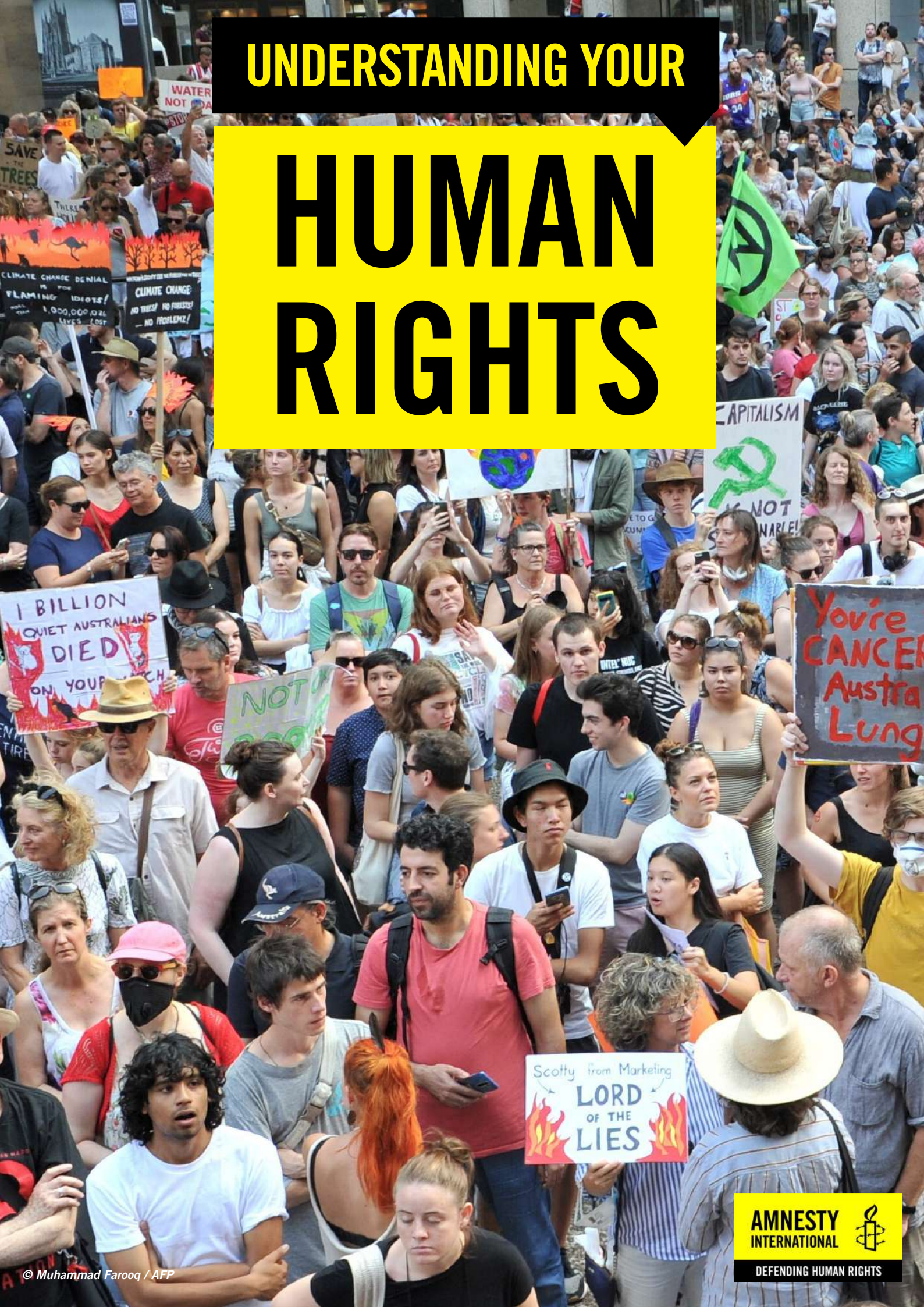


UNDERSTANDING YOUR

HUMAN RIGHTS



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS



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We live in a time of vast inequality and unprecedented change. A time in which freedom and equality are under threat, and people around the world are still courageously fighting for the recognition of their fundamental rights.

