

Documenting religious freedom violations

Introductory Session

*The right to freedom of religion or belief, documentation and
advocacy*

Welcome!

- ▶ Please introduce yourself
- ▶ Why did you join this course?



What to expect...



Topics

- ▶ *Universal human rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief*
- ▶ *Freedom of Religion or Belief in Vietnam*
- ▶ *The UN and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*
- ▶ *Principles and aims of documentation*
- ▶ *How to: Documentation: practical steps*
- ▶ *How to: Submissions to the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion of Belief*

Sample session

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An introduction to human rights and freedom of religion or belief

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...
Article 1 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1

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What are human rights?

Human rights are the rights a person has simply because he or she is a human being...

- These are the **minimum standards** that ensure human **dignity**, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- To **violate** someone's human rights is to treat that person as if he/she is not a human being
- To **advocate** human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected
- Everyone has a **responsibility** to respect the rights of others

2

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What are the characteristics of human rights?

- Universal – for all
- Interrelated, interdependent and indivisible
- Internationally recognised
- Legally protected
- Focus on human dignity
- Protect both individuals and groups

"...the foundation of freedom, justice and peace..."

3

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Underpins all human rights thinking at the United Nations



All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.
The United Nations is committed to promoting, protecting and promoting the human rights of every individual. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948, is the foundation of the international human rights system. It is the first time that all the nations of the world have agreed to a common set of principles and standards for the treatment of all human beings.

4

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What is freedom of religion or belief?

Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of **thought, conscience and religion**. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

5

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What is freedom of religion or belief?

This means that:

- The right to **have** a religion or belief is an absolute right;
- The right to **change** a religion or belief is an absolute right;
- The right to **teach, practice, worship and observe** can only be limited under certain conditions prescribed by law.

6

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Exercise: Identify specific human rights abuses in the example case, and list related articles

Discussion point: human rights principles and human rights in practice




7

Remember...

- ▶ Study at your own speed
- ▶ The best way to learn is to teach
- ▶ Do your own research
- ▶ Save up your questions
 - ▶ During the sessions – participate!
 - ▶ Respect and be ready to learn

A word about security

- ▶ Please consider your own situation.
- ▶ If it is not safe to give your name, use a nickname.
- ▶ Even if you are not worried about security, other participants may be.

Let's consider others' safety,
as well as our own



See you next time!