



**Accountable  
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# **Amnesty International Independent Review Panel Feedback**

**Interim Accountability Report 2016  
Review Round February 2018**



# Amnesty International

## Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

### Review Round February 2018

23 March 2018

Dear Salil Shetty,

Thank you for submitting your Accountability Report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to continuously strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

Amnesty International's second interim report responds to the Panel's last feedback and improvement analysis, and **institutional commitment** is demonstrated in Salil Shetty's opening statement. The Panel appreciates the link made to Amnesty's continued commitment to strengthen their legitimacy by adhering to (and demonstrating) the high standards they demand of others. **Evidence** is provided through many examples of how Amnesty is putting its basic values and procedures into practice. It appears that data gathering process and content and additional evidence is still in need of some improvement, as information on complaints (NGO2), grievances (NGO9) and diversity (NGO4) remains somewhat incomplete; hence the Panel considers this still an area for improvement. Better data will allow for benchmarking and target setting, and the Panel hopes that Amnesty is able to provide more comprehensive figures and explanations on these points in its next report.

It is appreciated that Amnesty has a [dedicated page](#) for Accountable Now which is featured prominently under the '[How we're run](#)' section. Amnesty is also encouraged to include the Accountable Now logo on their website, as raised by the Panel in previous feedback letters.

In light of the recent, highly publicised allegations of NGO staff malpractice, we are aware that many of our members are working hard to review their relevant policies and procedures regarding whistleblowing, management and/or independent investigations of alleged malpractice. We ask that all members discuss these matters fully in their next report.

Our intention is that this feedback letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report – as it is the case with all previously reviewed reports. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below; we would of course wish to correct these before publication. Please share any comments or amendments by 13 April 2018.



If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Mihir Bhatt

John Clark

Louise James

Jane Kiragu

Nora Lester Murad

Saroeun Soeung



# Amnesty International's Accountability Report 2016

## Review Round February 2018

### PROFILE DISCLOSURES

#### I. Strategy and Analysis

1.1	<p><b>Statement from the most senior decision-maker</b></p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The opening statement by Salil Shetty draws links between the Global Standard's 12 Commitments, and Amnesty's understanding of accountability in its work and results.</p> <p>It underlines that AI has just gone through a very substantial decentralisation, with perhaps half of the international secretariat staff now being based in one of the regional offices. This, as well as greater staff diversity, new support mechanisms and processes, and new operational systems, are indicative of Amnesty's commitment to decentralisation and diversity. It will be useful to the Panel to hear more about how these changes have affected Amnesty's work and its primary stakeholders in the next full report.</p> <p>The increasing threats to civic space and human rights work around the world are identified as a challenge for Amnesty. The Panel appreciates the link made to Amnesty's continued commitment to strengthen their legitimacy by adhering to (and demonstrating) the standards they demand of others.</p> <p>The Panel looks forward to reading about Amnesty International's new Secretary-General's vision for the organisation and accountability in the next report.</p>
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### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### I. Programme Effectiveness

NGO2	<p><b>Mechanisms for feedback and complaints</b></p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p>
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	<p>It is explained that reporting inconsistencies and differing ideas on what constitutes a formal complaint or grievance between national offices and the International Secretariat are the main reason for apparently low levels of complaint resolution. Some offices only detail formal complaints in their Standard Action Report submissions while others report more inclusively.</p> <p>This makes it difficult to assess whether the 70 unresolved issues out of the 2,617 registered in 2017 includes a significant number of serious complaints or not. The Panel's request for information on the geographic distribution of the complaints also remains open, as the report lists Europe, the Middle East, the Africas and the Americas without further breakdown of numbers.</p> <p>The Panel notes that Amnesty International has updated its feedback policy and guidelines to distinguish more clearly between complaints and general feedback, and will work with entities to improve in this area. An update on this is requested in the next full report, hopefully with clear figures on the number of formal complaints, their nature, and most importantly whether they were resolved in a timely manner satisfactory to both parties. The Panel would like to point out that, in addition to the UK institutions that complainants can approach when they are dissatisfied with Amnesty's response to complaints (about fundraising and alleged illegal activities) Accountable Now also has a <a href="#">complaints mechanism</a> relating to its members, which complainants can turn to as a last resort.</p> <p>The Panel is pleased to see that a dedicated complaints page exists on amnesty.org, with a link to the Feedback Mechanism Policy and Guidelines, and is hopeful that the initiatives for improvement outlined in the interim report, lead to positive changes in the near future.</p>
NGO4	<p><b>Gender and diversity</b></p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>A number of initiatives to improve on internal gender and diversity, mostly at the International Secretariat level, are outlined. An internal survey on sexual harassment has led to an assessment of how entities deal with these issues, and resources will be made available to improve. The Panel would also like more insight into the figures about complaints – it appears that 72% of complaints resulted in disciplinary action or dismissal, but what happened in the remaining 28% of cases?</p> <p>Provision of unconscious bias training, and a new HR Information System allowing identification of organisational trends and areas for improvement are positive steps. The Panel looks forward to reading in the next report if and how these have led to positive change.</p>



	<p>It is stated that Amnesty's Senior Leadership Team is aware of the need for benchmarking and target setting relating to gender and diversity. The Panel requests more information in the next report on the introduction of these targets and how they are tracked.</p> <p>What action does the International Secretariat take when entities do not take part in important data collection (such as the 12 offices which did not take part in the sexual harassment survey)?</p> <p>In terms of diversity in programmes, a number of efforts are outlined, including the recruitment of a gender mainstreaming post, targets to increase diversity in projects, and "a series of practical but ambitious steps... and a basic architecture for accountability to improve our performance on gender and diversity integration between 2017 and 2024". The Panel requests more details on these – what are the targets, and what are the planned steps – as well as updates on progress in the next report?</p>
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#### IV. Human Resource Management

LA12	<p><b>Global talent management</b></p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel understands the reasons for different rates of staff appraisals between national entities and the International Secretariat, and appreciates the provision of resources and training to help managers and leaders in this regard. The Panel has recently decided to focus more on the effectiveness of appraisals rather than their number – though still noting that appraisals of all staff members is important to ensure consistency, inclusiveness, fairness, and supporting the career development of all staff equally. We invite Amnesty to provide some evidence or examples in the next report that its staff development initiatives are resulting in positive change?</p>
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NGO9	<p><b>Mechanisms to raise grievances</b></p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel's previous feedback letter indicated that the lack of evidence that grievances have been resolved satisfactorily was a weakness area. In this update, figures are provided – namely that of nine grievances raised, four were alleged and three were upheld. Further clarification is requested. Does this mean that four cases were deemed invalid or dismissed? What were the outcomes of the remaining two cases (or are they still ongoing)? Were the cases resolved in a manner satisfactory also for the complainant? The panel wishes to know more details.</p>
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