

Creative Youth Resistance Project

The Art of Belonging/Beyond Division

Reclaiming stories of belonging and resistance

Artist Call-Out

About the Project

Across Europe and around the world, we are seeing the rise of so-called “authoritarian practices” that limit people’s rights, freedoms, and ability to participate in society. This can include increased surveillance, the spread of false information, attacks on marginalised groups and their human rights, and attempts to control public debate and culture. These forces shape how people see themselves, each other, and the world around them.

Young activists have told us they are living in a time where fear, division, and false information are making it harder for people to come together and take action.

We increasingly see people being blamed for problems they did not create. Instead of addressing the real causes of challenges such as the rising cost of living, housing shortages, climate change, or inequality, public attention is often focused by politicians, governments, media and companies on people who are already marginalised and under attack.

This can lead to communities being divided, trust being broken, and people feeling isolated from one another.

Migrants, refugees, trans people, LGBTQI+ communities, ethnic or religious minorities and other marginalised groups are often portrayed as threats – narratives create an “us versus them” mindset, encouraging fear, mistrust and division.

Young people are often most impacted by these narratives. They may be directly targeted for their identities, activism or beliefs, while also living in increasingly divided societies shaped by fear, misinformation and polarisation.

But this project is also about resistance. Amnesty has also seen how young activists in particular find creative ways to resist - Through storytelling, art, organising, and collective action, they are creating spaces of belonging, strengthening solidarity, and keeping hope alive.

Creative Youth Resistance: Writing Our Story of Hope is a youth-led art commission exploring scapegoating, solidarity and resistance. We are looking for six emerging young artists (aged 18-25) from **Bulgaria, Slovakia and Greece** (two from each country) to explore these themes through participatory, community-rooted artistic practice.

The Opportunity

Selected artists will receive a **€2,000 commission** to create an original artistic work exploring:

- How authoritarian movements use scapegoating, division and fear to maintain control.
- How communities can resist these narratives through connection, solidarity and collective action.
- What hope, resistance and belonging look like in practice.

We are looking for artists who want to work using dialogue, storytelling, shared experiences and community engagement to co-create art that brings people together, sparks reflection, and opens space for new possibilities.

The artistic medium is open. We welcome proposals across a wide range of artistic disciplines. These might include:

- Visual arts (painting, illustration, murals, printmaking, collage)
- Photography and photo storytelling
- Film and short-form video
- Creative writing, poetry and spoken word
- Theatre, participatory performance and live art
- Music, sound art and podcasts
- Digital art, social media storytelling and interactive media
- Textile art, craft and community-making projects
- Mixed-media and interdisciplinary approaches

The final output does not need to be a traditional artwork. We are open to participatory and socially engaged practices where the process itself is a central artistic element.

We are particularly interested in projects where the artistic medium helps create meaningful encounters, conversations and connections between people.

Project Goal

We aim to support young artists to co-create participatory art with communities that:

- Strengthens connection and solidarity.
- Challenges narratives of division and scapegoating.
- Reduces isolation and polarisation.
- Creates spaces for dialogue, reflection and collective sense-making.
- Inspires hope in the face of rising authoritarianism.

Timeline

- **Applications close:** Sunday 6 September
- **Q+A session:** August 19th August at 4pm CET time, [link here](#)
- **Interviews:** Week commencing 13 September
- **Artist workshop in Bulgaria:** 21st -25th of October
- **Community engagement and artwork development:** November 2026 – February 2027
- **Exhibitions and creative showcases:** By February 2027
- **Potential second artist gathering:** March 2027 (TBC)
- **Project close/exploring ongoing relationship:** April 2027

What Artists Will Do

Selected artists will:

- ★ Facilitate conversations within their communities, particularly with people who may be less aware of, engaged with, or affected by authoritarian practices.
- ★ Explore experiences of division, scapegoating, belonging, resistance and hope.
- ★ Create an original artwork informed by these conversations.
- ★ Attend online meetings and in-person workshops with Amnesty International and fellow artists.
- ★ Develop final exhibitions, installations, performances.
 - Note on exhibitions: we want the art to reach audiences beyond whoever attends in person, keep this in mind for your exhibition, either factoring in digital elements (Amnesty will also support this thinking and explore this with you in the October workshop)

The Creative Process

Community engagement is a core part of this project. We are looking for artists who are curious about people and believe that creativity can bring communities together. We want to support work that grows through conversation, shared experiences, and creating art together, where the process of making the work is just as valuable as the finished piece. Artists will spend time listening, asking questions, and creating spaces where people can connect and share stories. We hope these encounters create opportunities for people to meet beyond their usual circles and bubbles, hear experiences different from their own, find common ground and maybe give them hope that a better future is possible.

This could include:

- Hosting small group discussions
- Creative workshops
- Immersive experiences
- Story-sharing sessions
- Interviews or informal conversations
- Collaborative making processes
- Pop-up installations that invite audience participation
- Creative activities in public spaces
- Digital engagement and online dialogue

The scale of community engagement does not need to be large. We value depth and meaningful interaction over the number of participants. Every artist will approach this differently. We encourage proposals that reflect your own practice and the people you want to work alongside.

We are particularly interested in engagement with people who may not already be highly involved in activism or social justice spaces, and who may have different perspectives, experiences or levels of awareness of these issues. We see artists as facilitators of connection using creativity to build bridges between people, amplify stories that are often unheard, and create spaces where empathy and hope can grow.

