

# Retoryka ruchów społecznych

## Rhetoric of social movements

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### Multimodal rhetorical analysis of Amnesty International's website

#### Multimodalna analiza retoryczna strony internetowej Amnesty International

#### Abstract

This article explores the rhetorical dimensions of the structure and selected contents of Amnesty International's official website. The study is empirical in nature and considers current patterns of textual resources and visual affordances together with color applications and compositional design. It analyzes a sample of news reports, AI mission statement, vision and values together with topical icons, infographics, photographic and video materials. It illustrates the salient multimodal solutions in persuasive communication and evaluates the organization's online rhetoric with respect to the persuasive potential to mobilize support and remediate its appeals in social media. It also applies the notion of newsworthiness to demonstrate how reports, visuals and posts are represented to arouse emotions (pathos), engender authenticity and appropriateness of actions (logos) and boost credibility (ethos).

Niniejszy artykuł dotyczy retorycznych aspektów struktury i zawartości oficjalnej strony Amnesty International. Studium ma charakter empiryczny i obejmuje omówienie zarówno tekstowych wzorców, jak i wizualnych przedstawień działalności organizacji z uwzględnieniem kolorystyki i kompozycji strony. Materiały poddane analizie to aktualne raporty, misja, wizja i lista wartości przyjętych przez organizację, a także logotypy, infografiki, fotografie i krótkie filmy udostępnione na stronie. Celem studium jest zidentyfikowanie i omówienie głównych rozwiązań w perswazyjnej komunikacji wielokanałowej, a także ocena, w jaki sposób zastosowane strategie retoryczne przekładają się na potencjał perswazyjny służący do mobilizowania poparcia dla organizacji i remediacji jej przekazu w mediach społecznościowych. Ponadto, wykorzystuje się tu pojęcie wartości informacyjnej, aby wskazać, jak raporty, obrazy i posty na stronie organizacji przyczyniają się do wzbudzania emocji (patos), podkreślania autentyczności zdarzeń i adekwatności akcji (logos) oraz podnoszenia wiarygodności organizacji (etos).

#### Key words

social mobilization, NGOs, website design, multimodality, organizational rhetoric, Amnesty International  
mobilizacja społeczna, organizacje pozarządowe, projektowanie stron, wielokanałowość, retoryka organizacji, Amnesty International

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### Introduction

Non-governmental organizations are variously labeled as “voluntary organizations,” “civic associations,” “non-profits,” and “charitable organizations” (cf. *Cambridge Dictionary, English Oxford Dictionary*). They are committed to social activities in the third sector (separately from the state’s public institutions and corporate organizations), particularly of humanitarian, civic and charitable nature. What the definitions additionally stress is that such organizations are independent of established institutions and usually not controlled by governments in their attempts at fulfilling their social or political goals. This indicates such organizations’ constant need to mobilize the publics and engage citizens to get involved in the actions they champion, to donate or volunteer for the sake of the organization’s aims. The effectiveness of an organization’s persuasive strategies to mobilize can be measured in terms of its international or global reach. This study is devoted to identifying and describing such mobilization strategies in the case of a distinguished international organization that has achieved global status and recognition, despite acting for the sake of unpopular, remote or marginalized causes and most vulnerable individuals that have no voice of their own - Amnesty International.

Amnesty International (AI), according to their website, now involves more than seven million people who actively counteract human right abuses and who participate in the social movement that began with the founding of the organization in 1961. The engagement in AI actions and initiatives is based on voluntary membership and is open to all those who want to act in accordance with the mission of this humanitarian non-governmental organization. The Global Assembly is the highest decision-making body, formed by representatives of the membership entities and independent international members. With the help of elected International Board, the organization strives to uphold human rights around the world, to coordinate

policy frameworks in specific regions and to approve proposals for global actions, as the flagship letter-writing action to demand the release of political dissidents (cf. Statute of Amnesty International 2018). Within the recent decade, the organization has developed dynamically, constantly re-establishing its mission and values to show their image in media more uniformly, to address the needs of the public more fully and to meet the technological requirements of online media. To this day, apart from its official website, AI benefits from the spectrum of five different types of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google Plus and Instagram) in order to spread its message and reach different types of public (cf. @amnesty).

