

# HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE WEB: A NAVIGATION PRIMER

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## 1. Foreword

This page is meant to be a simple annotated bibliography containing links to 2-3 very important websites on major human rights topics. It is not meant to be a complete source list on any topic but mainly an orientation tool for anyone who is approaching the subject of human rights for the first times, as well as a simple reference for the volunteer and activist.

Major sites are listed right below the section heading; they are discussed usually along with a few other sites in the lines of comment. For the convenience of off-line consultation and printing, it also available in PDF.

## 2. Major International Non- (or Inter-) Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

*Amnesty International -- Human Rights Watch -- United Nations Human Rights Website*

*Amnesty International* is nowadays an house-hold name. Amnesty International is an independent, worldwide human right movement working impartially for the release of all prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for political prisoners, and an end to torture and executions. Founded in 1978, Human Right Watch is a large US-based NGO with an international scope, similar in aims and spread to Amnesty international. The web site of *Human Rights Watch* hosts pages on a broad range of topics, from women's rights to death penalty. Like Amnesty, HRW publishes an annual world report, and investigates, exposes, and helps prosecute human rights abuses in every country around the world.

The United Nations Organization, through its various sites and agencies, and especially at the *United Nations Human Rights Website* hosts a wealth of resources on human rights, including several related to education, as well as a complete, searchable database of UN charters and treaties.

## 3. Basic Human Rights Information and Documents

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- UN Conventions and Charters -- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*

About.com provides interesting and basic information on human rights, including the latest news: *About human rights – death penalty, use of torture, women's rights, more.*

Most *UN Conventions and Charters* are available at the UN Commissioner for Human Rights site. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is available in many languages, "from Abkhaz to Zulu." Human Rights Awareness has *a handy compilation of links to all major UN and European Union conventions and covenants.* *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* is available in the form officially approved by the Convention on 2 October 2000 in the 8 main languages of the Union. The texts of the European Union conventions are also

available from a related page at [the European Union Parliament site](#), along with the Constitutions of member states.

#### 4. Basic Newsservices/Mailing Lists

##### *Derechos -- Znet*

A community of people concerned about social changes, publishing a Zmagazine, and hosting [The Noam Chomsky Archive](#) as well as a large collection of articles and documents on human rights around the world. Hosts also the [Znet song archive](#). *Derechos* works with human rights organizations in Latin America and the world to bring you accurate and timely information on the human rights situation in their countries, as well as opportunities to help. They also coordinate several human rights mailing lists, publish an internet human rights journal, and work on the preservation of memory and for justice for the disappeared.

#### 5. Teaching and Education

##### *Human Rights Education Associates*

We live in the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) launched by the United Nations! The [Human Right Commissioner](#) site provides information on education and teaching. [Human Rights Education Associates](#) Network provides a large number of documents and handbooks – both for teaching and for training of human rights activists almost on every human rights topic, also with material focused on specific countries, including ["Making The Mountain Move: An Activist's Guide to How International Human Rights Mechanisms Can Work for You"](#). "Every woman, man, youth and child has the human right to a life of dignity:" the [People Movement for Human Rights Education](#) hosts presentation of 23 fundamental human rights issues to teach how human rights relate to social and economic injustices. in your community.

#### 6. Activism/Funding

##### *Idealist.org*

[Idealist.org](#) is the most comprehensive directory of nonprofit and volunteering resources on the Web. 20,000 organizations in 140 countries. A project of Action Without Borders. [Idealist](#) provides an extensive directory of funding and employment opportunity in human rights

There is a search engine provided by [Funders -on line](#) for philanthropic funding in Europe at the [Funders on-line Search page](#). Several foundations may provide funding for human rights projects. The Global Fund for Women provides financial resources for activities related to women's issues.

