



WRITE FOR RIGHTS

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Amnesty international is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

Our work protects and empowers people – we work to end the death penalty, to protect sexual and reproductive rights, to combat discrimination and to defend refugees' and migrants' rights. We campaign to: bring torturers to justice, change oppressive laws, and free people who are jailed simply for voicing their opinion. We speak out for anyone and everyone whose freedom and dignity are under threat.

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Human rights quizzes on Kahoot!

WRITE FOR RIGHTS

Write a letter. Change a life.

Sometimes a letter can change someone's life. That's the premise of Write for Rights, Amnesty's global letter-writing campaign. Today, it's one of the world's biggest human rights events.

Every December, Amnesty supporters across the globe will write millions of letters for those whose basic human rights are being attacked. And it's not just letters – it could be petitions, emails, Tweets, Facebook posts, photos, postcards. As a result of the international call to action, public officials are bombarded with letters; victims of torture, prisoners of conscience, people facing the death penalty or other human rights violations receive messages of solidarity from thousands of people in far off corners of the globe. Those suffering the violations know that their cases are being brought to public attention. They know that they are not forgotten.

The results of similar campaigns in previous years have been striking. The individuals affected by the violations report the difference that these letters make, they express their gratitude to those who have written, and they often describe the strength they derive from knowing that so many people are concerned about their case. Often there is a noticeable change on the part of officials towards these individuals: charges are dropped, treatment becomes less harsh, laws or regulations addressing the problem are introduced.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There are three quizzes offered on Kahoot on Amnesty International's profile: <https://create.kahoot.it/profile/amnestyinternational>. They will be appropriate for use in schools and with youth groups. Most of the activities can be run within a school lesson, and the learning objectives are relevant to many different subjects and disciplines. These quizzes provide an introduction to human rights for young people, in a way which is both urgent and engaging. Human rights are not presented as an abstract ideal, but as real issues affecting real people.

Ready to take action? More information about the Write for Rights campaign and the specific calls for action can be found on <https://amnesty.org/writeforrights>. A Human Rights Education pack with specific activities around the cases for young people can be downloaded: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act30/4740/2016/en/>. You can get in touch with your national Amnesty International section for more information and/or educational material. See for example: <https://write.amnestyusa.org/classroom/>.

Your words can change lives.



QUIZ I: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

General flow of the quiz: Introduction to human rights and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights > Understanding how treaties become laws > Reflection on who has a role to promote, protect and fulfil human rights > Understanding who can be a Human Rights Defender > Call to action: Write for Rights

Question 1. Watch first, then read closely. Human Rights at its very core are...

- Universal, invisible, alienable and interdependent
- Universal, divisible, inalienable and dependent
- **Universal, indivisible, inalienable and interdependent**
- Say what? Human Rights? Indivisibility? Inalienability?

[90 seconds] + video

Guidelines: Human rights are universal and inalienable; indivisible; interdependent and interrelated.

They are **universal** because everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of where they live, their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic background. **Inalienable** because people's rights can never be taken or given away. **Indivisible** as all rights are equally important and can't be separated from each other. Lastly they are **interdependent and interrelated** because rights are connected – political, civil, social, cultural and economic – and none can be fully enjoyed without the others. For example: can children enjoy the right to education on a daily empty stomach? If they are in poor health? If the road to school is unsafe?

Question 2. What does UDHR stand for?

- Unprecedented Declaration of Human Responsibilities
- Universal Decree of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Universal Denouncement of Human Rights
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) for all people and all nations. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of what many people believe to be the rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled. In the UDHR, the United Nations stated in clear and simple terms rights that belong equally to every person.

Question 3. So! There are 30 Human Rights in the UDHR. Which one of these is not a human right?

- **The right to love**
- The right to education
- The right to rest and leisure
- The right to a nationality

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: We all have the right to family and a right to protection from interference with family life. Yet there is **no explicit right to love or be loved**. At the same time, there is a very clear understanding on the principle of **non-discrimination and equality** in international human rights law, including on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. So, you should be free to choose your own partner, even if your religious leader, your family, the government or any other (state or non-state) actor does not agree with your choice.



