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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaim in clear and simple terms the rights which belong equally to every person on this earth. These rights are your rights. Familiarize yourself with them and help to promote and defend them for yourself as well as for your fellow human beings.

Your rights can be restricted only in limited circumstances, such as to protect other people's rights. No person or state may use any of the articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to justify undermining the rights to which we are all entitled.

Article 1

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”

You have the same human rights as everyone else in the world, because you are a human being. These rights are inalienable — they cannot be taken away from you. Every individual, no matter who they are or where they live, should be treated with dignity.

Article 2

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind”

You should not suffer discrimination, or be deprived of any of your rights, because of your race, colour, sex, language, religion or political opinions. When it comes to respect for your basic rights, it should not matter what country you were born in, what social class you belong to, or how rich or poor you are. Everyone should enjoy all the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 3

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

Article 4

“ No one shall be held in slavery or servitude”

Human beings must not be owned, bought or sold. No one has the right to enslave anyone else. Slavery is a crime.

Article 5

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”

Torture is forbidden at all times and in all circumstances. No one should suffer treatment or punishment that is cruel or makes them feel less than human. These rules apply everywhere — in police stations, prisons, on the streets, in peacetime or during a war.

Article 6

“Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law”

Every human being has the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law. We must all be granted the rights and bear the obligations accorded to every person by the law.

Article 7

“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”

You have the right to be treated by law in the same way as everyone else. You have the same right to be protected by the laws of your country as anyone else.

Article 8

“Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law”

If your rights under the law are violated by someone else — be they another individual or a member of the police or security forces — you have the right to see justice done.

Article 9

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”

You may not be arrested or held in a police station or prison without good reason. You may not be kept out of your own country. If you are detained, you have the right to challenge the detention in a court of law.

Article 10

“Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

Article 11

“Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty”

If you are accused of a crime, you have the right to be treated as innocent, unless or until you are proved guilty, according to the law, in a fair and public trial, where you are allowed to mount a proper defence. You cannot be tried for doing something which was not a criminal offence in law at the time it was done.

Article 12

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation”

No one has the right to intrude in your private life or to interfere with your home or family without good reason. No one has the right to attack your good name without reason. The law should protect you against such interference.

Article 13

“Everyone has the right to freedom of movement”

You have the right to move about freely within your country. You also have the right to travel freely to and from your own country, and to leave any country.

Article 14

“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”

If you are forced to flee your home because of human rights abuses, you have the right to seek safety in another country. This means that border police or other authorities may not refuse you entry, or return you to your own country, without proper consideration being given to your request for asylum.

Article 15

“Everyone has the right to a nationality”

You have the right to be treated as a citizen of the country you come from. No one can take away your citizenship, or prevent you from changing your nationality, without good reason.

Article 16**“Men and women... have the right to marry and to found a family”**

All adults have the right to marry, regardless of their race, country or religion. Both partners have equal rights in the marriage, and their free and full agreement is needed for the marriage to take place. The family is entitled to protection by the state.

Article 17**“Everyone has the right to own property”**

You have the right to own goods, land and other property, alone or with other people. No one has the right to take your property away without good reason.

Article 18**“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”**

You have the right to hold views on any issue you like without fear of punishment or censure. You also have the right to believe in any religion — or none at all. You have the right to change your religion if you wish, and to practise and teach your religion or beliefs.

Article 19**“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”**

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

Article 20**“Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association”**

You have the right to gather together with other people, in public or private. You have the right to hold meetings and organize peaceful demonstrations. Everyone has the right to form or join societies, trade unions, political groups and other associations. No one may force you to join any group if you do not wish to.

Article 21**“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country”**

You have the right to be part of your government, either by being in it yourself or by choosing others to represent you. Governments have the authority to govern because they represent the will of the people. This means there should be free and fair elections on a regular basis.

Article 22**“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization... of... economic, social and cultural rights”**

You have the right — by virtue of being a human being — to have your basic needs met. Everyone is entitled to live in economic, social and cultural conditions that allow them dignity and let them develop as individuals. All countries should do everything they can to make this happen.

Article 23

“Everyone has the right to work... Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions”

You have the right to work in fair and safe conditions and to choose your job. You have the right to be paid enough for a decent standard of living, or to receive supplementary benefits. You also have the right to form or join trade unions to protect your interests.

Article 24**“Everyone has the right to rest and leisure”**

You have the right to time off from work. No one may force you to work unreasonable hours, and you have the right to holidays with pay.

Article 25**“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for... health and well-being”**

Every human being has the right to a decent life, including adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services. Society should help those unable to work because they are unemployed, sick, disabled or too old to work. Mothers and children are entitled to special care and assistance.

Article 26**“Everyone has the right to education”**

Everyone has the right to an education. It should be free of charge, and everyone should be required to complete at least the early years of schooling. Education at a higher level should be equally available to everyone on the basis of merit. Education should strengthen respect for human rights.

Article 27**“Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community”**

No one may stop you joining in cultural events organized within your community. You have the right to enjoy music, plays, exhibitions, poetry or any other form of artistic or collective expression. You have the right to share in the benefits that scientific discovery may bring.

Article 28**“Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”**

Human beings have the right to live in the kind of world where their rights and freedoms are respected.

Article 29**“Everyone has duties to the community”**

We all have a responsibility to the people around us, and we can only develop fully as individuals by taking care of each other. All the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can only be limited by law and only if necessary to protect other people’s rights, meet society’s sense of right and wrong, maintain order and look after the welfare of society as a whole.

Article 30**“Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying... any right to engage in any activity... aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth”**

There is nothing in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that justifies any person or state doing anything that undermines the rights to which we are all entitled.