Reaching wider audiences

We want the artwork and conversations generated through this project to reach audiences beyond those who attend events in person. When developing your creative work and exhibition plans, please consider how elements of the project could be shared digitally or adapted for wider audiences. Amnesty will support artists to think through this and explore possibilities together during the October workshop.

What Artists Will Receive

- **A €2,000 artist commission**
- Travel, accommodation and meals for the October workshop (and if confirmed, March workshop)
- Connection to other young artists, activists and organisers
- Creative, political and pastoral mentoring throughout the project
- Space to experiment, take risks and learn without pressure to produce "perfect" outcomes
- Opportunities for visibility through Amnesty International platforms

Commission and Budget

Each selected artist will receive a **€2,000 commission**.

This commission is intended to cover all costs associated with your artwork and process, including day rates, expenses such as local travel or accommodation if needed, materials, venue hire, community engagement and consultation activities, collaborator costs, and any other project-related expenses.

Applicants should therefore consider carefully how they will deliver their proposed project within the available budget.

The exception is the project workshop in Bulgaria (21-25th of October 2026), which will be fully funded by Amnesty International. Amnesty will directly cover all travel, accommodation, meals, visa costs (where applicable), and other reasonable expenses associated with attending the workshop.

Should a second in-person gathering take place in March 2027, those costs would also be covered separately by Amnesty International and would not need to be included within the €2,000 commission.

Who Can Apply?

We are looking for artists who:

- Are aged **18–25**
- Are based in **Bulgaria, Slovakia or Greece**
- Identify as part of a marginalised or underrepresented community (for example: minority ethnic, migrant, racialised, LGBTQI+, disabled or working-class communities)
- Have a good working level of English
- Are interested in facilitating dialogue and engaging communities
- Have a commitment to exploring themes of human rights, resistance and social change
- Are available for the project timeline, including the October workshop
- Can confidently commit to the entirety of this opportunity
- Are open to forming a longer term relationship with Amnesty

What We're Looking For

We are particularly excited by proposals that are:

- ★ **Bold and Creative:** Projects that take risks, experiment with new ideas, and push beyond conventional approaches.
- ★ **Rooted in Community:** Creative processes shaped by real conversations, relationships and collaboration, especially with people who may not already be engaged with these issues.
- ★ **Centring Underrepresented Voices:** Work that amplifies perspectives and experiences that are too often ignored or excluded.

- ★ **Process-Focused:** Projects where the journey, conversations and connections are as important as the final artwork.
- ★ **Grounded in Hope:** Work that explores how people respond to fear, exclusion and division through care, solidarity and collective resistance.

How to Apply

Please submit either:

- ★ **Option 1:** Written Proposal, Maximum 2 pages - **We have provided a template for your convenience if you would like to use that.**
- ★ **Option 2:** Video Proposal, Maximum 3 minutes
 - If choosing option 2, please also include your budget and relevant work separately as attachments

Your proposal should include:

- ★ Who are you and why are you interested in this opportunity?
- ★ Which communities would you like to work with, and why?
- ★ How would you engage people in meaningful conversations?
- ★ What stories, experiences, emotions or questions would you like to explore together?
- ★ What is your current vision for the final creative work?

We understand this will probably evolve through the process - we just want to hear your initial thinking.

You should also include:

- ★ A rough budget outline - it doesn't need to be detailed at this stage, we can help you finalise this if you are selected.
- ★ Confirmation that you can attend the in person workshop in October
- ★ Up to 3 examples of previous relevant (art) work

Send your application to **youth@amnesty.org** and **hi@amnesty.bg** with the subject line:
Creative Resistance

Selection Panel: Applications will be reviewed by the Global Children and Youth Team and Amnesty International Bulgaria, Greece and Slovakia staff members.

FAQ'S

Do I need to know exactly what my final artwork will be?

No. We expect ideas to evolve throughout the project. We are interested in your initial vision and approach, but recognise that conversations with communities and the October workshop may significantly shape the final outcome.

Can I apply as part of a collective or group?

The commission is intended for individual artists. However, artists may choose to collaborate with community members and local partners as part of their creative process.

How much community engagement is expected?

There is no required number of participants or activities. We expect artists to make a genuine effort to engage people in meaningful dialogue and demonstrate how these conversations have informed the creative work.

Does the artwork need to explicitly reference authoritarianism?

Not necessarily. The themes of scapegoating, division, belonging, solidarity, care, resistance and hope can be explored in many different ways. We welcome creative interpretations of the project theme.

Can I work with a community that I am already part of?

Yes. In fact, we encourage artists to build on existing relationships, knowledge and trust where appropriate. However, we also want you to bring these connections and stories to people you don't know, or not necessarily connect with. To connect people that won't necessarily otherwise have the chance to speak to each other.

Can the artwork be created in a language other than English?

Absolutely. Artists are encouraged to create work in the language(s) most relevant to their communities. However, artists should have sufficient English to participate in workshops and project meetings.

Will artists receive support with facilitation?

Yes. Amnesty International will provide mentoring and support throughout the project, including guidance on facilitation, community engagement, creative development and political context.

What kinds of communities could artists work with?

Communities might include neighbourhood groups, young people, migrants, LGBTQI+ communities, rural communities, workers, students, disabled people, faith communities, cultural groups, online communities or other groups with whom the artist has a meaningful connection.

How will projects be selected?

Applications will be assessed on creativity, feasibility, commitment to community engagement, relevance to the theme, and the potential to foster dialogue, connection and hope.

Can I discuss my application with Amnesty before applying?

We don't have capacity to have any 1:1 conversations with people before they apply, but if you want to join the Q+A session on 19th of Augusts, [register here](#) - and if you can't attend you will receive a recording.