

This time with human rights defender Kiruba from India!

WHO DEFENDS THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS?

Second series - First version



Course material for 15/16 year old high school students



COLOPHON

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Version 1: This time with human rights defender Placide from Congo!

Version 2: This time with human rights defender Lydia from Kenya!

Version 3: This time with human rights defender Zafar from Pakistan!

Version 4: This time with human rights defender Mariam from Georgia!

Second series - Version 1: This time with human rights defender Kiruba from India!



'Who defends the human rights defenders?' is meant for 15/16 year old high school students.

Free download on <http://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/index.php/educatie/lesmateriaal>

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WORKSHEETS



**Who defends the
human rights defenders?**

Human rights

All countries of the world have agreed that everyone in the world whether you are a man or a woman, young or old, poor or rich and no matter what skin color, has the same rights. This agreement was made in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* on the 10th of December 1948 (UDHR). The rights named in the UDHR are called human rights.



The logo of the UDHR

In this short YouTube-movie some of these human rights are mentioned:



Human Rights - Ministry of Foreign Affairs



1. What human rights do you recognize in the movie?
2. What other human rights that were not mentioned in the movie do you know?



You probably already know that not everyone respects human rights. In that case, we speak of human rights violations. Some violations are easy to prevent, others are more difficult to find a solution for.

A human rights violation that can easily be prevented, is torture. If the government of a country prohibits torture and enforces the law, torture can be banned.



3. Give another example of a human rights violation that can easily be prevented.
4. Give an example of a human rights violation that cannot be prevented easily.



Prohibition on torture

Freedom of expression

One of the most important human rights is freedom of expression. If you cannot express your opinion, you cannot oppose human rights violations either.

Martin Luther King was publicly opposing discrimination of people with a dark skin color. His only 'weapon' was freedom of expression. Partly because of his famous speech 'I have a dream' (in front of about a million people) he realized equality of law for everyone in his country.



In some countries you have to be careful in the way that you act or about the things that you say. That is especially true for people with the following professions:

- Artist
- Journalist
- Moviemaker
- Union leader



Protest of a union in Belgium



A piece of art of Chinese artist Yue Minjun



5. Explain for each of the four professions mentioned above why these people should be extra careful according to you.
6. What do these professions all have in common?
7. Name a profession -not mentioned above- that could also be in the category of extra vulnerable professions.
8. Write your own text for a protest against a current wrong on the protest sign of Yue Minjun.

Human rights defenders



9. Write down as many words as you can that come to your mind when you think about 'human rights defender'. Does a person like that have any special characteristics according to you? If so, which ones?



A human rights defender is not superman. What is a human rights defender according to you?



10. Try to think of your own definition of 'human rights defender' together with your neighbour.

A 'human rights defender' is someone who

Extra vulnerable

Human rights defenders stand up for human rights, individually or in an organisation, without using violence. Unfortunately they cannot always do that in freedom. Protection of civilians is most needed in times of armed conflict or war. A human rights defender who exposes violations committed by political leaders or armed militias are often accused of partisanship and get threatened.

Since 9-11 a lot of countries adopted rules to oppose terrorism. This often means that the work of human rights defenders is criminalized.

Amnesty asks special attention for female human rights defenders, who often work under more difficult conditions than men and are extra vulnerable because of that. They are often not taken seriously by their surrounding society because of prevailing about women.

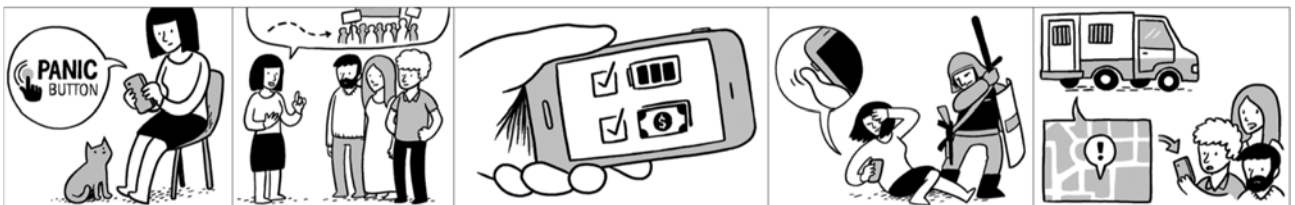


Some governments see the work of human rights organisations of women as not important and unlawful.

