



THE KEY HUMAN RIGHTS RANGERS HOLD AT WORK

FOREWORD

The work of a ranger needs to operate within the parameters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is important to the International Ranger Federation (IRF) as we aim to develop an accountable global ranger workforce. But rangers face many challenges in the workplace whilst executing their duties, and therefore it is important that people understand that rangers also have rights which must be recognised and respected.

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A GUIDE TO THE KEY HUMAN RIGHTS RANGERS HOLD

This guide is one amongst several initiatives undertaken by the International Ranger Federation (IRF) and Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) to support the professionalisation of the conservation sector and to recognise the pivotal role rangers* play in safeguarding our planet. In this context, it was deemed important to develop a specific tool to highlight the human rights rangers hold while on duty.

This guide is a tool to make rangers, their managers and public and private entities employing rangers aware of the key human rights rangers hold while on duty.

- Right to life
- Freedom from discrimination
- Right to dignity at work
- Right to freedom of expression and association
- Right to privacy
- Right to liberty and security
- Right to a fair trial

This document does not intend to be a comprehensive guide to rangers' rights. If you wish to find out more, we encourage you to visit the website of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and also seek further information or assistance from your National Human Right Commission or Ombudsman or national human rights organisations.

To learn more about the human rights obligations rangers have you should refer to the International Rangers Code of Conduct which you can find in the International Rangers Federation website www.irf.org

*Rangers provide a wide number of services such as, protecting, conserving and restoring natural and cultural values in protected and conserved areas and wider land and seascapes; enforcing relevant laws, managing visitors; maintaining a safe, secure and balanced environment for Indigenous Peoples and communities and wildlife; monitoring and researching wildlife, habitats, and features of cultural and historical importance as well as providing education and awareness to the public.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Law

Human rights law regulates the relationship between the State (the Government and its agencies) and the people living in its territory (citizens, visitors, migrants, stateless persons and refugees). Human rights are affirmed in international, regional and national instruments such as conventions, treaties, constitutions and local laws.

Wildlife rangers as individuals are entitled to the same rights and freedoms as everyone else. Also, in their work they are protected by the same human rights standards; yet due to the particularity of their functions it is important to highlight the key rights they hold at work.

Similarly, it is vital to indicate that because of the special powers rangers may hold, for example, the power to use force or bear arms, these faculties come with specific obligations to protect and respect the rights of others, particularly the rights to life, safety, physical integrity, liberty and fair trial– the same rights they are entitled to. These obligations are distilled in the International Ranger Code of Conduct.

HUMAN RIGHTS

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The Right to Life

Proclaims that every human being has the inherent right to life. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life.



The Right to Freedom from Discrimination

Proclaims the respect for human rights for all without distinction of any kind.



The Right to Dignity at Work

Asserts the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work.



The Right to Freedom of Expression and Association

Proclaims that people can pursue political activities; become members of trade unions or work associations; and be free to express their own opinions.



The Right to Privacy

Asserts that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with their privacy, nor to attacks upon their honour and reputation.



The right to liberty and security

Proclaims that everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.



The Right to a Fair Trial

Asserts that everyone charged with a criminal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. This principle must be adhered to in work-related investigations and disciplinary procedures concerning rangers.



THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Article 6 establishes that 'Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his [her] life'.

This includes an obligation on State authorities to take preventive measures to protect an individual whose life is at risk from the criminal acts of others.

To comply with this obligation, State authorities and employers must do all that can be reasonably expected of them, to avoid a real and immediate risk to life of which they had, or ought to have had knowledge. This means the State and employers have a duty to protect rangers in situations where they are known to be in danger when performing their duties.

The duty of the State to protect the life of rangers also extends to the planning and execution of operations, so as to provide the necessary equipment, carry out risk assessments and to deploy professionally trained rangers. This includes drafting, regular updating and systematic application of standard operational procedures.

In real terms, for example, this would apply to the planning and executing of surveillance operations to counter poaching activities. The right to life requires, that there be an effective official investigation, when a ranger is killed. This also means that the pertinent Ministry or agency and employer may be held responsible where a deficiency in training, planning, equipment or/and control of operations leads to fatalities.

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF DISCRIMINATION



In the Charter of the United Nations, Member States reaffirm their conviction in human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women. They also pledge to promote respect for human rights for all **without distinction** as to 'race', gender, language, religion or political opinion.

Various human rights documents bind State parties to respect and ensure to all, without discrimination, the rights enshrined in those treaties. For example:

- Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Article 2, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Article 16, 3 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights establishes that States shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women;
- Article 1 of the American Convention on Human Rights establishes that State Parties undertake to respect the rights and freedoms recognised by the Convention and to ensure to all persons subject to their jurisdiction, the free and full exercise of those rights and freedoms, without any discrimination for reasons of 'race', colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or any other social condition.

- Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibits discrimination in the exercise of the rights enshrined in the Convention.

There are three fundamental principles associated with non-discrimination:

- The equality of rights for all (everyone has the right to all rights);
- The inalienability of rights (humans possess rights by the simple fact that they are human);
- The universality of rights (rights are for everyone).

The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination prohibits all forms of racial discrimination, while the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women requires State parties to undertake specific action to end discrimination against women, and to allow women to exercise and enjoy human rights on a basis of equality with men.

In real terms, for example, regardless of origin, social status, 'race', gender, language, religion or political opinion, all rangers should be provided the same opportunities to join the ranger profession and to progress in their career by having access to transparent and fair procedures for promotion.

THE RIGHT TO DIGNITY AT WORK



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in article 1 proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of solidarity.

Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stipulates that States recognise the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

- Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
- Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;
- A decent living for themselves and their families;
- Safe and healthy working conditions;
- Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his/her employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;
- Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.

