



**Topic: The Implications of Plastic Pollution on Human Rights**

Amnesty International is a global movement of over ten million members, which stands to defend and promote human rights worldwide. Over the last 50 years, plastic pollution has drastically worsened, becoming not only an environmental issue, but an escalating human rights catastrophe. Every stage of the plastic cycle, from fossil fuel extraction, to production and disposal have generated pollution that threatens human rights. Our research has proven that climate change perpetuates structural inequalities, with plastic pollution extensively impacting poor communities of marginalized individuals, who are forced to live next to polluting facilities, facing severe health violations. Furthermore, contamination of waterways by plastic waste has compromised the right to clean water, sanitation and the right to food for millions. This crisis is not distributed equally, with the burden of environmental injustice being placed on the least responsible.

Our stance is rooted in human rights law and the recognition that states have the duty to protect, and corporate responsibility to respect human rights. Our Secretary General, Agnès Callamard, underlines how “the dramatic impacts of climate change have exposed with devastating clarity, how integral a healthy environment is to the enjoyment of all our other rights”.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting how a healthy environment creates the necessary conditions for people to live with dignity, safety and equality, we stress that environmental degradation prevents such by undermining the rights to health, life, safe water and adequate food. The scale of this crisis is astounding, with research indicating that over 90% of plastic is never recycled.<sup>2</sup> Impacts are further worsened by the climate crisis, with UNHCR stating that in countries highly exposed to climate related hazards, 3 out of 4 people are forcibly displaced.<sup>3</sup> Production of plastics has also drastically worsened air pollution, which has resulted in an estimated 7 million deaths every year.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, “Climate Change”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change/>

<sup>2</sup> UN, “Plastics-fueling oil demand, climate change and pollution”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/plastics>

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, “Global Trends”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, [www.unhcr.org/co/be/in/fr/editions/global-trends](http://www.unhcr.org/co/be/in/fr/editions/global-trends)

<sup>4</sup> UNDP, “Historic UN resolution recognizes healthy environment is a human right”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.undp.org/blog/historic-un-resolution-recognizes-healthy-environment-human-right>

We have carried out extensive documentation that advocated to expose the human rights impact of plastic pollution, publishing reports that detail abuses and hold powerful decision makers to account. We demand people to be prioritised over profit and bring an end to fossil fuel use. Further advocating for a rights-based approach in international treaties, we work to emphasize that “the transition to renewable energy can improve basic socio-economic rights - the right to development”.<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International grounds its work on the core human rights, as established by the UN General Assembly resolution recognizing the right to a “clean, healthy and sustainable environment”.<sup>6</sup> We strongly support a Human Rights-Based Approach driven by the PANEL principles of Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment and Legality, to ensure that the response is inclusive in addressing the impacts of plastic pollution.<sup>7</sup>

Amnesty International calls for a legally binding plastic treaty that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics, mandating a strategic reduction of virgin plastic production, better recycling mechanisms and the incorporation of accountability procedures. We reject the narrative that individual action is the primary solution, and as UN experts have stated, the treaty must be grounded in the polluter-pays principles, entailing plastic producers to reduce fossil-fuel emission and contribute to a global fund that works to clean up toxic legacies of plastic.<sup>8</sup> Requiring funds be grant-based and public. In this Council’s resolution, we will acknowledge that plastic pollution constitutes a direct violation of human rights, seeking direct policy goals rooted in waste management, corporate accountability and duty of states in regulating the industry.

Amnesty International will closely work with members from the Global South and Small Developing Islands, as they often endure the crisis the most, despite contributing to it the least. Our position is to challenge major plastic producer and consumer nations for their role in negating human rights protections by prioritising their industrial and monetary interests. Ultimately, we wish to ensure the final outcome is rights-based, upholding responses that are “non-discriminatory, inclusive, intersectional, gender-responsive, and advance substantive equality”.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> WMO, “Climate change undermines human rights”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://wmo.int/media/news/climate-change-undermines-human-rights>

<sup>6</sup> UNGA, “Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 22 July 2022”, Online Portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/76/300>

<sup>7</sup> UNDP, “At the nexus of human rights and climate change”, Online Portal Accessed November 2025, <https://www.undp.org/vietnam/publications/nexus-human-rights-and-climate-change-rights-based-approach-environmental-impacts-and-policy-responses>

<sup>8</sup> OHCHR, “Plastic pollution a global threat to human rights, say UN experts”, Online portal , Accessed November 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2024/11/plastic-pollution-global-threat-human-rights-say-un-experts>

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty, “Climate-related human rights harm and the right to effective remedy”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ENGLISH.pdf>