Female human rights defenders are more at risk to be threatened because of their gender and are more likely to become victim of sexual harassment and rape.

Amnesty launched a special application in 2014 that human rights defenders can use to call out for help, if they are at risk of being kidnapped, attacked or tortured. The Panic Button-app is a silent alarm and can be activated in case of emergency.

By pressing the button, fellow-activists are alarmed if a colleague is in danger. This will fasten the process of providing help. In the first hours of the arrest, the human rights defender's network can act fast to get their colleague released. For example they can overwhelm the police station with phone calls, organise a protest or warn lawyers and organisations like Amnesty.



11. What is meant by 'criminalizing human rights defenders'?
12. In what way the Panic Button-app works, is explained by the above pictures. What is missing, is English explanation. Write the five steps down together with you neighbour.

Who defends human rights defenders?

Human rights defenders stand up for the rights of others. This often puts them in danger. They also need protection.



13. Who should protect human rights defenders according to you? Explain.

Different international organisations stand up for the rights of human rights defenders. The two most important ones are the United Nations and the European Union.

United Nations

In 1999 the UN adopted the *Declaration on Human Rights Defenders**. The official name of the declaration* already shows that everyone has an obligation to protection human rights defenders.

Article 12 of the declaration pays special attention to the obligations of States:



Article 12

1. *Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.*
2. **The State shall take all necessary measures** to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.
3. *In this connection, everyone is entitled, individually and in association with others, to be protected effectively **under national law** in reacting against or opposing, through peaceful means, activities and acts, including those by omission, attributable to States that result in violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as acts of violence perpetrated by groups or individuals that affect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

* Officially: *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*



European Union

In 2004 the EU adopted the *Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders*. Embassies of member States and EU-missions must provide protection to human rights defenders by visiting, observing processes and where needed undertake action against governments. They must also help guarantee that human rights defenders have free access to (foreign) financial donations.



14. The UN Declaration and the EU Guidelines (it already explains in the name) have one important disadvantage. What could that be? What could the UN and the EU do to further strengthen the protection of human rights defenders?

Next to States, private organisations can offer help to human rights defenders. We name a few, but there are more!

Amnesty International

One of the main tasks of *Amnesty International* is the protection of human rights defenders. Amnesty realizes that by protests, publicity, arranging visits and contacts, education and training, lobbying and sometimes financial support.

For example by supporting protests and by writing letters, you can participate yourself in the protection of human rights defenders.



#Idefend

#Idefend is an initiative of the delegation of the EU in the UN.



The goal of *#Idefend* is to show solidarity to human rights defenders and to improve their commitment and work for human rights for people all over the world. Maybe you have seen this on social media, like Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/idefend>). You can support the initiative yourself by social media.

Justice and Peace



This Dutch organisation stands up for the protection and training of human rights defenders. *Justice and Peace* created several projects that support the work of human rights defenders..



Justice and Peace Netherlands

- *The Hague Training Course* provides training on digital security mechanisms and policy influencing.
- *Connet2Protect* connects human rights defenders with members of the parliament, lawyers and journalists.
- *Temporary Relocation* temporarily relocates human rights defenders from Africa and Asia in those continents.
- *Shelter City* is a European project. You can read more about that on the next page.



15. Next to legal rules - for example by referring to antiterrorist regulations - the movie mentions another way to obstruct the work of human rights defenders. What is that?
16. Which four ways of threatening a human rights defender are named in the movie?

Shelter City Nijmegen

The movie of Justice and Peace showed that human rights defenders can be put to silence, arrested and tortured and sometimes even disappear. If their situation allows it, they can benefit a lot from temporary shelter. Based on an initiative of the European Parliament, Shelter Cities have been created in all of Europe.

How does Shelter City work?

Shelter City started by recruiting cities in Europe. Shelter Cities in the Netherlands (or soon to be) are: Amsterdam, Den Haag, Groningen, Maastricht, Middelburg, Nijmegen en Utrecht. After The Hague and Middelburg, Nijmegen was the third Shelter City of the Netherlands.

The next step is the selection of human rights defenders. They are chosen by a national selection committee, composed of representatives of Justice and Peace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, de Faculty of Law of the University of Amsterdam, Hivos en Free Press Unlimited.



Every Shelter City provides a human rights defender a safe environment for three months. In that period, the human rights defenders can recharge so that he or she can return with new found energy.