Question 4. The State has a duty to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. To fulfil means the State...

- should satisfy the people's needs and demands
- **should take action to ensure people can enjoy human rights**
- may not stop the people from exercising their human rights
- should not allow for human rights abuses to take place

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: To **fulfill** human rights means that the States needs to provide the positive conditions for the people to enjoy their human rights. For example: to fulfil the right to health, the state must adopt a national health plan, ensure healthcare provision, provide information on health issues, ensure equal access to the conditions for health such as water, food and sanitation, among many more practical steps. These are called **positive duties**: a government is obliged to actively do **something**. # 3 is an explanation of a State **respecting** human rights. For example: the State must respect a person's freedom of expression and cannot put someone in jail for expressing opinions. This is called a **negative duty**: it implies that the State must not interfere and is obliged to do **nothing**. #4 is the State **protecting** human rights: the State has the obligation to protect individuals and groups from human rights abuses. The State has a positive obligation to act as to prevent, protect, prosecute and punish for acts where human rights are being violated, whether these are committed by the State or non-state actors. This is called **due diligence**. This means that in some cases of e.g. violence against women, even when committed by non-state actors, the State can be held responsible.

Question 5. Individuals who violated the law, such as prisoners, can lose their basic human rights

- True
- **False**

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: What does it mean again for human rights to be inalienable and universal? All people, globally, are entitled to them and they can never be taken away, even if you have been convicted or are suspected of having committed a crime. Having said that, some rights can be **restricted** under certain circumstances. Some countries will not allow for (all) prisoners to vote, New Zealand and the UK for example, while in other countries they may (i.e. Israel and Canada). So, people don't lose their rights, but they might be restricted.

Certain rights are **absolute**. This means they cannot be restricted ever. The right to freedom from torture and the right to freedom from slavery and servitude are examples.

Question 6. A government accepts a human rights treaty by signing it. In a later step they can ratify it. Here...

- The state formulates certain exceptions to the treaty
- Civil society stakeholders prepare a report on human rights
- **The state officially accepts to be bound to the treaty**

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: # 1 is called the process of making **reservations** to a treaty or convention: the provisions of a treaty that the state excludes and is therefore not bound by.

#2 is about other stakeholders submitting a **shadow report** to the UN, to be considered alongside the official state reports, with their findings on human rights violations within a certain country.



#3 is **ratification**. When Member States ratify a treaty it becomes binding on the state. The States who ratify a treaty will then have to incorporate its provisions into their national laws. If a State only signs, it expresses their intent and for the moment only includes an obligation to refrain from acts that would defeat the purpose of the treaty.

Question 7. What is the importance of ratification? It...

- shows how well-developed and civilized a nation is
- shows how much a State cares about human rights overall
- **provides a legal framework to hold governments accountable**
- is a symbolic act so it really has no practical implications

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Although international human rights law provides an important framework for guaranteeing the rights of all people in all countries, human rights standards generally do not become enforceable in States unless and until they are implemented through local, state, and/or federal law. This is what ratification does: the State commits to incorporating human rights in **national laws**. So this gives politicians, law enforcers, civil society, or anyone with an interest in human rights the framework to hold the government **accountable** to respect, protect, and fulfill those rights.

Question 8. 192 Member States ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. One State didn't:

- French Guiana
- **The United States of America**
- India
- Iraq

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: The United States of America is the only Member State who has signed it (in 1995), but not yet ratified it. This means then that it is **not legally binding** for the United States of America and the UNCRC is not part of the legal system of the country.

So, 192 out of 193 member states in the UN have committed to respect, protect and fulfil the rights contained in the UNCRC.

Now, what does it mean for a State not to ratify it? Why is that important to us? What are the practical implications? Ratification provides us with a legal framework to hold governments accountable to respect, protect and fulfill these rights. Civil society can do that for example by **monitoring** the government policies, programmes and laws in place and the actual situation on the ground against these. Without the legal frameworks, this is a lot harder to do.

Other answers: French Guiana is a dependency and not a member state of the UN, so it cannot sign or ratify treaties of the UN. India ratified in 1992, Iraq in 1994.



Question 9. So! Making sure that Human Rights are protected and promoted is the responsibility of...