#### 7. Civil Rights

##### *American Civil Liberties Union -- Statewatch -- EFF, the Electronic Frontier Foundation*

The *American Civil Liberties Union* is the nation's foremost advocate of individual rights – litigating, legislating, and educating the public on a broad array of issues affecting individual freedom in the United States. The ACLU site provides information on several human rights topics, from the death penalty, against which the ACLU supports a moratorium (see details at), to the monitoring of telecommunications by governments and police (as in *the Echelon and Enfpopol cases*). *Statewatch* – is a British organization dedicated to monitoring the state and civil liberties in the European Union. Statewatch helped to uncover the Enfpopol project of the European Union. *EFF, the Electronic Frontier Foundation*, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization working in the public interest to protect fundamental civil liberties, including privacy and freedom of expression, in the arena of computers and the Internet.

## 8. Gay and Lesbian Rights

*The Human Rights Campaign -- International Lesbian and Gay Association*

“*The Human Rights Campaign*, the largest national lesbian and gay political organization, envisions an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic equal rights -- and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.” HRC has more than 360,000 members, both gay and non-gay -- all committed to making this vision a reality. The *International Lesbian and Gay Association* is a world-wide federation of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people everywhere. Founded in 1978, it now has more than 350 member organizations. Every continent and around 80 countries are represented.

*The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)* is dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of individuals and events in all media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. *The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force* is an US grassroots organization working for the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people with a political focus. Several reports of interest for gay rights are available on-line.

## 9. Women's Rights

*Global Human Rights Report on Women's Rights – AI's women's rights -- Women Human Rights Net*

Women's rights encompass an enormous range of issues, from trafficking to gender specific violence like rape. An overview of topics related to women's rights can be found at “*Global Issues*.” Oneworld *provides a guide on women's rights*, which is another good starting point.

All major international HR organization have projects/sections on women's rights. The HR Watch *Global Human Rights Report on Women's Rights* provides a very comprehensive overview of major women rights issues covering the whole world. Regarding the USA, the ACLU *has activity in support of women's rights*. Also Amnesty International has a page devoted to *women's rights*. An *in-depth report on the condition of women in United States prisons* is available at the US section of Amnesty. Prison Issues Desk also has a page on *women prisoners in the US*.

Given the spread of the subject, those interested in more particular issue may visit the very comprehensive list of links at *the B. Laskin Law Library of the University of Toronto*, part of project DIANA (at present under restructuring). The IGC hosts a *Women's Net*, where many organizations on women's rights have their site. *A directory (with search engine on Women's rights organizations n* is hosted by the *Human Rights Internet*. The *Women Human Rights Net* site covers all major topics – from custodial abuses to women with disabilities and employment issues – providing information on resources, news and education.

A collection of human rights instruments specific to women's rights is available at *the reference guide to official United Nation documents for the human rights of women*. On the other hand, *Equality now* has an interesting *collection of discriminatory laws from many countries around the world*.

Trafficking is a special problem. There is a monography on *The Trafficking in Women to the United States* published by the CIA that may be a good introduction to the subject. Anti-Slavery International is an organization dedicated to the problem of trafficking. Further information may be found at the site of *the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking*.

The UNICEF *Innocenti Research center in Florence* has material on domestic violence against women and children. A *The Innocenti Digest No. 6t* is dedicated to this issue and available on-line in PDF.

The *National Organization for Women* is a foremost feminist organization in the USA battling for reproductive, labor, and lesbian rights. *Madre* is an organization providing support to victim of human rights abuses, as well as information to people in the US about the effects of US policies on communities around the world.

The frontier of a frontier is the fight for the rights of transgender women, which are victims of hate crimes at an impressively high rate.

## 10. Transgender Rights

*Gender Education and Advocacy -- Gender.org -- trans-academic mailing list*

*Gender Education and Advocacy* is committed to the civil rights, health and well-being of transgender people. Accordingly, they dedicate themselves to providing an array of information services, educational materials, advocacy training and technical assistance of the highest quality. *Gender.org* hosts the *Remembering our dead page*, with information on transgender hate crime victims. *GAIN* is a newsservice focused on Transgender issues. *The international Journal of Transgenderism* is a source of scholarly work on transgender issues. Also the *trans-academic mailing list* relate important news for transgender rights defense. *GenderPAC* is the national advocacy organization working to ensure Americans right to their gender free from stereotypes, discrimination and violence, regardless of how they look, act or dress or how others perceive their sex or sexual orientation. Their work focuses on: Congressional Advocacy Educational Gender Law/Impact Litigation.

