



ENGELSKA 5 OCH 6

## WRITE A LETTER!

### *Instructions for teacher*

We live in troubled times. Many communities are characterized by social, economic and political inequality and conflict. Meanwhile, the struggle for human rights continues, everywhere and all the time. We call those at the forefront of this struggle human rights defenders.

Human rights defenders document, expose and protest against discrimination, human rights violations, corruption, abuse of power and other violations. They demand respect and protection for their rights and the rights of others, and they hold authorities accountable for what they do – and for what they fail to do. The work done by human rights defenders is an absolute necessity for ensuring respect for and protection of all our rights.

During the period 2017-2019 Amnesty Sweden will take part in the global campaign BRAVE. The aim of this campaign is to change the situation for human rights defenders and contribute to strengthening their position so that they can work in a safe environment.

In this exercise students will write letters to raise their voice against extrajudicial executions, impunity and unlawful killings. By doing this they will improve their ability to express themselves on ethical issues, in writing, and to convey their feelings and opinions.

### **SHACKELIA JACKSON**

Shackelia Jackson will not give up. When her brother was gunned down by police in 2014, she made sure that Jamaica's independent investigators secured the crime scene. The police had been pursuing a "Rastafarian-looking" suspect in a robbery, and Nakiea fit that description. They found him in his small restaurant and shot him dead. Police killings of mainly young and mostly poor men is all too common in Jamaica, with some 2 000 killed in the past decade.

Shackelia was determined not to let Nakiea's story end there. She has battled a badly underfunded, sluggish court system to lead a bold fight for justice. In doing so, she has rallied dozens of families whose loved ones have been summarily killed, amplifying their cries for justice. The police have responded by raiding her community, timing the raids to coincide with court dates. They have also intimidated Shackelia and her family, but she refuses to be silenced. She says their attempts only reinforce her belief in what's right. "I fight because I have no other choice," she says. "To stop would mean I am giving another police officer permission to kill another of my brothers."

### **Amnesty International demands:**

- Call on the Jamaican authorities to protect Shackelia and other families from harassment by the police.
- Call on the Prime Minister to urgently reform the justice system to ensure justice for Shackelia and other relatives of people allegedly killed by the police.

## **METHOD**

Letter writing has always been at the heart of Amnesty International's human rights campaigning and 55 years of human rights activism shows us that words really do have the power to change lives. The more people who get involved and write letters, the more powerful will be the impact on governments and authorities.

There are two versions of the exercise. In the first version the students will write what is known as a solidarity letter to Shackelia herself. In the second version they write an appeal letter – addressed directly to the Prime Minister or Minister of National Security of Jamaica. The two letters differ in form, but the actual process is similar in both exercises.

The students' letters to Shackelia Jackson should be sent to her address in Jamaica. The letters to the Prime Minister or Minister of National Security in Jamaica should be sent directly to their office.

## **STEP-BY-STEP**

The exercise is divided into six steps.

**STEP 1.** A good starting point when writing a letter to Shackelia Jackson, or Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Minister of National Security Robert Montague, is to together watch a [film](#), recorded by Shackelia Jackson (5:20 minutes). If it's not possible for you to watch the film you can go straight to step 2.

**STEP 2.** Present the case study, included in the exercise along with the instructions, to the students.

**STEP 3.** In this step the students learn more about human rights defenders. The student instruction may form the basis, but the students can find out more by reading:

Information about Jamaica on Amnesty International's site:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/report-jamaica/>

A news article from Amnesty International:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/01/jamaica-s-deadly-police-we-live-in-constant-fear/>

**STEP 4.** The students can now choose to write either a solidarity letter directly to Shackelia Jackson, or an appeal letter to Prime Minister Andrew Holness or Minister of National Security Robert Montague. They may of course do both assignments, depending on how

much time is available. The appeal letter does, however, demand a higher level of formal correctness.

There are two different student instructions; one concerning the solidarity letter, the other concerning the appeal letter.

### **1. The solidarity letter**

There is no template or structure for solidarity letters; their purpose is primarily to communicate support and solidarity. How the students choose to do this is up to them, and there is wide scope for creativity.

The exercise entails that the students acquaint themselves with a particular case and form an opinion on the person's situation. When they have done this, they must communicate their solidarity with them in an appropriate way. Since Amnesty International coordinates the letter writing the person will be overwhelmed by thousands of positive letters.