- The United Nations and other multilateral institutions
- Government and law enforcement: judges and police
- Non-governmental organisations
- The people: you, me and everyone else

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: Responsibility to **protect** human rights resides first and foremost with the states themselves. The State is a **duty bearer**: they have the responsibility to respect, protect and fulfill human rights. However, governments may actually institute laws or policies that fail to respect, protect or fulfill basic human rights. The state can also be responsible for human rights violations when they do not investigate human rights abuses by non-state actors (such as businesses). Again, this is the principle of **due diligence**.

Violations are being monitored by United Nations committees, national institutions, governments, and many independent NGOs such as Amnesty International. But everyone can play a role in the **promotion** of human rights by holding governments and others accountable, on bigger and on smaller scales. Even you!

Question 10. So we all play a role in respecting Human Rights. Who then are 'Human Rights Defenders'?

- Only A
- A + B + C
- **A + B + D**
- All

[90 seconds]

Guidelines: A human rights defender is someone who, individually or with others, acts to promote or protect human rights. Human rights defenders are those people who act **peacefully** for the promotion and protection of those rights.

We can all be defenders of human rights if we choose to be. However, if you deny certain human rights yourself while defending others, you are not a human right defender. This because of the principle of **universality and indivisibility of human rights**: defenders must accept the universality of human rights as defined in the UDHR (Source: OHCHR Factsheet 29). That does not mean that you can't have personal, different opinions, as long as you respect and uphold human rights for all.

Question 11. (No Points) 'Human rights affect me directly in my life.' Do you agree with this statement?

- I agree
- I do not agree
- I am not sure yet if I agree

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: Ask participants to share. How do they see that it does, or does not, affect their life? How do they see human rights reflected in their life, in their surroundings (school, wider community)? Invite them to think about everyday violence, bullying, discrimination. Is that a violation of human rights? What about poverty?



Question 12. (No Points) Watch the video. 'Words. They can do anything.' Do you agree with this statement?

- I agree
- I do not agree
- I am not sure yet if I agree
- Anything? Um? Maybe not anything

[30 seconds] + video

Guidelines: Ask participants to share. What does this mean to them? How can words create change in the world? What is required? What can be done?

To illustrate the power of words: Moses Akatugba from Nigeria was sentenced to death at 16 years old for stealing 3 mobile phones in 2005. He signed confessions after having been tortured by the police. After Amnesty International supporters took 800.000 **actions** (letters written, tweets sent, petitions signed to the State Governor) in December 2014, Moses was finally pardoned in May 2015.

Question 13. Watch the video. How many *actions* you think were taken in the 2015 Write for Rights campaign?

- 174.000
- 651.800
- 1.126.900
- **3.700.000**

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: Every December, Amnesty International supporters across the globe will write millions of letters for those whose basic human rights are being attacked.

And it's not just letters – this is the total number of actions, which include petition signatures, emails, Tweets to governments, Facebook posts, photos, postcards. As a result of the international call to action, public officials are bombarded with letters and victims of torture, prisoners of conscience, people facing the death penalty or other human rights violations receive messages of solidarity from thousands of people in far off corners of the globe: <http://amnesty.org/writeforrights>.

Question 14. (No Points) You too can defend human rights in several ways. What will be your next step?

- Campaigning? Forget about it, I really don't have the time
- I want to learn more about human rights. Next Kahoot please!
- I will sign Amnesty's petitions to call upon governments
- I want to write letters or take action for Write for Rights

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Apart from the Write for Rights campaign (see explanation above), there are others ways to take action. Throughout the year, there are **petitions** launched that call upon government's responsibilities in various human rights cases and issues. These petitions can be found on the global website <https://www.amnesty.org/en/> or on the national Amnesty websites.

There is plenty of educational material available that can help students learn more about human rights and Amnesty encourages people globally to keep learning. See for example <https://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/>. The key to being a HRD however lies in the **action** that people will take: we can have all the knowledge in the world about human rights, but it won't make a difference until we act, collectively or individually, to create a positive change.



