

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATING HUMAN RIGHTS. CASE STUDY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

JAVIER BERNABÉ FRAGUAS

j.bernabe@ucm.es

PhD in International Relations, degree in Information Sciences, both from the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM); lecturer in the Department of International Relations and Global History at the UCM (Spain). Specialises thematically in international information and communication, and geographically in Latin America. Director of the international information and analysis media Dossier 48. Member of the research groups: "Relaciones Internacionales Siglo XXI" of the UCM in Spain; and "Comunicación, Periodismo y Sociedad" of the Fundación Universitaria para el Desarrollo Humano UNINPAHU in Colombia.

Abstract

This text analyses the importance of social networks for one of the most important non-governmental organisations in the world in terms of the defence of human rights at a global level, Amnesty International, through its Spanish section.

To do so, it moves from the general to the specific, starting by addressing the importance of communication as a fundamental element for development cooperation, the defence of human rights and the environment. It moves on to a general analysis of the social networks used by Amnesty International, arriving at a specific analysis of their use during the first 15 days of January 2021 by the organisation. It ends with the drawing of conclusions with the intention of opening a space for debate, which can increase the growth of knowledge about the usefulness of social networks and new technologies as key tools for the defence of human rights.

Keywords

Human Rights, Social Networks, Amnesty International, International Communication.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyse the use of social media as a tool for communicating human rights, through the case study of Amnesty International³.

The first objective is to determine the definition of communication for development, communication for human rights and communication for the environment (COMDEDEHUMA), as an integrated communication space, in which communication for human rights is inserted as a protagonist at a global level. The second objective is to find out how Amnesty International, through its Spanish Section, uses social networks as a tool for communicating human rights and achieving its objectives. The third objective is to make visible how this organisation uses these social networks in a concrete way, in a period of time that covers the first 15 days of January 2021. The fourth objective is to generate a space for debate and reflection based on conclusions that set out the present and some future scenarios of the link between social networks and human rights on a global scale.

This work is part of a qualitative research project and will be undertaken in three phases. The first of these will establish the background to human rights communication, explaining a newly created term by the author (COMDEDEHUMA) as a dynamic of international communication and a line of communication applied to the Sustainable Development Goals. In the second phase, the use of social networks by Amnesty International will be analysed, through the work of its Spanish Section; this will be done in two ways: a) by collecting information directly through interviews with its media officer; b) through the collection of data on its social network activity during the first 15 days of January.

Methodologically, this research is approached using descriptive and analytical methods, as their combination provides the necessary explanatory elements to reach the most pertinent conclusions. The bibliographical review of primary and secondary sources, such

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² This text is one of the results of the project "La información internacional como herramienta de inserción laboral para el alumnado de Relaciones Internacionales", approved in the Innova-Docencia 20-21 call for proposals; project leader: Javier Bernabé Fraguas; funding entity: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

³ <https://www.es.amnesty.org/>



as reports, documents or research papers published by academic journals and think tanks has been used, especially for the first part. The interview and data collection have proved to be instruments that have been presented as great tools for deepening the object of study. The information obtained has made it possible to capture those aspects which are most significant and to provide, after their systematisation, an approach to Amnesty International's work, which will give meaning to the study and will be very relevant for the analysis and conclusions.

The main premise of this work is based on the following statement: social networks are an extremely important tool for human rights communication, both in terms of disseminating messages, interacting with interested people and raising funds for non-governmental organisations specialising in human rights.

2. Communication by non-governmental organisations at the international level

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that work in the international arena usually do so in one of four thematic areas: international development cooperation, humanitarian action, defence of human rights, and defence of the environment. These four areas form an area of work within international relations that is led by some very particular actors, which emerge from organised civil society, and express their concern to improve the living conditions of the most disadvantaged populations in the international arena. These manifestations take the form of various types of action on the ground, including awareness-raising, denunciation, research and applied research, most of the time. The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are the roadmap to follow, and their 169 goals are the roads on the map to reach the right destination. Communication is central to all of this, and NGOs understand that without it they cannot achieve what they set out to do.

Communication, therefore, stands out as something essential, in all its complexity, from the relationship with traditional media, to interaction in social networks and the use of new technologies to communicate, as well as internal communication with partners and members of the organisations.

