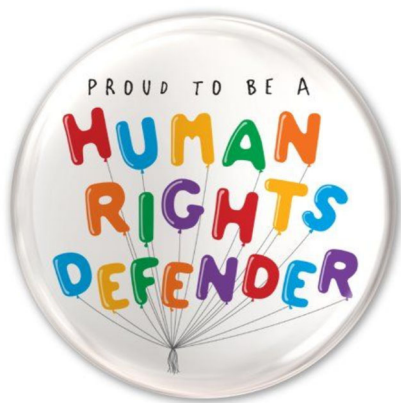


This time with the human rights defender Prisca from DR Congo!

# WHO DEFENDS THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS?

Third series - First version



Course material for 15/16 year old high school students



# COLOPHON

Who defends human rights defenders?" is meant for 15/16 year old high school students.  
Download free from <http://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/index.php/educatie/lesmateriaal>

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Third series - Version 1: Now with human rights defender Prisca from DR Congo!



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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!

Second series - Version 2: This time with human rights defender Midhat from Sudan!

Second series - Version 3: This time with human rights defender Dinah from Kenya!

Second series - Version 4: This time with human rights defender Mary from Venezuela!

Second series - Version 5: This time with human rights defender Mary from Zimbabwe!

Second series - Version 6: This time with human rights defender William from Uganda!

Second series - Version 7: This time with human rights defender Nataliia from Russia!

Second series - Version 8: This time with human rights defender Gulaiim from Kyrgyzstan!

# CONTENT

## STUDENTS

### Worksheets

Human rights  
Freedom of expression  
Human rights defenders  
Extra vulnerable  
Who defends the human rights defenders?  
Shelter City Nijmegen  
*The human rights defender 'from Nijmegen'*  
Human rights in Congo  
Freedom of expression  
Radio IRIBA FM

### worksheet 1

worksheet 2  
worksheet 3  
worksheet 4  
worksheet 5  
worksheet 6  
worksheet 8  
worksheet 8  
worksheet 9  
worksheet 9  
worksheet 10

### Extra course material

Notes

### worksheet 11

worksheet 12

## TEACHERS

### Instructions

Introduction  
Structure  
*Different versions*  
Goals  
Movie material  
Translations of the Dutch movie  
Answers to the questions  
Literature  
Web links

### instruction 1

instruction 2  
instruction 2  
instruction 2  
instruction 3  
instruction 3  
instruction 4  
instruction 4  
instruction 7  
instruction 7



## 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*



*Assignment*

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.



*Assignment*

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*

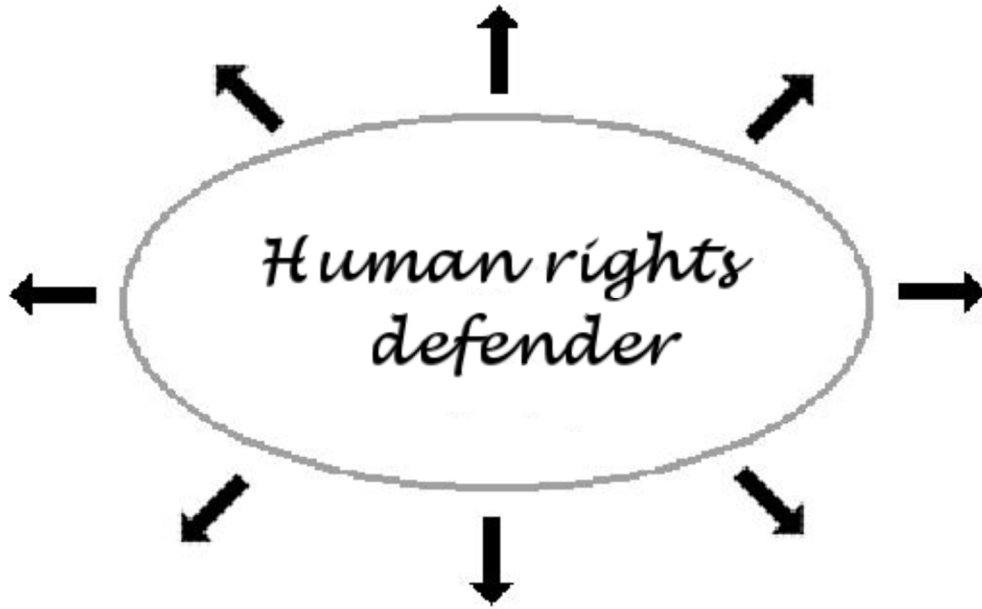


5. Explain for each of the four professions mentioned above why these people should be extra careful according to you.
6. What do these professions all have in common?
7. Name a profession -not mentioned above- that could also be in the category of extra vulnerable professions.
8. Write your own text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