## 11. Children Rights

*Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) – Save the Children*

*Save the Children* is a leading child right organization working in 120 countries. The *Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)* is a membership-driven organization and network of over 1,000 child rights organizations around the world. It strives to improve the lives of children through the exchange of information about child rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CRIN's network furthers the discussion on critical child rights issues such as, for example, child labour; children living with HIV/AIDS; children in armed conflict; and more. *Child Rights Education-International* is an international distance learning project. It has been created to make the highest levels of knowledge, expertise, and critical thinking available to interested persons, organizations and institutions throughout the world to help them understand and promote the human rights of the child.

The *Innocenti Research Centre in Florence* has a large number of publications on violence against women and children, and especially on the plague of child labor (most of them are available on-line in PDF format). An extensive bibliography on domestic child workers is available [here](#).

## 12. Migrant/Domestic Workers

### Anti-Slavery -- *Solidar*

The issues related to domestic workers rights are certainly not a “thing of the past”. In poor countries, several concerns on domestic workers are the same that were supposed to be actual in European countries decades ago or even in the XIX century (like extreme poverty, underage workers and lack of education). In industrialized countries, however, at present time domestic workers are less frequently recruited from the local workforces. Employers in industrialized countries resort to **migrant workers** from poorer countries, who are less frequently uneducated or underage. *Anti-Slavery* promotes the eradication of slavery and slavery-like practices (i.e, trafficking of women and the predicament of migrant workers who are trapped into servitude; debt bondage and other traditions which force people into low status work; forced labor; forced prostitution; abusive forms of child labor; and early or forced marriage and other forms of servile marriage), and freedom for everyone who is subjected to them. *Anti-Slavery* focuses on the rights of people who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation of their labour, notably women, children, migrant workers and indigenous peoples. See also the *US Section of Anti-Slavery International*. *Solidar* maintains a network for the protection of the rights of immigrant workers in Europe, with attention to domestic workers. The Chart of Rights for Migrant domestic workers.

The *UNICEF* dedicated *the Innocenti Digest No. 5 to Children Domestic Workers*, which is available on line clicking [here](#) (in PDF format). The report is a fundamental document on child domestic workers.

The *National Network for Immigrants and Refugee Rights* maintains a mailing list with news relevant to migrant and domestic workers in the US. The Institute for Policy Studies has launched a campaign in favor of *Migrant domestic workers. Human Rights and Women Domestic Workers*, produced by the Asian Committee for Human Rights, as part of the Human Rights Correspondence school, provides an highlight of the plight of domestic workers in India and in developing countries in general. Further information can be found at the web site of the *International Labor Organization*.



### 13. Racism/anti-Semitism

*Anti-Defamation League -- The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)*

“*The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)* is an international public interest law organization which monitors the human rights situation of Roma and provides legal defense in cases of human rights abuse.” The *Anti-Defamation League*: since 1913, the ADL fights anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry.

### 14. Hate Crimes

The ADL has an *anti-hate crimes page*. *Hate watch* offers a comprehensive news archive on hate crimes – mainly in the US but not exclusively – starting from Nov. 1999. *Gender.org* hosts the *Remembering our dead page*, with information on transgender hate crime victims.