The human rights defenders will go back to their own country, empowered by a larger network and with more knowledge to better do their work. If desired, the human rights defenders can participate in education or training. Meetings with politicians in The Hague and Brussels will also be arranged.

An interaction should be created between the human rights defenders and civilians of the Shelter Cities. He or she will be part of events in the city (like Music Meeting and the Four Day Marches in Nijmegen). In their turn, the human rights defenders can participate in debate or have a speech on human rights in his or her country.

The human rights defender 'from Nijmegen'



Kiruba is an attorney involved in legal processes at the Supreme Court in India. Specifically, she defends women, sexual minorities (LGBTQI*), ethnic minorities, and other minorities suffering from human rights violations.

A main focus point of Kiruba are the Dalits, the so-called 'untouchables', who are exposed to all kinds of discrimination and are mostly only employed in humiliating occupations (see worksheet 9). Sadly, her resistance against India's caste system and her support for inter-caste marriages has led to dangerous and alarming situations. She has been threatened by several caste members and has been stabbed in her stomach, an attack she barely survived.

*LGBTQI: lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, and intersexuals.



17. Shelter City does not just have advantages. What disadvantage(s) of the Shelter City project could you think of?
18. Imagine you would be in Kiruba's position. What practical matters could come up for a human rights defenders in Nijmegen?

Human rights in India

Unfortunately, human rights violations are still rather common in India. These violations are mostly related to religious tensions among different peoples in India. Especially the extremist Hindus are known for their cruelty.

Artists, writers, and scientists encounter an increasing lack of tolerance. Their freedom of expression is at stake and the Indian government lacks to act upon this trend.

Additionally, India faces violence and discrimination of women. Although all women seem to be affected, women of lower castes suffer the most. For instance, if a woman is raped by a man of a higher caste are typically not reported. Moreover, even if such a case would be reported it is likely to get suspended.

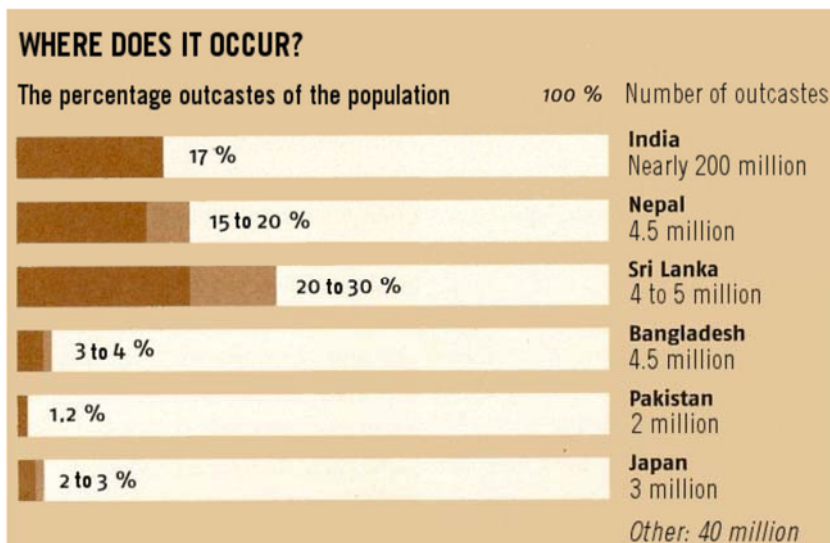
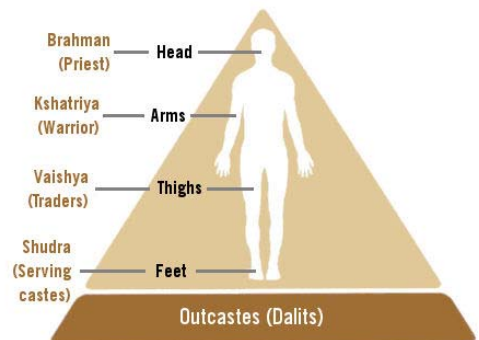


Assignment

19. What are the most important differences in the work of a human rights defender in Europe and that of one in India? Motivate your answer.

Caste system

The caste system divides India's population into so-called 'castes', based on their descent. The caste system has Hinduistic roots and discriminates between 'higher' castes which are 'clean' and therefore enjoy the most rights. The 'lower' castes are 'unclean' and confront many duties and hardly any rights. The very bottom is made up by the 'untouchables' who are not part of the system and are treated like lesser people.