This study explores the rhetorical dimension of AI's website and online activity in order to identify its persuasive and mobilizing strategies and discuss their implications for fostering civic engagement (Ice and Fritch 2012). This is a descriptive case study that relies on contemporary publicity materials to offer insights into both AI's textual and visual patterns used for persuasion, hence a multimodal rhetorical approach is applied here (Bezemer and Kress 2008, Machin 2008), with additional references to how "newsworthiness" is constructed multimodally in online materials (Bednarek and Caple 2012). Newsworthiness is the quality of media language (particularly news items) to attract attention and stir up emotional responses with specific uses of language and image (cf. Szyma 2018). Another objective is to survey which rhetorical resources tend to be currently used to keep up and reproduce Amnesty International as a global brand in humanitarian communication (Swan 2008) in the era dominated by social media and popular culture.

This article reports on a data-driven abductive analysis, which attends to AI website's multimodal affordances inclusive of the patterns in the textual mode (written language), visual mode (icons, pictograms, infographics, photographs) and the semiotic modes of colour and composition. Specific mobilization strategies, are identified based on recurrence and frequency, and interpreted with the use of established classical rhetorical categories (ethos, logos, pathos, scheme, trope, logical fallacy, topos, appeal), and with reference to current theories of hypertextual rhetoric and remediation, where applicable. One approach that is of particular use for this study is Ridolfo and DeVoss's (2009) velocity theory, which stipulates that in the era of social media platforms, effectively and widely disseminated messages such as certain viral texts, slogans, images and memes have been rhetorically pre-formulated to suit the online medium and the transient context of reception with formally clipped but semantically rich compositions that engage viewers.

The structure of the article is as follows. The study starts with a description of the content and graphic design of the homepage with special attention paid to hypertextuality and multimodal ensembles that function to engage viewers. In the

following section the focus is on the textual rhetoric of AI's mission statement, vision and values that engender its ethos and allow for identification with its purposes (Burke 1969). Finally, the analysis concerns the photographic and video affordances, which allow not only to document the organization's actions but also to foster emotional engagements and boost drama that translates into pathos-driven newsworthiness. The article finishes with a concluding section that discusses and interprets findings and evaluates the persuasive potential of AI website with regard to rhetorical categories and theories.

## 2. The graphic design of the website and its structure

The website of AI is easy to navigate and inviting, as is advocated for public-oriented outlets by Bezemer and Kress (2008). As far as the technical affordances are concerned, the website is screen-responsive, which means that it might be viewed on a variety of mobile devices by adapting its page resolution and navigational tools to the current viewer. Obviously, once logged to the website on the mobile device, some subsidiary information is hidden and the text is compressed as to display only the essentials, which is a rhetorical strategy of selectivity and minimalist design. For example, donation and mobilization appeals are foregrounded while organizational structure and administrative information is backgrounded.

The color palette of the page has also been selected carefully, as it was aimed at a conscious creation of the world-wide, recognizable, powerful organization's image. The yellow color, which is permanently incorporated into the color scheme of the organization and its standard logo (Figure 1) serves as a highlight. It has been selected to attract attention but also index such qualities as urgency and hope (Puhalla 2008). In the context of the website and advertising materials, the yellow color is also used to highlight the important pieces of information. Additionally, the contrastive combination of black and yellow could be associated with the work, energy and even the sense of danger (Swan 2008).



**Figure 1.** An example of the most traditional and recognizable AI logo.

In the multitude of AI regional websites and sections, the logo is displayed in a form of a different, but coherent color and placement variations of the candle and the text with the organization's name. Each of these variants comprises the non-serif font in the all-caps name AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, and the icon

signifier of a candle braided with barbed wire in which the wire stands for oppression and the candle represents the light of hope. This symbol originates from the Chinese proverb, which, when translated into English, means “Better to light a candle than curse the darkness” (logodesignlove.com 2008). This slogan is also used in the AI website section “Who we are” discussed below.