Young people in particular face a unique set of hurdles. Climate change is threatening the future of the planet they will live on and they're increasingly bearing the brunt as the cost of living continues to climb. Their path to adulthood has been compounded by a global pandemic, during which they've seen the rising impact of global inequality for the most vulnerable and marginalised people.

No matter how bad things get, there's always hope.

Throughout history, people have taken action for human rights around the world. From the Arab Spring and the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter, School Strike for Climate and March 4 Justice. And for over 60 years, we've been right there beside them.

Amnesty is a movement of everyday people joining together to challenge injustice and defend human rights. We shine a light in the darkness to expose abuses, ensure accountability, change laws and improve lives. By sharing people's powerful stories we mobilise millions around the world to campaign for change. Through decades of human rights wins, we've shown that individual action makes a real and tangible difference, and that together we can change our world for the better.

Together, we'll continue to campaign tirelessly to not only sustain the ground so many fought hard to win but also strive for systemic change on the human rights issues that matter to us all — anti-racism, climate justice, women's rights, First Nations justice, LGBTQIA+ rights and refugee rights.

But first, understanding human rights is key.

Amnesty's vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international human rights standards. The UDHR is the bedrock of our campaigning — allowing us to hold authorities to account when rights are abused.

These are your rights, they belong to you. It's your right to know and claim them.

This booklet is designed to help you understand your human rights and responsibilities, because, when we're educated about our rights, we're empowered to defend them. I hope it provides a source of inspiration for you to speak up for your rights and challenge injustice wherever you find it.

In solidarity,

Sam Klintworth
National Director, Amnesty International Australia





WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the fundamental freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us.

Every person is born with equal rights and fundamental freedoms that can't be taken away. The very fact that you're a human being grants you these rights. Yet while we're all human, so many of us live without human rights.

Human rights are based on dignity, mutual respect and compassion regardless of race, sexuality, gender identity, age or beliefs.

Your rights are about being treated fairly and treating others fairly. They're about having the ability to make choices about your own life. They're about justice, freedom and equality.

Our basic human rights are:



Universal: They belong to all of us - every person in the world.



Inalienable: They can't be taken away from us.



Indivisible and interdependent: Governments shouldn't be able to pick and choose which rights are respected.

Where do our human rights come from?

In 1948, following the traumatic events of World War II, country representatives at the United Nations (UN) worked together to create a list of the rights everyone around the world should enjoy.

