

The traffic lights



QUIZ

Annotated statements for facilitators

The following statements are designed for use with the [‘The traffic lights’](#) exercise on page 55 but could be used as the basis for a variety of other ‘barometer style’ games or quizzes, or as the basis for buzz-group discussions.

Beside most statements you can find tips for short videos that explain the right to freedom of religion or belief which might help you give feedback to participants. Find all the films here www.forb-learning.org/films/films-on-forb.

Suggested statements for exploring participants’ knowledge

STATEMENT 1:

Freedom of religion or belief protects all religions.

FALSE: This is something of a trick question. Freedom of religion or belief does not protect religions in and of themselves, in the sense of protecting beliefs or deities – it protects people. People have the right to believe and practice in accordance with their conscience. There are also collective rights for communities of believers.

TIP! Connects to [film 1](#) (Introduction to FORB).

STATEMENT 2:

Freedom of religion or belief gives everyone the right to leave their religion or belief system, without fear of punishment or discrimination.

TRUE: Coercion to have or to change a religion or belief is not permitted.

TIP! Connects to [film 2](#) (Right to have or change your religion or belief).

STATEMENT 3:

Freedom of religion or belief gives you the right to protection from offensive statements related to religion or belief.

FALSE: Freedom of speech is essential to freedom of religion or belief. When one person states what they believe to be true – for example ‘Jesus is the son of God’ or ‘There is no God’ - they are by definition implying that some other people’s beliefs are not true. Obviously, beliefs can be expressed peacefully or violently. Violence and incitement to violence are not permitted. But some people find the peaceful expression of beliefs other than their own offensive. Without the right to say what we believe, regardless of if others find it offensive, we cannot have freedom of religion or belief. Blasphemy laws tend to be implemented in a highly discriminatory manner – protecting majority communities from offence while increasing the vulnerability of minorities. In some countries accusations of blasphemy can lead to imprisonment or even the death penalty.

TIP! Connects to [film 8](#) (Limitations to freedom of religion or belief).

STATEMENT 4:

Freedom of religion or belief gives religious leaders/institutions the right to determine the family laws applied to their members.

FALSE: Freedom of religion or belief gives believers the right to follow their religion and participate in the life of the belief community. It does not give religious authorities the right to force followers to retain their beliefs or to practice them in particular ways in their daily lives. If religiously-based laws violate for example women’s rights, imposing them on people regardless of whether individuals want to follow them or not, this is a violation both of women’s rights in general and of women’s right to freedom of religion or belief.

STATEMENT 5:

Freedom of religion or belief gives women the right to disobey their husbands in matters of religion.

TRUE: Wives have the same rights as their husbands to choose their religion and how they want to practice it. Human rights do not discriminate between men and women.

STATEMENT 6:

States have a duty to stop private employers from discriminating on the basis of religion.

TRUE: States have a duty to work actively to prevent discrimination and to provide access to remedy for those affected by discrimination. Legislation banning discrimination should be in place.

TIP! Connects to [film 5](#) (Protection from discrimination).

STATEMENT 7:

Freedom of religion or belief gives religious leaders the right to require their members to practice their religion in a particular way (e.g., to wear religious clothing, fast, pray, attend worship) and to enforce their obedience.

FALSE: Everyone – including leaders of religious or belief communities – has the right to state what they consider to be the right way to follow a particular religion or belief. It is up to the individual to decide what they think of this and to act on their decision in their daily lives. Coercion is not permitted in matters of religion or belief.

TIP! Connects to [film 3](#) (Right to manifest religion or belief) and [film 4](#) (Protection from coercion).

STATEMENT 8:

Freedom of religion or belief bans coercion in the choice and practice of religion.

TRUE: This is protected by article 18 paragraph 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.

TIP! Connects to [film 2](#) (Right to have or change) and [film 4](#) (Protection from coercion).

STATEMENT 9:

States are allowed to limit which religions may be followed in the country if allowing them would cause social tensions.

FALSE: The right to have a religion or belief may never be limited. Blanket bans on all forms of practice public and/or private practice of a religion are NOT permitted. Limitations must be non-discriminatory and necessary to protect public health, safety, order, morals or the rights and freedoms of others.

TIP! Connects to [film 3](#) (Right to manifest) and [film 8](#) (Limitations).

STATEMENT 10:

Freedom of religion or belief gives us the right to tell others about our faith in ways that are non-coercive.

TRUE: This is protected both by freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression. Coercion in the form of violence or threats, including the threat of withdrawal of rights and benefits, is not permitted. Many people feel that religious persuasion (often called proselytism or evangelism) is immoral. Human rights law takes no stance on the morality of religious persuasion.

TIP! To explore these issues more see the exercise 'Persuasion or coercion' on [page 91](#).

Suggested statements for exploring participants' attitudes

STATEMENT 1:

Blasphemy should not be a criminal offence – it's a moral matter.

See response to knowledge statement 3 above.

STATEMENT 2:

People from minority groups or with non-traditional views, should have the same rights as people who follow the traditional or majority religions.

This statement is in accordance with the right to freedom of religion or belief. If people do not agree with it encourage discussion about the suffering caused by legal and societal discrimination and ask what rights they would want to have if they were in a minority.

TIP! Connects to [film 1](#) (Introduction), [film 3](#) (Right to manifest), [film 5](#) (Protection from discrimination) and [film 8](#) (Limitations).

STATEMENT 3:

Religions that are bad should be banned OR

Religion/Atheism is a dangerous force in society - it needs to be controlled.

Regardless of what religious or non-religious beliefs you hold, somewhere in the world there is a place where majority public opinion or the state think your beliefs are bad/dangerous. Discuss who gets to decide what is 'bad' and how much power the state should have over citizens' beliefs. Connect the discussion to knowledge about FORB: the right to hold beliefs is absolute and it is important that limitations are in line with international law. Religious and belief practices are only permitted if they are given in law, necessary to protect public order, health, morals or the rights and freedoms of other people and are non-discriminatory and proportionate to the problem they address.

TIP! Connects to [film 8](#) (Limitations), [film 2](#) (Have or change) and [film 3](#) (Manifest).

STATEMENT 4:

Everyone should be allowed to change their religion.

This is in accordance with the human right to freedom of religion or belief.

TIP! Connects to [film 2](#) (Have or change).

STATEMENT 5:

Christians should be allowed to propagate their faith without restrictions.

The right to tell people about what you believe is part of both the freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, but coercion is of course banned. In practice, restrictions on the right to tell others usually target minorities making them vulnerable to arbitrary accusations, violence and criminal procedures. This often connects to hostility towards the right to change religion. (Repeat this statement replacing Christians with Muslims.)

TIP! Connects to [film 8](#) (Limitations).

STATEMENT 6:

My religion or belief holds the absolute truth so I can't believe in FORB.

Agreeing with freedom of religion or belief does not mean compromising on truth claims, it means accepting that other people have the right to hold different truth claims and practice their beliefs, even if you don't agree with them.

STATEMENT 7:

Freedom of religion or belief is not as important as other human rights OR Freedom of religion or belief is a special interest for religious people!

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief is what gives each person the right to decide for themselves what they believe and to live their lives on the basis of their beliefs instead of being forced to hold or follow the beliefs of others. It is a fundamental pre-condition for the enjoyment of many other rights including women's rights. Violations of FORB and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief affect every area of life and many other human rights including rights to education, employment, housing, justice, private life, marriage rights and child custody rights. FORB is not just about what happens in places of worship – although this is important too!

TIP! Connects to all the films, but particularly to [film 1](#) (Introduction) and [film 2](#) (Have or change).