AI website applies design characteristics of a public or institutional outlet, which adds to the perception of credibility (Lester 1991). At the same time, one can sense that the website is focused on facilitating the viewer’s interacting with the content. The person who enters the website is offered a choice of the various possibilities of engagement with AI activities. The right top corner of the header contains seven buttons, two of them being “get involved” and “donate now.” Just below the main section with the enormous picture corresponding to the recent news, there are three infographics illustrating the main domains to explore: mission statement (Who we are), current actions and reports on completed actions (What we do) and appeals (Get involved). The sense of integrity is sustained by the constant usage of “we”, which, according to previous studies of institutional discourses (Wales 1996; Hyland 2010), is rhetorically charged as it can foster engagement (build an imagined like-minded community) and project alignment with certain propositions thus priming the reader or viewer towards certain interpretations. See Figure 2:



**Figure 2.** The main domains of AI website content presented with “we” as institutional entity interpellating “you” the viewer in the imperative mood in a form of infographics.

The fact that the ‘menu’ section comprises merely three sections and only after clicking on them the several subsections are revealed increases the readability of the page (cf. minimalist design mentioned earlier) and allows the users an easy access to the content that interests them while not distracting their attention. Size, font type, as well as the color and background of the subtitles are clear and transparent. In order for the text on the website to be readable, a high contrast between the subtitles and the background is needed (Machin 2008), which in this case is also applied: there are black inscriptions on a white background, or white ones

against a black backdrop. The right bottom of the webpage, in the footer section, represents five interactive sites/signs, signifying social networking websites, respectively Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google Plus and Instagram. In this way, the website complements its graphic design characteristics with interactivity.

As many of the website's posts contain the sharing button, being compatible with all social platforms, the content of the announcement and the appeal can be easily clipped and remediated. The possibility of sharing the text through the external sources makes it efficient for the organization to promote its actions through remediation, but also to preserve its original way of news presentation, thus fulfilling the requirements of rhetorical velocity theory (Ridolfo and DeVoss 2009). For example, AI allows spreading the majority of its posts from the news section with just one click, thus making sure that the messages contain all necessary hyperlinks to the original website and that the message viewed on the external site would be not only informative but also mobilizing. It allows instant sharing specifically of these chunks of text which reveal the personal, often very emotional take on the issue (the pathos mode achieved through evaluative terminology and expression of emotion) multimodally enhanced with typography, color and an occasional photo.

In the multimodal composition of AI's announcements in the news section, one could identify a common pattern emerging in the majority of news pieces. In addition to a huge photo taking up the entire width of the page at the top of the news to arouse greater interest, AI team highlight comments of accounts of eyewitnesses by inserting their quotes between the text paragraphs and highlighting them in a large, bold font (Figure 3). This adds the sense of factuality and authenticity (the logos mode achieved by giving the name of the speaker and using facts and/or figures) and provides personalized perspectives that complement the typical institutional affordances of the news section.

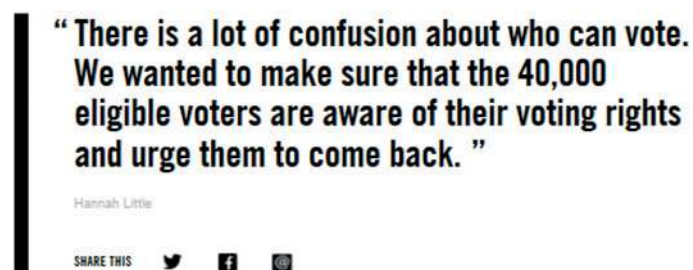


Figure 3. An example of the (shareable) quotation from the article of AI official website.

The footer section includes instructions and descriptions of how one could contribute to the organization's activities. Apart from the prevalent imperative mood, it uses positive direct appeal and flattery (an example of fallacious argument,

Bennett 2012), for example in “If you are talented and passionate about human rights then Amnesty International wants to hear from you” (Figure 4), which, with its conditional clause, is slightly reminiscent of a style used by recruiting agents (Dhebar and Stokes 2008). One could interpret it as another mobilizing maneuver.

