

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## What is freedom of expression?

This infographic is developed to give a basic understanding of what freedom of expression means. It provides a guide to the three crucial aspects of the freedom, describes its place in a democratic society, and explains why the right is so important.



### What is freedom of expression?

Freedom of expression is the right to freely hold opinions and express yourself publicly without fear of restriction, punishment, arrest or other forms of retribution. It is a way through which you make known your views, feelings, culture, beliefs, identity, etc.



### Does freedom of expression include only verbal expression?

No. Freedom of expression includes verbal and non-verbal expression. For example, speech is a verbal form of expression. Other actions such as use of symbols, dress code, appearance, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, body language etc are all forms of non-verbal expression and are protected by the law if exercised within justifiable limits.



### What media/form of expression is protected under the law?

You are free to express your opinions in different forms such as through oral statements, poems, music, in writing, in print, in video, in the form of art, or through any other media. The expression can be on platforms such as the Internet for example through posting on social media platforms, TV, radio, and other medium. The decision on which form to use and medium is entirely in your hands.



### What are the 3 characteristics of the freedom of expression?

You have a right to engage yourself in any (or all) of these three activities in exercise of your freedom of expression:

- Seek/ask/request for information.
- Receive/obtain/get information.
- Impart/broadcast/transmit information.



### Is freedom of expression connected to the right of access to information?

Yes. Your right to exercise the freedom of expression goes hand-in-hand with your right of access to information. The cycle is not complete if one of the three characteristics listed above is not respected, protected or enforced.



### Why is the freedom of expression so important?

Freedom of expression is the foundation of a vibrant democracy. Without it, other fundamental rights, like the right to dress the way you want, share your opinions, or vote would wither away. The freedom enables you to express yourself freely to not only share your opinions but to participate in matters that concern you. Such participation in decision-making promotes democracy and can make our society better and improve our lives.

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*For more information, please contact:*  
Chapter Four Uganda  
Plot 2 Wampewo Close, Kololo, Kampala  
Email: [info@chapterfouruganda.com](mailto:info@chapterfouruganda.com)