



Human rights timeline 60 min

EXPLORING HUMAN RIGHTS

BRAINSTORM

PLENARY EXERCISE

About the exercise

TARGET AUDIENCE

This exercise is best suited to audiences for whom knowledge of a range of human rights documents is important – for example, civil society or decisionmakers. It is less suited to grassroots groups and unsuitable for groups that have little or no prior knowledge of human rights.

PURPOSE

- To enable peer-to-peer learning and draw out participants' pre-existing knowledge about human rights.
- To introduce knowledge about the right to freedom of religion or belief (FORB).

DESCRIPTION

Participants contribute individually to creating a joint human rights timeline that shows key events on three different levels: national, regional and global.



Instructions

RESOURCES

- Flipchart sheets and sticky tack or tape to stick them up.
- Marker pens.
- Post-it notes in four different colours.
- Optional – a copy of the FORB Learning Platform's 'Compendium of key international human rights agreements on FORB' for each participant.

Find the compendium at www.forb-learning.org/compendium.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Make a frame for the timeline on several sheets of flipchart paper stuck together and display it in the training room:

TIMELINE	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
NATIONAL									
REGIONAL									
INTERNATIONAL									

- Review the FORB Learning Platform's 'Compendium of key international human rights agreements concerning freedom of religion or belief' to compile your own list of key events in the development of the right both internationally and regionally.

HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 2 MIN

Explain to participants that the group is going to create a timeline of human rights events, with each participant adding events to the timeline. A human rights event could be a new international human rights agreement at the global or regional level, new legislation at the national level (good or bad), or a significant violation of human rights.

HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 57 MIN

- **CREATE THE TIMELINE** (7 MIN)

Give each participant three post-it notes, with each note having a different colour. Allocate a colour for each of the following categories:

- National
- Regional
- Global

Ask participants to write ONE human rights event on each post-it note (one for each category). Ask them to place these events on the timeline, according to the category and the decade the event took place.

- **PLENARY FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION** (40 MIN)

When everyone has placed their events on the timeline, go through the events one by one. Start with the global, then regional, then national. Ask participants to elaborate and explain the events, noting any similar ones. Ask if any important national, regional or global events are missing and invite participants to add them to the timeline.

Make sure that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) are added, as well as any relevant regional human rights declarations and/or treaties mentioning FORB.

Begin to introduce FORB by asking the following questions:

- Does anyone know when and where the right to freedom of religion or belief first appeared?
- Does anyone know the number of the article that refers to FORB?
- Which other international and regional agreements refer to it?

Add the following to your timeline, giving a very brief explanation of each article/instrument:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Art. 18
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Art. 18 & 27
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) Art. 14
- Any relevant articles of regional instruments.
- Declaration on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief (1981)
- General Comment 22 of the Human Rights Committee (1993)

Mention that:

- Art. 6 of the 1981 Declaration provides a helpful list of examples of the right to manifest religion or belief e.g., to observe days of rest and to celebrate holidays in accordance with one's religion or belief, and to teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes.
- General Comments of the Human Rights Committee provide guidance about how rights should be interpreted.
- Although declarations of the General Assembly and general comments of the Human Rights Committee are not legally binding, they are used

to interpret the meaning of the right and have helped to clarify what it means in practice. For example, the 1981 Declaration predated and influenced the wording of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see Art. 5 of the Declaration).

- Ask participants if any national or regional level FORB events (good or bad) should be added to the timeline.

SHARING 10 MIN

Ask participants to share their reflections on the timeline.

- Does anything on the national, regional, or international parts of the timeline we've created together surprise you?
- Does looking at the events we have added to the timeline evoke any reflections or feelings you would like to share? (Emphasise that all sharing is voluntary.)

HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE 1 MIN

Thank everyone for sharing their knowledge and reflections. Say that we will spend the rest of the training learning more about the right to FORB together. If relevant to your group distribute copies of the FORB Learning Platform's '[Compendium of key international agreements on FORB](#)'.

Source

Adapted from [The Human Rights Education Toolbox](#) (2012), Danish Institute of Human Rights.