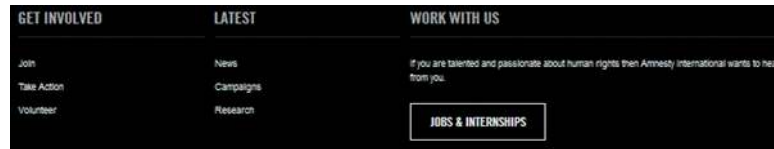


Figure 4. A footnote section of Amnesty International website.

To further enhance its credibility while documenting current and completed actions and priorities, AI team use simple and dramatic infographics to draw attention supporting its accumulated statistical effectiveness (Figure 5).



Figure 5. An example of AI infographics with statistical data appearing strategically at the top of the section on “What we do.”

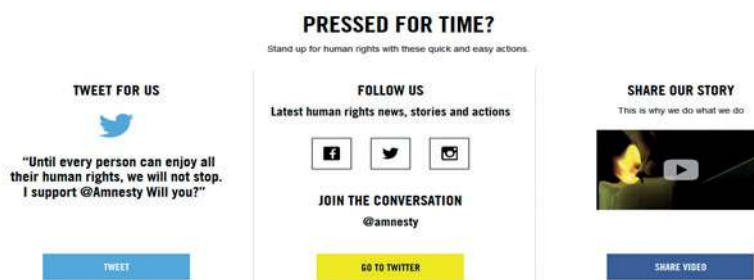
Argumentatively, this is the optimal way to disseminate information through the design with figures and icons, which is relatively easy to understand. At the same time the logos mode of the representation of AI activities is increased with numerical data supporting the cases and appeals. Not incidentally, a number of actions are announced with the focus on people – both activists and victims, negativity and impact to draw attention (Bednarek and Caple 2012), which is discussed in more detail below in the section on photographic representations of AI actions.

To get involved, a visitor needs to click on the “take action” button and follow the steps choosing the most suitable form of support. Here, to forestall disengagement or apathy, the organization responds to the needs of various recipients through questions and infographics illustrating how much commitment is needed for a given activity. The least intrusive in time and effort are such actions as signing a petition and sending an automatically created e-mail (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Infographics from the section “Get involved” with the possibility of choosing the most appropriate method of providing support to AI.

The section entitled “Pressed for time?” displays opportunities for even less time-consuming actions that aim to support AI (cf. “quick and easy actions” Figure 7.). It includes ways to quickly publicize Amnesty International’s content on the external social platforms. Starting with the confession of a person supporting Amnesty International and finishing with the sentence “Will you?” rhetorically constructs the sense of unity, assuming that the volunteer would never be left alone but instead provided with organizational help. It only emphasizes how much effort the organization puts in the development of each of the social media, with the pursuit to reach the largest audience and adapting its content to individual social platform-specific tools (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Linking elements to the external platforms, which allows for the automatic share.

To navigate the site interactively, it is useful to make use of search tools and indexing. Each and every news item published on the AI website is manually labeled to facilitate the search process. The user has a control over the four buttons, which in this case are: “content type,” “topic,” “region/country,” and “resource type.” Another function is the possibility to select the “topic” from the large spectrum of 60 key terms. These are the prevalent subjects, which reflect the internal system of selection, cataloguing and tagging of the posts, which is coherent with the organization’s policy and creates some sort of strategic designation within the discursive framework. Not incidentally, most of these terms, which are a part of the institutionalized process of fighting human rights abuses, can be classified as negative, as they generally describe situations of abuse or injustice (e.g. armed

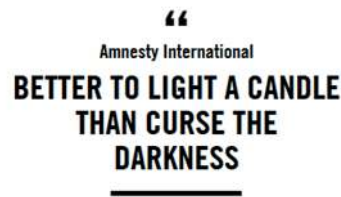


conflict, arms trade, censorship, child soldiers, death in custody, disappearances, exploitation, honor crime, people trafficking, etc.). In the section “Latest” at the very top of the website, just under the searching criteria buttons, there is an option for subscribing to a newsletter or personally customized alerts (e.g., announcements related to LGBT rights). In that way, Amnesty International cares for the integrity and customer relations characteristic of the corporate organizational brand image (Swan 2008).