Every caste has its own code of conduct specifying things like what you are allowed to eat, who you are allowed to interact with (and who not), who you are allowed to marry, and in what kind of occupations you are allowed to be employed. The untouchables, who prefer to call themselves Dalits (= oppressed), are technically protected by certain laws. However, maintenance of this legislation is often not looked after.



Assignment

20. Even though the caste system is officially abolished in 1950 it appears to be still in place. Try to think of at least two reasons that make it hard to completely eliminate the caste system.

Dalits and human rights

Centuries ago, the higher castes have decided on the type of job someone is allowed to get. Dalits are only allowed to get employed in sectors which are considered unclean for the higher castes, like jobs related to bodily waste and blood. Typical jobs for Dalits are clearing away cadavers, being a tanner, cremating the deceased, cleaning of streets, public toilets and sewers. Most of the time these jobs are carried out without any protective clothing or even getting paid.



Another common type of employment for Dalits is very low-paid work on the land of someone from a higher caste. Due to low wages and insecurity of seasonal employment, unforeseen circumstances like illness of a family member force a lot of Dalits to get a loan from the landowner.



Dalits often earn too little to be able to repay these debts and technically work for free. Whenever parents come about to die, the loan is transmitted to the children. Eventually a modern type of slavery has been created which is passed on from generation to generation.

In the very few cases Dalits attend (primary) school, children are often confronted with discrimination. On a regular basis, Dalit children get ignored by the teacher or are not allowed to sit with other (non-Dalit) children. Sometimes they have to get to school earlier in order to clean up the classrooms and toilets. Because of this type of treatment a lot of Dalit-children quit school.



In the past it was common for Dalits to get beaten up if they would touch the shadow of someone of a higher caste. They were also not allowed to wear shoes and forced to carry a small bell warning people for their presence. Although a lot of these severe types of discrimination are now less prevailing, Dalits are still being humiliated on a daily basis.

It is determined by law how caste discrimination should be dealt with. Violence against Dalits is for instance considered a legal offense. Moreover, a positive discrimination policy has been established and indicates a percentage of 15% of the jobs in the public sector to be reserved for Dalits. Unfortunately this percentage is not reached because a lot of Dalits lack appropriate education.

Watch the YouTube clip:



We are not untouchable!



Assignment

21. The YouTube clip talks about 'untouchables'. Why would Dalits consider this term disparaging?
22. Just like the caste system, reincarnation is tied to Hinduism. Why would this keep Dalits from revolting?
23. What kind of human rights do Dalits lack? List as many as possible.

Extra course material

As a preparation for the meeting with human rights defender Kiruba we came up with some questions you can ask her. Of course you can think of some question on your own that you want to ask. What would you like to know?

- * Against what human rights violations is she fighting?
- * Why do these violations take place and what can she do about it?
- * What successes has she achieved in his work?
- * She is threatened for opposing violations. How does that affect her work? Is she not scared?
- * What does the future of India look like?



Text in picture: Are there any question?

Notes

INSTRUCTIONS



**Who defends the
human rights defenders?**

Introduction

The course material 'Who defends the human rights defenders?' is developed by the Education group of Amnesty Nijmegen in cooperation with Shelter City Nijmegen.

Shelter City is a national initiative of Justice & Peace in cooperation with Dutch cities and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to protect human rights defenders as initiated by a motion of the European Parliament. Human rights defenders that risk their own lives by fighting for human rights, will be provided temporary shelter in European cities.

Shelter City Nijmegen is realised by a cooperation between different organisations from Nijmegen, under which Amnesty Nijmegen, Radboud University, the municipality of Nijmegen and Bureau Wijland. Qader Shafiq of Bureau Wijland coordinates the project, q.shafiq@bureauwijland.nl.

Between 2017 and 2020 eight human rights defenders will come to Nijmegen. The first one of the second series is Kiruba* from India, who will be in Nijmegen from March until May.

* For her safety we can not disclose her name.

Structure

The course material 'Who defends the human rights defenders?' takes two lessons of 50 minutes.

Lesson 1: worksheets 1-5

Lesson 2: worksheets 6-10

The course material can be used by the teacher independently as well as by guest teachers from Amnesty Nijmegen. For guest lessons you can contact the head of the Education group: Harry de Ridder, amnestynijmegen@gmail.com.

