section one

CAMPAIGNING IN A CHANGING WORLD

- Strategic Campaigning
- Campaigning in the Modern World
- Organizing for Action
- Responding to Crises
- Fundraising and Campaigning
- International Human Rights Standards and Organizations

CHAPTER 1
STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNING

"Narrowing down a broad humanitarian mandate into a limited set of issues and priorities is highly challenging. Relief and development non-governmental organizations operate in complex local, national and international arenas, and juggle with many competing priorities. The strategic planning process can help to eliminate unnecessary conflict and to unify stakeholders around a shared vision and a common purpose."

The Oxfam Handbook, 1995

As one of the largest and most ambitious human rights organizations in the world, AI faces difficult decisions every day. Making the right choices at the right time in order to be effective is the skill of strategic campaigning. This chapter looks at some of the key principles that guide our decisions.

Contents

What is strategic campaigning? / **12**
- Evaluation / **14**

Making choices / **14**

Principles of good campaigning / **15**

Principles in practice / **16**
- Focus / **16**
- Clarity / **17**
- Credibility / **19**
- Relevance / **20**
- Timing / **21**
- Commitment / **22**

Tools for building strategies / **24**
- Strategic campaigning cycle / **24**
- Building a country strategy / **24**
- The need for specific country strategies / **26**

Possible objectives for campaigns / **26**

What is strategic campaigning?

Strategic campaigning is choosing a specific course of action, on the basis of available information and resources, which will be most effective in achieving identified objectives.

Campaigning is an organized course of action to achieve change. Letter-writing, lobbying, demonstrations, vigils and publicity are just some of the methods of campaigning we frequently use. But it is not possible for any campaigner, or AI as an organization, to do everything well and at once. We are therefore constantly faced with choices – about what we will do, how we will do it and when.

Making the right choices at the right time is the heart and art of strategic campaigning. None of us makes the right choices all the time, but there are some core principles of effective campaigning that can help to guide our decisions.

Strategic planning is the process of agreeing where you are now (A), deciding where you would like to get to (B), and how you can best get there (see diagram below).

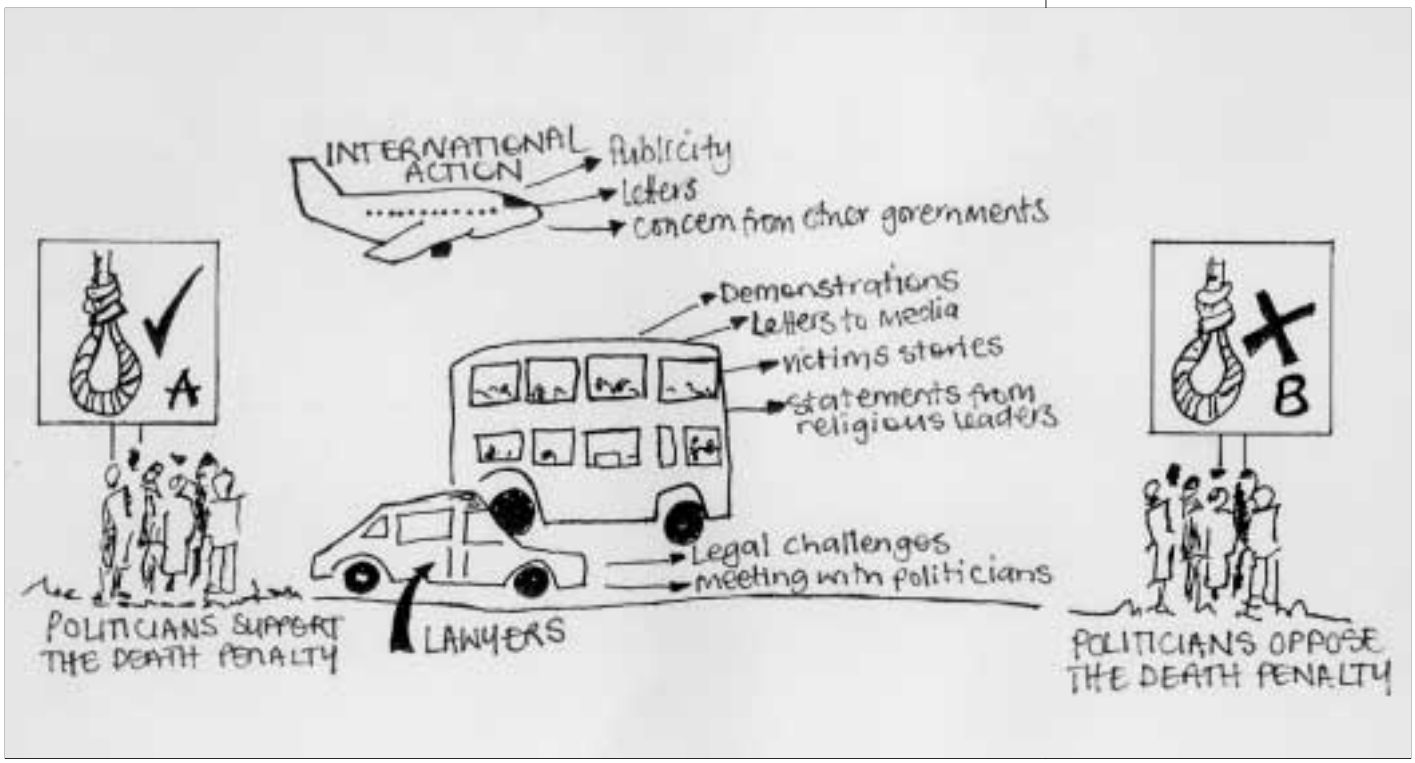
Many strategic planning processes, forms and tools have been developed to facilitate and encourage strategic thinking and planning. One of the best known and most commonly used is SWOT. This is a process for looking at the existing and potential Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in an organization or of an issue. It can help to define the existing situation and the problems that need to be addressed so that objectives and strategy can be agreed (see box opposite).

Strategic plans should be helpful tools rather than set formulas to be rigidly followed. Perfectly constructed strategic plans can be prepared and implemented – but they can still be the wrong plans!

Thinking strategically is not a specialized or difficult process. Each of us can imagine a range of everyday situations where we have to make choices about what we will do – from how we travel to work to how we approach competitive sports.