This list formed a document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

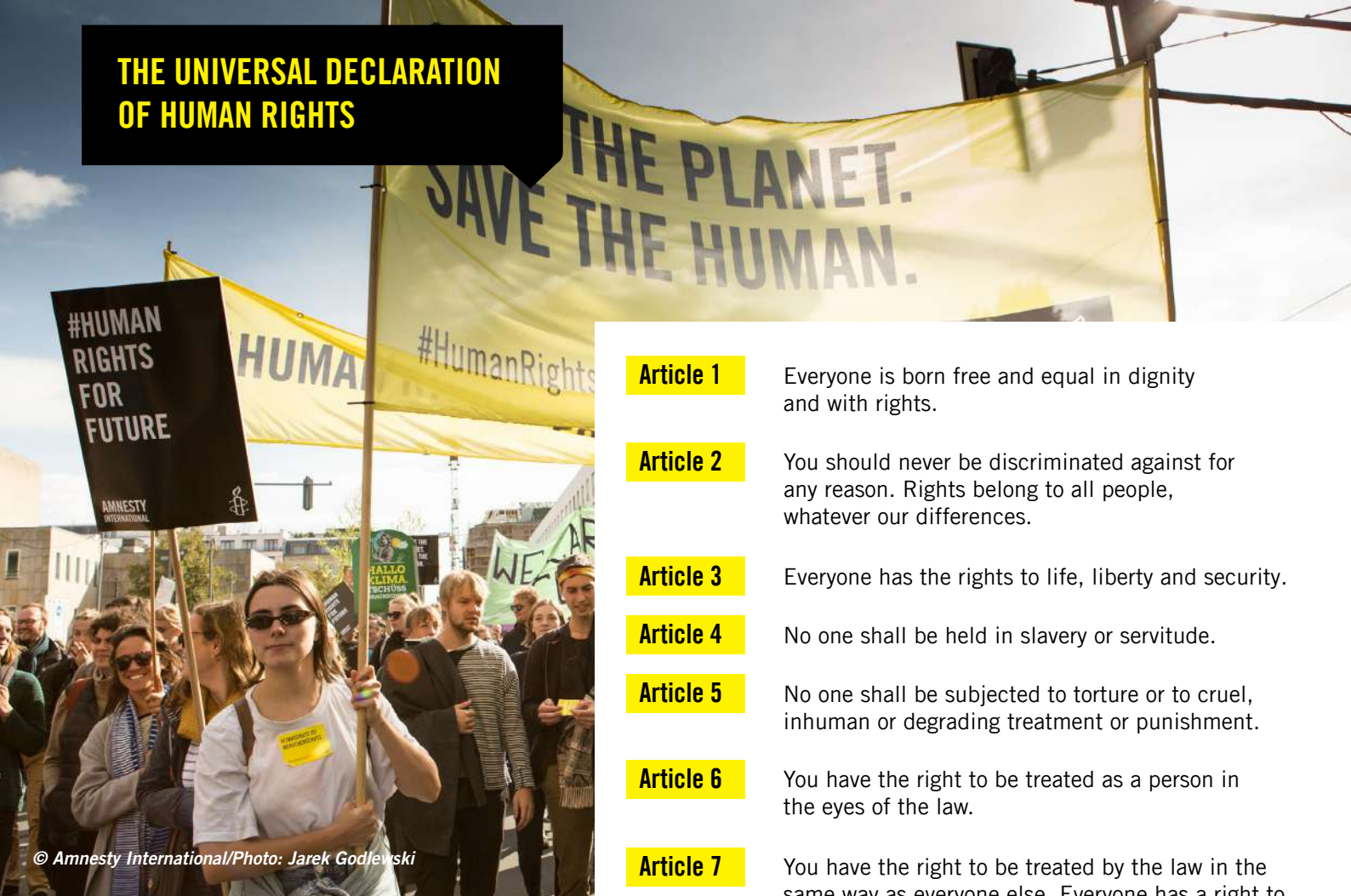
There are 30 articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - 30 rights for everyone on this planet.

Article 1 of the UDHR states that all humans are born free and equal in dignity and in rights. They're endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of kinship.

This is the ethos of the human rights framework.

Despite the UDHR's international credibility, the standards outlined in it are sometimes difficult to enforce. That's why it's important for ordinary people to speak out against human rights violations whenever they happen. This is how we keep governments and leaders across the world accountable and build a world where everyone enjoys justice, freedom and equality. Together our voices are powerful.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



© Amnesty International/Photo: Jarek Godlewski

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the UDHR on 10 December 1948.

These rights belong to you. **They're your rights.** Familiarise yourself with them.

Help to **promote** and **defend** them for yourself as well as for your fellow human beings.

Article 1

Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and with rights.

Article 2

You should never be discriminated against for any reason. Rights belong to all people, whatever our differences.

Article 3

Everyone has the rights to life, liberty and security.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

You have the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law.

Article 7

You have the right to be treated by the law in the same way as everyone else. Everyone has a right to protection against violations of their human rights.

Article 8

If your rights under law are violated, you have the right to see justice done in a court or tribunal.

Article 9

No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

You have the right to a fair and public trial by an independent and impartial tribunal.

Article 11

Everyone is to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a fair trial. No one should be charged with a criminal offence for an act which wasn't an offence at the time the act was done.

Article 12

No one has the right to intrude in your private life or interfere with your home and family without good reason. No-one has the right to attack your good name without reason.

Article 13

You have the right to freedom of movement within your country. Everyone has the right to leave a country and to return home.

Article 14

You have the right to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries.

Article 15

You have the right to a nationality.

LGBTQIA+ rights

All people have the right to express themselves and make decisions about their own lives, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation or variations in sex characteristics.

