

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



SNAPSHOT OF 2020

CAMPAIGNS AND  
ACTIVISM UPDATES

FUNDRAISING

**AMNESTY**  
INTERNATIONAL







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👁️ ↑ *Impressions from a Silent Demo on  
06 June 2020 against racism and  
police brutality.*

© Amnesty International / Jarek Godlewski

👁️ *Cover image: An emergency nurse  
(ICU) dressed in garbage bags and a  
protective mask loaned altruistically by a  
private company at the emergency entrance  
door of the San Jorge hospital on March 31,  
2020 in Huesca, Spain.*

© Getty Images

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# FOREWORD

In late 2019, a doctor was being targeted and censored in China for trying to raise the alarm about a strange and dangerous new virus. His name was Dr. Li Wenliang and he tragically died from Covid-19 in February 2020. Amnesty put out the call; China had to stop the censorship of what was then an epidemic. 600 people had died at that stage.

And then the world changed.

This report is of our work in 2020, and it feels overwhelming to look back at that year. It was the beginning of isolation for so many but also the beginning of a new way of being a community. We found ways to connect, ways to reach out and took it upon ourselves to do the right thing by each other. There has been a huge amount of suffering and grief, but there has also been incredible amounts of compassion, solidarity and kindness. I want to take this opportunity to thank every last one of our supporters who made all the sacrifices demanded of us all, followed public health advice and who took care of each other. You truly saved lives.

As I write this, we are two years into this pandemic which is still not over, facing the existential threat of climate change, and in the midst of a terrifying and brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The world feels dark and it has for quite a while now. But we owe it to humanity and to all the generations to come to fight tooth and nail to turn this around. And we can. I've no doubt about this.

So again we look to our supporters to shine a light and lead the way. 2020 was the year of zoom meetings and masks, but it was also the year that you all took on Direct Provision, along with extraordinary groups like Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland, Irish Refugee Council and many others. You campaigned non-stop to protect people living in state-mandated centres that were unsafe during a pandemic, and violated their rights. The calls to end Direct Provision grew louder and louder and it was a pivotal year for this long-standing campaign. In 2021, the government committed to finally ending this cruel and inhumane system.

2020 also saw Narges Mohammadi, Wang Quanzhang and Rubén González being freed! Teenager Magai in South Sudan was also released from death row, and so many others lives were changed for the better because of Amnesty supporters.



It was the year that saw the rise of the awe-inspiring Black Lives Matter movement. The killing of George Floyd, one of many black Americans killed by US police, sparked outrage and calls for justice that resonated around the world. Our supporters joined in protests in Ireland and internationally, and Amnesty as a movement committed to becoming an actively anti-racist movement. The road to racial justice will be long and difficult but we all have a responsibility and role in ending discrimination, injustice and racism. Those of us who are white must examine our own privilege; how it has driven and shaped systemic racism within our societies, and how we can now work to end that.

Looking back at what we achieved together in what was an incredibly difficult year for us all, it's very clear to me what our supporters will do next. You will face into dark, uncertain times and fight to change lives for the better. You won't give up. And I know this because you never have, so thank you once again.

In solidarity and with gratitude,

**Colm O'Gorman,**  
Executive Director,  
Amnesty International Ireland.

👁️ ↑ Colm  
O'Gorman,  
Executive director  
of Amnesty  
International  
Ireland.  
© Amnesty International



# GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

Over 1 million of our supporters around the world took action for George Floyd, the Black man who was killed by US police who used unnecessary and excessive force to arrest him. His death sparked outrage around the world. We documented how police forces committed widespread human rights violations against largely peaceful anti-racism protests, using tear gas and rubber bullets. The fight for justice and equality continues, but the world has been changed.

👁️ → Around 50,000 people took part in an anti-racism demonstration in Vienna on Thursday, 4th of July 2020. Activists of Amnesty International Austria demanded justice of George Floyd who was killed by police officers in Minneapolis, USA.

© Christopher Glanzl / Amnesty International Austria



## NOTHING CAN STOP US STANDING UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS!

While we couldn't take to the streets, we got creative...Here are just some of the ways our activists fought for human rights from their sitting rooms!

We took part in solidarity protests for asylum seekers in Ireland and called for an end to Direct Provision. We joined in national moments of recognition and deep gratitude for healthcare workers and amplified public health guidelines and support services for marginalised groups. We joined international protests against anti-abortion and anti-LGBTI movements in Poland, and against police violence and authoritarianism in Belarus. We gave our platform over to activists from Black Lives Matter movements and LGBTI human rights defenders from Uganda to Hungary.