QUIZ II: HUMAN RIGHTS & FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

General flow of the quiz: Introduction to a Write for Rights case > Explanation of absolute rights and restrictions > Understanding the risks of 'expression' through Write for Rights cases > Reflection on own behavior and beliefs around freedom of expression > Call to action

Question 1. (No Points) "Ilham Tohti should be released immediately and unconditionally."

- I agree
- I don't agree
- I'm not sure, it depends

[20 seconds] + video

Guidelines: **Guidelines:** Survey question as an introduction to the topic. Ask participants for their answers. Why do or don't they agree? Did Ilham Tohti commit any crime? Is the State violating any of his rights? If so, which ones? (Possible answers are: his rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, freedom from torture and other ill-treatment).

Explain to the participants that when thinking about freedom of expression and being in prison, we might normally think of journalists who are at risk of being imprisoned for writing critically about the government.

Tell them that according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2015, 199 journalists were imprisoned globally (a question will follow about this later!) but that overall many more people, for example, people like you and me using social media, are at risk and have been imprisoned for criticizing their government. And many others, such as artists, musicians, and writers.

Question 2. The person in this video explains about some rights being absolute. What does this mean?

- They are prioritized above all other rights
- States may never torture people
- **They cannot be limited or restricted under any circumstance**
- Everyone agrees on absolute rights, they are never debated

[30 seconds] + video

Guidelines: International human rights law recognizes that there are very few **absolute** rights. Whilst absolute rights may not be limited under any given circumstance, reasonable limits may be placed on other rights and freedoms. This is expressed in **Article 29** of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR). In order to be free, collectively and individually, there have to be laws and limits in place that respect everyone's rights and keep the peace in a world where we all play an active part.

Regarding #1: this is incorrect because all human rights have equal status and cannot be separated or given a hierarchical order (**indivisibility** principle). Another equally important core principle is that human rights are **interrelated and interdependent**: the fulfillment of one right often depends on the fulfillment of others. For example, to enjoy the right to health may depend on the right to information and education. Think about this: where information and education about sexual and reproductive rights is not available or repressed, we can see higher numbers of people seeking unsafe abortions, which can put women's health at risk.



Question 3. Which of the following rights is an absolute right and therefore cannot be restricted?

- **Right to freedom from torture (Article 5)**
- Right to work (Article 23)
- Right to freedom of expression (Article 19)
- **Right to life (Article 3)**

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: (Articles refer to the UDHR.) Ask the participants: How did they understand that the right to freedom from torture is an absolute right? Why can't the right to work be an absolute right?

The other listed rights can be restricted. Take for example the right to work. This is, as are all other human rights, also an **inalienable** right. Inalienable means they can never be taken or given away. Yet it is clear that this right only applies to people of a certain age to prevent and protect children from child labor. Or, in national laws it will be stated that you cannot perform certain professions without a license, such as in teaching, medical and legal jobs. You can't start performing heart surgery on people just because the UDHR says you have free choice of employment.

Question 4. So freedom of expression may be limited. Under what circumstances? To...

- prevent people from verbally attacking the authorities
- **protect e.g. national security, public order, public health**
- protect the governments and its leaders' reputations

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Rights can be limited, but not just for any reason. States can limit the right to freedom of expression in the performance of its duties to protect the rights of others or the rights or reputations of others, national security, public order or public health or morals.

Can students think of a real-life situation in their country where freedom of expression was rightfully limited? (E.g. incitement to murder or the sale of pornography to children.)

Question 5. Any restriction to a right must be necessary and proportionate. Proportionate means that it...

- must be universal: it must apply equally to all people
- must be excessive compared to the threat faced
- **must be the least restrictive measure to achieve its aim**

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: The restriction of a particular freedom may not cause more harm than the harm it is trying to protect against.

Any restriction should be as **specific** as possible – for example, applied to a particular article in a journal or specific details in that article, it would not be permissible to restrict the whole publication.

Restrictions that are demonstrably necessary for a legitimate purpose may still be **disproportionate** (e.g. imprisonment for public nudity would likely be disproportionate, whereas a fine or administrative penalty might not be). Restrictions must also not be **discriminatory** in their intention or effect (e.g. restrictions on certain forms of dress may have a discriminatory effect on some ethnic or religious groups).