The objective of all AI's campaigning is to protect people's human rights. Simply asking yourself or others a few questions before taking a particular course of action can help ensure your plans are taking you in the right direction.

You are at A. You need to get to B. You have to choose the best way of getting there. Public opinion, help from the legal community and international action are all options. © BEATE KUBITZ



SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

STRENGTHS are positive factors of the AI Section that might be of particular importance in different campaigns or actions. They might include financial and material resources, good access to home government, a good public image, an efficient organizational structure, contacts (for example, in the media or other organizations), supporters, specialist knowledge or the existence of many groups.

When planning your work, consider how your Section's strengths might be useful in the context of a particular campaign. For example, if one of the international objectives of a campaign includes getting action from the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy and you have a strong religious outreach program with that church, then this might be one of the most effective areas of work for the Section.

WEAKNESSES are factors that inhibit the Section's ability to act generally or on particular issues. Weaknesses might include a lack of experienced members, limited (or no) funds, lack of facilities, poor organizational capacity or poor public image.

It is very important to identify your weaknesses so that you can either take steps to overcome them or avoid activities that you will be unable to cope with.

OPPORTUNITIES are factors about your society which might affect your campaigning. They might include an interested and sympathetic media, close links between your society and the target country, a meeting of an aid consortium, a visit to your country by the head of state of that country, other organizations that might be able to put effective pressure on the targets of your campaigning, such as trade unions, women's groups, professional groups or ethnic groups, and important dates in the calendar.

When planning your work on a campaign or action, consider how you might take advantage of these opportunities.

THREATS are factors in your society that may have a negative impact on your ability to contribute to a campaign or action. They will usually be out of your control, although as campaigners we may, in the longer term, hope to change at least some of the factors that represent a threat.

Threats might include a political or economic crisis, a hostile government, an intolerance of campaigning or voluntary organizations, business or other sectors saying that human rights are against the national interest, a poor image arising from factors beyond the group's control, human rights violations, security issues, local restrictions on AI's work, etc.

Threats also need to be analysed carefully when planning involvement in a particular campaign or action.

Note: Strengths and Weaknesses are mostly internal questions and relate to AI, Opportunities and Threats are external and relate to the campaigning environment.

QUESTIONS

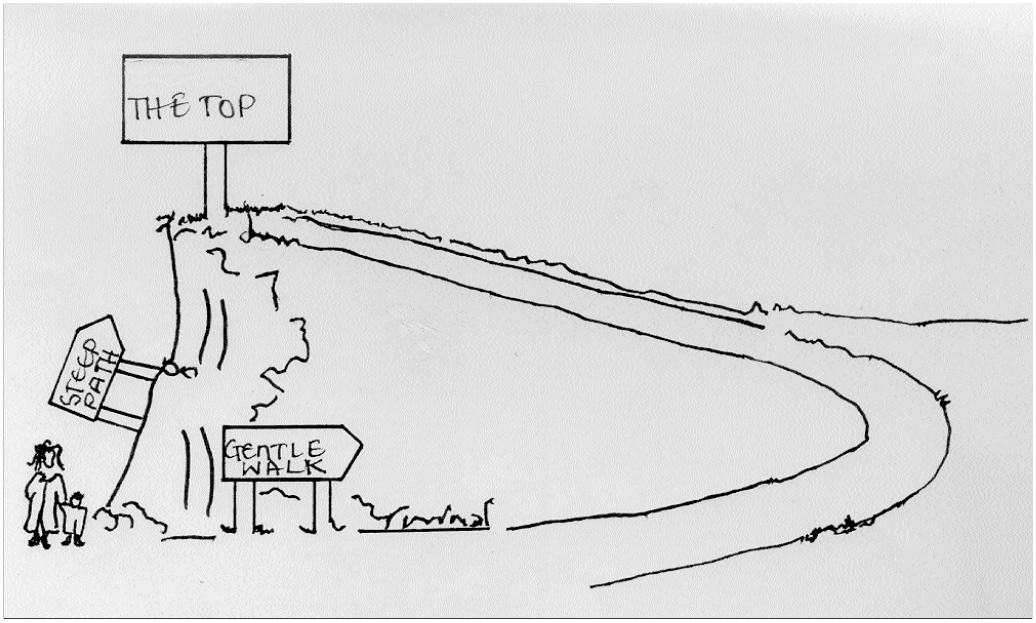
Q Can you explain how your campaign will contribute to changing a human rights situation?

Q Can you say why you are taking this course of action rather than another?

Q If it is successful, can you say what will be different at the end of your campaign from the beginning?

Members and board members should be asking these questions, as might journalists. You need to have the answers.

Explicit strategies and plans are particularly important for AI, as it is a membership organization. Accountability is essential. The membership must also be kept informed as this enables them to choose how their skills, creativity and knowledge can best be used to make the strategy succeed.



The child may be able to go up the steep path, but the grandmother will need to take the longer way round. Choices must be made on the basis of your situation.
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Evaluation

There is no guaranteed way of ensuring that every "strategic plan" is indeed strategic, or is the right plan. However, there are ways to help make sure we learn from our experiences and those of others and use these lessons to improve our future work.

Foremost of these is formal monitoring and evaluation, which is dealt with separately in Chapter 13. Evaluation can simply involve reflecting on past campaigns. Alternatively, you can look at the campaigning of others and discuss with them the causes of their successes and failures.

Making choices

Having chosen to campaign, and to coordinate campaigning, campaigners are immediately faced with choices. Which members of the target government should we be appealing to and about what? Should we post 50 letters or complete five petitions for the same effort? Who should we approach in our government? Should we focus our campaign on the death penalty or on torture?

AI is perhaps luckier than many organizations in that its overall objectives (its mandate) are clear and specific. Nevertheless, campaign coordinators in every Section are continuously faced with strategic choices about direction and priority.

Choices are always made within certain parameters, as they are in everyday life. Some of these are clear for AI's campaigners:

- AI's mandate and policies, including working on all the mandate issues and balance;
- international campaigning priorities established by the movement and specific requests from the IS and reflected in the international campaigning calendar.

The other parameters are largely set by your particular campaigning environment and resources, which can be determined by answering the following questions:

QUESTIONS

Do you have a membership to mobilize?

How much money can you budget for a campaign?

