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Human rights are based on the principle that every human being is born equal, in dignity and rights. All human rights belong to all people simply because we are human beings. They are equally important and they are interdependent; loss of one right impacts other rights.

Defending human rights in one area supports everyone's human rights. ¹



CIVIL RIGHTS



POLITICAL RIGHTS



ECONOMIC RIGHTS



SOCIAL RIGHTS



CULTURAL RIGHTS



ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

* WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS

How do you take action to challenge injustice?

How do you protect and promote human rights?



UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Peacefully taking action, individually or collectively, to promote or protect human rights makes you a human rights defender. ²

NAME AND DOCUMENT THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS YOU ARE WITNESSING OR EXPERIENCING

Take note of how these violations may be experienced differently among populations such as women and girls, LGBTQ2I, children and youth, Indigenous peoples, people living with disabilities, and other marginalized populations.

Remember that human rights are for everyone. ³



Universal Declaration of Human Rights

IDENTIFY WHO BEARS RESPONSIBILITY AND HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE



Do the duty-bearers know about the human rights violations?



Do they care?



Do they have the solutions to fix it?

State actors are duty-bearers. Along with other entities and individuals, they have the specific obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations.



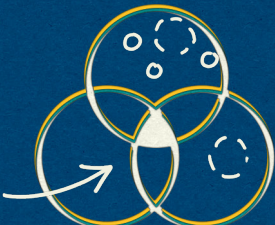
UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

DIVERSIFY YOUR PEACEFUL ACTIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

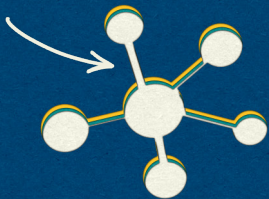
Respect and recognize intersecting identities within and among social movements.



Listen and be open to invitation and call for solidarity from other movements.



Harness human rights education



Engage powerholders and decision-makers



Use the UN System as an instrument in your toolbox

We have the right to meet or assemble peacefully; to form, join and participate in NGOs, associations, or groups; and to communicate with NGOs or intergovernmental organizations, for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.



UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

We have the right, individually and in association with others, to develop and discuss new human rights ideas and principles and to advocate their acceptance.

- Education **about** human rights means providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms, values, and mechanisms.
- Education **for** human rights means learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of learners and educators.
- Education **through** human rights means empowering people to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.



UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training ⁴

Mapping out who has power within the system and identifying how they can influence decision-making is a strategy to hold duty bearers accountable.

Everyone who, because of their professions, can affect the freedom and dignity of others, should respect and promote human rights.



UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Since the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN system includes international human rights standards for populations including women and girls, children and youth, Indigenous peoples, people living disabilities, racialized peoples, and other vulnerabilized groups.

This includes the crucial work of protecting and promoting the work of human rights defenders.





Human rights defenders may face many challenges along the way.

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UN General Assembly 2013 Resolution on protecting women human rights defenders ⁵

Due to systemic and structural forms of discrimination and violence, these challenges disproportionately affect human rights defenders from marginalized groups, especially women and LGBTQ2I peoples.

SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL
EXCLUSION

THREATS
TO ONLINE
AND OFFLINE
SECURITY

FEELINGS OF
ISOLATION OR
LONELINESS

EMOTIONAL
BURNOUT

RESTRICTIONS
ON FREEDOMS

LOVED
ONES BEING
TARGETED

HARASSMENT
AND VIOLENCE

GOVERNMENT
RETALIATION

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES ALONG THE WAY



Find your sources of joy and motivation

Ask yourself, what gives you hope? What replenishes you? Allow yourself the time to seek peace and connection.

Recognize how physical, emotional, and psychological trauma may impact you and others and create spaces for safety and healing.



Protect yourselves, online and offline

Plan for your protection:

- Conduct a risk assessment.
- Develop a security plan for yourself and/or for your organization.



Seek out direct assistance/practical support

Reach out to one of the many organizations which exist to help people doing the work like yours, such as Frontline Defenders.

Consider how to potentially use retaliation to bring further attention to human rights

Everyone has the right to be protected from violence, threats, retaliation, discrimination, pressure, or any arbitrary action as a consequence of their human rights work.

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UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

“ There will always be people like you, who seek to fight injustice and inequality with madness and a little bit of hope. And the magical thing about hope is that no state can ever defeat it.” ⁶

MARY LAWLOR
UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

* **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS**

How will you take action to challenge injustice?

How will you seek to promote and protect human rights?

How will you take care of yourself along the way?



The content in this infographic was inspired by the Spring 2022 EquiTalks - Heart, humanity, and defending human rights. Visit equitas.org to learn more about how to take action to defend human rights in your community.

#EquiTalks

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Sources:

1. Equitas International Center for Human Rights Education, International Human Rights Training Program (IH RTP): Facilitator's Manual, pg. 3-13, 2019.
2. United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, GA Res 53/144, Third Committee, 53rd sess, 85th plen mtg, Agenda Item 110 (b), UN Doc A/RES/53/144 (8 Mar. 1999, adopted 9 Dec. 1998).
3. United Nations, (1948), Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. United Nations General Assembly, Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, GA Res 66/137, Third Committee, 66th sess, Agenda item 64, UN Doc A/66/457 (16 Feb. 2012, adopted 19 Dec. 2011).
5. United Nations General Assembly, Promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protecting women human rights defenders, GA Res 68/181, Third Committee, 68th sess, Agenda Item 69 (b), UN Doc A/68/456/Add.2, 30 Jan 2014, adopted 18 Dec. 2013).
6. Lawlor, Mary, keynote speaker. Panel discussion. EquiTalks, 22 March 2022.

