



VITAL VOICES
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

LEGAL AND ARREST TOOLKIT FOR WOMEN LEADERS





This toolkit was created by Vital Voices Global Partnership in collaboration with Defend Defenders.

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WHEN YOU GET ARRESTED – DO'S AND DONT'S

“As human rights defenders and leaders, it is crucial to know what to do if you are arrested, ensuring you can protect yourself and advocate for justice effectively through clear, step-by-step actions.”



Imagine you are arrested and arrange the following steps in the order you believe they should be followed in response.

STEP	1-5
If you are physically injured by the police during your arrest, seek medical attention and inform your medical providers of the cause of your injuries. Take photographs of your injuries as soon as possible.	
Clearly inform the police that you will not speak to them about anything without a lawyer being present.	
Ask for the police officer's name and badge number or read it off his/her badge. Try to remember it. Try to get a good look at the officer's face so that you can identify him or her later by that method, if necessary.	
Ask if you are under arrest. If you are, you have the right to be told why.	
As soon as you can, write down everything that happened during your arrest so that you can use that writing to refresh your memory later.	

What are five (5) things you should **NOT DO** if you get arrested?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

PRACTICE DOCUMENTING AN INCIDENT

“It is very important to know that the police must not treat you in an inhumane or degrading way, or torture you during investigative activities e.g. beating or threats. If you are mistreated, it is imperative to know how to document the incident and take the proper next steps to protect yourself. Practice documenting an inhumane scenario below.”



1

Descriptive details (where, what time, who's involved, etc.)

Examples: *In my red Toyota at 7:30 PM by a city police officer.*

Tip: *Include as much detail as possible, colors, brands, names, streets, cities etc.*

2

Sequence of events

Tip: *Note what you were doing before, during, and after the incident took place. Record the sequence of events as soon as possible.*

3

Medically related details

Tip: *If possible have a trusted individual help you identify and document any injuries. Keep any medical documents and securely store images.*

4

Next steps

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW

“To prepare for an event my organization is hosting, I worked with my team to develop an action plan outlining steps to take if one of us is detained. My plan includes a strategy for communication channels and securing legal representation to ensure my rights are protected.”



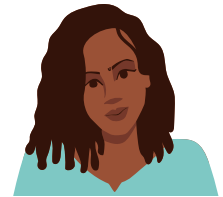
The effective implementation of international human rights norms is premised on adherence to the **rule of law**, i.e. that no person is above the law, and that the law applies to every person equally, without discrimination, whether a person is a private citizen or a public official.

Read the three statements below on the left. Answer **Yes** in the box on the right if you agree with the statement and **No** if you don't agree.

STATEMENTS	YES OR NO
Do you agree with the statement that no one is above the law?	
When police break the law, they violate human rights. Do you agree?	
Are some human rights more difficult for the police to uphold than others?	

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

“As someone deeply involved in human rights advocacy, understanding how to navigate the risk of arrest is crucial. It’s about knowing who to trust and staying vigilant.”



When dealing with the risk of arrest it is important to be aware of the intentions of those surrounding you. Identifying who you have as a reliable and trustworthy resource can help protect you. However, it is also imperative to identify any individual who may have negative intentions and could harm you. Being vigilant and having individuals with unknown intentions is a great way to be preventive and aware to avoid arrest.

Use the stakeholder analysis table below to identify **supporting actors**, **opposing actors**, and **actors with unknown intentions**.

	SUPPORTING ACTORS	OPPOSING ACTORS	ACTORS WITH UNKNOWN INTENTION
Actors			
Interest/Aims			
Action for or against			

LEGAL RESOURCES

Organizations

DefendDefenders (Emergency line available 24/7 in English, French, Swahili and Arabic on phone, WhatsApp and signal +256707020086)

Front Line Defenders

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)

Urgent Action Fund

World Organization against Torture (OMCT)

Manuals

Accessing US Embassies: A Guide for Minority Human Rights Defenders

- **English**
- **French**

STAND UP! Manual for African human rights defenders (HRDs), DefendDefenders Guide and Guidelines on the Protection of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa

Security in a Box

Institutions

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998)

Introduction to the UN Human Rights Council, DefendDefenders

Research

The Yogyakarta Principles (2006)

Recommendations for Gender Specific Implementation of the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders

Urgent Responses for Women Human Rights Defenders at Risk: Mapping and Preliminary Assessment by Association for Women's Rights in Development