Not all the work of these NGOs is carried out in what we might call the countries of the South, but a very large percentage of it is. And the information that NGOs offer to international audiences about these countries would constitute a counterweight to the disinformation that the media provides about the South. Therefore, they are shaped as sources of information or producers of information, given their knowledge on the ground, their specialisation and the body of experts that generally support their work. However, this is not yet the case, because there is often a misperception in development, human rights and environmental NGOs. On the one hand, forgetting or ignoring what the media are, wanting them to adapt to the needs of these organisations; and on the other hand, limiting their communication activity to fundraising.



2.1. Approaching communication for development, human rights and the environment

The academic literature on communication for development, communication for human rights and communication for the environment (COMDEDEHUMA, from now on) is extensive when it considers the three strands separately, but scarce when it must consider the common elements of what this author considers COMDEDEHUMA.

The three spaces mentioned above, separately, are identified with the Millennium Goals, in a way that is equivalent to what this COMDEDEHUMA identifies with the SDGs.

It would therefore be the communication that is developed to denounce, investigate and report on the problems, and to promote communicative solutions to the challenges posed by the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets, from non-governmental organisations, international bodies and the media.

One of the key elements of this discipline, though not the only one, is to find out how journalism is linked to development, human rights and the environment. To know what it does not yet contribute, what it can realistically contribute, and whether it is possible that the current negative balance, in which misinformation wins, can change at some point.

Non-governmental organisations, international organisations (especially those belonging to the United Nations) and the media complete the triangle of entities that lead COMDEDEHUMA's work on a global scale.

We can affirm that this communication work is premeditated when the final objective is to make a contribution through communication and information to improve the living conditions of humanity. NGOs, international organisations and some media (small and specialised in these issues) are generally the protagonists of this premeditated contribution. Such a contribution is unpremeditated when, despite reporting on the three issues in question, it has other objectives as its main purpose, generally economic and corporate profit. Most of the major generalist media are at the forefront of these contributions.

Since Sean MacBride in the 1970s spearheaded the Theories of Information Dependency, especially between 1977 and 1980 at the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, many years have passed, but little real change has come about in the North-South communication imbalance through the mainstream media (MacBride, 1980).

The introduction of social media into the equation changes the final result in two ways: a) the first is that there are many, many more sources of information thanks to social media; b) the second is that young audiences use social media on a massive scale, not using the general media for information. The Mac Bride Report is still valid today in terms of the description of the problem caused by these generalist media, as there is still a clear inequality of information flows and an image promoted by these media from the North, which do not provide sufficient elements to have complete information, neither from the North nor from the South.



The general media expose realities that are too partial, marked by spectacle and by the supposed interest of the audience, which the media themselves decide, where explanations and analysis are difficult to find.

UNESCO set a goal in the field of communication for development, which the author of this research believes can be extrapolated to COMDEDEHUMA, making this goal broader, more realistic and more ambitious:

To encourage the free flow of information at the national and international levels; to promote the widest and most balanced dissemination of information without hindrance to freedom of expression; and to develop all appropriate means to strengthen communication capacities in developing countries in order to increase their participation in the communication process (UNESCO, 1989).

However, communication applied to development, the environment and human rights has been gaining ground in Spain since the 1990s, above all through the work carried out by NGOs and some media professionals. Even so, this discipline can be considered the "poor sister" within development studies in our country, if we take into account the economic, human and material resources dedicated to it in comparison with other disciplines, both at governmental and non-governmental level.

The paradox is that the positive results obtained by international organisations based in Spain, non-governmental organisations or Spanish governmental entities dedicated to development, are presented with interest by those in charge, through their communications departments, in order to obtain maximum economic and image benefits.

In the field of the environment and human rights, the issue has been dealt with in a different way, with NGOs dedicated to these issues giving high importance to their communication areas, as from the beginning they saw that their presence in the media through journalistic materials was fundamental, as well as raising awareness in society through campaigns, currently with social networks as the main protagonists. Some examples are Greenpeace and Amnesty International, organisations that are already a point of reference for the media, which give them important spaces both when they present reports and specific investigations, as well as on a day-to-day basis.