How is AI seen in your society?

Is your government hostile or open to AI?

Is your government open to taking up human rights concerns with other governments?

Does your media influence government policy?

"No one starts a campaign… without first being clear in their mind WHAT they intend to achieve by the campaign and HOW they intend to conduct it. This governing principle will set [the campaign's] course, prescribe the scale of means and effort which is required, and makes its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail."
Carl von Clauswitz, a renowned military strategist

Who in your society may be able to influence the human rights situation in another country?

Which sections of your society should you prioritize for developing support for AI?

What materials are most effective for mobilizing AI members or the public?

AI has been described as an organization of idealistic pragmatists, or realistic idealists. Its mandate looks impossibly idealistic, yet it works towards achieving its objectives through realistic, practical steps that have contributed to real change.

Campaigners are never in a position to control all the factors that will decide success or failure in any campaign. If they could, success could be guaranteed every time!

There are always other actors and circumstances beyond our control. Some of these, such as a change of government or peace negotiations, may present opportunities. Others, such as business, military or political leaders voicing opposition to human rights, may represent threats that have to be taken into consideration in any strategy.

Campaigning is also about changing parameters. Increasing AI's membership or support in the community, for instance, can open up new campaigning possibilities.

The campaigning principles outlined below can help when making choices, deciding strategies and putting your plans together.

Carefully timed events can reinforce the impact of a campaign. During the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the UK Section hired a tank and drove to the Chinese Embassy in London to protest against human rights violations in China. The tank was chosen as a well-recognized symbol of the student demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

© AI

Principles of good campaigning

Campaigning and strategy were originally military terms. However, good campaigning and good strategy are as important to those who seek to prevent war as to those who wage it.

Understanding why some campaigns worked and others did not can help you make choices about how to campaign in the future. The following is a list of some of these key principles.

Focus
- objectives must be specific
- resources and energy must be concentrated
- research and analysis are needed to decide focus

Clarity
- objectives and strategy need to be communicated clearly
- all action needs to be clearly related to the objectives
- communications must be clear, internally and externally

Credibility
- in communications, the messenger can be as important as the message
- AI's motivation and information must be trusted and reliable

Relevance
- AI's campaigning has to connect with the people whom it wants to involve
- AI's campaigning has to offer a solution relevant to the problem

Timing
- the same action will have different effects at different times

Commitment
- the campaigning will not stop until the violations end
- different strategies and techniques will be tried to discover the most effective

These principles of good campaigning are interrelated and need to be integrated. Why they are important, and some examples of how they have been applied in practice, are detailed below.

Principles in practice

Focus

Specific objectives:
You should be able to state any objective in a simple sentence. If you cannot, then you may be trying to achieve a number of different objectives. These need to be stated separately in order to:

- see whether the objectives are conflicting or complementary;
- allow decisions to be made about priorities;
- measure whether you have achieved your objective.

Usually there are many problems that need to be solved, so you need to work out which is the most urgent, and whether there is a natural or logical sequence to solving them.

While the objective of AI's campaigning is always to protect people's human rights, we need to be specific about what changes are necessary for this to happen.

Fulfilling AI's mandate is a long-term objective. Over the period of a particular campaign, say six or 12 months, or during a strategy period of two to five years, it might be unrealistic to expect that AI will stop torture in a particular country. So the objective of ending torture may not be specific enough to know what action will be most effective for AI and others to take.

In such a case AI's researchers and campaigners need to identify (at least internally) the specific steps or changes most likely to contribute to ending torture. The same applies to the other violations in AI's mandate. The changes, for example, could be:

- legislation to prohibit torture;
- training of prison and police officials;
- immediate suspension and prosecution of officials believed responsible for torture;
- independent and immediate access to detainees;
- an independent inquiry into allegations of torture.

The steps to be taken could, for example, be:

- building public awareness;
- letter-writing to the government or prison officials;
- lobbying the home government to make representations.

A group of AI campaign coordinators outside the International Secretariat
© AI

"There is one key rule in any sort of communication… start from where your audience is, not from where you are."
Sue Ward, *Getting the Message Across*, Journeyman Press, 1992

Then check that the relationship between these are clear.

These shorter-term objectives become the focus of campaigning and allow progress to be measured on the road to abolition of torture or the ending of other violations.

Focus energy and resources:
Being focused when deciding campaigning objectives and strategies is important because it:

- helps to make sure that resources of time and money are directed to where they are most likely to have an impact;
- keeps people motivated by increasing the chances of success and therefore builds capacity to take on more work in the longer term.

Why allocate resources of time or money to campaigns that have unrealistic objectives when they could be allocated to something that could have an impact? Campaigns appearing to have unrealistic or unachievable objectives find it more difficult to attract support. There is a credibility gap.

Trying to do too much at one time can spread and exhaust the resources which need to be focused for maximum effect.

"Know the adversary and know yourself; in a hundred [campaigns] you will never be in peril. When you are ignorant of the adversary but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of your adversary and of yourself you are certain in every [campaign] to be in peril."
Sun Tzu, around 500 BC

Research and analysis:
The issues AI confronts may be simple but the context in which they take place is always a complex mix of economic, social, political and cultural factors. The more knowledge AI has on these factors the more likely it will be able to make its impact on them positive and effective.

AI campaigning is about changing behaviour. It is about persuading police to respect the rights of detainees or encouraging members of the public to sign a petition.

To change behaviour it is useful to find out why people or organizations are behaving as they are, or what may motivate them to act. Sometimes it is possible only to make an informed guess, but even this can help to show how our actions can affect behaviour.

Information and analysis are the starting point of all campaigns. They allow us to define the problem we are trying to solve or the opportunities we are trying to take advantage of. The analysis of available information will affect every part of a campaign, from deciding objectives to determining and implementing strategy. While much of this research, particularly on the target country, is primarily the responsibility of the IS, research and analysis by Sections involved in the campaign are just as important, particularly in informing national strategies.

There is a standard type of information and analysis that are important to AI's campaigning, which the following questions might help ascertain.

