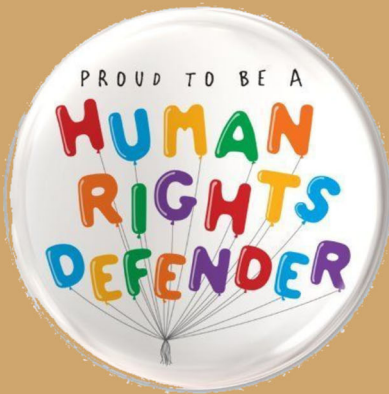


This time with the human rights defender Lobe from Cameroon!

WHO DEFENDS

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS?

Third series - Sixth 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>

Author: Harry de Ridder

Third series - Version 6: Now with human rights defender Lobe from Cameroon!



Authors of the first and second series: Alana Thelissen, Christa Adema, Emma van de Laar, Harry de Ridder and Lisa van Tiel
Translation: Lisa van Tiel, Yvonne Schapelhouman, Emma van de Laar and Miranda Florussen
Layout and editing: Harry de Ridder

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 Guliaim from Kyrgyzstan!

Third series - Version 1: This time with human rights defender Prisca from Congo DR!
Third series - Version 2: This time with human rights defender Carmen from Venezuela!
Third series - Version 3: This time with human rights defender Jodesz from The Philippines!
Third series - Version 4: This time with human rights defender Mamikon from Armenia!
Third series - Version 5: This time with human rights defender Angel from Mexico!

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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



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

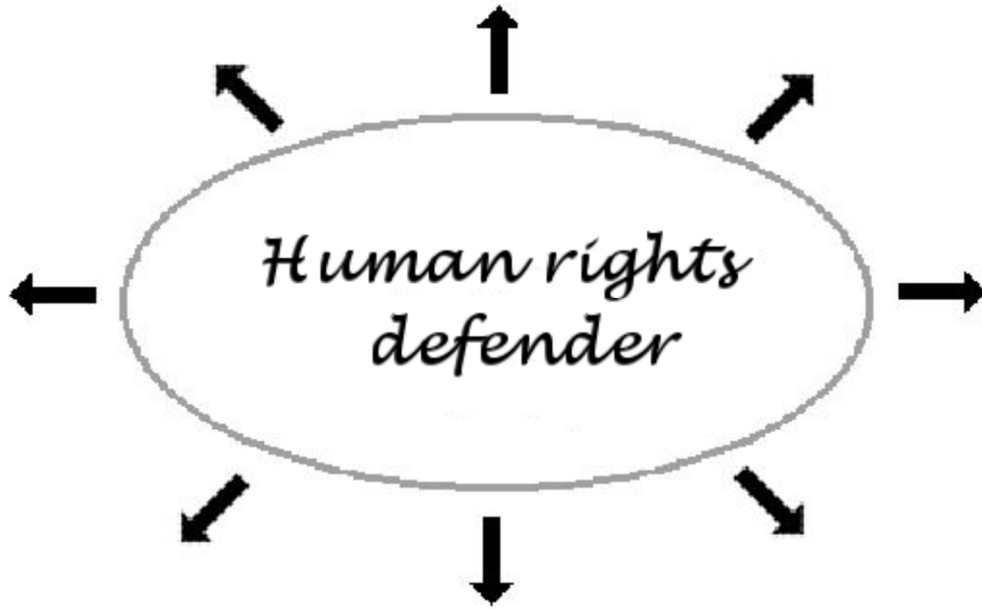


5. Explain for each of the four professions mentioned above why these people should be extra careful according to you.
6. What do these professions all have in common?
7. Name a profession -not mentioned above- that could also be in the category of extra vulnerable professions.
8. Write your own text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