Question 6. Journalists run risks worldwide. How many were imprisoned globally in 2015?

- 25
- 86
- 117
- **199**

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: This question relates back to the explanation given in question 1, where the quizmaster will have mentioned the total number. The countries with the highest numbers of imprisoned journalists are:

China (49), Egypt (23) and Iran (19).
(Source: Committee to Protect Journalists)

Ask participants what kinds of risks journalists run. Answers might include that journalists are being exposed to a variety of physical and psychological hazards. They might be reporting on events in dangerous natural and social conditions (disasters, war). Many journalists have an important role as **human rights defenders**, revealing human rights violations. They might be subjected to censorship and political pressure, or at risk of persecution, intimidation and violence. That constitutes an attack on the lives of these journalists and the practice of independent journalism, threatening freedom of expression as a whole.

Question 7. Watch the video. Photojournalism. Is that included in the right to freedom of expression?

- **Yes**
- No

[20 seconds] + video

Guidelines: Yes, photojournalism is included. Ask the participants: what about other forms of expression such as art, film, theatre, or even personal behaviour?

Freedom of expression covers both **verbal and non-verbal** ways of expression. This means that the work of painters, sculptors, graffiti artists, mime players, singers et cetera are all protected by the right to freedom of expression. Often when we talk about freedom of expression, we might think more about written and spoken words, but it includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds (e.g., political, religious or philosophical, artistic and cultural), by any means (e.g. writing, speech, theatre, film, music, graphic, internet, language, behaviour).

Question 8. Besides arbitrary detention, what other human rights violations were shown in the last video?

- **Right to health**
- Right to food
- **Right to freedom from torture and other ill-treatment**
- **Right to life, liberty and security of person**

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Ask participants to explain what they saw or read that constitutes a human rights violation.

Army and police in Cairo killed 1.000 people in one day. Shawkan was arrested for taking photographs and now he could face the death penalty. He has been unlawfully detained and is in jail since 2013. He is sick but not getting his medication. They have tortured and ill-treated him while in prison.



Question 9. 'Under freedom of expression, I am allowed to voice opinions that others may find offensive.'

- True
- Not true
- It depends on the circumstances

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: Everyone is allowed to voice their ideas, opinions and beliefs, even if considered offensive by many. Such expression may only be restricted to protect one of the specified public interests discussed earlier at question 4 (refresher: to protect national security, public order, or public health or morals or the rights and reputations of others). And, remind participants that restrictions to human rights should follow the **principle of necessity and proportionality**: it should be the least restrictive measure in order to protect the legitimate aim.

Is a joking text about a terrorist group to a friend in violation to other rights? A threat to national security, or public order? Remind participants that restrictions to human rights should follow the **principle of proportionality**: it should be the least restrictive measure in order to protect the legitimate aim.

In the case of **Fomusoh Ivo Feh**, the person we see in the image, he texted a friend jokingly that Boko Haram (against Western education) would have GCSEs as necessary qualifications. This in a context of high youth unemployment in Cameroon and the joke that it may be easier to join Boko Haram than find employment. A third party then saw the SMS and showed it to the police, who arrested Fomusoh. He is being tried by the military tribunal and could face the death penalty under Cameroonian anti-terror law. A genuine text recruiting for Boko Haram could be a legitimate concern for law enforcement (national security). But in Ivo's case? Does the government have a legitimate aim? Is the joke inciting violence?

Question 10. (No Points) It is okay to shout that someone has a gun in a full metro, just for fun.

- I agree
- I disagree
- I'm not sure

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Ask participants what will most likely happen if this someone would do this. What would their reaction be if they're in the metro and someone starts screaming that someone has a gun? Will there be chaos? Most likely. And in that chaos people might get injured.

This is an example of limitation of freedom of speech that falls under securing the **public order**. Just as you cannot make a prank call about a bomb on an airplane. If you do this, you might get arrested under public order offences.



Question 11. (No Points) Posting sexist jokes on Facebook should be allowed.

- I agree
- I disagree
- I'm not sure
- It depends on the joke

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Ask participants to share their opinions. Make sure that people respect each other's views.