The definitions of communication for development put forward by authors such as Javier Erro and Begoña Ballesteros should be noted at this point. Erro starts from the idea of a communicational perspective in which communication, education and culture converge, understanding communication itself 'as development', where NGOs should not only inform about the problems of the South, but also educate in order to promote citizen decision-making. In Erro's vision, it is necessary to evolve to a concept of communication that transcends information - the transmission of data - to recover the essence of communicating, "The communicative is associated with teaching, sharing, living, recognising, meeting and learning with the other. It is a matter of accompanying learning, of assuming that the other is not only a destination point, but above all a meeting point" (Erro, 2002: 28).



The author of this research agrees with Erro on the need for communication to transcend information, but not only in the field of development, but also in the field of human rights and the environment, thus being in line with the SDGs.

This idea is complemented by the definition of Ballesteros, for whom communication for development refers to "recourse to a horizontal and participative communicative conception that permeates and cross-cuts a development process regardless of whether or not communication tools, technologies and media are used during it" (Ballesteros, 2005).

Once again, the author of this research dares to affirm that this conception can be extrapolated to the field of human rights and the environment. He concludes at this point that the communication to which he refers must try to produce a democratic and participatory relationship, being itself a democratic and participatory process, making these two values not only the final goal but also the path to be followed in order to reach it.

3. Amnesty international and social media as tools for communicating human rights⁴

In its own words, "Amnesty International is a global, independent organisation of more than 10 million people who take action against injustice by defending human rights around the world" (Amnesty International, 2021).

In order to carry out this task, the use of social networks has become essential in this organisation. In this section we are going to analyse which social networks are most used by the Spanish Section of Amnesty International in its global work, what they are looking for, what results they are getting, and how all this affects the general work of communicating human rights that the organisation carries out.

It should be specified that there is careful verification of the information Amnesty International transmits on social networks, for the organisation it is essential to be credible and trustworthy.

To enhance these good practices, the organisation has implemented tools and spaces such as the Citizen Evidence Lab, which "...was originally created as a space to keep abreast of the best innovations by sharing advice, tools and good practices on disciplines such as video verification, remote sensing and weapons analysis" (Amnesty International, 2019).

We can consider "citizen evidence" to be materials that show, in any format, human rights violations in the world, collected by people who are not engaged in professional research in this field. These materials, which usually provide many details of the human rights violations they document, are disseminated through social networks, which is precisely why it is important to ensure that they are not sources of disinformation.

⁴ The content of this section arises from the analysis of the information obtained in the interviews conducted by the author with Ángel Gonzalo, media officer of Amnesty International, Spanish Section, on 9 and 12 February 2021; and from the verification of the data obtained on the website of the organisation: <https://www.es.amnesty.org/>



This Citizen Evidence Lab helps to maintain verification of what it disseminates on networks:

The site includes guides to tools and techniques for verifying publicly available video and images, and highlights Amnesty International case studies that show how methodologies such as remote image sensing and weapons analysis can reveal human rights abuses. It also details and builds on innovative projects involving thousands of volunteers to sift through data on a massive scale. There are tutorials on techniques such as reverse image searching, preserving data from social media to avoid losing it, and using other data sources - such as satellite imagery - to verify when and where events took place (Amnesty International, 2019).

Building on this initiative, Amnesty International launched the Digital Verification Corps (DVC) in 2016, one of whose objectives is to "collate and verify the overwhelming amount of digital content that exists in the world today, some of which depicts human rights abuses" (Dubberley, 2019).

The DVC is made up of six universities: University of California, Berkeley; Cambridge; Essex; Hong Kong; Pretoria; and Toronto. They train student volunteers to verify videos and photos of possible human rights violations around the world. The results support Amnesty International's research teams to do rigorous and verified work on social media (Dubberley, 2019).

Indeed, in the words of DVC director Sam Dubberley:

When uncomfortable truths lead public authorities to cry 'fake news', or when content posted on social media claims to show something it does not, we are prepared to respond based on rigorous and methodical methods of investigation and verification (Amnesty International, 2018).

It is this verification work that gives exceptional value to the materials disseminated on the social networks by this NGO, a work that is not normally known, not seen, and which adds great value to the organisation's image, to its credibility as a reliable source.

