Report on Respecting, Protecting and Fulfilling the Right to Freedom of Thought

**1. What is the content and scope of freedom of thought? For example:**

**a) What does freedom of thought encompass?**

It encompasses the liberty of acquiring, believing and expressing ideas, such as religious, political and social views and changing them in the society without fear and also without harming others by these ideas and thoughts.

Ideals, ideologies, human achievements and life movement are all ignited by freedom of thought, evil behaviour too.

**b) How have regional human rights courts, UN human rights mechanisms and domestic courts interpreted and applied freedom of thought?**

Freedom of thought is vague concept for many, and It varies from one region to another and from one country to another. In most developed countries these are of major importance and commonly and freely practiced, for developing and least developed countries these may not be understood and are not practiced, these continue to implement local laws which may not be sufficient to cover such rights.

The UN human rights mechanisms should also embark on stronger reenforced role through related ratified international conventions and to raise awareness and identify violations.

**c) How could this freedom be protected in law and policy, noting inter alia that rights-holders may be at different stages of cognitive development or have varying levels of cognitive functions?**

Society members must first be taught this at schools in early stages. They must be taught tolerance and not confined to religious believe which mostly emphasis superiority of thoughts and believes to other religious and faiths. There have to be awareness raising efforts in various agencies such as governments workers, community leaders, religious members and police and security force members.

Courts and lawyers in developing countries must also taught and implement awareness raising campaigns.

**2. What does it mean in practice to respect, protect and fulfill a freedom not to:**

**a) disclose one's thoughts (mental privacy);**

In developing countries people must not be obliged to state their religion, social, tribal affiliation or other believe in official papers.

**b) be penalized for one's thoughts; or**

There have to be laws to govern that, also in school and it must also be emphasized in educational institutions this is of a paramount importance

**c) have one's thoughts free from coercive or other interference?**

For some religions, only the individual “thought” of an individual challenging some religious beliefs and practices can be considered by religious preachers and scholars as “the work of the devil”

**3. How and to what extent do other fundamental rights and freedoms (including but not limited to freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion or belief in Article 18 of the ICCPR, and the rights to privacy (Article 17 of the ICCPR), opinion and expression (Article 19 of the ICCPR)) either depend upon, support or otherwise relate to freedom of thought?**

All ideals, ideologies, beliefs etc. originated from an individual and/or group of individuals combined thoughts, they are all fundamentally interrelated and mutually supportive and reenforcing each other.

**4. Is there a difference between "freedom of thought" and "freedom of belief"? If so, what is the distinction?**

Freedom of thought is mostly learned and confined to one’s own thinking, but freedom of belief is mostly taught is young age or enforced by the community and it can be expressed, but it can also acquire by reading, knowing and living in other countries and regions.

**5. Is there a difference between "freedom of thought" and "freedom of opinion"? If so, what is the distinction?**

Freedom of opinion could be a result of the freedom of thought. Freedom of thought could be confined o someone own thinking and internal space but freedom of opinion is expressed and probably defended in public.

**6. What is the relationship between the *forum externum* of a rights-holder (e.g. manifestations of one's religion or belief, or expression) and freedom of thought (part of one's *forum internum*)? Would violations or limitations of the former affect the latter? If so, how does this occur and is it permissible under IHRL?**

There is a linked relation since freedom of thought may encourage a person to express his or her self in public. If freedom of thought is violated by the State, freedom of expression will be violated and suppressed, and the opposite is true. If the freedom of expression is suppressed, the individual and other members of society will fear expressing their thoughts.

**7. Do certain self-expressions (e.g. one's diary or digital footprint, language and non-verbal expression) ever constitute "thought" in and of themselves? If so, how and under what conditions?**

Freedom of thought should be expressed freely by all means but not to harm others.

**8. How could the law assess whether attempts to unduly affect one's freedom of thought are impermissible under IHRL? To this end, what principles or factors could be considered? Are there any aggravating or mitigating factors?**

There should be a clear and accessible mechanism to identify cases of violations and clear guidelines of redress for all.

**9. Are there evidentiary challenges for proving a violation of freedom of thought? If so, what are they and how could they be overcome?**

Some religious preachers and scholars may supress freedom of thought of the masses on the ground of divine undisputed verses, without being challenged by anyone.

**10. Do certain practices and policies have undue influence on "freedom of thought"? If so, which ones, why and in what circumstances? This may occur in various contexts – whether offline or online, involving State or non-State actors – such as in media and technology, healthcare, national security and education sectors.**

There are many factors that may have undue influence such as culture, religion, stereotype, education, the treatment of migrant workers, government policies etc. inherent culture habits, stereotype and strict religious teachings may have an enormous impact especially if the country is host to many nationalities of migrant workers.

**11. What is the effect (if any) of the following on freedom of thought:**

**a) misinformation / disinformation;**

Tremendous effect, especially in poor and less educated communities.

**b) proselytism or "anti-conversion" efforts; or**

Religious leaders have undisputed opinion on freedom of thoughts since they relate to divine power this is of great effect in poor and less educated communities. Religious leaders may interfere with the believes of other faith to encourage them to change their religion and thoughts.

**c) "treatment" for one's thoughts – including for mental health reasons.**

Less effect.

**d) If there is an effect, how and when does this occur?**

**12. Information about what practices and policies may unduly affect freedom of thought of individuals in vulnerable situations, including:**

**a) refugees and migrants;**

**b) children;**

**c) girls, women, and LGBT+ persons;**

**d) disabled persons;**

**e) the elderly; and**

**f) members of minority religious or belief communities.**

**13. What steps could States take to ensure that an individual's freedom of thought is not unduly affected by certain practices and policies? For instance, it is recalled that the Committee on the Rights of the Child has encouraged States to take certain measures with respect to the digital environment.**[**[2]**](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/freedom-of-thought.aspx#_ftn2)

There should be less government, governments should encourage freedom of thought in schools, media, treating everyone equally in government services, initiating laws against the violation of freedom of law and believe. Governments must also initiate clear, efficient and strong steps for identifying cases of violation of freedom of thought and clear steps for redress.

**Good practice for identifying, responding to and mitigating violations of freedom of thought:**

**14. Civil society / National Human Rights Institutions:**

**a) Information on measures they have adopted that effectively (i) promote freedom of thought (e.g. educational and interfaith initiatives); (ii) identify and monitor practices or policies that may unduly affect freedom of thought; or (iii) support those who have been subjected to practices or policies that may unduly affect their freedom of thought;**

**b) Information on tools for defining and respecting parameters of freedom of thought in theory and practice; and**

**c) Information on how to mitigate practices or policies that may unduly affect freedom of thought for girls and women.**

**15. International organisations:**

**a) Efforts taken by international organisations to (i) monitor and analyse practices or policies that may unduly affect freedom of thought; or (ii) mitigate such practices and policies, including in relation to the technology sector; and**

**b) Examples of how international organisations are engaging and supporting those who have experienced practices or policies that may unduly affect their freedom of thought (e.g. access to justice, public forums, intergroup dialogues and consultations etc.).**

**16. Other stakeholders:**

**a) Examples of professional bodies (e.g. psychologists) adopting restrictions on certain conduct that may unduly affect freedom of thought.**

**With Best Regards**

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