👁️ → Iranian human rights defender and anti-death penalty campaigner Narges Mohammadi. © Private

## YOU HELPED SET THEM FREE!

**Rubén González** was a trade union leader in Venezuela. He was targeted by the government because he fought for the rights of workers. The military came to arrest him in November 2018. They said he attacked them and he was sentenced to nearly 6 years in prison by a military court, despite a lack of evidence of criminal responsibility..

**Wang Quanzhang** was a Chinese human rights lawyer who defended religious freedom. He was imprisoned in 2015. It was 3 years before his family were even told that he was still alive. We declared Wang a Prisoner of Conscience and campaigned for his release. We told his story to journalists and our millions of supporters around the world, so the Chinese authorities couldn't cover up their human rights abuses. Now he is finally free and back with his wife and son.

Iranian **Narges Mohammadi** had been imprisoned since May 2015 in reprisal for meeting with an EU representative and for her human rights activism. She was also at risk from Covid-19 because of her underlying conditions.

**Magai** was just fifteen years old when he was sentenced to death in South Sudan. Over 765,000 people all over the world who took action as part of our annual Write4Rights campaign. The authorities heard us, his sentence was cancelled and he is no longer on death row. No child should ever be sentenced to death.

*"Reunited with my whole family after 21 months deprived of my freedom. I want to thank deeply in my heart, and from all my family, for the support I received from all of Amnesty International. For me, it is an honour to thank you and we want to tell you that we have you in our minds, in our hearts, for that great support."*

*Rubén González, a trade union leader in Venezuela.*



# END DIRECT PROVISION – 20 YEARS OF CRUELTY

We launched our partnership with Bohemian FC in early 2020, which captured media headlines and went viral on social media. Their 2020 away jersey featured the iconic image of a family fleeing with the words ‘Refugees Welcome’ on the front, and the famous ‘Love Football, Hate Racism’ slogan on the collar. We joined with Bohemian FC and the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland to highlight our calls to end Direct Provision (DP).

When Covid-19 struck, we responded rapidly to push for urgent and effective measures to protect people in DP and emergency accommodation. The pandemic highlighted in a truly brutal way just how inhumane DP is, and why it must urgently end. People in DP faced this crisis in settings which made ensuring their health and wellbeing even more difficult. Social distancing was simply not possible when strangers shared bedrooms, bathrooms, and living spaces.

We wrote to the Government and launched an online petition. We worked with partners on digital actions targeting relevant authorities. We co-signed a letter from more than 900 experts and activists to the Government, and joint NGO letters calling for increased Covid-19 expenses allowances, and for the closure of the Skellig Star DP centre. We organised an opinion piece in the *Irish Independent* and interview on *Morning Ireland* by Dr Eamon Fallar, an infectious disease specialist, on the serious infection risks in DP.

In the midst of this, the new coalition Government committed to finally end DP. Direct Provision was one of our key issues in our pre-General Election briefing sent to political parties and in our Programme for Government submission to Fine Gael.

This was a critical moment in the history of Direct Provision. Our updated campaign focused on pushing the Government to urgently establish a timeframe and implementation plan as key to realising the commitment to end DP.

We welcomed the publication of a report by the Advisory Group on Direct Provision and called on the Government to accept and implement its comprehensive and detailed recommendations towards ending Direct Provision.

As part of our public facing work, we launched a series of weekly digital/social media actions targeting the new Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and his Department. These actions, calling on the Government to finally ‘Set the Date’ to end Direct Provision, launched to coincide with the publication of the Advisory



👁️ ↑ *Lissycullen Direct Provision Centre Athlone*

© Vukašin Nedeljkovic/Asylum Archive

👁️ ← *Bohemian FC Jersey.*

© Bohemian FC

Group report and continued until the Government published its ‘White Paper’.

Our direct engagement with the new Minister and Department throughout the year culminated with a meeting at the end of 2020 to outline and seek commitments on our key priorities. The Minister committed to a strong implementation plan to include goals and objectives for each year during the process of ending DP and a means of monitoring and accountability. We urged prompt publication of the implementation plan, setting out key steps, roles, responsibilities and timelines, and a clear roadmap for finally and fully ending Direct Provision.