3.1. Social networking teams

The social media area is made up of a full-time community manager and a group of 12 support staff, who are volunteers. It is integrated into communication technology, which is managed by a webmaster, who is hierarchically higher up the hierarchy and is also the person responsible for the website. Therefore, the person responsible for social media is accountable to the webmaster; and the webmaster is accountable to the head of the Communication Department.

Social Networking also has a marketing support person, due to the large number of cyber actions that the organisation carries out on the Internet, for example, collecting signatures or requests for donations; this person is specialised in this type of action, and has a part-time contract.



Another person is added to the team, also on a part-time basis, who liaises with the campaigns area, giving it the activist focus that is necessary in all the organisation's activity according to its objectives.

The person responsible for social networks is a journalist and develops content for all the social networks in which the organisation is present. He or she writes threads for Twitter, makes Stories for Instagram, makes videos for Tik Tok, or develops general ideas that can be applied to all the networks by adapting the language. She then shares them with the person who is the liaison with campaigns, to give them the right tone if they intend to mobilise or carry out activist actions. In the case of a donation request, linked to one of these actions, it is coordinated with the marketing liaison person.

We can see how the strength of the organisation's social media area is really the team made up of its three members, who combine the generation of ideas, their translation into a type of material or language appropriate to the specific network they use, and the achievement of the objective set. Practically all their actions coordinate the three areas.

A concrete example of this type of work is that carried out for the release of Loujain al Hathloul, a Saudi Arabian activist who had been imprisoned for three years for defending women's rights. Amnesty International campaigned for 3 years, developing several phases: a) the first was to call for her release as soon as they learned of her imprisonment, in traditional or general media; b) the same work is done on social networks, taking advantage of the latter to mobilise the population; c) the marketing team enters into the equation. All this is done in a coordinated way: traditional or generalist press, social networks and marketing; all at the same time, at different times, with the work teams coordinated. Social media becomes a spearhead.

3.2. Workload of the social media area

The organisation can run at least one campaign per week per year, with some weeks having two. They manage an average of 70 campaigns per year. They do not conceive of any campaign that is not supported by the social media area. And there is no social network in which they do not have a presence. Adding all the social networks together, they have more than one million followers.

They make use of the data of people who have already expressed interest in the organisation's content and given their permission to do so. In addition to this, they use the database of people who have signed a cyber action, which means they have more than 10 million people in Spain alone.

When someone signs up in support of a campaign, their details are stored and as soon as there is a human rights violation similar to the one that a person has signed up for before, that person or group is approached. That work is done by email, or by social media. For example, if they are journalists, they use Twitter, which is the network that gives them the best results with that professional group; if they target the general public, they use Facebook; if the segment is a younger audience, they use Instagram or Tik Tok. They work according to the population group, the professional group and the objective they have set.



3.3. Interaction with users

The interaction of social media users with the organisation reaches high volumes. The job of the person responsible for networks is not only to inform or create content; 50% of their time is dedicated to responding to comments, requests, mentions, etc. According to the organisation's code of conduct, they do not respond to insults or disqualifications. They do respond to negative opinions, because they consider that constructive criticism is useful for the organisation. On some occasions they have encountered 40,000 opinions against them, many of which were trolls or *haters*. The campaign by the Spanish section of Amnesty International for the release of "the Jordis" in Catalonia is a clear example of this. When they consider that there is a "popular outcry" against one of their campaigns, they have to respond.

Among other things, this is why the social media person works full time, with his two part-time support staff, because he spends much of his time responding to and interacting with network users and distributing the work.

Sometimes there are media appeals to Amnesty International that come through social media, especially Twitter, as it is a common tool for the journalistic profession. Journalists often seem to find it more difficult to phone the media officer, and find it easier to send a tweet, or a DM (direct message) on Instagram, or contact in any other way using a social network, depending on the day-to-day experience at Amnesty International.

3.4. Usefulness of networks

The organisation is finding the greatest use of the networks to carry out mobilisation actions and achieve great results. The latest example is the campaign for the non-imprisonment of Pablo Hasel, in which in one day they collected 40,000 signatures, the vast majority through social networks, and they only launched a Twitter thread. Users can sign in support of any campaign using any network, that's what the Webmaster is there for, the person who has the complete technological structure, and has done the relevant programming so that these signatures can be collected from any social network, and so that the data is interconnected.