What does it mean for something to be sexist? What about jokes that mock other cultures or religions? Could they contribute to a culture where discrimination against certain groups is more accepted? Could you consider Facebook a public space? Does that make a difference? And, what about sincerely hateful statements about a particular group that aren't made as a joke?

Advocacy of hatred (sometimes understood as "hate speech") that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence cannot be considered legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and should be subject to restrictions. This includes advocacy of hatred on national, racial or religious grounds, or any other discriminatory basis including gender, sexual orientation, disability etc.

Advocacy of hatred is more than just the expression of ideas or opinions that are hateful towards members of a particular group. It requires a clear showing of **intent to incite others** to discriminate, be hostile (experience intense and irrational emotions of opprobrium, enmity and detestation) toward, or commit violence against, the group in question. States are required to **prohibit** – though not necessarily criminalize (think about necessity and proportionality) - advocacy of hatred.

Question 12. (No Points) Which group you think has the most restricted freedom of expression in your country?

- Students
- Prisoners
- Soldiers
- Other

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Open question. There is no right or wrong in this case. Invite participants to share why they believe this particular group is the most restricted in exercising their right to freedom of expression?

Question 13. Amnesty International campaigns for 'Prisoners of Conscience'. These are persons who are...

- inflexible in changing their moral sense about right / wrong
- **imprisoned for their political or religious views**
- very intelligent and imprisoned: the IQ-crime correlation

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Amnesty International calls for the **immediate and unconditional release** of Prisoners of Conscience.

This term was coined by the founder of Amnesty International, Peter Benson, in 1961. It refers to people imprisoned solely because of their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs, ethnic origin, sex,



sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or other status. A person cannot be a prisoner of conscience if they have used **violence** or have advocated violence or hatred.

Question 14. (No Points) Amnesty activists write letters for prisoners of conscience. Who would you write for?

- Ilham Tohti, teacher in prison for writing a blog. China
- Shawkan, journalist in prison for taking pictures. Egypt
- Fomusoh Ivo Feh, student in prison for a joke SMS. Cameroon
- Other, namely...

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: Ask participants for the reasons for their decision. Why do they consider it important to write for these persons? Would they write for all of them, for none of them? Do they feel more connected or concerned about one particular case over the others? Why? And who selected option 4? Why did they pick this option?

Invite students to the page of **Write for Rights** for example letters they can use and further instructions on how to send them: <http://amnesty.org/writeforrights>. On the general website of Amnesty International they will be able to find and sign petitions online around these and other cases: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/>.



QUIZ III: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS. TERRITORY, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT

General flow of the quiz: Introduction to human rights defenders > introduction to territory, land and environment rights defenders through Write for Rights case > Understanding risks of being a TLERD > Reflection on own behavior and context > Call to action for Write for Rights

Question 1. Watch the video. Is Máxima a human rights defender by defending water and the environment?

- Yes
- No

[20 seconds] + video

Guidelines: There is a clear relationship between human rights and the use of natural resources. Without water, without food, there is no life. People who are defending land and the environment are defending matters that relate to human well-being. Think about it: what are the effects of major changes in our environment, such as climate change, on the lives of people all around the world?

Question 2. Human rights defenders must...

- Be officially recognized as one by the United Nations
- **Defend human rights through non-violent means**
- **Not undermine the human rights of others**
- Work in a professional setting on human rights

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: Blind question. Anyone can be a human rights defender (HRD). There is no specific qualification or requirement, though a HRD should conduct his or her actions in compliance with the Declaration of Human Rights. If you deny certain human rights while defending others, you are not a HRD (e.g. not recognizing rights of certain minority groups). You are of course allowed to have your own opinion, but you should respect and uphold human rights for all. This is because of the principle of **universality and indivisibility of human rights**. A person who uses violence or undermines the rights of others when fighting against human rights violations is not considered a HRD. People can defend human rights through certain professions and paid work, but also on a voluntary basis, out of personal interests and passions.

The **universality** of human rights means everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of where they live, their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic background. They are **Indivisible** as all rights are equally important and can't be separated from each other.

Source:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet29e>



Question 3. 'You can only be a Human Rights Defender if you defend human rights on a daily basis.' This...