QUESTIONS

- **Who is responsible for the human rights violations?**
- **Why are the violations happening and which factors could AI influence?**
- **Are there particular moments or times when we may have more influence?**
- **How could our membership, society and government influence those responsible for the violations?**
- **How can we persuade them to exert this influence?**

Clarity

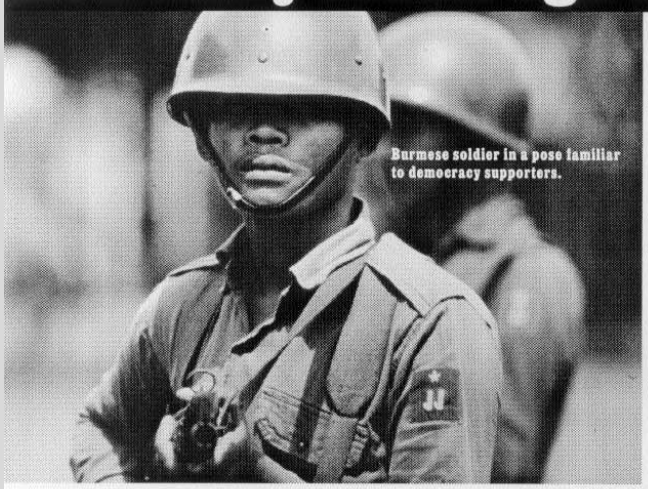
Objectives and strategy need to be clear. This is particularly important in a membership organization, where individual initiative is necessary and encouraged.

Clarity enables all involved to bring their skills, knowledge and creativity to bear. Once they know what is to be achieved and how, they can make rational decisions about how they and those they can mobilize can contribute most effectively. It also minimizes the possibility that members

Shock to generate interest

The UK Section of AI has for a number of years run a very successful series of fundraising and membership recruitment advertisements in national newspapers and magazines. Their advertisements broke many advertising conventions by relying heavily on a long text. They use shock to attract the readers' interest. They then tell a compelling story to keep that interest while they explain a terrible human rights situation. Finally, they offer the reader an opportunity to do something about it. Their target audience has been people with a tertiary education, interest in world affairs and disposable income. They have gained many donations and new members.

You always meant to join us. How many deaths ago was that?



Burmese soldier in a pose familiar to democracy supporters.

Last month John Pilger's shocking documentary showed a Burma where thousands have been killed for daring to call for democracy, where the woman who won an election was held under house arrest for years. If this made you think of joining us, please hurry, for even in the few weeks since the programme was shown, nearly three hundred pro-democracy supporters were arrested.

Amnesty International: working worldwide for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and an end to torture, extra-judicial executions, "disappearances" and the death penalty.

Last month, millions of TV viewers saw John Pilger's terrifying film about Burma, which for 34 years has been ruled by generals who renamed the country Myanmar, closed it off to the outside world and imprisoned, tortured or killed anyone who disagreed with them.

With our own eyes we saw young Burmese students calling for a 'democracy' which most of us take for granted, being shot down, running away through the streets and falling, drenched in blood.

"Keep filming till they shoot us."

We heard the voices of Burmese cameramen who were warned they'd be shot if they kept on filming. As the soldiers raise their guns one cameramen asks the other:

'What shall we do?'

'Keep on filming till they shoot us.'

We saw Aung San Suu Kyi, who won a democratic election with 82% of the seats, confined under arrest in her house by the generals who lost. We saw how the generals imprison any who dare to express a desire for freedom - by singing a song, or writing a poem. We saw these 'criminals' bound in chains and manacles and forced to labour.

We watched a small boy, forced to work long hours each day, crying as a barrowload of cement collapsed on top of him.

The horrors you didn't see.

Amnesty International has been keeping watch on Burma for years. We can tell you that John Pilger's film, harrowing as it was, was just a snapshot of the fear that rules the country. It couldn't show the horrific human processions that wind through Burma's mountains: thousands of Burmese villagers who have been forced at gunpoint by the army to work as porters, carrying heavy loads over mountains with little food.

The sick, old, mentally ill - none are spared. If they fall they are left to die by the wayside. One man was hacked to death with a hoe. Many are shot and kicked over mountainsides to fall to their deaths.

New arrests since the film was shown.

Since the programme went out, Amnesty has reported the arrests of pro-democracy supporters. In two cases, when the men they were after were not at home, the soldiers took their wives. Almost 300 were arrested in the last few weeks, but many have been released.

These people should never have been arrested in the first place. We want those still in jail released and are campaigning for them, for an end to forced portering and for the freeing of those who were already in prison for daring to call for democracy.

To date the Burmese generals refuse to allow us into the country. We need to pile the pressure onto them, and to do this we need the support of everyone who gives a damn.

Please don't turn away again.

This advertisement was going to open with the words: "We don't mean to make you feel guilty." But it's not true. We do.

Feeling guilty proves that you care. That you value justice and freedom and basic human rights. That you're not one of those who can watch people's agony on TV while wondering what's on the other channel.

You care. That makes you very special. We *need* you. Please act on your best instincts. Do something to help.

Joining us isn't the only way you can help, but it's one of the most effective.

For thirty five years we have campaigned tirelessly against human rights abuse all over the world. There are many examples of how the intervention of Amnesty International has helped free people from jail, save them from torture or from being killed.

What is Amnesty International but people just like you? People who on their own can do little, but by joining together can help thousands.

We need you because despite everything we're doing, it still isn't enough.

We know it's not enough because the killings, torture and imprisonment haven't stopped. Until they do, neither can we.

Please take this opportunity to join us or make a donation to help our work. Make today the day. Make this the moment. Do it now. Do it for the sake of the suffering people in Burma whose acts of principle and courage deserve more than our complicit silence. Most of all, do it for yourself.

I want to be a member of Amnesty International. Here's my annual subscription fee. 96ADTMG6B/E65
£21 Individual ❑ £27 Family ❑ £7.50 Students ❑ Under 22 ❑ Claimant ❑ Senior Citizen ❑
I wish to donate £500 ❑ £250 ❑ £100 ❑ £50 ❑ £25 ❑ £10 ❑ Other _____
Please charge my Access/Visa/Mastercard Number: _____
Total: _____
Signed: _____ Card valid from: _____ Expires _____
If you are paying by credit card please give the address where you receive your credit card bill
Mr/Ms _____ Address _____
_____ Postcode _____
If you do not want to receive information about mailings from sympathetic organisation please tick this box ❑
To join or make a donation please call 0345 611116. *Calls are charged at local rates*
TO DEPT AA AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK FREEPOST, LONDON EC1B 1HE.
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Shock advertisements have worked well in Ireland and the UK, but not in other countries.