Everything is done through Amnesty International's own software, specifically designed by a company to meet the organisation's needs. It is also used, by crossing the relevant data, to send press releases by the media officer, automating the change of format by the aforementioned software, for any social network. If when they upload a news item to the organisation's website, they want to share it on Twitter, Instagram or WhatsApp, there is an automatic conversion for these networks. The economic investment made by the organisation in this software allows them to have the capacity to collect, for example, those 40,000 signatures in one day, with the localisation of the relevant data.

They also use it in what they call "urgent actions", through which they mobilise a large number of people in a very short time. They could generate a WhatsApp message to gather 40,000 people at a specific point. And the computer system could support many, many more.



The record number of signatures collected by the Spanish Section of Amnesty International is 9,600,000 in the case of Amina Lawal in 2003, when this tool did not exist. Its development has been progressive, it is 6 years old, and has permanent updates; the tool is the Spanish Section's own. But there is a system that allows them to share technical knowledge which is also permanent, both with the International Secretariat of Amnesty International (based in London) and with other national sections in different countries.

It is impossible for Amnesty International to run a campaign without social media, and some are even only activated through social media. The reason is that it works best for them. Nigerian singer-songwriter Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, 22, wrote a song in February 2020 and shared it via WhatsApp; after being arrested and tried, he was sentenced to hang for blasphemy because, according to Islamic law, it contained derogatory comments about the Prophet Muhammad. Fear of Boko Haram was in the background. On 21 January, an Appeals Commission ordered the case to be reheard before a different judge because of a lack of legal representation throughout the previous trial. This was a triumph for Amnesty International, although it continues to fight for his final release. A triumph that was achieved exclusively using social networks, where the campaigns of people with names and surnames, specific cases (and general thematic causes), have a lot of impact, for this case they have 200,000 signatures. It was a case in which the organisation was not successful in the media, where Amnesty International's reports are more popular.

The first death sentence handed down through Zoom occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore. On 20 May 2020, a spokesperson for the Singapore High Court confirmed that a Malaysian man had been sentenced to death after being convicted of drug trafficking charges. The decision was delivered "by video conference" on Friday 15 May 2020. The convicted man's lawyer confirmed that this sentencing hearing was held via the Zoom platform. The difficulty for the media to cover the situation was enormous, but in networks it was the opposite for this NGO. They used Twitter to tell the story and connected with people who, for the needs of their work, used Zoom on a daily basis, making them realise that the death sentence could also be carried out on that platform. This was another campaign they launched solely on social media.

Amnesty International also uses clickbait, which according to Ana Isabel Sordo is "... a writing technique that consists of creating sensational headlines and descriptions in a link. Its purpose is to attract visitors and incite them to click to open that content" (Sordo, 2021).

An interview can be done by the media relations team and passed on to the person responsible for social media to adapt it to this tool. This ensures that the interview is disseminated in a different way, adapted to a different format (for example, to the web, WhatsApp and Telegram), and that it has a great impact on a user public that either only or mostly uses social networks, to the detriment of traditional media.

3.5. Distribution of user public

Facebook is where they have the most users. But for mobilisation actions, the most important for them is Twitter, although Instagram is gaining ground every month. All this forces them to change their formats.



The Youtube channel is the one that is working the least for the organisation. When they do make live connections, each public event is streamed via Facebook Live, which is what gives them the most followers. This reconfirms that: a) to access a more general audience, Facebook is their main tool; b) Twitter for journalists, opinion leaders and authorities; c) younger users through Instagram and Tik Tok.

The support volunteers are constantly coordinated and are located in many parts of Spain. Each territorial group has its own network leader, who coordinates with the leader of the Spanish Section.

Amnesty International's key messages come from the International Secretariat, from its headquarters in London, and each national section adapts it to its audience. The same happens from the Spanish section to the country's territories, if necessary. Key international messages work perfectly for them once they have been adapted, the case of the Saudi activist Loujain al Hathloul is a clear example of this. When she was released, the Spanish section found out about it because an investigator in charge of the case reported the event, and from that moment on, each national section worldwide tells the story as it will be best received by its national audience.