### 15. Genocide

*Prevent Genocide International -- Freedom Democide and Wars -- . Gendercide.*

**Genocide** A definition From Statute of the International Criminal Court: "genocide" means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

*Prevent Genocide International* Prevent Genocide International is a global, Internet-based network of activists working to prevent the crime of genocide. Prevent Genocide International hosts the Rome Statute of The International Criminal Court *in 11 languages*. The ICC is aimed at providing the since-long missing legal instrument to prosecute human rights violations (including genocide) worldwide. *Genocide: Resources for Teaching and Research* A web site developed and maintained by the Genocide Research Project by the University of Memphis and by the Pennsylvania State University. At present, an extensive bibliography is available on-line. *Gendercide*: GENDERCIDE WATCH seeks to confront acts of gender-selective mass killing around the world. Several case studies, ranging from witches to Rwanda, from female infanticide to the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust are discussed at their website. *Remembering and Understanding the Armenian Genocide*, by ROUBEN PAUL ADALIAN Also, the page by Prof. Rummel of the University of Haway on *Freedom Democide and Wars* provides a stunning quantitative picture of the numerical dimension of genocide in the XX<sup>th</sup> century.

### 16. Holocaust

*The US Holocaust Memorial Museum* is probably the largest source of on-line pictures and documents on the Holocaust, hosting also several on-line exhibitions. Noteworthy is also an extensive bibliography of *the Nazi persecution of Homosexuals*.

### 17. Torture

Amnesty International was born as an organization to fight arbitrary detention and torture. AI has *a campaign to stop torture...OMCT* is today the largest international coalition of NGOs fighting against torture, summary executions, forced disappearances and all other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in order to preserve Human Rights.

## 18. Capital Punishment

*The Death Penalty Information Center -- Amnesty International and the Death Penalty*

*The Death Penalty Information Center* is a very comprehensive site on capital punishment in America. Read the excellent paper available on-line *The case against the death penalty*, by Hugo Adam Bedau, a professor of philosophy at Tuft University. Amnesty International has launched a campaign to stop executions within the United States: see their page on Death Penalty in America. Also the ACLU and HRW have death penalty information at their sites: visit *Amnesty International and the Death Penalty* as well as *ACLU and the Death Penalty*.

## 19. Legal Resources

*Rights International*

*Rights International* “sues foreign governments before international tribunals on behalf of people throughout the world whose human rights have been violated by their governments.”

## 20. Periodic Publications/News

The Human Rights Interactive Network provides *a list of Human Rights-related newsservices and magazines*. It hosts also an archive of articles with a focus on womens' rights and on developing countries.

## 21. Directories/Lists of Links

The *Directory of Human Rights Resources on the Internet* by the AAAS *Science and Human Rights Program* is the reference directory for human rights activity, together with the idealist organization database). Founded in 1976, *Human Rights Internet* (HRI) is a world leader in the exchange of information within the worldwide human rights community. HRI communicates by phone, fax mail and the information highway with more than 5,000 organizations and individuals around the world working for the advancement of human rights. Very thorough is the *Amnesty International List of external links* Also the IGC has an exhaustive *link page*. Notable is the *interesting nodes collection* of Human Rights Net, an organization focused on human rights in Greece and the Balkans. The Institute for Global Communication hosts a large number of human rights organizations providing *a unique gateway to them*.

## 22. Professional Organizations



The AAAS *Science and Human Rights Program's* work is based on the premise that, to be consistent with the principles of scientific freedom and responsibility, scientific societies should encourage international respect for the human rights standards embodied in the UDHR and international treaties. Many of the rights and standards set out in the Universal Declaration are essential to the conduct of science. These include the rights to education and work; the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas; and the rights to freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of movement and residence, and freedom of association and assembly.

*Global Lawyers and Physicians for Human Rights:* using medical and scientific methods, investigate and expose violations of human rights worldwide and we work to stop them. Since 1978, the *Lawyers Committee for Human Rights* has worked in the US to protect and promote fundamental human rights. Its work is impartial, holding all governments accountable to the standards affirmed in the International Bill of Human Rights. Its programs focus on building the legal institutions and structures that will guarantee human rights in the long term. Strengthening independent human rights advocacy at the local level is a key feature of its work.

### **23. Academic Sites**

*The University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center; the Peace Human Rights Archive, Padua University* is also an interesting site.