# DEFENDING INDIVIDUALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

## BRAVE: WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (WHRDS)

On International Women's Day 2020, we handed out flowers, replicating Iranian WHRD Yasaman Aryani's action in solidarity with her and to call for her freedom. She is imprisoned for handing out flowers on a train without a headscarf and speaking about women's rights.

As Saudi Arabia hosted powerful leaders at the G20, we took the opportunity to generate global pressure to call for the release of Saudi WHRDs. We joined Twitter storms with Saudi human rights organisations, met with officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and joined global online actions targeting the Saudi King Salman. Positive developments saw Loujain al-Hathloul and other WHRDs later released from prison.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DURING COVID-19

The international movement released a report about the risks faced by human rights defenders (HRDs) arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. We campaigned in support of several HRDs, such as imprisoned HRDs Nasrin Sotoudeh and Narges Mohammadi who contracted Covid-19. Both have health concerns but were denied appropriate medical treatment. We acted when the Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organisations of Honduras received threats for offering their premises as an isolation centre.

Tens of thousands of health workers died from Covid-19, and a report and map were launched showing the impact of the pandemic on health workers. We campaigned for several health workers in Egypt, Russia and Malaysia who were persecuted for expressing concerns. In Russia, Dr Yulia Volkova faced prosecution

and Dr Tatyana Revva faced dismissal after complaining about a lack of PPE. They were successful in defeating attempts to silence them.

## SHRINKING SPACE FOR DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

The situation for HRDs and civil society in Bahrain, Egypt, Hungary, India, Poland, Russia, and Turkey remained grave. We joined a global action for rule of law in Hungary and Poland. We stood with our Amnesty colleagues and HRDs in Turkey. Taner Kiliç was sentenced to 6 years 3 months. Özlem Dalkıran, İdil Eser and Günel Kurşun were all given 25 months, all pending appeal.

When directors at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights were arrested, we responded by engaging with the Irish Government and issuing an Urgent Action. Their releases came in the wake of a strong public response by States including Ireland and multilateral institutions, NGOs, and activists condemning their arrests.

## RESPONDING TO CRISES

We gathered petition signatures as part of a global campaign to end the crackdown on peaceful protests in Belarus and we called for the release of HRD Marfa Rabkova and political opposition leader Maryia Kalesnikava.

We called for justice for George Floyd and for the end of police violence at Black Lives Matter protests. We held a Failte event with Marion Gray Hopkins, whose son was killed by the police, and Ernest Coverson, Amnesty USA's End Gun Violence Campaigner.

👁️ ↙️ Russian investigative journalist from Novaya Gazeta newspaper.

© Anna Artemyeva / Novaya Gazeta

👁️ ↓ Saudi woman WHRDs picture from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Taken after being released from prison in February 2021.

© Al-Hathloul family



# COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP CONTINUES TO WELCOME REFUGEES TO IRELAND

**Community Sponsorship is an innovative** model of refugee resettlement which offers ordinary people and communities an extraordinary opportunity; to directly help refugees to rebuild their lives in safety and settle into new communities.

Following a successful pilot programme in 2019, in which 33 refugees were welcomed by 8 Community Sponsorship Groups, it was announced that Community Sponsorship would transition into a full government programme with a multi-year commitment. Ireland pledged to welcome up to 2,900 refugees between 2020 and 2023 through a combination of resettlement and community sponsorship.

In 2020, we continued to support the development of Ireland's community sponsorship programme and worked collaboratively with government, civil society and other key stakeholders and partners, including the Irish Refugee Council, the Irish Red Cross, Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre and the UNHCR.

Our primary focus in 2020 was to work alongside our programme partners to prepare for the launch of a new National Support Organisation (NSO) solely dedicated to the growth and development of community sponsorship. The NSO is formally to be called The Open Community (Local Welcome, Global Impact) and will have a number of key responsibilities. This includes the development of The Open Community website which will act as the central hub of information and national promotional tool for sponsorship. It will host a comprehensive range of resources, case studies, videos, testimonials, and training materials. The Open Community will also coordinate strategic discussions between with the programme's civil society partners and government, as well as work to development complementary resources and programme tools that are made available across the entire programme.

At Amnesty, we continue to champion community sponsorship because of its potential to improve refugee rights in Ireland and build awareness of and support for broader refugee-related issues. Community sponsorship is about people power: individuals and communities pulling together to welcome refugees, whilst providing a practical and powerful way for people to respond to the global refugee crisis at a local level. In doing so, it strengthens and enriches host communities, helps to promote understanding, tolerance and provides unique opportunities for intercultural exchanges.