3.6. Economic impact

The traditional way of recruiting members has disappeared in times of pandemic, everything has been done through social networks and new technologies. And Amnesty International has fared much better than expected in a disastrous economic moment, in which the first thing people do without is non-essential expenses, and being a member of an NGO, for many people, can be considered a dispensable expense. They currently have 90,000 members compared to 17,000 in 2003, which shows the growth in membership driven by the networks. The indicators of the objectives to be achieved through social networks can be swept up in one day with 40,000 signatures, and those of media impact also through Twitter with 400 in the same 24 hours.

Their marketing experts assure them that social media works better than membership and street donations did: in terms of impact and results, membership growth and one-off donations.

4. Analysis of the use of twitter, facebook and instagram by amnesty international's spanish section

Within the framework of the project "International information as a tool for job placement for students of International Relations", approved in the Innova-Docencia 20-21 call for proposals, for which the author of this research is responsible, and whose funding entity is the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), an analysis exercise was carried out on three of the social networks used by the Spanish Section of Amnesty International as part of its communication strategy.

The exercise was designed by the author, and the students of group 4.8. of the subject "International Information and Communication" of the Degree in International Relations of the UCM participated, especially in the collection of information. Its objective was to find out how this organisation dedicated to Human Rights uses social networks to achieve



its objectives as an entity. The criteria used for the analysis were oriented towards the general metrics of the profile to know its reach (number of followers, number of publications and frequency of publication), the type of information published (complaints, campaigns, life stories, etc.) and the positive interactions (support) and/or negative interactions (criticism or insults, for example) generated in these forums based on the information published. The period analysed was from 1 to 15 January 2021.

The three social networks were: Twitter (@amnistiaespana), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/amnistia.internacional.espana>) and Instagram (@amnistiaespana).

4.1. Facebook

Amnesty International's Facebook profile was created on 22 May 2009, has more than 430,000 followers (specifically, as of 20 January 2021 at 13:47, 436,818 people like the page and 430,669 followers). They publish content on a daily basis, with two posts per day in the period analysed. The Facebook page provides direct access links to their other platforms: website, Twitter and Instagram, as well as to their telephone number and email, offering an immediate point of contact from this social network to attract potential members and/or people interested in the activity they carry out. This, added to the fact that donations can be made to the organisation from the Facebook profile itself, demonstrates how important it is for Amnesty International to generate a channel for the 'call to action', with the aim of taking advantage of the opportunity of a single click in the "moments of truth" with the public interested in Human Rights and thus reducing the risk of abandonment of possible donations.

Despite the high number of followers (even more so if we compare it with other related organisations such as Human Rights Watch Spain or Transparency International Spain), the interaction received by its publications is low, very few reach 1,000 reactions, with the most interaction being those aimed at more "controversial" issues such as the death penalty, abortion, gender or the LGBTIQ community. Most publications consist of an image or video and an explanatory text. In other cases, only an image and a strong sentence appear, as in their latest post, in which they announce that the 'tampon tax' has been eliminated in the UK with an image and add: "Access to tampons is a right. Full stop. In addition, almost all of them are accompanied by a hyperlink to their official website where more information can be accessed, in other cases they also use direct links to signature campaigns.

The denunciation of human rights violations, through information relating to specific situations or more structural problems, is the aim of a significant number of the publications analysed on Facebook. For example, there is a post denouncing the sentencing to death of a Nigerian musician for blasphemy and inviting people to collect signatures to prevent his death. Beyond the denunciation, a trend identified is the use of current events to raise awareness, launch campaigns and generate debate on structural issues relevant to the SDGs and the defence of human rights. As an example, a publication on 15 January consists of a video of a doctor who walked 17 km to get to the hospital where he works, thus linking the specific case to the importance of public health. It thus takes advantage of the opportunity offered by current events by being used to ask for support/donations to "armour public health" and also to reinforce public pressure



on the Spanish authorities to invest more in the public health system. Another example is the case of a publication in the form of a denunciation and pronouncement calling for the release of Aleksei Navalny (Russian opposition leader), linking his detention to the violation of the right to freedom of expression.