LGBTQIA+ rights are enshrined in the UDHR under the right to be free from discrimination (Article 2) and the right of adults to enter into consensual marriage, no matter their gender or sexuality (Article 16).

Despite recent wins for equality around the world like marriage equality #LoveWins, in many countries the right to express our sexuality and gender identity is still being challenged. For example, conversion practices are a dangerous movement which target LGBTQIA+ people with harmful attempts to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. In Australia, thanks to the advocacy of survivors and allies fighting for equality and anti-discrimination, LGBTQIA+ communities are now protected from harmful conversion practices in several states and territories.



NSW LGBTQI Network at the 2017 Mardi Gras Parade. © Cosmo Price



© Private

Yulia Tsvetkova is an LGBTQIA+ and women's rights activist who faced up to six years in prison under Russia's oppressive 'gay propaganda' laws.

In 2019 at 28-years-old, Yulia was charged with 'disseminating pornography' after sharing her creative drawings of a same-sex couple with children and for her body positive art.

Russia's 'gay propaganda' laws are applied at the discretion of the authorities and have led to unjust imprisonment, torture and acts of violence against the LGBTQIA+ community. For more than three years, Yulia suffered unrelenting mistreatment - in the form of criminal proceedings, fines, threats, arrests and travel restrictions.

While Yulia was championing human rights for all, her own human rights were being violated.

We must stand in support of people like Yulia.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 16

You have the right to marry and to raise a family. Men and women have the same rights when they're married and when they're separated.

Article 17

You have the right to own property and it cannot randomly be taken away from you.

Article 18

You have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to peacefully express those beliefs in teaching, practice and worship.

Article 19

You have the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 20

You have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 21

You have the right to take part in the government of your country.

Article 22

As a member of society, you have a right to social security.

Article 23

You have the right to work, to good working conditions, to equal pay for equal work and to form and join unions.

Article 24

You have the right to rest and leisure.

Article 25

You have the right to a decent life, including enough food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services.

Article 26

You have the right to an education.

Article 27

No one may stop you from participating in the cultural life of your community.

Article 28

You have the right to live in the kind of world where your rights and freedoms are respected.

Article 29

We all have a responsibility to the people around us and should protect their rights and freedoms.

Article 30

There is nothing in this declaration that justifies any person or country taking away the rights to which we're all entitled.



*Amnesty International Senior Crisis Response Researcher, Donatella Rovera, photographing the destruction of Raqqa. January 21 2019.
© Andrea DiCenzo/Pano*

Article 7

You have the right to be treated by the law in the same way as everyone else. Everyone has a right to protection against violations of their human rights.



Women's rights

For many years, women and girls have fought hard to address violence and inequality and fight for their human rights - to be educated, to access health care, to own property, to vote, and much more. While gains have been made, women around the world are still denied their human rights on the basis of their sex and gender identity.

Women's rights are protected in the UDHR under Article 2: rights and freedoms are applied without discrimination and include equal pay for equal work, the right to health and the right to an education for all, and Article 16: equal rights in marriage.

The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in the US has raised awareness of reproductive rights around the world — including here at home. While abortion isn't a crime in Australia, it brought our attention to the fact that they aren't affordable or accessible for many. First Nations and regional Australians seeking an abortion experience the brunt of this inequality. The expensive procedure is only covered under the public health system by a couple of states.

Abortion is healthcare, and healthcare is a human right. As human rights belong to all of us, they shouldn't be conditional to the state you live in.

Violence, sexism and discrimination are rife in Australia — in Parliament, in our schools and workplaces, and in our very own homes. 1 in 5 women will experience violence in an intimate relationship, while 1 in 5 have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. Trans women and gender diverse people experience sexual violence at twice the rate of the general population. First Nations women — who also battle the ongoing impacts of colonialism and racism — are five times as likely to experience physical violence, and three times as likely to experience sexual violence, than other women.

Australia has signed up to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This means that the government has promised to take action to ensure Australian women can enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms.

In 2021, Grace Tame, Brittany Higgins and Dhanya Mani's courageous voices advocated for survivors of sexual assault, particularly those abused in the workplace. Their stories remind us that women in Australia aren't safe from abuse and that access to justice remains difficult. In response to the waves of women who took to the streets to #March4Justice, the Australian government finally responded to the Respect@ Work report, although they didn't implement all the report's recommendations.