- is true
- **is false**
- I'm not sure of
- depends on which human right you are defending

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: A human rights defender is someone who, individually or with others, acts to promote or protect human rights. We can all be defenders of human rights if we choose to be. We can be one whether we promote and protect human rights our **entire life, occasionally or only once**.

For Maxima Acuna defending human rights is a daily struggle and it affects her family's life on a daily basis. Others defend human rights on different occasions. Amnesty International, for example, has a movement of 7 million supporters, who engage in human rights activism in different ways. Some are very active, others less.

Question 4. (No Points) Malala is a human rights defender. Can you think of others?

- Yes! I know one
- Yes! I can think of more than one actually
- I wouldn't know of anyone really
- Maybe, but I am not sure if they qualify as a defender

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: Open question. Ask for input. Who did they think off? Why? What rights is Malala Yousafzai defending? Other examples are: Emma Watson as a defender of women's and girls' rights. Or what about Shailene Woodley? She has joined non-violent protests of Indigenous peoples against the Dakota Pipeline in the United States.

Do they know of someone close to them who defends human rights? It doesn't need to be a famous, public figure after all. Remember: we can be one whether we promote and protect human rights our entire life, occasionally or only once.

Is the group thinking of specific rights in particular? Pertaining to political rights, social rights, or economic rights? Or related to certain categories of rights holders? Youth, refugees, women?

Question 5. (No Points) Most killings were recorded against which category of defenders globally in 2015?

- **Environmental activists**
- Journalists
- Humanitarian professionals working in war zones

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: Defenders working on rights related to land or the environment are at risk of being attacked for their activities.

In 2015 alone, **185 killings of defenders** working on land and environment issues were recorded around the world. 122 (or 65%) of these were in Latin America.

A total of **110 journalists** were killed around the world in 2015 (source: Reporters Without Borders), and **109 humanitarian** aid workers (source: Aidworkers Security).



Question 6. 'To be a human rights defender you can't have been convicted of a crime.' This is...

- true, you need the law on your side
- **false, many defenders are unjustly accused by authorities**
- maybe true, maybe false, I am not sure

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: The fact that an individual has been accused or convicted of a criminal offence does not automatically mean that they are not an HRD. This is to be determined based on the individual circumstances of the case. The critical test is whether or not the person is defending a human right.

This is a very important issue because, in many countries, the criminal justice system is misused to target and silence human rights defenders who are often vilified and subject to smear campaigns by the State, or even the public. They are then told that they are not “real” human rights defenders. (Source: OHCHR)

Question 7. Watch the video first. What are ancestral lands?

- **Lands/territories/resources belonging to Indigenous peoples**
- Lands not yet seen formally developed for civilization
- New lands discovered and claimed by colonizers centuries ago

[30 seconds] + video

Guidelines: Ancestral land refers to lands belonging to an Indigenous people. The territory includes both the ancestral lands where communities have lived and the natural resources found on these lands. The culture, way of life and world view of these communities is intimately linked to the territory.

The lands inhabited by Indigenous peoples are dealt with differently by different countries. Many states have specific legislation for ancestral lands. Yet some Indigenous peoples live in places where their right to land is not recognised, or not effectively protected.

Question 8. Apart from access to land, people in the video protect other rights. Which can you identify?

- **The right to adequate housing**
- **The right to work**
- **The right to food**
- **The right to health**

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: All of these rights are connected to the right and access to the ancestral lands that the Indigenous people in the Peace River Valley are campaigning for.

They live and work on and off these lands. The land gives them food (berries, fruits, game they hunt). It gives them access to natural medicines that they harvest for their health. Also, increasing mercury levels in the water makes it unsafe to eat fish and drink water from the river.

Question 9. The right to land is part of international treaties. Is everyone entitled to this right?

- Yes, these rights are universal and apply to everyone
- No, a right to territory never applies to citizens
- **It depends, only Indigenous peoples can claim this right**

[30 seconds]

Guidelines: There is no such thing as the right to land or territory per se. However in international treaties it is established that **Indigenous peoples do have a right** to their traditional lands. Those are written down in, amongst others, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: 'indigenous people peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories' (Article 10). The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 from the International Labour Organization includes land rights as well: 'the rights of ownership and possession of the



peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognized' (Article 14).