This type of publication is combined with others related to major human rights issues, even if they are not newsworthy, and which articulate Amnesty International's permanent action; For example campaigns "For a 2021 free of gender violence in all its forms" through which Amnesty International reiterates its commitment to the eradication of gender violence, recalling that in 2020 the number of women who died at the hands of their partners has decreased; or also the collection of signatures to ask for protection for victims of human trafficking, the defence of the rights of immigrants, campaigns against the death penalty and executions. There are also campaigns with a strong social character such as the petition for freedom for women who fight for their social rights in countries such as Saudi Arabia, for families living in the Cañada Real to have electricity or campaigns for vaccination against COVID for all groups.

In addition to this content, Facebook stories are only available for 24 hours. In this alternative mode, they repost content from other people or entities, promote their own publications and even publish memes related to their complaints.

In terms of the interactions generated, positive interactions outweigh the negative ones, which may lead one to think that the public that follows this account is close to or mobilised towards the defence of human rights. The majority of the publications receive positive interactions, giving the option to 'Like' or sharing the content; for example, the publication on the 'Human Rights Goals for 2021' has been one of those that has generated the most interactions on Facebook and communicates the objectives that Amnesty International proposes for the year. On the contrary, negative interactions are more present in publications related to more controversial or politicised content, for example, the collection of signatures for the victims of Francoism and the civil war which saw a number of negative interactions due to some comments referring to the fact that this petition for signatures was to reopen wounds in the history of Spain that had 'already' been closed.

From the publications analysed in the Facebook profile of this NGO, it can be concluded that communication is closely related to current issues, generating a link between the major issues and goals of the organisation in favour of the defence of human rights and the everyday life of citizens. This makes communication very close to the people, aimed at raising awareness and mobilisation, using a current, concise and accessible narrative. They avoid long texts that most people would not read. In addition, with some of the shorter publications, with simple but powerful posters, they manage to make an impact on users, as well as getting them to share them. This promotes the organisation in a simple and emotional way.

4.2. Twitter

The Twitter account is under the username @amnistiaespana, and its description includes the slogan that summarises the organisation's mission: "At Amnesty International we act for human rights around the world. HT and RT ≠ support". The link in its description



redirects to its privacy policy and also to its website. Since its creation on 28 May 2009, it has posted a total of 28,600 tweets.

The account has been operational since 28 May 2009 and currently has 162.2 thousand followers. In turn, they follow 17.8 thousand users on Twitter, among them scientific staff, platforms and NGOs, and personalities and celebrities who support social causes.

The user image is permanent and is a version of their logo in yellow and black on a candle surrounded by barbed wire; the cover photo changes periodically, during the days analysed the cover photo corresponded to an image of two grandparents embracing and a message of encouragement to a group severely affected in the COVID crisis with the slogan "I ask for dignity for my grandparents".

In terms of the frequency of publication on its wall, we observe that it uploads content regularly, on a daily basis, and the range of tweets goes from 2 on some days to 8 on some occasions, which refers to the intense activity that the organisation has on its Twitter account. The type of information it publishes refers to denunciations of certain situations of human rights violations, collection of signatures, awareness-raising campaigns and support for causes, and informative threads. The way it collects this information is through photographs, videos of testimonies or press articles, in order to raise public awareness of situations that violate human rights.

It highlights the use of threads based on newspaper articles to explain situations in more detail. An example of this is the first thread of the year, which includes some of the most important achievements in terms of human rights in 2020, such as access to education for Rohingya children in Bangladesh or the new non-discriminatory minimum wage in Qatar. The publications do not have many interactions, and in most cases the comments are supportive, although there is also criticism, for example, criticism of the tweet posted about the celebration of the legalisation of abortion in Argentina as a triumph for human rights. It is worth mentioning how tweets for the protection of HR usually bring with them rejection from what we can identify as Internet "trolls", as they rarely have a profile picture or name.

On the other hand, and no less important, is the use of people's testimonies and announcements about appearances on issues of special interest that Amnesty International fights for. Among the most relevant testimonies we find that of Alike, talking about how she had to be subjected to prostitution; and another, and being of special interest nowadays after the COVID-19 pandemic and the Filomena storm, the testimony of Álvaro talking about the precarious situation of health workers having to go to their place of work with more than 15 cm of snow. On these testimonies, although not all of them, people who follow his account are urged to join in the collection of signatures to denounce the situation.