As a follow-up, you can ask Kiruba herself to tell her story as long as she still is in Nijmegen. For that you can also contact Harry de Ridder, amnestynijmegen@gmail.com.

As preparation for a possible meeting we have prepared some question and ask the students to prepare some questions as well before the meeting.

Preparation of the meeting: worksheets 11-12

Eight versions

In 2017-2020 eight different versions in the second series of the course material 'Who defends the human rights defenders?' will be created. Each version will be connected to the individual story and backgrounds of the human rights defenders that come to Nijmegen. The first one and a half part of the material will not change, only the last half on the human rights defender will be adapted every time. As soon as we know the identity of the following human rights defender, we will publish the next version of the course material.

General notions

Lesson 1 and the first half of lesson 2 (worksheets 1-8)

Human rights defender

Second half of lesson 2 (worksheets 8-12)

Goals

- The student will be introduced to human rights and human rights violations.
 - The student knows that the human right 'Freedom of expression' is connected to opposing human rights violations.
 - The students know that people with certain professions have to more careful than others.
 - The students can explain their own definition of a human rights defender.
 - The student knows that human rights defenders are extra vulnerable and know why female human rights defenders are at even greater risk than their male colleagues.
 - The student can tell who stands up for the rights of human rights defenders and can name some international and private organisations that protect their rights.
 - The student knows about Shelter City.
 - The student knows about the selection procedure of human rights defenders that come to one of the Shelter Cities of the Netherlands.
 - The student knows human rights defender Kiruba and her background.
 - The student can name some human rights violations in India and explain why these violations mostly occur there.
-
- The student will meet and converse with human rights defender Kiruba.

Movie material

In the course material 'Who defends the human rights defenders?' three short movies are showed:

YouTube-movies:

- * Human rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2.22 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eRCogmiGfA>
- * Justice and Peace Netherlands (3.02 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK1jAIJOAcM>
- * We are not untouchable (11.55 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5eyXPAvGfM>

MP4-movies:

- * Human rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2.22 min.)
<http://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/download/Mensenrechten-BuZa.mp4>
- * Justice and Peace Netherlands (3.02 min.)
<http://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/download/justice-and-peace-netherlands.mp4>
- * We are not untouchable (11.55 min.)
<http://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/download/notuntouchable.mp4>

The first movie is in Dutch. We have translated it into English (see the next page).

Movie: Human rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Everyone is equal and has the same rights... or is that not true?

Everyone has the right to peace and freedom... or is that not true?

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression... or is that not true?

Everyone has the right to believe what they want... or is that not true?

Everyone has the right to life with who they want... or is that not true?

Justice - Equality - Solidarity - Humanity

In a humane society everyone enjoys equal rights. For that reason there is a foreign policy on human rights.

Human rights - For everyone - Always - And everywhere

Human rights

The lesson starts with discussing what human rights and human rights violations are.



1. Everyone is equal, everyone has equal rights, everyone has the right to develop in a good standard of living, everyone has the right to live in freedom and safety, everyone has the right to sufficient food and water, there is a prohibition on the use of child soldiers, nobody can be arbitrarily arrested without the family of the person knowing where they are (prohibition on disappearances), everyone has the right to life, everyone has the right to freedom of expression, torture is prohibited, everyone has the right to believe, everyone has the right to live together with whom he or she want, everyone has equal rights.
2. -
3. For example: prohibition on slavery, prohibition on the use of child soldiers.
4. Some economical, social and cultural rights are less easy to realize, think of: the right to labour. Every society copes with unemployed people.

Freedom of expression

In this part of the course material we further discuss the human right 'Freedom of expression', a condition to be able to oppose human rights violations (of others).



5. Artist: if you show art that exposes the government or makes fun of it, you risk being arrested.
Journalist: he can expose corruption or other wrongs which the risk of being arrested.
Moviemaker: similar to the journalist, but not with words but with images. A moviemaker can make fun of the government as well.
Union leader: he or she stands up for the rights of workers and stands up against the wishes of employers
6. They do not just stand up for their own opinion, but also for the rights of others.
7. A writer, blogger, cartoon artist, comedian.
8. -

Human rights defenders

We are discussing a self-made definition of human rights defenders and their characteristics.



