

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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CLT Statement on Focus Group Report

The murder of George Floyd in police custody earlier this year created a seminal moment, not just in the USA but in focusing attention globally on historic and systemic racism.

It led to deep soul searching at Amnesty International as to whether, as an organization born nearly 60 years ago, our structures could be unintentionally perpetuating ingrained racism, and whether we are tackling incidents of individual racism firmly and effectively. We have started exploring this through several initiatives, recognizing that each one of us, in our respective areas of work, must engage with these questions. It is precisely because we are deeply committed to becoming not just a non-racist organization but an anti-racist organization that we commissioned this report. However, this is by no means an end for us, but a step in the journey.

We are sobered by the findings of the report. It is a timely reminder that discrimination, racism and anti-Black racism exist in our organisation. It has highlighted both the extent and systematic nature of racism and indicates we must address white privilege wherever it exists.

We would like to acknowledge the courage and honesty of colleagues who took part in the focus groups and shared what are clearly painful experiences of exclusion, discrimination, and frustration. We would like to thank them for their openness, courage, and genuineness in helping to chart the way forward.

As a leading human rights INGO, transparently identifying and acknowledging the complex structures and legacy of racism and discrimination is an important step to initiating authentic change. The different incidents of racism and systematic bias as outlined in the report will need to be solved. Some will be more complex than others. We are therefore committing to a concerted effort of what will be a long-term transformation to become a truly anti-racist organisation, with equality, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of everything we do.

As the International Secretariat's Coalition Leadership Team, we are firmly committed to implement the recommendations of the report and will do so in the wider context of our ongoing efforts to transform our organizational culture for the better – to create an environment where our beliefs, behaviours, and values allow our colleagues the opportunity to flourish and belong while delivering human rights impact.

With the support and guidance from the Racial Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (REDIG), the Coalition Leadership Team has committed to several actions, which include:

1. Review and improve our recruitment processes.
2. Review our staff data to be able to set a baseline and collate meaningful records to inform decisions and track progress over time.
3. Ensure the reform of our People and Organizational Development (POD) department so that it becomes a driver of anti-racism within the organization.
4. Assess the capability and expertise of our external provider handling staff complaints, grievances, and whistleblowing complaints, to address complaints in the context of race and racism.
5. Assess our existing training modules and increase the visibility of training opportunities available to staff.
6. Commission external experts to lead a series of cross-programme facilitated sessions exploring racism across the IS.

7. Explore and support staff-led initiatives to foster and promote equity and dialogue within the organization, such as Employee Resource Groups and other networks.

These are our initial commitments. We embrace the challenge ahead, acknowledging that we will make mistakes and we will need to adjust, adapt, and make more commitments as we learn more. We do this in the spirit of accountability and of commitment to the work of active anti-racism.

The Coalition Leadership Team welcomes this report as an important contribution to a complex process of organizational transformation. We are firmly committed to shaping Amnesty as an authentically anti-racist organization, so that we can be part of the change we demand to see in the world.