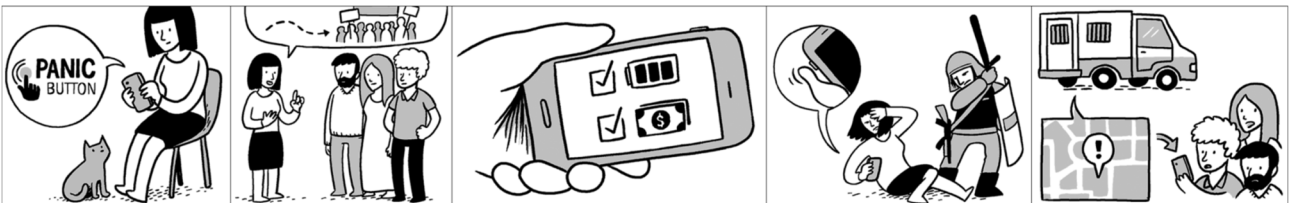


Some governments see the work of human rights organisations of women as not important and unlawful.

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.

#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'



Lobe is a defender of indigenous rights. In her work, she fights against environmental crime, particularly illegal logging and smuggling of protected species. She is currently researching the impact of environmental crime on the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples in the forests of Cameroon. During her work against organized crime and corruption, she is regularly intimidated and threatened. In Nijmegen, Lobe wants to unwind, expand her network and learn to strengthen her physical and digital security. She also enjoys going to schools and giving lectures about her work.



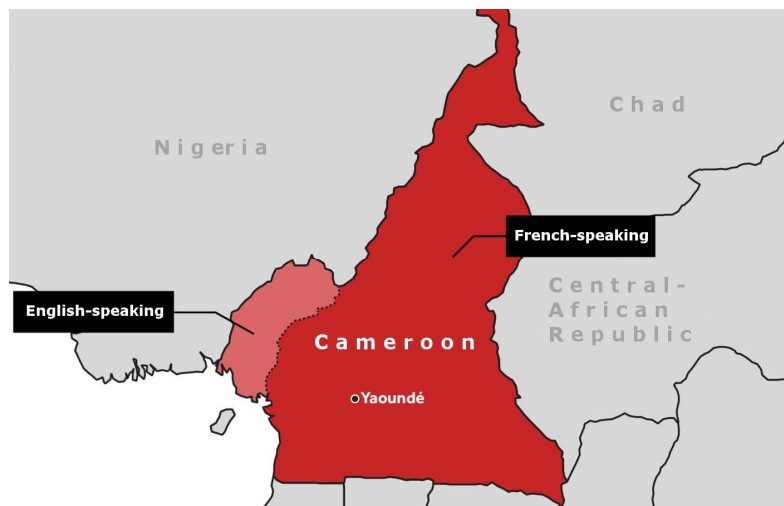
17. Shelter City does not just have advantages. What disadvantage(s) of the Shelter City project could you think of?
18. Imagine you would be in Lobe's position. What practical matters could come up for a human rights defenders in Nijmegen?

Human rights in Cameroon

Cameroon has been ruled with an iron hand by President Paul Biya and his all-powerful party for more than 40 years. There are elections every six years, but observers say they are fraudulent. Many residents of this Central African country complain that they actually live in a dictatorship.

Human rights defenders and journalists who criticize the government are harassed, face intimidation and regularly receive death threats.

During peaceful demonstrations, people are detained and tortured to extract "confessions". Prison conditions are abysmal. Due to poor sanitary conditions, several prisoners have died of cholera.



19. What are the most important differences in the work a human rights defender in Europe and of one in Cameroon? Explain your answer.
20. Why is "confessions" in parentheses?

Assignment

Conflicts between French-speaking and English-speaking Cameroonians

In Cameroon, 80% of the inhabitants speak French and 20% speak English. In the early 1960s, some English-speaking regions were annexed to the predominantly French-speaking republic. Friction immediately arose. In late 2016, violence escalated when teachers, students and lawyers protested discrimination against English-speaking Cameroonians.



The (French-speaking) security forces reacted harshly to the demonstrations. There were deaths and thousands of (English-speaking) civilians fled.

