

# An introduction to human rights and freedom of religion or belief

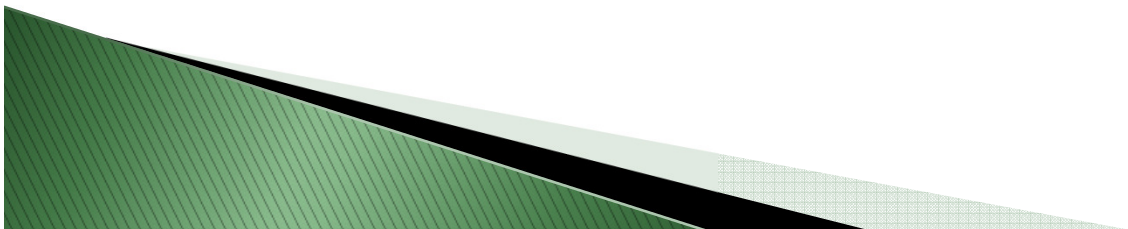
*All human beings are born **free** and **equal** in dignity and rights...*

Article 1 , Universal Declaration of Human Rights

# What are human rights?

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

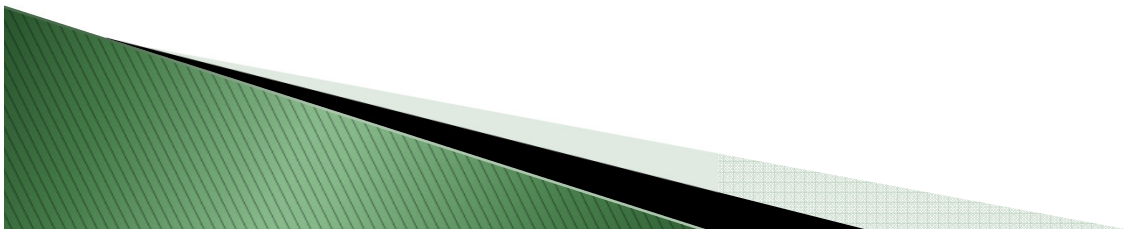
- ▶ These are the minimum standards that ensure human dignity, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- ▶ To violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as if he/she is not a human being
- ▶ To advocate human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected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



## 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...”*



# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- ▶ Underpins all human rights thinking at the United Nations

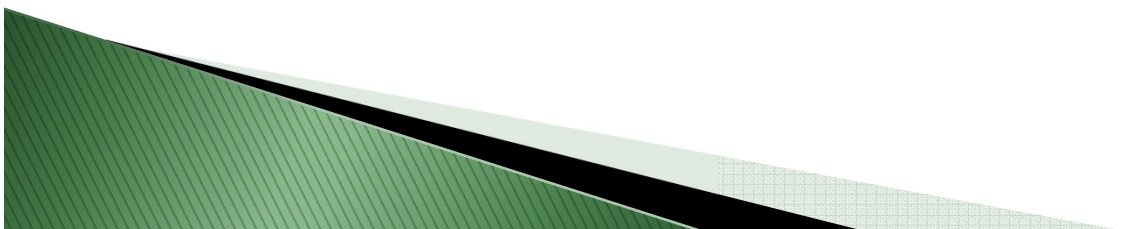


*All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.*

*The United Nations is committed to upholding, promoting and protecting the human rights of every individual. This commitment stems from the United Nations Charter, which reaffirms the faith of the peoples of the world in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person.*

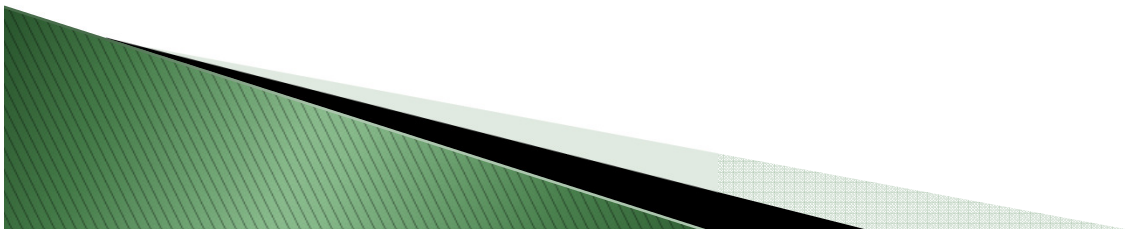
*In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has stated in clear and simple terms the rights which belong equally to every person.*

*These rights belong to you.*



## What is freedom of religion or belief?

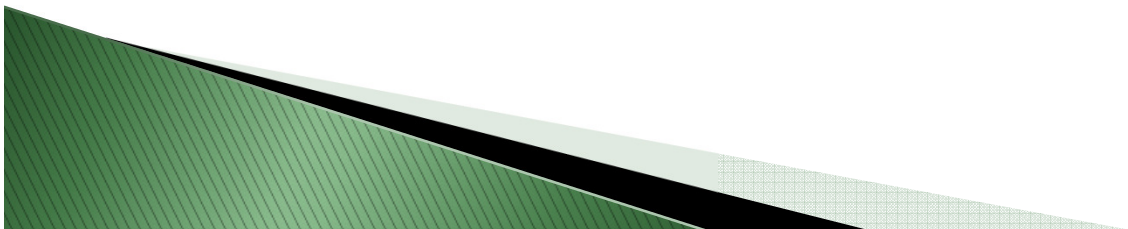
- ▶ Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ▶ Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in *worship, observance, practice and teaching*.



# 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.





- ▶ Exercise: Identify specific human rights abuses in the example case, and list related articles
- ▶ Discussion point: human rights principles and human rights in practice