**Topic: Countering Disinformation**

Amnesty International asserts that disinformation constitutes a multi-faceted threat to the entire spectrum of human rights. The issue is not merely one of “fake news” but a weaponization of pre-existing social fissures which incite real-world violence, discrimination, and the erosion of democratic institutions. A human rights-based approach is essential to counter this crisis of disinformation. In Myanmar, Amnesty has documented how systematic disinformation campaigns on Meta’s Facebook, driven by dangerous algorithms and relentless pursuit of profit, amplified harmful content that dehumanised the Rohingya minority, ultimately creating the conditions for the 2017 atrocities.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, disinformation fuels religious intolerance, such as Islamophobia and anti-Semitic stereotypes, promoted by media figures who blame Muslim communities for anti-Semitism, wrongfully combining criticism of a state with religious hatred, deepening societal divisions.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, health-based disinformation during the COVID-19 created an “infodemic”, where the overabundance of false and misleading information increased vaccine hesitancy, impacting the right to health globally.<sup>3</sup>

Amnesty International’s policy is grounded in the principle that countering disinformation must adhere to international human rights law. We oppose state censorship and punitive “fake news” laws, which are oftentimes used to suppress freedom of expression, and advocate for a human rights-based approach that addresses the root causes of the issue.<sup>4</sup> This framework will hold both states and powerful non-state actors accountable by looking at documentation that justifies their role in perpetuating disinformation and their correlation with specific human rights abuses. On Meta’s role in enabling the atrocities against the Rohingya, our Secretary General, Agnès Callamard stated that “Meta must be

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, “Meta’s new content policies risk fueling more mass violence and genocide”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/02/meta-new-policy-changes/>

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, “Mainstreaming Islamophobia: When an editor goes rogue, the publisher cannot guide behind a disclaimer”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025,

<https://www.amnesty.eu/news/mainstreaming-islamophobia-when-an-editor-goes-rogue-the-publisher-can-not-hide-behind-a-disclaimer/>

<sup>3</sup> OHCHR, “call for input of the study of then Human Rights Council advisory committee on the impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025,

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/files/cfi-disinformation/subm-impact-disinformation-enjoyment-global.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, “A human rights approach to tackle disinformation”, Online portal, Accessed

November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IOR4054862022ENGLISH.pdf>

held to account. The company now has responsibility to provide reparations to all those who suffered the violent consequences of their reckless actions”.<sup>5</sup> This is not about rectifying past wrongs, but about demanding systematic transformations that prevent algorithmic atrocities from ever happening again. Meta has consistently failed to conduct human rights due diligence. Before the 2017 crisis, local actors and radical nationalist groups flooded the platform with misinformation, referring to the Rohingya as ‘invaders’, and despite the repeated warnings from civil society as early as 2012, it failed to act.<sup>6</sup>

Amnesty has undertaken direct action, publishing reports on crises fueled by disinformation, such as in Myanmar or during the global COVID-19 crisis, and launching campaigns like “Toxic Twitter” that detail how platform’s algorithm policies fail to protect users.<sup>7</sup> Our work is guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR), built on the state’s Duty to Protect, as well as corporate responsibility and the need for due diligence.<sup>8</sup>

Amnesty International proposes a model that holds both states and corporations accountable and moves beyond content removal. We require states to enact legislation to ban surveillance advertising, as well as state-linked bot networks.<sup>9</sup> Tech companies must uphold human rights and corporate responsibility by providing remedy to victims, and ensure algorithmic transparency to prevent the amplification of disinformation. We believe the business models to be primary drivers of disinformation-related harms. Illustrating how corporate profit, not passive platform misuse, is the catalyst. Amnesty International calls on states to strengthen protections and oversight of corporate business models. We challenge perpetrators of state-sponsored disinformation, oppose corporate self-regulation and argue that unregulated disinformation destroys the ecosystem for genuine free expression. True freedom of expression requires an information environment free from both state and corporate abuse.

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<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, “Myanmar: Facebook’s systems promoted violence against Rohingya; Meta owes reparations”, Online Portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/09/myanmar-facebooks-systems-promoted-violence-against-rohingya-meta-owes-reparations-new-report/>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International, “Toxic Twitter – the psychological harms of violence and abuse against women online”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-6-6/>

<sup>8</sup> OHCHR, “Guiding principles on business and human rights”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, “Facebook files: how a ban on surveillance advertisement can fix facebook”, Online portal, Accessed November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2021/10/facebook-files-how-a-ban-on-surveillance-advertising-can-fix-facebook/>