

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

## WHY NOW?

Amnesty International joins in solidarity with the communities who have been threatened and put at risk by the bigoted rhetoric and discriminatory policies advocated by President-elect Donald Trump and others during the presidential campaign. We are committed to working with all such communities against hate, discrimination, and violence. Together, we are Human Rights Defenders, peacefully defending the human rights of all people. Join us!

## WHO ARE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS?

Human rights defenders (HRDs) are people who take peaceful actions to defend human rights. Human rights defenders can be community members, students, teachers, journalists, lawyers, union members or politicians who promote human rights and speak out against human rights abuses. They may be friends or relatives of victims of human rights abuses who stand by their loved ones despite threats and intimidation. Anyone can choose to become an HRD.

## WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER?

International laws and standards spell out the human rights that governments should respect, protect and fulfill in relation to human rights defenders, including the rights to:

- ✓ Freedom from discrimination
- ✓ Peaceful protest and assembly
- ✓ Freedom from harassment, intimidation, threats or unlawful surveillance
- ✓ Life
- ✓ Blow the whistle on human rights abuses
- ✓ Seek, obtain, receive and hold information relating to human rights
- ✓ Develop and discuss new human rights ideas and principles and to advocate their acceptance
- ✓ Make complaints about official policies and acts relating to human rights and have them reviewed
- ✓ Attend public hearings, proceedings and trials in order to assess their compliance with human rights
- ✓ Effective protection under law when reacting to or opposing human rights violations by the state
- ✓ Benefit from an effective remedy for abuses of these rights

## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF AS A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER?

- ✓ Know your rights during peaceful protests and safety precautions—see below.
- ✓ Know and share with police Amnesty International's Good Practice for Law Enforcement Officials Policing Demonstrations: [www.amnestyusa.org/bestpracticesforpolice](http://www.amnestyusa.org/bestpracticesforpolice)
- ✓ Learn the risks of unlawful government surveillance online and on the street, read our toolkit at [www.amnestyusa.org/UnfollowMeKit](http://www.amnestyusa.org/UnfollowMeKit)
- ✓ Use encrypted apps for your texts and phone calls, like Signal and WhatsApp.
- ✓ Know your Constitutional rights—check the ACLU's website [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)
- ✓ If you believe that you are a human rights defender whose rights as a defender have been violated, you can submit a complaint to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders through [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org). Look for the section of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders.

## WHAT ARE YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS DURING PEACEFUL PROTESTS?

- ✓ Freedom of Expression and Assembly: Everyone has the right to carry their opinion to the streets.
- ✓ Protection of the Right to Freedom of Assembly: Law enforcement must facilitate and not restrict a peaceful public assembly.
- ✓ Freedom from Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force: In the policing of non-violent protests, police must avoid the use of force.
- ✓ Right to Medical Assistance: If you are injured, you have a right to medical assistance without delay.
- ✓ Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Detention: If you are arrested, you have a right to be told of the reason for your arrest, you also have the right promptly after your arrest to have access to a lawyer and your family.
- ✓ Right to Complain: If your rights have been violated, you have a right to file a complaint and to be provided information on how to do so.

## HOW CAN I BE SAFE DURING PROTESTS?

### ***What to do***

- ✓ Plan ahead: For essential needs, care and supplies. Know what to expect. Know how to get assistance. Plan for how to contact your friends if separated
- ✓ Be calm and focused: when things get most intense, react to danger or warning signs sooner, not later
- ✓ Watch for signs of physical and mental distress in yourself and others. Cool down others who are panicked
- ✓ Document: film or write down police actions, abuses, and injuries
- ✓ Don't forget to eat food and drink lots of water

### ***What not to do***

- ✓ Don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturizers on skin as they can trap chemical irritants like teargas
- ✓ Don't wear contact lenses, which can trap irritating chemicals underneath
- ✓ Don't wear things which can easily be grabbed (i.e. jewelry, ties, loose hair)
- ✓ Don't go alone, if you can help it - go with others you know you well

### ***What to bring***

- ✓ Water in a plastic bottle with squirt top, to drink and to wash off your skin or eyes
- ✓ Identification and/or emergency contact information
- ✓ Enough money for pay-phone, food, transportation
- ✓ Watch, paper, pen for accurate documentation of events
- ✓ Inhaler, epipen, insulin & several days of prescription medication
- ✓ Basic first aid kit, wet wipes and tissues, and energy snacks
- ✓ Menstrual pads. Avoid using tampons - if you're arrested you may not have a chance to change

### ***What to wear***

- ✓ Shatter-resistant swimming goggles and a N95 facemask
- ✓ Comfortable, protective shoes that you can run in
- ✓ Clothing covering all your skin to protect from sun and pepper spray exposure
- ✓ Bandana (to cover nose and mouth) soaked in water, lemon juice or vinegar: it can aid in breathing during chemical exposure
- ✓ Fresh clothes in plastic bag (in case yours get contaminated by chemical irritants)
- ✓ A hat to protect you from the sun and from chemical irritants

### ***Dealing with teargas***

- ✓ Avoid use of oils & lotions because they can trap the chemicals and thereby prolong exposure
- ✓ Gas masks provide the best facial protection, if properly fitted and sealed. Alternatively, goggles, respirators, or a wet bandana over the nose & mouth will help
- ✓ STAY CALM. Panicking increases the irritation. Breathe slowly and remember it is only temporary
- ✓ Blow your nose, rinse your mouth, cough & spit. Try not to swallow
- ✓ Wearing contacts: you must remove the lenses or get someone to remove them for you, with CLEAN, uncontaminated fingers. Destroy the lenses after exposure
- ✓ DO NOT RUB IT IN
- ✓ Use an eye flush using a solution of half liquid antacid and half water. This only applies to aluminum hydroxide or magnesium hydroxide

## HOW CAN I GET MORE INVOLVED IN AMNESTY'S CAMPAIGNING FOR AND WITH HRDs?

- ✓ Join Amnesty International's campaign in support of human rights defenders and communities at risk: email [hrd@aiusa.org](mailto:hrd@aiusa.org). You'll receive important actions you can take to help support human rights defenders here in the United States and around the world.
- ✓ You can also visit our website, [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org), for our latest actions, cases and reports.