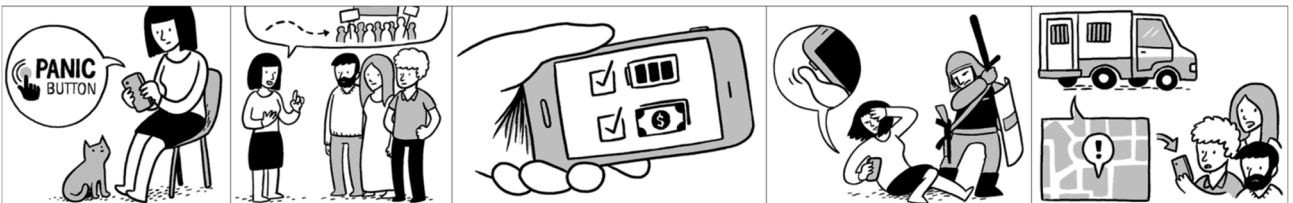


Some governments see the work of human rights organisations of women as not important and unlawful.

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.

Assignment

## 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.



Assignment

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 funda-

\* 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.



Assignment

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.

### *#Idefund*



*#Idefund* is an initiative of the delegation of the EU in the UN.

The goal of *#Idefund* 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/idefund>). 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'



Prisca from Congo is a presenter of political debates and director of a radio station that focuses on the rights of women and youth. Because she speaks out against human rights violations, she regularly receives threats and intimidation. She was also the victim of an illegal arrest in 2020. In the past, Prisca has had to live temporarily somewhere else in Congo on several occasions because of the threats against her.

In Nijmegen, she would like to relax, but she would also like to follow safety training. She also finds it important to speak about her work as a female journalist. She hopes that in this way she can inspire other women and girls to also speak out and stand up for their rights.



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 Prisca's position. What practical matters could come up for a human rights defenders in Nijmegen?

## Human rights in Congo

In 2019, Félix Tshisekedi was elected - according to many after fraudulent elections - as the new president of Congo. Not much changed in the country.

Human rights violations are still rife.

Armed conflicts and inter-communal violence continue, especially in the east of the country, resulting in hundreds of deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees. Government forces and armed groups carry out many extrajudicial killings with impunity.

Sexual violence is an increasingly common disaster for the civilian population in recent conflicts, and mostly, but not only, for women. During the many conflicts, eastern Congo in particular, and more specifically the city of Butembo, acquired the sad honour of being called "the rape centre of the world".



Assignment

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

## Freedom of expression



Police officers arrest a journalist

The authorities subject people working in the media to threats, intimidation, harassment, violence, arbitrary arrest and detention. They accuse journalists doing their job of disturbing public order or violating professional ethics. Many journalists are detained on trumped-up charges.

In 2020, the authorities of Mongala province revoked the press cards of 13 journalists, ordered the temporary closure of five radio stations and suspended the broadcasting of several television and radio programmes dealing with politics.



Assignment

20. What could the Congolese authorities mean by the 'professional ethics' of journalists?  
21. How is this regulated in the Netherlands?

## Radio IRIBA FM

Human rights defender Prisca is the director of Radio IRIBA FM. "Iriba" means "the source". Radio IRIBA FM is an independent broadcasting station that speaks out on human rights violations.

Radio IRIBA FM takes the youth as its starting point to realise peace and a just society. To this end, it offers the people of eastern Congo a platform for political debates with people representing different political parties and different groups of people (including women's movements).



Prisca is also the coordinator of Pamoja kwa Amani, HAKI na Maendeleo (PAHAM, "Together for Peace, Justice and Development"), a non-profit association that works for the socio-economic and cultural wellbeing of the Congolese people, and is committed to the protection of human rights defenders and journalists in particular.

PAHAM also works to empower youth and women by involving them in public affairs, and advocates for social cohesion within communities.

The human rights situation in the DRC is of increasing concern. Human rights violations continue in several areas of the country, especially in the east, where Prisca lives. Armed groups, and sometimes state troops and police, commit (sexual) violence against civilians and women. Rape, murder and kidnapping occur regularly. In addition, recent emergency measures against COVID-19 were misused to violently crush anti-government demonstrations. Meanwhile, criticism of government policies, including online, is dealt with harshly.



As presenter of a roundtable programme on political debates on Radio IRIBA FM, Prisca is honoured by the International Training Centre for Human Rights and Development (CFIDH/D). Faustin Katanga, coordinator of CFIDH/D, says of her: "Through her profession, she promotes human rights in the production of programs, magazines and reports. This is a

recognition of the work she does every day for the development of the province and respect for human rights."