### 3. The rhetoric of mission-related information

The structure of the “Who we are” section is the principal branding tool for AI, as is the case for many organizations. Usually, in the foreground there is a huge picture with the name of the section, and underneath the mission statement text is placed, interspersed with quotes and more important information that has been especially highlighted by the choice of larger font. The main picture illustrates a group of people who are gathered together in a street protest. In the foreground there is a young woman wearing a yellow T-shirt of the Amnesty International organization holding a big banner in her hand with the same bright yellow color of the organization’s logo. Her facial expression reveals that she is actively participating in the protest, probably shouting together with the protesters. This representation of a social actor through setting, pose, gaze, angle of viewing and distance is to connote activism and promote “embodied” demonstrating against injustice (Machin and Mayr 2012). The picture is also emblematic of the anti-establishment and pro-humanitarian values cherished by non-governmental organizations, such as AI.

In the upper right corner of the free space the textual slogan of Amnesty International is located (Figure 8), which refers to the organization’s logo through the explanation of the meaning of the candle icon. One of the elements that makes this slogan so strong and memorable is that it incorporates several stylistic devices, such as metaphor (a trope) and antithesis (a scheme) (Aristotle 1924). The metaphor linking an icon candle and the barbed wire has a symbolic meaning, thereby stimulating the imagination, tending to deeper thoughts and allowing greater flexibility in interpretation. The text of the proverb is also an example of an antithesis collating the notions of light pictured by a candle and darkness that stands for oppression, which could be classified as hybrid pictorial metaphor in the multimodal ensemble (Tseronis and Forceville 2017) (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** The written representation of the Amnesty International's iconic signifier

The post further foregrounds encouragements for joining AI as a team. The sense of projected ideological closeness between the organization and the viewer is sustained by the use of personal pronouns such as: “yours,” “our,” “us,” or “I.” that tend to imply certain alliances through deixis and (in)clusivity (Wales 1996). For example, in the initial sentences of the mission statement one could see the concise but straightforward message expressed in as many as five clauses in the imperative mood sequenced in such a way as to indicate an easy path and a recipe for a morally correct attitude for actively standing for human rights (ethos mode) (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Textual invitation to becoming a member of Amnesty International community.

Furthermore, in order to shape the image of organizational unity in a conscious manner, the organization should impose certain features, goals and common characteristics that all members of the Amnesty International team would like to share and would adhere to. The mission statement is also a repository of knowledge for all those who would like to learn more about the organization, its status and perhaps consider joining the team or materially support its initiatives. In this context, AI's Statute refers the reader to the universal values that the organization wants to be associated with, namely human rights, liberty, safety, change, equality, prosperity for all (the ethos mode) through its principal modes of operation: researching cases of human rights abuse, advocacy and lobbying of powerful institutions and public mobilization through campaigning and actions. On the basis of the information contained in this section of the website, people form an opinion about the whole organization, therefore the slogans of vision, mission and values must be especially well rhetorically developed. The vision and values of AI are as follows:

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights (Amnesty International 2018).

Rhetorically, the text of AI vision is sustained in the idealistic, even utopian terms, which makes this statement hard to take issue with and, by implying such a world is not completely attainable right now, it calls for constant joint striving to be closer to that designated vision. In this maneuver, a part of the burden and responsibility for the realization of the "perfect world" vision is placed on the public, without whose support and mobilization the organization will fail. The mission statement is much more mundane, describing the activity of the organization's members in everyday life, but naming it "research" and "action" without going into details. The effect of underlining their mission is contained by the use of strong adjectives such as "grave" in the context of the plural noun "abuses".

The section "Our core values" is kept simple and straightforward, without broadening the meaning of each of the organization's values, but only listing them all in the form of nouns or noun phrases. These interwoven adjectives strongly accentuate the organization's internationality, such as "global" (community), "international" (solidarity), "global" (coverage) (Bezemer and Kress 2008). Individual values nurtured and professed by AI circle around the same underlying goal - preventing human rights abuses. These values also interpenetrate, so that one value is the extension of the other, making the whole list easy to remember. All those texts - the vision, mission statement and values of the organization are all concise with no more than one sentence for each, which affects the ability to remember and to share this knowledge with others.