Look for important dates and anniversaries which might be helpful to a campaign. Also watch out for dates to avoid as offence can easily be caused by planning action for a time that is sensitive in a particular culture or country.

will take action that is counter-productive to the strategy.

All action needs to be clearly related to these objectives. This enables all suggestions for actions to be measured against strategy and objective, and allows resources to be used most effectively.

Communications must be clear, internally and externally. People have to know what you are saying and what you are asking for. This may mean messages need to be expressed in different ways to different audiences.

Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may know what the indivisibility and universality of human rights mean. Upwards of 98 per cent of a broader public – radio and television audiences – will not. If you say people should never have to choose between freedom from fear of hunger and freedom from fear of torture, you express the same concept in a way more people can relate to.

Communications must be clearly related to purpose. A detailed report may be the best way to influence government, but not the best way of persuading members of the public to take action.

"I think that is what hurts most. Until... people like that said they had doubts about our convictions no one really wanted to know. Yet nothing is different now to what it was 10 or 12 years ago... All that has changed is the people telling it... Unfair isn't a strong enough word for what I feel about it all, but I can't think of another one."

Carole Richardson, writing from prison, was wrongly convicted in the UK after an unfair trial in 1974. She was freed in 1986.

Credibility

The messenger can be as important as the message.The words of Carole Richardson (see margin) describe how the campaign to release her gained momentum after leading members of British society expressed doubts about the safety of her conviction.

Campaigning organizations need to be listened to if they are to stand any chance of success. They need to be listened to by those from whom they are asking for help and by those they need to convince to take some action to stop a human rights violation. In many societies, to be listened to takes more than being right or just.

AI's credibility means that its information is generally believed. It is widely referred to – by journalists, academics, policy advisers, other campaigning organizations, diplomats and government departments. Other individuals or organizations could be making the same claims and calling for the same action, but they will often find it harder to be believed or to have an impact.

Since organizational credibility is important to the success of AI's campaigning goals, it follows that

Reinforcing AI's credibility: a queue of people wait to present testimony to an AI delegation visiting Guatemala.
© JEAN-MARIE SIMON

campaigners should both use this credibility and be careful to protect it. It is much easier for an organization to lose credibility than to gain it!

AI's motivation and information must be trusted and reliable. Its organizational credibility rests on the following:

- the commitment of its membership to campaign;
- the issues it campaigns on are enshrined in internationally agreed standards;
- its information is trusted, its recommendations are reasonable and clearly related to the problems identified;
- the consistency of its campaigning record – that it campaigns on countries and individuals whatever their political ideologies and allegiances;
- perceptions of relevance and effectiveness;
- attention to "forgotten", hidden and often unpopular situations;
- its focus on the need to stop violations rather than winning agreement on their causes, which could easily become an attack on ideologies or systems of government;
- it can point to evidence that AI works, such as individuals released or treated better;
- people relate to the issue of unfair treatment.

Relevance

AI's campaigning has to connect with the people it wants to involve. Some of AI's campaigning is directly or indirectly related to our own societies such as:

- campaigning on refugee issues, arms transfers, the death penalty, own government foreign policy;
- campaigning on themes or issues, including women's rights.

The main focus of AI's campaigning is international solidarity. People take action about human rights violations in a country they may never have heard of for many reasons. Sometimes they feel it is their responsibility or duty. More often they respond because you made them interested. Interest might not be enough on its own, but it is generally an important starting point.

Perceiving something as relevant is a major motivating factor in personal and organizational behaviour. AI seeks to take advantage of it routinely in outreach work (see Chapter 10). We seek to involve trade unionists in AI campaigns by demonstrating that some of the individuals we are working for are trade unionists.

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance" is an often used quote. It suggests that we all share an interest in protecting our rights – even when ours are not being violated or threatened. The argument that we are all diminished by allowing acts of injustice to go on around us is another way of appealing for people to see the relevance of taking action. Whatever its truth, it will appeal to some but not to others.

Many other campaigning organizations can rely on a clear sense of relevance and sometimes self-interest when asking people to take action. This applies to environmental campaigners, for example, who are trying to stop a toxic dump in their

Carnations and Colombia: challenging assumptions

Researching information on Colombia in preparation for the international campaign in 1988, the Australian Section discovered that Colombia was a major exporter of carnations. This surprised many, partly because Colombia's image was overwhelmingly of drugs and drug-related violence.

One aim of the campaign was to change these perceptions and highlight the human rights violations in Colombia. Carnations proved a positive and attractive way of challenging these images. For example, a local AI group in Townsville, a small town in Queensland, was filmed during a publicity action in which they used carnations. They were then interviewed on a major regional television network.

Making it easy to say 'yes': a non-AI campaign

Tim Anderson was convicted in 1991 of charges arising from the bombing of the 1978 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sydney, Australia. He immediately lodged an appeal and applied for bail pending the appeal. The campaign group protesting his innocence decided to seek support from prominent Australians for the bail application. The stated objective was to get bail, although the secondary objective was to gain widespread support and favourable media coverage.

A short statement expressing concern over aspects of the conviction and calling for his release on bail was drafted. It included a pledge to provide $A 1,000 in surety to support bail, which was intended to demonstrate the commitment of those signing the statement. Over 30 leading Australians signed. The bail application was refused, but the judge remarked on the extent of community concern over the safety of the conviction and this received substantial media coverage. (The conviction was quashed in the appeal court six months later.)

Had the statement asked people to state a belief in Tim Anderson's innocence, rather than concern over the conviction, many fewer people would have signed it. The strategy would have failed. Its success lay in making the statement easy to support.

community. AI campaigners often have to work harder and more creatively to make issues seem relevant to the people from whom support is wanted.

People define relevance in many different ways. However, most campaigners asking others to take action are likely at some time to be asked "Why should I?" The answer needs to satisfy their needs – which might be quite different from the campaigner's motivation.

In short, interest, concern, anger and shock can all make people feel emotionally and intellectually involved in an issue.

Campaigning also has to offer a solution relevant to the problem. Some people will take action no matter how hopeless the cause seems. Many others, however, will want to know that:

- the solutions AI are suggesting are practical and realistic;
- their support or action will be effective.