Australia needs major cultural change to address the fundamental disrespect of women and abuses of power, and it has to start at the top. We need to keep pressuring those in charge to take action to keep women and girls safe.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The UDHR applies equally to everyone. To further protect the rights of the world's most vulnerable people the UN has adopted several other human rights agreements. When countries sign up to these agreements, it means their governments commit to protecting these rights in their countries.

Although Australia was a founding member of the United Nations and played a key part in drafting the UDHR, it remains the only liberal democracy without a Human Rights Act that provides consistent protection of everyone's rights on a national level.

Anti-racism and the rights of First Nations peoples

Australia has a racist history. The violent British colonial invasion, theft of Aboriginal land, the rejection of Aboriginal culture, slavery, the stolen generation. All of this has had a lasting impact — First Nations people are to this day facing injustices across housing, education, healthcare and more.

Sadly racism is a growing problem and despite Australia's multicultural society, not everyone is treated the same. Those who face racism the most are First Nations Australians, Asian Australians, migrant and refugee communities and Australians of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.

Under Article 2 of the UDHR, we all have the right to be free from discrimination.

The International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP) outlines the unique rights of First Nations peoples and sets a standard for the protection of these rights.

First Nations peoples have rights to:

- be free from discrimination
- their cultural identity
- self-determination (the right to decide on matters that affect your own life, land or livelihood)
- free, prior and informed consent (the right to be consulted and given all the information necessary to make decisions that may impact your life or land).



© Maëlle Raluy



Janna Jihad is a young Palestinian journalist living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

© Tanya Habjouqa/NOOR

Since she was seven, Janna has documented the widespread abuse, racism and discrimination of Palestinians by the Israeli military, despite being attacked with death threats and harassment for not staying silent. By 13 she was recognised as one of the youngest journalists, inspiring children, youth and parents from all over the world.

Palestinians are living under a violent, cruel and racist system called apartheid. Millions have been displaced from their home, live through traumatic night raids, and watch their schools and communities be crushed. This is a blatant violation of the right to shelter, the right to education, to work, and the right to a decent life.

No one's born racist. We don't enter the world with inbuilt prejudices. Rather, they're something we learn from the society we live in. There's a lot of work to be done to break down both the conscious and unconscious racism that still exists in Australia and around the world.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The right to freedom of assembly

Throughout history, protest has been a powerful tool for change. The Salt March in India in 1930 against British colonial rule. Protests to protect the Franklin river. Anti-apartheid protests in South Africa. The Wave Hill walk off. And more recently, Black Lives Matter.

Protesting is a human right. Covered under Articles 19 and 20 of the UDHR, no matter how old (or young) you are: you have the right to peacefully protest and have your voice heard.

Right now, governments around the world are suppressing peaceful protests and silencing critical voices, because too many people in power fear change. Militarisation and misuse of force by police at protests make it more difficult to stay safe while making your voice heard.

Our right to protest must be protected. Without the right to expose injustice and demand accountability, the world would be a very different place.

Children's rights

Children's rights are equal to those of adult's and if you're aged under 18, you have your own set of human rights.

All children have the right to be free, happy and safe, to speak up, finish school, get good jobs and become community leaders. These rights are guaranteed by the UDHR under Articles 25 and 26, and additionally under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Too often though, children are the worst affected by injustice, targeted because they're dependent and vulnerable. Children must be able to depend on the adult world to look after them, to defend their rights and to help them develop and realise their potential. Child rights are the basis for securing human rights for future generations.



Climate justice

The climate emergency is a human rights crisis of unprecedented proportions and Australia has been consistently ranked as one of the worst climate performers among developing countries. Climate change disproportionately affects individuals and groups who are already subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation - people living with disabilities, from the LGBTQIA+ community and lower socio-economic backgrounds for example, as well as people marginalised on the basis of gender, race, age and migration status.