#### **4. Photographic and filmic representations of actions**

The photographs play an important role in the AI's documentary and promotional activity online. Especially today in the context of news, the images serve not only to report events, but also exhibit the emotions in the way that the words alone are not able to and thus could strongly affect the recipient's emotions (Bednarek and Caple 2012). In addition, the presence of photos, illustrations, or infographics on the website makes it much more entertaining as the eye could take a break from the text for a while, and the content itself is better remembered when combined with the image (Machin 2008). The same opinion is shared by AI's website administrators who often use graphic elements in their advertising materials and in news. Photographs of AI activities, just like the news, are chronologically collated onto

the homepage, so that the most recent, the most emotion-filled ones are displayed at the top covering the entire width of the screen. Needless to say, they are also remediated in the AI social networks.



**Figure 10.** Exemplary AI photo footage remediated on the social media website – Instagram

The photo in Figure 10 portrays a large group of people sitting on the ground probably in some Asian country, which can be confirmed by inspecting at the caption and the broader context. Due to a specific organization, a foregrounded individual and a backgrounded crowd, the photo might bring ambivalent emotions and connotations that one might have with any kind of gathering (Machin 2008, 56-60). The frontal lower angle and middle distance enables a closer inspection of the faces and the implied emotion; hence, one could distinguish fatigue, frustration, uncertainty, hope and perhaps even sadness or resentment. One might conclude from the imagery that it is probable that the people were forced to be sitting there for a long period of time. The setting indexes a secluded, rural area surrounded by dry grass in the foreground and palm trees in the background. Additionally, the men's attires indicate that they are poor peasants, and the main figure in the foreground is wearing only a piece of cloth tied around his waist. The photographer strategically made the shoot from a sitting position, thus emphasizing the equality and support for the sitting people visible in the picture and calling for our sympathy (Machin and Mayr 2012, 130). The constructed suffering in the image is confirmed through the caption, which indicates that these aboriginal communities, forced by the government, would have to leave their native land. This could be an example of photography setting used for strategic maneuvering to increase attention and emotional rather than rational engagement (Eemeren and Houtlosser 2003).

The photographs made by the NGOs, especially those who claim to support the rights of the citizens and counteract oppression, rhetorically build their

newsworthiness through emotional, sometimes quite drastic, photos of exercised force (Heiferman 2012). If the rights of the people are violated and the government of a given country does not show respect to the citizens but works to their detriment, then the matter is of particular interest to Amnesty International. For this reason, coercive power is often represented iconically by uniformed authorities and all kinds of bodies of state power (although it might also be represented metaphorically or metonymically in other photos). In the foreground of the sample photo (Figure 11), there are two policewomen holding a woman who took part in the protest, and one policeman in the back trying to restrain the woman's movements. The frame of the photograph is captured in such a way that the horizontally laid figure is at the center. In this one shot, the emotions of the captured woman are well expressed by her facial expressions – pain, bitterness, stubbornness as well as the emotions of the organs of state power – resolve to contain the demonstrating woman.



**Figure 11.** Photo coverage of a violent news report.

Encouragement for taking an action may also take the visual form, with footage of actual marches or decontextualized scenes to function as “posters” advocating social involvement (Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** Examples of the photo coverages from the main sections of AI website.

Vivid, boldly expressed emotions and the dynamic facial expressions of the presented people stress their involvement in what they are doing. The silhouettes of people caught in motion with their fists raised up could symbolize the strength, energy and determination to achieve goals. Additionally, each picture comprises the individual characteristics which make the scene complete (e.g. make-up of the activist, the flags of marching peasants).

In both of the above mentioned photographs the angle of viewing is strategically adjusted as to extract the most of the situation. The top picture in Figure 12 above was taken from a close range, which enables one to set a focus on the subjects on the foreground and close to the camera. The background of the photograph is very blurred and lacking of details, which leaves the observer without any dilemma as to what he or she should pay attention to when looking at the photo. Additionally, the picture presents the side face of the manifestation participant, and allows focusing on the dynamic movement of the arm, as her fist is directed forward, and with light that falls on the woman's face. The wording "take action for the fairer world today" encourages identification with a young woman visible in the photograph.