AI communications need to stress both. If members and supporters do not see AI offering relevant solutions to problems, they may well take their support to other organizations or simply stop believing they can do anything. Let the membership know of every success to which they have contributed.

Timing

The same action will have different effects at different times. As acrobats, actors and comedians say, timing is everything!

AI's campaigning, whatever its extent, is only one factor in the dynamics of change. The success or failure of campaigning is shaped by its context and the interplay of a wide range of factors. Timing is one of the most important factors.

- Urgent Actions (UAs) were developed by AI in response to changing patterns of human rights violations and the increasingly apparent need for action to be taken very quickly if it was to be effective.
- Issuing a major human rights report on a country prior to a meeting of an aid consortium on that country is more likely to build pressure than releasing the report after the meeting.
- A media conference or media release issued on a quiet news day is more likely to get coverage than one that competes with other major news stories.
- Action in the lead-up to discussion of legislation is more likely to have an impact than after the law has been passed.
- It is usually best not to organize major membership activity during a holiday season.

- Many UN discussions of human rights happen on a fixed timetable. Individual Sections need to lobby governments months before such meetings occur.
- A news release issued immediately after an event has the greatest chance of winning and influencing coverage. A news release a few days or a week later is more likely to be ignored.

Commitment

AI's campaign will not stop until the violations end. This commitment is important because:

- people suffering and at risk of human rights violations have placed trust and hope in AI and AI has a responsibility towards them;
- governments must be denied the hope that they can simply ignore the campaign until AI gives up and goes away.

Try different strategies and techniques to discover the most effective. A commitment to creativity is important for several reasons:

- it helps to make campaigning interesting, to yourself and others – and helps to motivate people to become involved;
- it can get your campaigning noticed;
- it makes it more difficult for governments to come up with effective counter-strategies and tactics.

Think of who you are trying to influence.

- Have they become familiar with and adept at handling the letters generated by AI members?
- Will a different approach, or perhaps an approach to a different part of government or society, help to regain the impact that the first wave of letters had?

Keep it simple

Simple plans are usually easier to organize and therefore more likely to happen. Simple ideas are easier to explain and more likely to be understood and acted on by others. Less can go wrong with simple ideas.

Make it easy

The easier it is for someone to do something, the more likely they are to do it.

If you send an appeal asking for a donation, how easy is it for someone to respond? Have you made it clear who the payment should be made to? Have you provided an envelope for them to return their donation in? Is the postage pre-paid?

If you ask an organization or individual to send a letter on behalf of a prisoner, have you provided all the information they need, such as the address, background information, points for letters?

If you are asking a trade union or other association to pass a motion of support, should you provide them with a model resolution that is likely to need minimum modification?

Do not ask people for what they cannot deliver

Whether in lobbying, outreach or other campaigning, it is important to find out what the person you are approaching is able to do. Journalists, for example, may not be able to guarantee that a story will make it to print or to air as this decision is taken by an editor. Government officials may not be senior enough to take the necessary decisions.

Making unrealistic demands of people may lead to frustration on both sides, and can make AI look unprofessional and badly informed.

Representatives of governments must be clear about what AI is asking for: the immediate release of a prisoner of conscience, abolition of the death penalty, etc.

Success breeds success

Everyone is motivated by achieving what they set out to do. Successes create new opportunities and lead to new challenges. They also create momentum and attract support.

Defining success and failure is partly in your hands. If your campaign

aims to end torture in six months, people will be disappointed if it fails, even if your campaigning has secured access to detention centres by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – a major safeguard against torture.

If, however, you had stated access to detention centres as an aim and then achieved it, people will be motivated to continue campaigning because they can see that they have helped to achieve change. The first and perhaps most difficult step has been won and you will probably be able to build on this success. The results of the campaign were the same – but one is seen as a failure, the other as a success.

Sometimes it is useful to state your objectives as the things you hope to achieve if everything you can control goes to plan and circumstances are favourable. But it is also useful to state realistic aims that you think you will be able to achieve if some things do not go to plan or external circumstances are not favourable.

Measuring the effect of AI's work is not always easy or possible. Processes of change in any society are complex, and it can be very hard to judge AI's precise impact on a situation. Yet it is normally possible to build into our strategies some indicators of success (for example, the number of governments or NGOs supporting access to detainees by the ICRC), even if the impact of this on the pattern of torture is a matter of informed guesswork for some time.

To check how specific and measurable your strategy is, ask yourself what you hope and what you expect will be different after the campaign. Write down the answers.

Maris-Stella Mabitje, a former political detainee in South Africa, meets AI members who successfully campaigned on her behalf
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Set the agenda

Campaigning on the death penalty provides a good example of how different sides of the debate try to define the issue in different ways. Those in favour of executions want the death penalty defined as a law and order issue and seek to play on fears of crime or violence to mobilize public opinion and put pressure on politicians and governments. Abolitionists try to ensure the death penalty is defined as a human rights issue and seek to keep the debate focused on the cruelty of the punishment and the unfairness of the justice process. Abolitionists will often have to explain that there is no evidence that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime. This means acknowledging and trying to counter the fact that the death penalty is seen by many as a law and order question.

Other examples of this principle can be seen in the responses of governments to AI's campaigning. Governments often seek to divert AI's campaigning by trying to redefine the issue, for example by presenting AI's report on torture as an infringement of national sovereignty. They may also attack AI's credibility, motivation and information, or deflect the discussion into a debate about which rights are more important than others.

Quotations

Establish a file of useful quotations. Include statements that you see in the media or obtain through campaigning from politicians, human rights activists, business leaders, etc. These quotes can

be useful, for example by showing the degree of support for AI or the issues AI is campaigning on. A collection of quotes is included in Appendix I.

Tools for building strategies

Strategic campaigning cycle

AI's global strategies to improve human rights in particular countries and in relation to particular themes need to be explicit to enable national strategies to contribute to them. National campaigning strategies also need to be explicit to enable AI groups and other membership structures to campaign strategically.

➲ **Decide what the problem is (issue).**
This is distilled from an analysis of the human rights violations of concern to AI, the domestic political environment in which they occur, the forces (including individuals) that are directly or indirectly responsible for the violations, and those inside or outside the country who may influence them. Other factors worth considering are information on the effectiveness of past campaigning, whether current perceptions are adversely affecting domestic or international action on the problems, and whether the government or security forces have developed strategies to evade accountability.