In the 2019 on the occasion of the Centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), it was agreed that Member States must endeavour to develop human-centred approaches which key factors are:

- The effective realisation of gender equality in opportunities and treatment;

- Effective lifelong learning and quality education for all;
- Universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection;
- Respect for fundamental rights;
- An adequate minimum wage, statutory or negotiated;
- Maximum limits on working time; and
- Health and safety at work.

The ILO Maternity Protection Convention N.183 provides for 14 weeks of maternity benefit to women. Women who are absent from work on maternity leave shall be entitled to a cash benefit which ensures that they can maintain themselves and their child in proper conditions of health and with a suitable standard of living. The convention also requires States to take measures to ensure that a pregnant woman or nursing mother is not obliged to perform work which has been determined to be harmful to her health or that of her child.

The standard also prohibits employers to terminate the employment of a woman during pregnancy or absence on maternity leave, or during a period following her return to work, except on grounds unrelated to pregnancy, childbirth and its consequences, or nursing. The Convention also provides a woman the right to one or more daily breaks or a daily reduction of hours of work to breastfeed her child.

In real terms, for example, this requires employers to ensure all rangers have access to adequate work facilities that guarantee their wellbeing. Likewise, employers have an obligation to provide women suitable facilities to protect their dignity. This includes the use of single sex accommodation and toilets.



THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

The right to freedom of expression is protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 19); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 19); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (art. 9); the American Convention on Human Rights (art. 13); and the European Convention on Human Rights (art. 10). This entails that people can pursue political activities; participate in political life; become members of trade unions or work associations; and be free to express their own opinions.

The right to freedom of association is protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 20); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (arts. 21 and 22); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (arts. 10 and 11); the American Convention on Human Rights (arts. 15 and 16); and the European Convention on Human Rights (art. 11).

However, it is important to be aware that the rights to freedom of expression and association may be restricted according to the powers and responsibilities rangers hold as long as these restrictions are in accordance with national law, in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary and proportionate.

In real terms, for example, this can mean that due to security issues surrounding the safety of local communities and of wildlife, the right to go on strike may be suspended, as the absence of rangers could endanger national security.



THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The privacy, honour and reputation of individuals is protected under article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads:

'No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his/her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his/her honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.'

Similar provisions are set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 17); American Convention on Human Rights (art. 11); and the European Convention on Human Rights (art. 8).

Privacy issues may arise from situations such as:

- Workplace surveillance;
- Email and telephone monitoring;
- Drug testing;
- Requirements to submit DNA samples or fingerprints for records;
- Investigation into sexual orientation.

This does not mean that all such practices are a violation of human rights because the right to privacy can be restricted, provided that the restriction is in accordance with national law, pursues a legitimate aim and is necessary and proportionate to the conduct it is attempting to address.

Necessity and proportionality are key considerations in deciding if the right to privacy can be limited. Restrictions on rangers' privacy should only be enforced in response to an identified aim and if there is a less restrictive method that will still achieve the same result, the authorities should select that method.

In real terms, for example, it is valid and lawful to monitor staff to ensure compliance with legal obligations or to prevent fraud or corruption. Or in the case of repeated instances of suspected staff theft, this may constitute a lawful reason for placing CCTV cameras in appropriate locations, however; there must be visible signage indicating the use of CCTV cameras.



THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY

The right to liberty and security is protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 9); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 9); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (art. 6); the American Convention on Human Rights (art. 7); and the European Convention on Human Rights (art. 5).

This right proclaims that everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of their liberty except in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

In real terms, for example, at the time of arrest a ranger, as anyone else, must be informed of the reasons for their arrest and promptly be informed of any charges against them. Anyone arrested or detained on criminal charges must be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorised by law. They must also have access to legal counsel.



THE RIGHT TO FAIR TRIAL

The right to a fair trial is protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 10); The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 14); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (art. 7); the American Convention on Human Rights (art. 8); and the European Convention on Human Rights (art. 6) all guarantee the right to a fair trial. They also add other requirements designed to secure that end such as stipulating that the right shall apply to "all persons", or "every individual", or "every person", or "everyone".

This right makes it explicit that everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to the law. Moreover, in the determination of any criminal charge, everyone is entitled to a few minimum guarantees amongst them:

- To be informed promptly and in detail in a language which they understand of the nature and cause of the charge against them;

- To have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defence and to communicate with a counsel of their choosing;
- To be tried without undue delay.

In real terms, these principles must be reflected and adhered to in any work-related investigation and disciplinary procedures concerning rangers. For example, this means that if a ranger is under investigation because of suspected collaboration with poachers:

- They must be informed promptly, in a language which they understand, of any allegations against them;
- They must have suitable amount of time and facilities to prepare their defence and to communicate with a defence counsel of their choosing;
- The investigation must be conducted objectively and promptly;
- The inquest of their case must be held without unjustified delay.

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

UN

- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(1948\)](#)
- [The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(1966\)](#)
- [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(1966\)](#)
- [The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights \(1986\)](#)
- [The American Convention on Human Rights \(1969\)](#)
- [The European Convention on Human Rights \(1950\)](#)
- [The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination \(1969\)](#)
- [The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(1981\)](#)

ILO

- [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work \(2019\)](#)
- [The ILO Maternity Protection Convention N.183 \(2000\)](#)

IRF and URSA

- [International Ranger Code of Conduct \(2021\)](#)
- [Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers PART 1 | Principles \(2023\)](#)
- [Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers PART 2 | Guidance and tools \(2023\)](#)
- [International Ranger Federation and Universal Ranger Support Alliance \(2023\). Protected and Conserved Area Rangers Convention: A draft International Labour Standard](#)