In the bottom picture in Figure 12, the angle is strategically adjusted from the above and from the front of the marching group in order to encompass the greatest number of people moving in a tight formation. The photographer also made sure that the angle of the picture is not taken from a too high a point or from a bird's eye view, because then the expressions on the faces of the participants would not be so visible. The participants show no sign of aggression but rather present the great resolve in the spirit of the peaceful manifestation. Both of the pictures are the examples of the informative campaign, presenting the non-violent ways of demonstrating, passion and embodied engagement in the action.

Another type of medium used by the AI in their documentary and promotional materials is video. The video is a specific example of the mixture of different semiotic modes in use to create meaning, with settings, gestures, motion, speech, image, music and writing, which might be integrated into a mini-narrative sequence with a topos schema (e.g. before-after, problem-solution). Through a wide range of video modes used, a film reaches a much wider audience types. The camera angles and direct eye-contact established in the video could be involving for the recipient, who becomes an active participant in the events. In addition, the narrative could be created through a background voice-over, the added emotion-filled sound effects or the moving confessions of the participants in a dramatic event (Figure 13). A video from a newsworthy event is also a more reliable source of information, as it has an evidential function (Bednarek and Caple 2012). In an era of photo-manipulation and posed photos, it is much harder to counterfeit a long segment of a video than to fabricate a photograph; however videos are also stringently rhetorical.

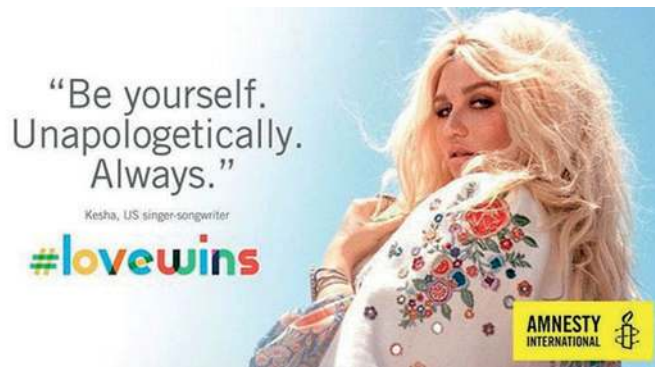


**Figure 13.** Footage of Amnesty International's news reportage from Yemen

The organization's news report "Yemen: Bombs fall from the sky day and night" (Figure 13) is the mixture of ethos, pathos and logos alternately used to emphasize different elements of the event. At the beginning of the video one could see one of the victims of the bombing in Yemen who is emotionally and vividly reporting what has just happened. By the use of witnessing not only is the pathos of the situation strategically projected, but also the newsworthiness of this reportage has increased through the use of personalization and negativity. An additional effect of the sublimity of the situation is maintained by the ostensibly ruinous setting and later by the voice-over that comments on the whole incident, focusing on the number of children who died during the airstrikes, as tragic events involving children are considered much more newsworthy and mobilizing through emotions of pity (pathos). After outlining the event, the narrator proceeds to a professional description of the cluster bombs, which are internationally prohibited, and logos-centered arguments and scientific facts along with a specific credible source such as "UNICEF" (3:32), thus emphasizing the logos and ethos modes. The text under the video also contains persuasive elements by the use of, among others, evaluative and technical language such as "serious violations of international humanitarian law." The textual and the visual modes complement each other as a testimony and evidence of humanitarian failure (Newton 2000).

In line with Dhebar and Stokes's (2008) recommendations, besides standard textual, visual and video materials used for news coverage, AI uses the whole range of possible promotional, advertising and marketing methods to publicize its activities. Well-organized marketing, adapted to each of the transmission channels guarantees access to an ever-larger group of recipients. AI endorsements, which are one of the sources of ethos, have proven to be popular with supporters and volunteers of Amnesty International. The picture of the American singer Kesha (Figure 14) was selected in their promotion on three different types of social platforms, namely Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to celebrate the international day against homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia (May, 18). The quotation "Be yourself. Unapologetically. Always" is a simple wording with a clear message, emphasized by the adverb "always" and the clipped syntactic units. For the needs

of modern media, which could be filtered using tags, the picture has also a hashtag with a rainbow-colored compound “lovewins.” Thanks to this solution Amnesty International is presented to a wider audience (singer’s fans) increasing the organization’s world-wide recognition (Baran and Davis 2006).