Groups of armed separatists emerged who wanted to reunite the English-speaking regions from Cameroon. They repeatedly attacked schools and killed at least 42 members of the security forces.



21. Why would schoolchildren, teachers and lawyers in particular protest discrimination?

Assignment

Fighting deforestation

Together with Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cameroon is part of an extensive tropical forest of more than 200 million hectares. This area is known as the "lungs of Africa." The forest is home to nearly 1 million indigenous people, who we know as Pygmies.

"The countries of the Congo Basin have benefited from major development investments, notably road construction," explains Marine Gauthier, an expert in indigenous peoples' rights and forest governance. "Roads have improved access to the villages, but they have also given access to people looking to farm and fell."

An estimated 2 million hectares of forest are destroyed each year.



Eugene Omokami, an Aka-Pygmy, poses in front of a devastated section of tropical forest

Human rights defender Lobe, co-founder and executive secretary of Action for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons and Environmental Migrants in Africa (APADIME), is campaigning against illegal logging in Cameroon. She says Central African countries have made pledges to protect forests, but those pledges are rarely fulfilled because of problems with political governance and security.

"In addition to violating the law and international accords, these smugglers exploit forests without authorisation and violate the rights of indigenous peoples", says Lobe, denouncing "corruption" in Cameroonian forest management. "Some indigenous populations live in extreme poverty because logging companies don't respect conditions in contracts that mandate building schools or water services."

The damage done to their habitats makes it difficult for Pygmies to care for themselves, says Gauthier. "They are completely dependent on the forest for their traditional medicines," she explains. "Cutting down the forest means depriving people of their habitat, their health and their food; everything they need to survive. They are destined to disappear."



22. What do we mean by "the lungs of Africa"?
23. What could Lobe do to stop deforestation?
24. And what could we in Europe do?

Extra course material

As a preparation for the meeting with human rights defender Lobe 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 Cameroon 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.

Since 2015, two human rights defenders have been coming to Nijmegen every year. The sixth of the third series is Lobe* from Cameroon.

* 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 Lobe 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

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 Lobe and her background.
 - The student can name some human rights violations in Cameroon and explain why these violations mostly occur there.
-
- The student will meet and converse with human rights defender Lobe.

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 Cameroon

The human rights situation in this Central African country is dismal. Arbitrary arrests, torture and crackdowns on protests.



Assignment

19. In Europe, governments stand up for the rights of people and of human rights defenders, while the Cameroonian government is the cause of many human rights violations. In Cameroon, not only do you not get any help from the government, but standing up for human rights can even be dangerous for you.
20. In parentheses, because the confessions are enforced and contain no truth.

Conflicts between French-speaking and English-speaking Cameroonians

English-speaking Cameroonians face discrimination. Resistance to this language discrimination sometimes leads to violent clashes between English-speaking citizens and security forces. The separatists do not shy away from violence either.



Assignment

21. Scholars and teachers: classes are in French, a less convenient language for them.
Lawyers: the trials take place in French. This is less easy for them and their clients.

Fighting deforestation

The forest in Cameroon and surrounding countries is being rapidly deforested, with all the negative consequences for the original inhabitants (Pygmies) and numerous animal species.



Assignment

22. Trees sequester CO₂ and convert it into oxygen. The tropical forest in Central Africa is the largest in Africa and the second largest tropical forest in the world after the Amazon in Brazil.
23. Together with other NGOs and governments, we try to ensure that the agreements made are respected.
24. No buying 'wrong', illegally harvested wood. We have a hallmark that ensures this: FSC, short for Forest Stewardship Council (Council for Good Forest Management).

Literature

Human rights in Cameroon

- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/cameroon/>
- https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0483_EN.html

Deforestation in Cameroon

- <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20230808-dependent-on-the-forest-the-fight-for-indigenous-peoples-rights-in-the-congo-basin>

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.

