

# WRITE FOR RIGHTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



## 8 TOP LETTER-WRITING TIPS

### 1 Give the facts

Give as much information (date and place of the violation, names and other facts about the victim) as possible. Name the human right that has been violated. This will convey that you are informed as well as concerned.

### 2 Follow the facts and instructions given by Amnesty

Each appeal includes instructions on what to say in your letter. Be sure to follow these exactly—if the action asks for a prisoner to receive medical treatment, say that—don't ask for things that aren't included in the instructions.

### 3 Be brief

A short letter is adequate and certainly better than no letter at all. Describe your concern in the first sentence and make a request in the second. A good rule is not to write more than one page (one side of a paper).

### 4 Be courteous and respectful

Remain impartial. Avoid making reference to any particular religious beliefs, cultural norms or political ideologies.

### 5 Base your appeals on official human rights standards.

Human rights are based on international laws and obligations. Letters are more persuasive when they are based on these obligations. Political judgments or jargon are not effective and can sometimes do harm.

### 6 Make it personal

Use your own voice. Writing a letter in your own words and with your own style will be more effective than a form letter. You may also wish to give an idea of who you are as this indicates that the letter is genuine and that people of all ages and walks of life are interested in the case.

### 7 Watch your language

Even if you are writing to a country where English is not an official language, a well-written English letter is better than a letter in another language that may contain mistakes. In the same manner, if you are fluent in another language and feel that an appeal may be more effectively written in that language, write away!

### 8 End with a request

It can be very effective to end your letter with a question that asks for action (e.g. Have you initiated an inquiry to find those responsible for carrying out these attacks? Can you write back to me with news about the steps you have taken to address this troubling matter?).