The purpose of the exercise is partly to let the students practise how to communicate feelings in writing, and partly to make them aware of the importance of solidarity letters to human rights defenders.

The letters will be sent by the school directly to Shackelia Jackson's address in Jamaica.

### **2. The appeal letter**

Appeal letters are written directly to authorities and governments. They are sent by the school to the relevant address. Appeal letters should have a different structure and demand a higher level of formal correctness than solidarity letters. We therefore recommend that you do this primarily in English 6 or 7. In the student instructions there are a number of points to consider when composing an appeal letter.

**STEP 5.** When the students have finished writing their letter they can swap with someone else and give each other feedback. The main point of this step is to stress that the letter is meant to be sent to an actual person. Is it written in an appropriate manner, considering who the recipient is? Is it a letter you would want to receive? Is there anything in it that may be inappropriate? Let the students modify their letters in response to the feedback.

**STEP 6.** The exercise may end with the students reading to each other in small groups.

## **SENDING THE LETTERS**

The finished letters should be collected by you, the teacher, and sent by you to the correct address. Bear in mind that it is important that you, as an English teacher, go through the letters first and decide which letters it would be appropriate to send. If any of the letters are inappropriate the students may be given the opportunity to make relevant changes; unsuitable letters must otherwise be rejected. Also, no student must be compelled to send his or her letter; this must be a matter of choice.

Amnesty International must know how many letters are being sent. Please count them and report the number of letters to the school's contact person. The contact person then fills in a form with the complete number of letters being sent from the school.

## ADDRESSES

### Send solidarity letters to:

Shackelia Jackson  
184 Orange Street, BLK J apt. 10  
Kingston, Jamaica  
Email: brokenbutnotdestroyedinfo@gmail.com  
Website: www.time4justice.org

### Send appeal letters to:

#### PRIMARY:

Prime Minister of Jamaica  
Andrew Holness  
Office of the Prime Minister  
1 Devon Road  
Kingston 10, Jamaica

Email: primeminister@opm.gov.jm  
Twitter: @AndrewHolnessJM  
Salutation: Honourable Andrew Holness

#### SECONDARY:

Minister of National Security  
Robert Montague  
Ministry of National Security  
North Tower  
2 Oxford Road  
Kingston 5, Jamaica

Email: information@mns.gov.jm  
Salutation: Honourable Robert Montague

The cost of sending 30 letters (A4) to Jamaica is 85 kr.

### Curriculum for the upper secondary school – fundamental values and tasks of the school

- "Education should impart and establish respect for human rights"
- "The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity between people are the values that the education should represent and impart."

### Central content of English 5

- Students should be given opportunities to discuss subject areas related to among other things "thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; relationships and ethical issues."
- "Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used."
- "Oral and written production and interaction of various kinds, also in more formal settings, where students instruct, narrate, summarise, explain, comment, assess, give reasons for their opinions, discuss and argue."

### Central content of English 6

- Students should be given opportunities to discuss subject areas related to among other things "current issues; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; ethical and existential issues."

- "Living conditions, attitudes, values, traditions, social issues as well as cultural, historical, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used."
- "Oral and written production and interaction in different situations and for different purposes where students argue, report, apply, reason, summarise, comment on, assess and give reasons for their views."
- "Texts of different kinds and for different purposes, such as formal letters"

## APPENDIX

### Suggestion for an appeal letter

Honourable Prime Minister Andrew Holness,  
I urge you to protect Shackelia Jackson and her family and ensure justice for all those unlawfully killed by the police.

When her brother, Nakiea, was gunned down by police, Shackelia took on a sluggish court system to lead a bold fight for justice for his murder. In doing so, she rallied dozens of families whose loved ones were similarly killed. In response, the police have repeatedly raided and harassed her community. Police killings of mainly young and mostly poor men is all too common in Jamaica, with some 2 000 killed in the past decade. It's time to end this scourge.

Yours sincerely,  
[name]

### Suggestion for a solidarity letter

Dear Shackelia,  
From [country], I want to tell you that you are not alone. Your struggle for justice is an inspiration for many families facing a similar situation in Jamaica and elsewhere. I want to express my solidarity with your struggle and hope that justice will prevail for Nakiea's killing and that many other families in Jamaica can soon obtain justice, truth and reparation.

In solidarity,  
[name]