

# Three phases of persecution 1 h 15 min



UNDERSTANDING FORB IN CONTEXT

ANALYSE  
GROUP EXERCISE

## About the exercise

### TARGET AUDIENCE

A more theoretical version of '[A freedom of religion or belief map of our town](#)' on page 144, this exercise is well suited to more formal settings, for example with decisionmakers, officials or national faith leaders. (Either exercise can work well with civil society organisations and human rights defenders.)

### PURPOSE

- To enable participants to deepen their knowledge and understanding of freedom of religion or belief (FORB) violations in their context.
- To help participants develop analysis skills in order to recognise patterns of human rights violations, using Candelin's 'Three phases of persecution' model (Disinformation – Discrimination – Violence).

### DESCRIPTION

An exercise that combines groupwork and plenary discussion to help participants define violations of FORB in their context and analyse them according to Candelin's three-phase model of persecution. Requires a basic understanding of FORB among participants.



## Instructions

### RESOURCES

- Flipchart paper, marker pens and post-it notes in different colours for the different groups.
- A table for each group to work at.
- A copy of the Stefanus Alliance booklet '[Freedom of religion or belief for everyone](#)' for each participant, (available to download and print in several languages).
- One [handout](#) of a simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) for each participant.
- Flipchart sheet/PowerPoint slide with group discussion questions written up (see below)

Find the booklet and the [handout](http://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/three-phases) at [www.forb-learning.org/exercises/three-phases](http://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/three-phases).

### ADVANCE PREPARATION

Prepare a short, 10 min knowledge input based on Candelin's three phases of persecution model: disinformation – discrimination – violence. Choose the methodology that will work best for your audience from the following options:

- Show the FORB Learning Platform's short 7-min explainer [film](#) about the model.
- Create your input based on the booklet '[Freedom of religion or belief for everyone](#)' from Stefanus Alliance International. Try to include examples from your own context that relate to each phase and that illustrate the State being both passive and active in violations.

- Use the ready-made script and PowerPoint presentation of the model from Session 5 of the Local Changemakers Course.

All these resources can be found at [www.forb-learning.org/exercises/three-phases](http://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/three-phases).

**HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE** 14 MIN

Give a short 10 min knowledge input based on Candelin’s three phases of persecution model: disinformation – discrimination – violence. Allow time for questions afterwards from participants.

Explain that the participants are now going to work together in small groups to use the three-phase model to analyse violations of FORB happening in their own context.



**SHORT TALK**

**HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE** 60 MIN

• **GROUPWORK AND PRESENTATIONS** (45 MIN)

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to appoint a spokesperson who will present back to the plenary. Point to a flipchart/PowerPoint slide and ask them to discuss the following groupwork questions, writing their answers on a flipchart.

**GROUPWORK QUESTIONS**

What violations of freedom of religion or belief do you see in your country today? List examples for each of the different phases of the persecution model: disinformation, discrimination and violence. For each example you list, answer:

- Who is committing the wrongdoing? Is the state active or passive?
- Who are the victims?
- Do other religious groups suffer from the same restriction/violation?
- What dimensions of freedom of religion or belief are violated in these examples?
- What other human rights are being violated?

**TIP!** Circulate among the groups during the discussion. Encourage them to think beyond their own religious community.

Allow 20 minutes for the groupwork, then invite each group to present their findings.

• **PLENARY DISCUSSION** (15 MIN)

Lead the discussion with the following questions:

- What did you think of this exercise?
- Was there anything new to you?
- Do you agree with the findings of the other groups?
- What would you say is the greatest challenge to freedom of religion or belief in your context/society?
- To what extent are the problems related to religion? Are there other factors behind the disinformation, discrimination and violence – for example ethnicity, social status, economic status, political affiliation, gender, language? How can you find out?

**HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE** 1 MIN



Conclude the exercise by thanking everyone for their hard work and for their engagement in the discussion.

**ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGY**

In contexts where FORB issues are perceived as particularly controversial and/or sensitive, it may be helpful for participants to use the three-phase model to analyse external contexts, rather than applying it directly to their own contexts. Case studies to choose from are included in the Stefanus Alliance booklet ‘[Freedom of religion or belief for everyone](#)’, or you can explore the collection of

case studies in Part 2 of the toolkit to find alternatives – see the '[Index of case studies](#)' on page 274.

Choose a different case study for each small group to work with. Use the same methodology as above but cut the third groupwork question and use the following plenary discussion questions instead:

- Was it useful to analyse a case like this? In what ways?
- Would you say that any of the FORB violations/restrictions we read about are justified/legitimate/necessary/proportional? Why/why not?
- How are the violations affecting the victims' lives as a whole, (rather than just their ability to believe and to practice)?
- Is it always the same religious group/belief community that is the victim all over the world? Why or why not?
- (Optional) Is there any learning that you could usefully apply to your own context? Invite participants to share reflections if they feel comfortable doing so.

#### Source

Adapted from FORB for everyone, Stefanus Alliance International <https://www.stefanus.no/english/forb-booklets>

“The three phases of persecution exercise helps participants recognise how disinformation, discrimination and violence are interconnected. It allows them to think beyond the direct forms of violence to the values and practices that maintain, protect and sustain it. It aims at a profound change in how violations are analysed - looking at them in a deep and a holistic manner.”

**YOSRA ELGENDI**, FORB TRAINING OF THE TRAINERS COURSE FACILITATOR