9. After the students' opinion. A human rights defender is not superman, but someone who is not afraid to stand up for the rights of others. It takes some courage, or at least someone who is willing to take on his own fear.
10. For example: A human rights defender is someone who stands up for the rights of others (in a situation where he operates himself and where human rights are violated; someone from Amnesty who stands up for human rights in a safe environment are not called human rights defenders). A human rights defender can only be called a human rights defender if he or she does not use violence.

Extra vulnerable

Human rights defenders are at great risk, especially women. Amnesty's application can help with that.



11. The work of human rights defenders is criminalized to silence them.
12. Step 1: Take the time to install the Panic Button-application in a calm situation.
Step 2: Think of the people who should be informed when action needs to be undertaken. Step 3: Check that your phone is on, sufficiently charged and with sufficient credits (for a prepaid or contracted phone).
Step 4: Press the button of the application in case of emergency.
Step 5: Your network will be notified by text and indicate your location so that people from your network can help you fast.

Who defends the human rights defenders?

Mensen die opkomen voor de rechten van anderen lopen zelf ook gevaar en hebben zelf ook bescherming nodig.



13. According to the declaration basically everyone: individuals, groups, organisations and official institutions.
14. Both are not treaties with legal force, but declarations with no more than official promises. If the UN and the EU would contain that protection in a treaty, we could take on violators with the law or treaty in place.
15. Defamation (violate someone's honour or good name on purpose) with the goal of degrading the human rights defenders and taking away their credibility.
16. 1) physically (physical intimidation or direct threats).
2) online (digital surveillance and online threats).
3) family (physical intimidation or direct threats of family members).
4) mobile phone (surveillance of mobile phones and threats by text).

Shelter City Nijmegen / The human rights defender 'from Nijmegen'

In this part of the course material we further discuss the how and why of the Shelter City project and the human rights defender who came to Nijmegen..



17. It could be: the human rights defenders do not want to go back to their own country or the situation in their country has become so badly in those three months that they cannot go back. It could also be personal: for example when a person got into a relationship in the city where he or she temporarily lived.
18. Think of things like: a place to live, a place to work or take a course, the use of a computer, telephone, public transport card, a budget to their expenses, but also: people around them to accompany and help them.

Human rights in India

Many human rights violations in India are because of religious tensions, predominantly led by extremist Hindus. Especially women face a lot of discrimination and violence.



19. The Indian government does not act upon human rights violations. Human rights defenders cannot count on any help from the government when noticing human rights violations. Moreover, defending human rights can even lead to personally dangerous situations.

Caste system

Although it is officially abolished, the caste system and particularly its negative consequences for the lower castes and untouchables still exists.



20. One: the caste system has evolved from a religion, which makes it really hard or even impossible to adjust.
Two: the higher castes benefit from their positions and are not willing to give up their status and power.

Dalits and human rights

Dalits' human rights are being violated in all possible ways and they lack any opportunity to improve their position.



21. The term confirms their inferiority to lower castes which explains the title 'we are not untouchable'.
22. Because Dalits believe in reincarnation and think that they will come back on earth in a higher caste if they successfully undergo this life.
23. Definitely a lot. The number refer to those used in the Universal *Declaration of Human Rights*.

- 1) All human beings are born free and equal.
- 2) Discrimination is prohibited.
- 3) Everyone has the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.
- 4) Slavery is prohibited.
- 7) Everyone is equal before the law.
- 16) Every grown-up has the right to marry who they want to.
- 17) Everyone has the right to possess things.
- 21) We all have the right to take part in the government of our country, directly or via chosen representatives.
- 22) Everyone has the right to social security.
- 23) Everyone has the right to do a job and a fair corresponding wage.
- 25) Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living and medical help if they are ill.
- 26) Everyone has the right to go to school.

Literature

Human Rights in India

- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/india/>

Landelijke India Werkgroep (National India Workgroup)

- <http://www.indianet.nl/english.html>

The position of Dalits

- <http://www.dalits.nl/english.html>
- http://www.indianet.nl/da_f_e.html

Web links

- http://www2.nijmegen.nl/mmbase/attachments/1549721/Shelter_City_Nijmegen_Initiatiefvoorstel_februari_2014.pdf
- <http://www.justiceandpeace.nl/mensenrechtenverdedigers-en-veiligheid/shelter-city>
- <http://www.bureauwijland.nl>
- <http://www.amnestynijmegen.nl>



Who defends the human rights defenders?

Course material for 15/16 year old high school students developed by the Education group of Amnesty Nijmegen and Shelter City Nijmegen