Community Sponsorship brings together people from diverse backgrounds to mobilise the energy, compassion



👁️ ↑ Ahmed, Shahera and their two sons were welcomed to Co Dublin by Anne and the other members of her community sponsorship group.

© Ruth Medjber/  
Amnesty International  
Ireland

👁️ ← Lynne, part of a community sponsorship group who welcomed a refugee family to Co Waterford.

© Ruth Medjber/  
Amnesty International  
Ireland

and expertise which already exists in local communities and to work towards a common goal. Direct community involvement helps build greater awareness, understanding and empathy around refugees. This allows us to demonstrate a tangible groundswell of grassroots public support for welcoming refugees. As one sponsor told us: "It's just the right thing to do. It's been good for our community, for our new Syrian friends, and it's good for Ireland."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME AND START YOUR OWN SPONSORSHIP JOURNEY, EMAIL [INFO@THEOPENCOMMUNITY.IE](mailto:INFO@THEOPENCOMMUNITY.IE) OR VISIT [WWW.THEOPENCOMMUNITY.IE](http://WWW.THEOPENCOMMUNITY.IE)



# ACTIVISM

2020 began with a **Schools Day in Cork** city. Over 100 attended from 7 schools, with rights-holders, volunteers and local group members delivering talks and workshops on Direct Provision, Digital Activism, and Climate Action.

In March, following the introduction of public health guidelines and regulations in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, all our activism moved online.

The **Stories of Refuge, Stories of Welcome** project also moved online, with 9 rights-holders facilitating workshops virtually and empowering over 270 students through human rights education and action. Student feedback: "...by listening to her story and her insights, my attitude to asylum seekers completely changed. I have grown to respect and acknowledge the difficulties asylum seekers face. I have never had to adjust to a new culture, take on a new language, or leave my family and friends behind. These are the hardships many asylum seekers have gone through." A virtual **Youth Summit** in November brought our 3rd level activist community together to up-skill, learn and act collectively.

We improved and innovated digital activism tactics in response to the pandemic, resulting in new digital activism projects and events. **'Freedom Flowers'** encouraged people to create and display flowers at home and take action for Yasaman Aryani in Iran. Activists and partners participated in a video **'We Cannot Stand Idly By'** urging people to call on the Greek authorities to provide protection for people seeking refuge. For the **Youth Climate Strike** in September 2020, we created a video with 4 youth activists to share on organisational media, receiving 10.9k views. The **'Fáilte Amnesty'** webinars began, increasing participation of activists, supporters, members and partners from across Ireland.

Amnesty Ireland activists continued to lead and organise action. Those focused on Direct Provision led a **weekly Friday twitter action** for 22 weeks beginning in August 2020. A **youth activism leadership** series of virtual workshops with 12 young people from April to June 2020 resulted in the group designing and leading a digital campaign on Direct Provision. **'Queer Amnesty – Resist Together'** was formed. The vision was to self-organise as part of the global Amnesty International movement to resist attacks on LGBTI human rights abuses around the world.



2020 ACTIONS	32,039	WRITE FOR RIGHTS
	8,796	URGENT ACTION AND IAR CASES
	2,109	REFUGEE & MIGRANT RIGHTS
	1,890	DIRECT PROVISION
	813	LGBTI
	16,024	BRAVE


👁️ ↑↑ Activists with Queer Amnesty wear a pride flag to support the METU Pride Defenders.


👁️ ↑ Youth activists with John Nazarius Aristide at the Cork Schools Day.





# FÁILTE AMNESTY






**Ellie Kisyombe**

In conversation with / ag labhairt le ;

**Colm O'Gorman**

Members and Activists Meeting;  
How do we keep the flame of Hope alive?  
Conas a ceamáidfaidh muid an mBeal Tine Dóchas beo?

Monday 25 May / De Luain 25 Bealtaine  
7:30-8:30pm Online / Ar an idirlíon





- 👁️ ↩️ Wesley College Amnesty group create #FreedomFlowers for Yasaman Aryani
- 👁️ ↑↑ Fáilte Amnesty Webinar May 2020
- 👁️ ↑ Activist Alesí Horan calls on Government to #EndDP
- 👁️ ← Youth activists at the Cork Schools Day 2020.



# FUNDRAISING REPORT 2020

**As set out in the** financial report, Amnesty International Ireland splits its income and expenditure between fundraising (membership subscriptions, donations, events and related expenditure) and the rest of the Section's income and expenditure (rental from the building, campaign and administrative costs etc.).