Prisca in turn, commented, "This is a big day for me. To be honoured is a unique and special moment. I promise to do more in the fight for respect for human rights."



*Opdracht*

22. What is meant by 'empowerment'?
23. And what about "social cohesion"?
24. How can women and young people be more involved in government affairs?

## Extra course material

As a preparation for the meeting with human rights defender Prisca 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 her work?
- \* She is threatened for opposing violations. How does that affect her work? Is she not scared?
- \* What does the future of Congo 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](mailto:q.shafiq@bureauwijland.nl).

Since 2015, two human rights defenders have been coming to Nijmegen every year. The first of the third series is Prisca\* from Congo.

\* 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](mailto:amnestynijmegen@gmail.com).

As a follow-up, you can ask Prisca 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](mailto: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

## ***Different versions***

With the arrival of each human rights defender, we will release a new version of the teaching package 'Who defends human rights defenders?'. 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 Prisca and her background.
  - The student can name some human rights violations in Congo and explain why these violations mostly occur there.
- 
- The student will meet and converse with human rights defender Prisca.

## Movie material

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

YouTube-movies:

\* Human rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2.22 min.) (in Dutch)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eRCogmiGfA>

\* Justice and Peace Netherlands (3.02 min.)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK1jAIJ0AcM>

MP4-movies:

\* Human rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2.22 min.) (in Dutch)  
<https://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/download/Mensenrechten-BuZa.mp4>

\* Justice and Peace Netherlands (3.02 min.)  
<https://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/download/justice-and-peace-netherlands.mp4>

## Translations of the Dutch movie

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?

People who stand up for the rights of others are also in danger and need protection themselves.



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 Congo

Human rights in Congo are violated in abundance, by the government and by armed groups: extrajudicial executions and (sexual) violence are the order of the day.



19. In Europe, governments stand up for the rights of people and of human rights defenders, while the Congolese Government is the cause of many human rights violations. In Congo, not only do you not get any help from the government, but standing up for human rights can even be dangerous for you.

## Freedom of expression

The Congolese Government does not respect the freedom of expression endorsed by Congo in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Journalists in particular have a hard time.



20. The Congolese government will point out that they cannot spread incorrect information, but what is correct and incorrect? The government misuses the term 'professional ethics' to keep critical reports at bay.
21. The Netherlands Association of Journalists (NVJ) has drawn up a number of ethical codes, which are generally accepted as ethical rules, see <https://www.nvj.nl/ethiek/ethiek/ethiek-algemeen><sup>1</sup> and:
- \* Bordeaux Code<sup>1</sup>
  - \* Code for Journalism<sup>1</sup> of the Netherlands Society of Chief Editors)
  - \* Guideline of the Netherlands Press Council<sup>1</sup>
- In a nutshell: good journalism is truthful and accurate, impartial and fair, verifiable and with integrity.

<sup>1</sup> See the translations at <https://www.amnestynijmegen.nl/download/ethicsforjournalists.txt>

## Radio IRIBA FM

The independent radio station IRIBA FM devotes attention in its broadcasts to the defence of human rights, focusing particularly on women and youth.



22. Empowerment is the process by which a person is encouraged to decide, act and stand up for himself independently.
23. The word social cohesion refers to the degree of cohesion and connectedness within a certain group of people. A high degree of social cohesion means that a group of people are very involved with each other.
24. Involving women and young people in issues that concern them, i.e. talking to women and young people and not just about them.

## Literature

Human rights in Congo

- \* <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/report-democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>
- \* <https://www.unhcr.org/dr-congo-emergency.html>
- \* <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/africaregion/pages/cdindex.aspx>
- \* <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/democratic-republic-congo>

Freedom of expression in Congo

- \* <https://www.asf.be/blog/2016/03/07/voices-from-kinshasa-23-my-goal-to-live-in-a-country-without-injustice/>
- \* <https://www.article19.org/resources/democratic-republic-of-congo-arrest-for-criticizing-the-president/>
- \* <https://www.africanews.com/2021/07/16/the-long-march-to-freedom-of-expression-in-the-republic-of-congo/>

## Web links

- <https://justiceandpeace.nl/en/initiatives/shelter-city/>
- <https://www.bureauwijland.nl> (Dutch)
- <https://www.amnestynijmegen.nl> (Dutch)



## 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



**RIGHTS  
DEFENDERS**  
**PROMOTE. PROTECT. DEFEND.**