➲ **Agree on the specific change in the present situation that AI needs to work for in the short and long term (aims).**
This could be the repeal of particular legislation, the release of specific prisoners, an acknowledgement that violations have occurred and an explicit commitment to end them, ratification of international human rights instruments, etc.

➲ **Decide the best way to achieve these aims based on your earlier analysis.**
This could be:
- membership action, such as letter-writing to the target government by members;
- outreach, such as letters or statements by law societies and lawyers to the government and judges in the target country;
- lobbying/intergovernmental organization (IGO) work, such as raising the issue at the UN Commission on Human Rights and asking member governments to pass a resolution;
- media work, such as publicity about military supplies and training that are contributing to human rights violations.

➲ **Decide the best way to get the action you need (action forms).**
This could be a major campaign involving most of the membership (country campaign), a very quick worldwide response (rapid response or UA), lobbying of key governments, long-term work by a few groups, a publicity splash, etc.

➲ **Evaluate the analysis of violations, the context and any changes, as well as the existing strategy and actions, and adjust to them as required.**
Look at AI's position in your society and the links between your society and the target country – cultural, economic, institutional, political and/or military links (see Chapter 2). Then look at the opportunities any of these links may offer for influencing the human rights situation in the target country, and develop strategies for exploiting these opportunities.

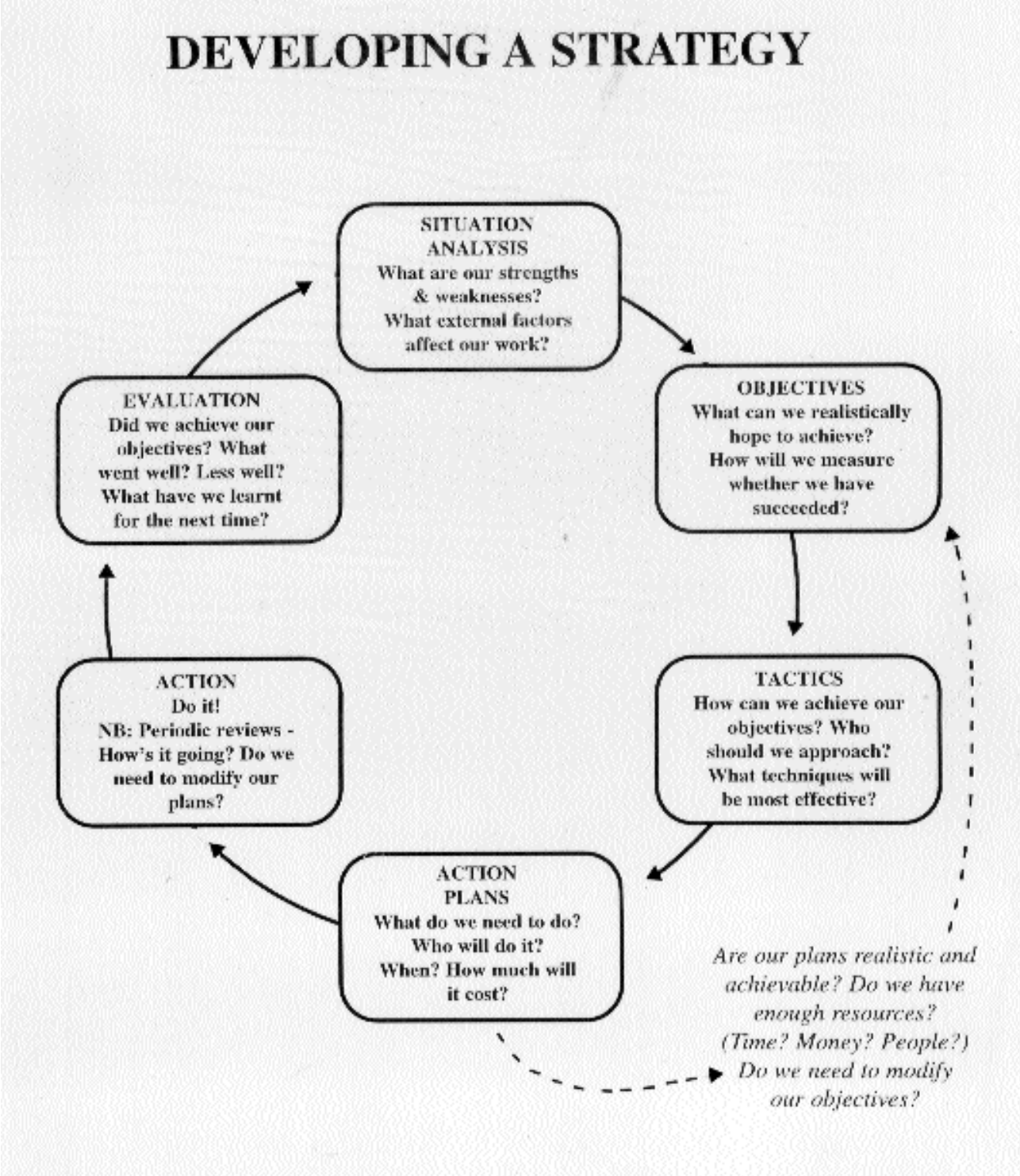
Building a country strategy

Answering the following questions may help you develop a country strategy:

QUESTIONS

What is the human rights situation in the target country? Are torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, or "disappearances" widespread?

What specific changes do we want to see? Do we want action to improve the treatment of prisoners,



to begin investigations into cases of "disappearance", etc?

- Who in the target country is directly responsible for the human rights situation that we are trying to change? Are they prison officials, opposition groups, etc?

- Who in these countries is indirectly responsible for human rights abuses? Are they politicians, prison authorities, etc?

- Who in the target country could influence those responsible? Are they health professionals, the media, religious organizations, trade unions, etc?

- Who in your country could persuade the influential people in the target country to act? Are they doctors, journalists, politicians, religious groups, etc?

- How can you persuade the

people or organizations in your country to put pressure on those with influence in the target country? What campaigning techniques could you most effectively employ: lobbying public events, petitions, media work, writing letters, etc?