**Figure 14.** A picture of the US singer – Kesha used to promote Amnesty International values

## 5. Conclusion

This study showcases the rhetorical strategies in the multimodal resources applied in the design, visual illustration and content organization of one of the largest worldwide NGOs that deal with preventing violations of human rights, violence and discrimination – Amnesty International. Online activity and the overall global image of the organization should be understood as constructed not only on the basis of the official website, but also on the basis of organization’s external social websites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google Plus) (Hathaway 2015). For this purpose, rhetoric and semiotics as well as (photo)journalism were applied to accurately examine the rhetoric of individual components of the AI page content and structure. For the analysis of textual resources of slogans and mission statement, vision and values, the study used the categories of figures of speech (tropes and schemes), Aristotle’s modes of proof (ethos, pathos and logos) and analyzed the occurrence of errors in reasoning – logical fallacies that often feature in promotional materials (Woods 2014).

In the course of the analysis of images, icons or combined elements such as infographics or videos, it was revealed how the techniques of interfering into the end effect of photography were applied by choosing the right angle, the right frame, or post-processing (Moura 2014). The dominant narratives of suffering and injustice championed by AI have been underpinned with the use of staged photography and emotional accounts (Allan 2015). Meanwhile, the infographics and poster-photographs have foregrounded drama and celebrated the embodied forms of



protest. If protest is not an option, to foster engagement, the section “take action” displays the wide list of currently organized actions and initiatives such as signing petitions, writing emails and letters to state authorities or to people in need (to comfort them and show support). This now does not require a lot of commitment, as some of them are automatically filled out with the ready-made sample text.

The analysis of Amnesty International’s recent online media activity revealed that the mission, vision and goals often referred to the willingness of cooperation and an open attitude towards the public and volunteers. To meet the expectations of the visitors, the organization has identified time-specific ways to engage in voluntary activities, which go so far as to indicate the time needed for support with the type of help provided (Sargeant 1999). All this information is shown in the viewer-friendly way, through a multimodal combination of text and graphic elements that make the image complete, yet transparent, affecting the imagination and facilitating memorizing of particular pieces of information. The website’s navigation, search, and hyperlinking also encourage browsing through various facilities, including matching content to the requirements of mobile devices or smartphones or advanced search function that allows to filter information more precisely.

In addition, a number of news items and stories contain a photograph which takes up the entire page width. It is a rhetorical strategy, most often referring to pathos and negativity in the context of describing sad events, scenes of suffering or abuse of power. Negative events are more memorable and tend to arouse emotions of compassion or empathy. Positivity depicts mainly the work of AI activists who engage in various protests and manifestations. All these images present members in a powerful way – shouting, and actively participating in the happenings. Importantly, these people are presented in a slightly different way than in television commercials - they are not retouched, they are usually shown without make-up (unless in the colors of the manifestation), naturally insinuating that everyone can become a member of the organization.

In the course of the analysis it was found that the organization puts much emphasis on documentation of its actions, testimonials and the reliability of information (the *logos* mode), with witness accounts and numerical information. Also, the web designers foster interactivity and engagement by adjusting content of the webpage in a way that allows for its sharing on the external social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. What transpires is the coherent message, the well-established goal, the atmosphere of cooperation and “dynamics of involvement” and, at least potential, mobilization through remediation (Ridolfo and DeVoss 2009). This analysis revealed that content that encourages cooperation is filled with a range of formal rhetorical devices: figures of speech (*tropes* und *schemes*), short imperative sentences, uses of personal pronouns, elements pointing to newsworthiness, and rhetorically sustained narrations that point to emotional events.

As a result, the analysis in this case study has traced how effective non-governmental organizations' communication ought to be designed and conducted through a website and related media. It could inspire further detailed and comparative studies, including those that quantify affordances in more rigorous ways. It is also hoped that analyses such as this one enhance critical rhetorical literacy and lead to more awareness of mechanisms of multimodal persuasion.

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