First Nations peoples and people living in the global south, especially in low lying small island states, are also disproportionately affected. Not only are the lands, waters and seas integral to their everyday lives and cultural identity, they often live in areas that are prone to climate-related disasters as the result of colonisation.

Climate change is a human rights issue because it threatens the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of present and future generations. It affects our rights to health, food, water, housing, livelihoods and life itself, rights protected under Article 25 of the UDHR.

Young people are learning about climate change in school, but see the world failing to do enough. Tired of inaction and determined to change the world, youth-led movements like School Strike 4 Climate, Fridays for Future, and Seed Mob challenge us to confront the realities of the climate crisis.

Economic rights

That everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights (Article 1) is the only global infrastructure that assumes everyone is entitled to the same level of opportunity, to the same basic level of living, of security, of resource, of the absence of fear and the right to participate.

Global recessions and the Covid-19 pandemic have had a devastating impact on people around the world. The cost of living is rising and it disproportionately impacts young people and low-income households who face housing unaffordability and an unpromising job market.

Economic rights are the key for people to break out of the poverty trap and end the cycle of deprivation, violence, insecurity and exclusion. Workers have the right to unionise and to speak out on human rights issues within their workplace.



© Pablo Barnes

The rights of refugees and asylum seekers

There are currently more than 100 million people around the world displaced from their homes because of war and persecution. Many are internally displaced, while others have been forced to flee their own country. All are now hoping to rebuild a safer, better life in a different country.

The current refugee crisis is the largest seen since World War II. World resettlement needs now exceed 2 million people, yet only 30 countries offer just over 100,000 annual resettlement places. Australia takes a very small portion of the world's refugees.

When people are forced to flee their countries, the international community must step in to provide refugees with the protection and rights due to them. This is outlined in Article 14 of the UDHR. The 1951 Refugee Convention outlines who is a refugee and the kind of legal protection, assistance, and social rights they're entitled to. Australia has signed up to abide by the Refugee Convention.

Mostafa (Moz) Azimitabar is a Kurdish-Iranian refugee who fled his home out of fear for his life and was detained offshore and in Australia for almost eight years.

Standing up for his human rights and the rights of other asylum seekers and refugees, Moz is taking legal action against the Australian government for his alleged unlawful detention in what he calls 'prison hotels'. He was unable to go outside, exercise properly or even open a window.

Moz's time in detention has taken a terrible physical, mental and emotional toll, and his story of horror and abuse is one of thousands. As war currently tears families and communities apart around the world, refugees are looking to Australia for a better future. Instead, they're met with trauma, abuse and some of the cruellest asylum seeker policies found anywhere in the world.

If successful, this case will create a national precedent and draw a line in the sand concerning the expansion of the detention regime in Australia.



© Amnesty Rainbow QLD Network

Every day we hear incredible stories of hope overcoming adversity, and people just like you leading positive change, all around the world. Together we can be the force for change that the world needs - until everyone's human rights are recognised, realised, and protected.

Your support helps us challenge injustice.

Ways to get involved

Learn more about our human rights campaigns or watch a video about how Amnesty works

amnesty.org.au/the-movement

Take action on our current human rights campaigns

amnesty.org.au/take-action

Register to volunteer

Join our global movement and work alongside other like-minded people to defend human rights and change people's lives.

amnesty.org.au/donate-my-time

Become a member

Amplify your voice and power the change on the human rights issues you care about. Members help shape our campaign work for years to come.

amnesty.org.au/sign-up

We offer free Youth Membership for 16 and 17 year olds.

amnesty.org.au/youth-sign-up

Find a local group or event

Connect with like-minded individuals in your area and be part of the driving force behind our movement.

amnesty.org.au/find-my-group

Donate to support our work

We have the power to make governments change because we're 100% independent. For the people, by the people. Your donation will support people around the world who are courageously fighting for their freedom, equality and justice.

amnesty.org.au/donate





Article 29

We all have a responsibility to the people around us and should protect their rights and freedoms.

SAVE LIVES
PROTECT
REFUGEES

AMNESTY
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Activists gather at Bondi Beach in Sydney, creating a giant human life ring to show solidarity with refugees. 8 May 2010. © James Morgan

Ways to connect

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