The need for specific country strategies

Every country strategy is different. For example, AI condemns the death penalty in the USA as much as it does in China. It is equally committed to achieving abolition in both countries. In both countries government legislation allows the state to kill citizens. In both countries achieving abolition poses a major challenge for AI. Will the same strategy work in both countries?

A campaign for abolition of the death penalty that does not recognize the differences between Chinese and US society will be unlikely to succeed in either country. The boxes on this page show just some of the differences. These need to be reflected in different international campaigning strategies.

For example, it may make sense to try and change public opinion in the USA on the death penalty as local politicians would then not win votes by promising to put more people to death than their political rivals.

It may not make sense to target public opinion in China because it is not clear how public opinion affects government policy on crime, nor whether public opinion is in favour or opposed to the death penalty.

Possible objectives for campaigns

This section looks at some possible campaigning objectives for AI and whether they are long or short term, specific or general.

The release of all prisoners of conscience in a country
This is a final objective in relation to a country with an AI mandate concern. At certain times, such as when a government has changed, it may be a short-term and final objective.

The release of specific prisoners of conscience
As a short or more specific objective on the way to achieving the release of all prisoners of conscience, AI may decide to concentrate on particular individuals or groups of individuals. This is a tactic that worked in relation to Indonesia in the 1970s, and was used to highlight the cases of people such as Andrei Sakharov in the former Soviet Union and by the anti-*apartheid* movement in South Africa in relation to Nelson Mandela.

USA

- Elected state government decides punishment options
- Public opinion is thought to have a major influence on the death penalty
- Trials are long and costly
- Executions are increasing but still less than 100 annually
- Few crimes are subject to the death penalty
- AI and many other groups campaign against the death penalty
- Race is believed to be a factor in verdicts and sentencing

CHINA

- Central government decrees punishments for different crimes
- Public opinion is not thought to have a major influence on the death penalty
- Trials are often summary and unfair
- Thousands of people are executed annually
- Many crimes are subject to the death penalty
- No known organizations campaign against the death penalty
- Race is not known to be a factor in verdicts and sentencing

➔ **The reduction of sentences for certain prisoners**
This is rarely a stated external objective of AI, but may be an internal (or expected rather than hoped for) objective.

➔ **Improvement in prison conditions**
This can be a final objective for prisoners, or an objective on the way to the final objective: the release of a prisoner of conscience.

➔ **Change in legislation that would affect AI's concerns**
This can be a final objective, but is more likely to have been identified as a step that can be taken towards achieving the final objective of ending a particular practice. It could therefore be the focus of a particular campaign.

➔ **Increase awareness of abuses**
This should never be a final objective. It may have been identified as an important step towards the final objective of ending abuses. As expressed, it is not specific and is very hard to measure. Its relationship to action that would provide evidence of moving towards ending violations is therefore difficult to establish.

➔ **Elicit a response from or dialogue with government authorities about AI's concerns**
This is not a final objective, although it may be the objective of a specific campaign. The sort of response or dialogue wanted and why a response is important would need to be explained in the strategy.

➔ **Increase the debate within government circles about human rights violations**
This can be an important campaign objective, particularly when AI believes that there is controversy and opposition to the violations within government circles. It would need to have some form of measurement, such as comments by ministers or journalists, or a policy change. It is not a final objective.

➔ **A target government to start investigations into human rights violations**
This may be identified as an important objective as evidence of a commitment

To welcome or condemn? Case One

Government A announces a moratorium on the death penalty. Should AI welcome the decision as a positive step towards abolition or condemn it as a lost opportunity for abolition? AI has taken both positions at different times in the past. What factors do you think may have led to these different responses? What might be the advantages and risks of responding in either way to such an announcement?

➔ If AI welcomes the moratorium it risks being accused of retreating from its position of calling for complete abolition. A moratorium may not be the best decision the government could have made in the circumstances and strong criticism may make it go a bit further and announce abolition.

➔ If AI condemns the moratorium it may be excluded from further debate with the government, and be seen as negative and unrealistic in refusing to acknowledge a step forward. The moratorium may have been the best decision in the circumstances and defining it as a negative step may mean missing the opportunity of using the momentum of the decision.

To welcome or condemn? Case Two

AI hears reports of government soldiers being involved in a massacre and calls on Government B to launch an independent inquiry. Government B announces an independent inquiry but does not provide details of its composition or terms of reference. Should AI welcome the inquiry or condemn it? AI has taken both positions in the past. What factors do you think may have led to these different responses? What might the advantages and risks be of responding in either way to such an announcement?

➔ How AI reacts will open up or shut down further campaigning opportunities.

to end impunity – and the violations themselves. It is easy to measure and opens up further opportunities for campaigning.

Independent access to detainees at risk of torture
This can be an important campaign objective. If respected, access is one of the major safeguards against torture and ill-treatment. It can be an important step towards ending torture. It is also measurable and specific.

Abolition of the death penalty
This is a final objective, although it can also be a short-term one. Several new governments in recent years have made abolition of the death penalty one of their first acts. It is very measurable. A campaign objective may be to establish a moratorium on executions.

Reduction in the number of offences carrying the death penalty
Some AI campaigning strategies have taken an incremental approach to abolition of the death penalty on the basis that focusing efforts on total abolition would be unrealistic and ineffective. Abolition remains the long-term objective. Abolition in practice may be the mid-term objective, with restriction of the death penalty to aggravated murder the short-term objective.

Increase awareness of AI's goals
This should only be an objective if its relationship to some other action is clear – if a case can be made that it is a necessary step. Awareness is notoriously difficult to measure and for this to be a specific objective it would be necessary to measure awareness before and after the campaign, and to specify among whom awareness was to be raised.

Statement from home government on human rights situation in target country
This is a specific objective that may be an important way of bringing pressure to bear.

Increase AI's membership
This can be a valid internal objective of AI's campaigning, particularly if a lack of members has been identified as a weakness. Specify how many new members are to be gained over what period.

Enhance AI's impartial image
AI's image in the community may have been identified as a weakness that is adversely affecting the impact of its campaigning. In this case, enhancing AI's image is a necessary step to achieving other objectives.

Increase participation in AI's activities of a particular section of the community
This may be an important objective in relation to either a specific country campaign or to AI's campaigning more generally.