Despite the intense activity on the Twitter account, it seems relevant that explanatory tweets tend not to be shared (likes and retweets) as much as those that link to an article or mention specific people. The post with the most interactions of the whole period refers to the news that Julian Assange will not be extradited to the US, with all replies celebrating this result.

In the analysis carried out, Amnesty International's capacity to bring up current issues and connect them with the values and actions that the organisation holds stands out.



They have a very collaborative work with other delegations (as can be seen in the retweets they have, often coming from regional delegations) as well as a very careful and aesthetic structure.

4.3. Instagram

The Instagram profile has 1,292 posts and 46,000 followers (as of 15 January 2021). Its profile description reads "More than 50 years working for human rights". Amnesty International Spain posts daily on current issues around rights campaigning, both in the form of stories (which it highlights) and posts.

Among the publications analysed, in the "featured stories" section, the content is divided into three different types. The first refers to quizzes to raise awareness of different topics among followers and to let them evaluate how much knowledge they have about them; in the period analysed, quizzes on education, devolution and migration were carried out. The second type of content is awareness-raising campaigns based on specific cases; for example, the story highlighted under the slogan "Save Yahaya", which explains the situation faced by a 22-year-old Nigerian boy sentenced to death in his country for composing and sharing a song on a WhatsApp group for allegedly defaming the Prophet Mohammed. The complaint is accompanied by a collection of signatures against this injustice. Another example of a featured story includes the testimony of three women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The publications on the Instagram account include relevant topics in terms of Human Rights. Not only are specific cases that require intervention by Amnesty International published, but the organisation also publishes images of denunciation, gratitude, awareness, reflection or data relevant to Human Rights. Moreover, these publications are not limited to a specific theme, but cover a wide range of issues from all parts of the world. The publications are presented in the form of images or videos, either real or explanatory drawings, with text added in the graphic part or in the caption, usually with a brief explanation of the issue related to the publication. The information in the publications has the theme of Human Rights as a common link and the specific topics are very diverse and in many cases take advantage of current news, such as the defence of public health, human rights in residences, the necessary reforms for women in Saudi Arabia and their freedom, climate change, LGBTI pride, denouncing the gag law, refuge and COVID, attacks against women for defending the Amazon rainforest, etc. It should be noted that, in addition to publishing videos and striking illustrations to publicise the story, denounce the situation and make it visible, they also propose solutions and invite users to be part of them, either by signing petitions or by sharing and commenting on the content.

The publications on Instagram, although they coincide with the themes used on the other networks, have a different language in order to relate to a younger audience, regular users of this social network, and to get them interested in international issues from a more particular point of view. With this type of communication activity, the organisation seeks to raise awareness and involve young people in the defence of human rights.



5. Conclusions and discussion

Amnesty International's Spanish Section has an imbalance of staff dedicated to traditional media (3 full-time) compared to those dedicated to social media (1 full-time and 2 part-time), which opens a debate regarding short-term results and the staff dedicated to achieving them. However, the organisation's impact on opinion leaders or decision-makers still comes more widely through its presence in the media. And even this is also changing (evolving or devolving, depending on how you look at it), since we have seen leaders using especially Twitter as a communication tool, dismissing the media; or at the very least, using this social network to respond and/or propose policy initiatives.

The trend is becoming mixed, the media will not be able to continue without the constant use of social networks such as Twitter, the newsrooms are made up of digital natives who are setting this trend, and the communication areas of non-governmental organisations are no different on this point. And therefore, their relationship is marked by this reality.

It is essential for NGOs to have systems for adapting formats if they want to continue to produce compelling content that has space and visibility on social networks, in order to avoid the temptation to produce empty messages.

Based on the data collected and its analysis, it can be concluded that the use of social networks to communicate human rights is effective and achieves the objectives that the organisation sets itself, with a high impact, not only in terms of visibility, but also in terms of attracting economic resources.

The coordination of three areas of work (content building, campaigns and marketing) has proven to be a key to the success of Amnesty International's Spanish Section's social media presence. And the design of specific software to cover their communication needs through the networks has been the other key to achieving efficiency.

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