This section of our report to members covers fundraising income and expenditure.

2020 was not an easy year for fundraising as it was the first year of the global pandemic, with Covid-19 restrictions impacting on our Face-to-Face programme and offline fundraising events. We had to reorganise our operations, increase investment in digital acquisition, and explore new channels to communicate our projects.

Nevertheless, overall funds raised reached €2.5m – 86% of the budget; net income was €1.8m – almost within the budget.

Share of Face-to-Face programme in overall income decreased by 6% in comparison to the previous year because we were not able to continue this work from March 2020.

We continued to invest in online acquisition, email and set up a new in-house telemarketing team remotely to support our digital activities, which performed as good as or better than external agencies within its first few months of operation on the various telemarketing campaigns. This allowed us to more than double the digital acquisition income as compared to 2019.

Our Direct Mails and Appeals raised €61k (85% of the budget) – 25% less than a year before. This was mainly due to us replacing the planned March Direct Mail with a donor care mailing in April.

Our Community events area showed a reduction due to Covid-19 restrictions with an income of €29k (30% of budget).



↑ Solidarity protest with detained LGBT activists and against homophobia in Warsaw, 8th August 2020.

© Grzegorz Żukowski

← Protestors face off with riot police guarding the house of Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of Poland's ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) during a demonstration against a decision by the Constitutional Court on abortion law restriction, in Warsaw on 23 October, 2020.

© Grzegorz Żukowski

The Major Gift area performed really well with an increase by 6% in comparison to 2019. Trust & Foundation income was ahead of budget by €126k, despite the significant decline in Legacies income.

Employee Fundraising income did well, raising €33k instead of a budgeted €14k, whereas the Local Groups fundraising was almost impossible due to Covid-19 restrictions.

To summarise, 2020 was a challenging year for us as it was for

the many people and organisations who faced the global pandemic and had to adapt to the new reality. However, due to our efforts and the support from our members, we reached the budgeted goals for the net income for the organisation to continue our human rights campaigns.



# COVID-19 AND AMNESTY IRELAND



👁️ ← Impressions from the "Silent Demo" on 06 June 2020 against racism and police brutality.  
© Amnesty International / Jarek Godlewski

## MOVE TO REMOTE WORKING

On 18 March 2020, all staff moved to remote working as our offices were closed to staff and the public in compliance with government restrictions.

The organisation's Senior Management Team (SMT) developed a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure that the organisation could continue business as usual whilst responding to these exceptional circumstances. Further to the implementation of the BCP, the SMT developed a Functional Continuity Plan to ensure the critical functions as identified in the BCP were maintained.

A lot of the SMT's work in the initial stages of the pandemic was focused on setting up systems and on supporting staff in moving to remote working.

We managed to transition to home working quite quickly with limited negative impact on our capacity to carry out the majority of our usual work.

We put in place appropriate IT systems and provided staff with the necessary equipment for remote work, as well as provided health and safety guidance and advice.

We enhanced staff communication with a weekly video recorded by the Executive Director in addition to the

usual weekly staff email updates. Several staff presentations and briefings were also delivered.

We created guiding principles for making decisions related to the ongoing pandemic. One of the significant principles was the 'Lag not Lead' approach, which meant that the organisation would look to learn from other organisations' experience of their approach to returning to the office, rather than trying to lead on it. It was decided that we would reopen our office when we were confident that we could do safely, learning from others' experiences, and without putting undue pressure on staff and the organisation. The other principle of 'flexibility and agility' meant that we worked to build-in a preparedness for further surges or other sudden/unexpected issues, so the impact on business as usual would be minimised as much as is feasible.

## STAFF WELLBEING

The SMT worked to support staff well-being and this topic featured as a standing monthly agenda item at SMT meetings. As part of this work, various staff sessions and webinars

were held, as well as periodic meditation sessions facilitated by an external consultant.

In an effort to better manage the volume of meetings and screen time, we introduced two meeting free mornings each week when staff were encouraged to avail of quiet time and focus on progressing work. A number of virtual social events were also held.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

The movement developed a project management methodology, which is meant to be adopted over time by all Sections and Amnesty entities. It provides a framework where there is clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability, as well as a clear focus on planning for and achieving impact.

We began the gradual roll out of this methodology with the Direct Provision Project Team established as a pilot project. Guidance for cross-team working groups has also been developed which incorporates elements of the project management methodology as appropriate to pieces of work.

