



Secretary General

Description

About Amnesty International Canada

Founded in 1973, Amnesty International Canada (English) is the English-speaking branch of the Canadian arm of Amnesty International, a global movement of over 7 million people in over 150 countries working to protect and promote human rights. Its mission is to research and act to prevent and end significant abuses of human rights and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated.

Amnesty International Canada aims to see a world in which every person enjoys all rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Areas that Amnesty International Canada addresses include the rights of Indigenous peoples, women's human rights, LGBTI rights and gender equality, corporate human rights accountability, the rights of refugees and migrants, solidarity with human rights defenders, human rights and the climate crisis, ending torture, confronting racism, human rights and armed conflict, international justice, economic and social rights, national security, the arms trade, the death penalty, free expression and working to free prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International works to address human rights concerns in Canada and globally.

About the Role

The Secretary General (SG) works in close collaboration with the Executive Director to ensure that relevant factors in both the external and internal environments are being effectively and proactively addressed in the Branch planning processes, policies and activities, so as to ensure maximum impact for positive human rights change. Together, they carry the overall responsibility of the organization and report jointly to the Board of Directors:

- The Secretary General carries primary accountability for the development and delivery of the substantive content of the Branch's human rights work and representing that work to a wide variety of audiences.
- The Executive Director has primary accountability for the Branch's operations, including supporting the delivery of the substantive content.

Collaboration between the SG and ED is particularly close in the areas of planning, fundraising and finance and support to and communications with the membership. In collaboration with the Board, the ED and SG are jointly responsible for an engagement at the regional and international level of the global Amnesty International movement and for liaising with the Francophone Branch of Amnesty International Canada (Amnistie internationale Canada francophone).

Purpose of the Role

The SG responsibility is focused on the relationship of the Branch with its relevant external environment. The SG acts as the senior spokesperson and representative of the Branch to a range of external stakeholders, officials and other bodies and represents the organization with members and supporters of the Branch, as well as other parts of Amnesty's international movement. In addition to representation, the SG's work includes ongoing strategy development, involvement in fundraising (particularly with major donors) and budgetary matters, and the development of policies within the Branch.

The SG is responsible for providing leadership to staff in order to ensure activities respond to both the changing external and internal environments, and that opportunities for staff to develop further their own leadership capacities are explored and supported. This involves ongoing evaluation and pro-active adjustment and change.

The SG is actively engaged in international activities which may include participating in human rights research delegations in other countries and advocacy meetings and other events at the United Nations. The SG plays a regional leadership role within Amnesty, alongside other colleagues from Amnesty International national sections and the Americas Regional Office.

The SG is also responsible for writing or approving a range of significant Amnesty research reports, legal documents and other materials related to human rights in Canada.

Duties and Responsibilities

Representation and Public Awareness

- Leadership responsibility for advancing the Movement's human rights goals through Canadian foreign policy.
- Play a key role in developing and implementing the Branch's strategy to strengthen human rights in domestic and foreign policy, particularly in terms of government engagement, media work, public events, and coalition initiatives.
- Prepare analyses and recommendations for policy papers, reports, submissions to governmental and international bodies and other materials to support the public representation work.
- Work with the media team and other staff, ensure strong reactive and proactive coverage of Amnesty's issues in the domestic media.
- Organize, participate in and lead meetings between Amnesty and government officials, political representatives and diplomats, frequently in conjunction with other civil society groups and Indigenous peoples' organizations.
- Appear before parliamentary committees and multilateral human rights bodies, often together with human rights defenders or other partners, to advance Branch objectives and respond to law reform initiatives.
- Build and participate in alliances with organizations and individuals to advance the Branch's human rights program and assist in strengthening the human rights movement in Canada.
- Public speaking, including at conferences, rallies, workshops, coalitions, donor events and in academic settings, among others.

Fundraising

- With the Director of Fundraising, plan for and participate in approaches to major donors and potential major donors.
- Help to identify and develop new major donor prospects.
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with donors, through thank you letters, ongoing individual meetings and delivering presentations for large donor events.
- Participate in a wide range of Branch fundraising projects and events, where appropriate.

Section Management

- Participate in and provide support to the ED's leadership of the Branch's Strategy Unit.
- In cooperation with the Board and the Executive Director, develop long term strategic goals and annual Operational Plans, ensuring that both internal and external elements are adequately addressed.
- Promote and support learning and discussion among staff, Board and members with respect to current and emerging human rights issues and their relevance to Amnesty.
- Act as an internal consultant on issues within the external environment.
- As part of the Strategy Unit, regularly monitor the financial situation of the Branch and participate, as appropriate, in discussions about changes in financial direction, budgetary allocations or fundraising strategies.
- Work closely on a daily basis with the media program and help supervise media staff.
- Oversee for the Branch's Legal Program.
- With the Executive Director, ensure operational plans respond to both the internal and external environments and participate in the evaluation of program areas.
- Help to identify and continually adjust priorities within the program work.
- Help to determine and continually adjust the level of financial and human resourcing necessary to meet priority program objectives.
- Ensure that representation, legal and other work led by the SG is well-integrated with Branch priorities and coordinated on a daily basis with other relevant Branch programs.
- Provide direction and support to staff whose responsibility deals predominantly with the external environment – this support includes maintaining an overall knowledge of the various external initiatives being undertaken, helping staff to develop and continually adjust strategies, keeping all relevant staff informed and involved, and identifying and fostering opportunities for staff professional and leadership development, as appropriate.
- Support the Executive Director in creating human resource policies and procedures for all staff.
- Help ensure adequate communication and consultation with Branch members and activists in the ongoing program operations, policy positions and advocacy initiatives of the Branch.

International Involvement

- Act as a primary contact person for the Branch with the International Secretariat and leaders of other national sections of Amnesty International.
- Monitor and participate in international discussions, projects, working groups and other similar initiatives.
- Identify and address instances when international developments have a consequence for Branch activities.
- Participate in international meetings, such as the yearly Regional Forum and Global Assembly, alternating when appropriate with the Executive Director.

Board

- Together with the Executive Director, the SG is jointly accountable to the Board for the Branch and carries primary accountability for the substantive content of the Branch's human rights work and the realization of key program objectives.
- Maintain communication with the appropriate Board members, in particular, the Board Chair, during and between meetings to ensure that all parties are informed of consequential issues related to the operations of the Branch.
- Contribute to timely and accurate reports for each Board and Annual General Meeting.
- With the ED, ensure the implementation of Board, Annual General Meeting and Global Assembly decisions.

Skills and Experience

- Proven experience in NGO or similar leadership and in working with boards and a membership organization.
- Proven experience in a representational or spokesperson role. An excellent public speaker, highly skilled in presentations, advocacy and written communications.
- Experience working in an empowering and collaborative manner with rights-holders and communities.
- Proven commitment to the advancement of human rights and the values reflected in the vision of Amnesty International.
- Knowledge of and experience working for international human rights issues is essential.
- Well versed in human rights law (experience and/or education).
- An ability to develop and incorporate diversity, equity (including gender equity), inclusion, accessibility and the broader goals of anti-oppression into the organization's policies in both internal and external operations.
- Proven management experience and abilities including planning, evaluation and team leadership. An ability to coordinate and work with staff to achieve work-related objectives is essential.
- Strong policy, government relations and media work.
- Experience in building relationships and making fundraising presentations to major donors is highly desirable.
- A university degree or equivalent work experience in a related field, such as international human rights or international affairs is highly desirable.
- High proficiency in French desirable; Spanish, Arabic or other language skills also beneficial.

Meta Fields