



Apply Human Rights

Introduction to Litigators and others to Human Rights of Minorities

Human Rights are universal, and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights belong to all human beings, including members of minority groups. Members of minorities are entitled to the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on equal terms with others in society, without discrimination of any kind. Minorities -- both the individuals belonging to minorities and the minorities as groups -- also enjoy certain human rights specifically linked to their minority status, including their right to maintain and enjoy their culture, religion, and language free from discrimination.

The human rights of minorities are explicitly set out in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the International Covenants, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**, the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, the **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities** and other widely adhered to international human rights treaties and Declarations. They include the following indivisible, interdependent and interrelated human rights:

The human right of members of minorities to freedom from any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, religion, birth, or any other status, which has the purpose or effect of impairing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The human right of members of minorities to freedom from discrimination in all areas and levels of education, employment, access to health care, housing, and social services.

The human right of each member of a minority to equal recognition as a person before the law, to equality before the courts, and to equal protection of the law.

The human right of all members of minorities to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.

The human right of members of minorities to freedom of association.

The human right of minorities to exist.

The human right of minorities to enjoy and develop their own culture and language.

The human right of minorities to establish and maintain their own schools and other training and educational institutions, and to teach and receive training in their own languages.

The human right of members of minorities to participate in shaping decisions and policies concerning their group and community, at the local, national and international levels.

The human right of minorities to autonomy in matters internal to the group, including in the fields of culture and religion.

The most important international standards can be found under the **Regulations category**.

We have as well covered the regional agreements on the rights of children and published them under the geographical area, such as **Africa, Americas, Asia, Middle East, Europe and Oceania**.

At the national level most countries have implemented and enforced the human rights of minority groups in national law.

Under the category **Case Law** we give reference to the most important databases with the rich access to the cases on the violation of minority groups' rights. Case law incorporates courts' decisions from individual cases and encompasses courts' interpretations of statutes, constitutional provisions, administrative regulations and, in some cases, law originating solely from the courts.

Interpretation of minorities' rights by UN and others is another category under which we placed the interpretation of the content of human rights provisions by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

To have access to legal recourse against violations of minorities' rights is essential. That is why the **Complaint Procedures** category contains an overview of complaint procedures under different human rights bodies. Individuals who claim that any of their rights have been violated and who have exhausted all available domestic remedies may submit a written communication to the Committee for consideration.

The **Bibliography** category consists of the list of important publications on specific issues of minorities rights.

If you need to get in contact with the persons or organisations working on protection and promotion of minorities rights and get their view on a certain problem we have the **Contact persons/organisations category** at your disposal.

On the page dedicated to the rights of Minorities we decided to talk specifically about the rights of the following minority groups: **Age Minorities, Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Religious Minorities, Sexual and Gender Minorities**.