

International standards on Freedom of Expression

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Article 19

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 3 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the right or reputations of others;
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Article 9

1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information.
2. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.

Resolution 169 on Repealing Criminal Defamation Law in Africa by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights - 24 November 2010

1. Underlines that criminal defamation laws constitute a serious interference with freedom of expression and impedes on the role of the media as a watchdog, preventing journalists and media practitioners to practice their profession without fear and in good faith;
2. Commending States Parties to the African Charter (States Parties) that do not have, or have completely repealed insult and criminal defamation laws;
 - (a) Calls on States Parties to repeal criminal defamation laws or insult laws which impede freedom of speech, and to adhere to the provisions of freedom of expression, articulated in the African Charter, the Declaration, and other regional and international instruments;
 - (b) Also calls on States Parties to refrain from imposing general restrictions that are in violation of the right to freedom of expression;

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Article 10

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary

American Convention on Human Rights

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one's choice.
2. The exercise of the right provided for in the foregoing paragraph shall not be subject to prior censorship but shall be subject to subsequent imposition of liability, which shall be expressly established by law to the extent necessary to ensure:
 - (a) Respect for the rights or reputations of others;
 - (b) The protection of national security, public order, or public health or morals.
3. The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over newsprint, radio broadcasting frequencies, or equipment used in the dissemination of information, or by any other means tending to impede the communication and circulation of ideas and opinions.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 above, public entertainments may be subject by law to prior censorship for the sole purpose of regulating access to them for the moral protection of childhood and adolescence.
5. Any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitute incitements to lawless violence or to any other similar action against any person or group of persons on any grounds including those of race, colour, religion, language, or national origin shall be considered as offenses punishable by law.

ASEAN Human Rights Declaration

There is no established regional human rights body for Asia. However, the ten countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) formally established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on 23 October 2009, during the 15th ASEAN Summit. The group also adopted a Human Rights Declaration, which guarantees freedom of expression as follows: 23. Every person has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information, whether orally, in writing or through any other medium of that person's choice.