Be aware that **declarations** (such as the UDHR and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) are **not** legally binding and do not follow a process of ratification. They are documents of intent, declaring certain aspirations. They are often the base for **conventions**, such as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, which **are** legally binding for States who have ratified them. This means that the Indigenous peoples right to land **is indeed legally binding**, further established by jurisprudence of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

For people claiming and defending their rights this marks an important difference, as a ratified convention can give them the legal framework to defend their rights through domestic courts, while a signed declaration does not provide them with the same tools to do so.

Question 10. Watch the video. Who is responsible for attacking land & environmental rights defenders?

- Police and army
- Governments
- Companies
- Other citizens

[20 seconds] + video

Guidelines: In many cases the government, the armed forces and companies may be involved in perpetuating the violence land and environmental rights defenders.

Non-state actors, such as individuals or companies, may attack HRDs. They are then punishable by criminal law and should be held responsible. However following international human rights law the State is also responsible, for having failed to protect HRDs from being attacked by others. It is important to stress that the **government as a duty bearer** has a specific duty to protect people from being attacked by other groups of people.

So when HRDs are under attack, the government must actively protect them and prosecute perpetrators. However, in reality we see many cases where crimes against activists are not properly investigated, which sends the message that such attacks can be carried out with impunity. The authorities often blame their country's weak institutions for the shocking injustice, but conveniently ignore the fact that lack of political will to protect and support these activists is often what puts them in danger in the first place.



Question 11. The State should consult Indigenous peoples about plans that may affect them. This means...

- their traditional decision-making process must be respected
- the State should seek their consent
- they should invite the community leader to speak on behalf
- a questionnaire should be sent out to all people

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires States to **consult and cooperate** in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned. This should be done through their **own representative institutions**, which is why talking only to a community leader is not enough. The community leader might, after all, have a different view than the community itself. Indigenous peoples will normally have their own decision-making processes, and these must be respected. A questionnaire is neither a good format nor tool to inform people and ask for their consent, as illiteracy rates may be high and will exclude many people to voice their concerns.

The Indigenous peoples' **free, prior and informed** consent must be sought before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them (article 19), including mining and other utilization or exploitation of resources.

Question 12. (No Points) Are specific land & environment related violations affecting the community you live in?

- Yes, definitely
- Not that I heard or know of
- No, we are all pretty good here

[20 seconds]

Guidelines: Open question. Ask participants for their thoughts.

First of all, what do they consider their community? Especially in our globalized era, does the community you live in extend your direct environment?

There is quite often a relation between these rights and business development. The link between business and human rights is gaining more and more recognition, as is the importance of climate change and sustainability.

Many of the Sustainable Development Goals that countries have agreed upon to reach by 2030 contain goals that are related to territory, land and environment. For example: Goal 11 (sustainable and resilient cities), Goal 14 (sustainable use of the ocean's resources), Goal 15 (sustainable forest management and biodiversity). These goals are important for all the nations.

General examples of land and environment related violations can include contamination of water and air quality, which can result in health issues, through, for example, illegal dumping of waste in the ocean. Other specific contexts in which such violations may occur include the Dakota Pipeline in the USA, aboriginal land rights in Australia, Roma rights in Europe.



Question 13. (No Points) The Peace River Valley can hear your voice of support. Do you know how to reach them?

- Yes, and I would like to reach out them!
- **Yes, but then again, why would I? It's not my issue.**
- **No, I have no idea how to reach out and what I can do**

[60 seconds]

Guidelines: Ask participants for their ideas and opinions. What exactly can and will they do to make a difference? Would they prefer to work on such cases individually, or in the group?

Tell them that they can respond to a human rights violation by demanding the government to uphold and respect the rights of human rights defenders.

One of the ways can be done is with Amnesty International. In the Write for Rights campaign millions of people write such letters and sign petitions, and with great success. The case of Maxima in Peru and the Peace River Valley in Canada are included in this year's quiz. For more information and access to direct actions:

<http://amnesty.org/writeforrights> and

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/>.