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# Countries Without First Amendment Rights

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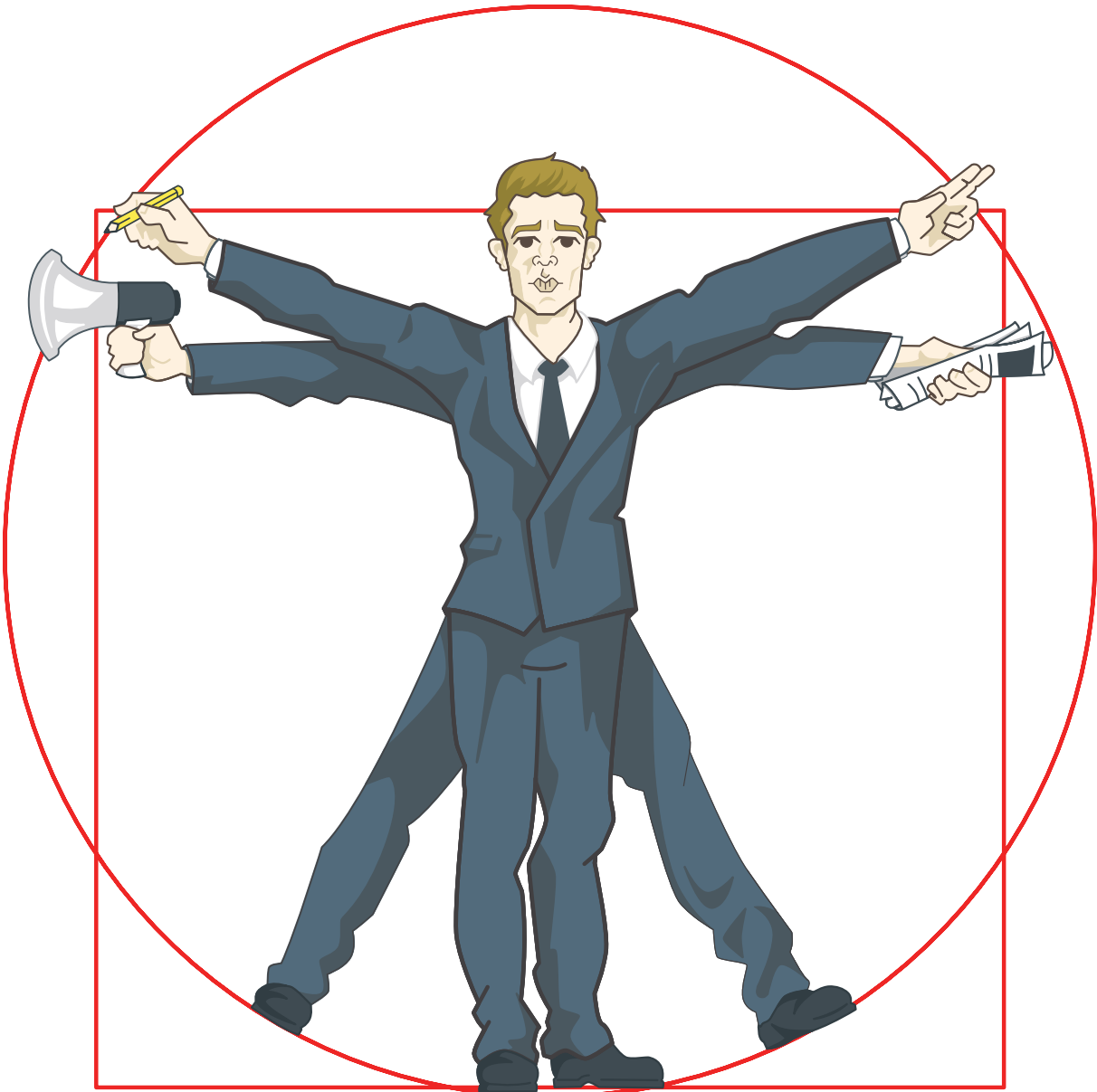
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# COUNTRIES WITHOUT FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

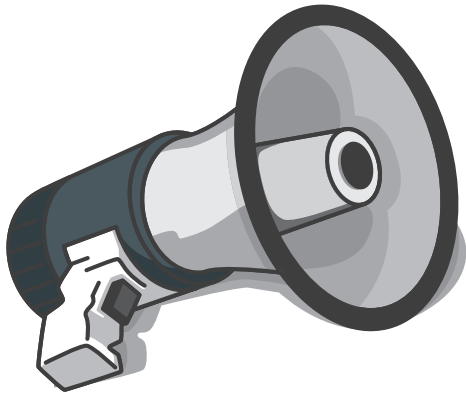


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To Americans, the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment may seem to be a simple demand of a country's citizens, but in many cases, it is a luxury that does not exist outside of America.

As Americans, we are fortunate enough to have laws, or in this case amendments, that grant us as citizens certain

rights that are meant to be upheld by our government. One of the most important amendments is the first: the right to speech, press, religion, assembly, and petition. To Americans, this may seem to be a simple demand of a country's people, however in many cases, it is a luxury that only Americans have.



*Many other countries operate on a completely different level when it comes to protecting rights that, in America, we consider to be the most basic.*

### **SOUTH KOREA**

The rest of the world looks at South Korea as being more evolved compared to North Korea or since the Korean War, there are still laws in place that limits the rights of its citizens.

For example there is clear official censorship set in place by The National Security Law that makes it illegal to share sympathies or beliefs with North Korea, however much more of the censorship is focused towards the media.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

In the UK there is no very clear and concise document, such as the US Bill of Rights, that lays out the relationship between the citizens of the country and the state. Citizens of the UK have the freedom of expression, or speech, however it can be restricted to protect public interest. In the same clause as freedom of expression is freedom of conscience, which includes the freedom of religion without being persecuted. These are both found in articles nine and ten of the European Convention on Human Rights. Along with these rights, citizens of the UK have the right to assemble as they consider it part of the freedom of expression.

### **AFGHANISTAN**

This country has taken on several offenses to human rights when the Taliban was running the country, but there have been some changes since the Taliban regime has ended. Since then there have been organizations, such as Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, or AIHRC, that have been created to protect human rights in the country. While this is a step in the right direction, it is still difficult for other nations that have been watching Afghanistan, to be able to tell the progress that is actually being made. As of right now, there seem to still be major offenses towards people's human rights in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, there is not nearly enough attention brought to the issue as the media is primarily government-owned.

This country's laws differ from ours in another way in the sense that there is a national religion: Islam. While the people of Afghanistan are not required to practice Islam, all of the laws must align with Islamic morality.

### **CHINA**

China has been accused of human rights violations by several organizations, such as the US State Department, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. A lot of their human rights issues could have to do with the fact that the government lacks structure as there are very few laws in general, let alone ones that protect civil rights of the people of China.

Often many things are censored by the government regardless of the fact that their 1982 constitution guarantees the freedom of speech to the Chinese citizens. Protesting has also been dealt with in a similar way in

the case of the 2008 summer Olympics that were held in Beijing. As there were seven foreign activist advocating for Tibetan freedom in one of the parks that summer, protesters were deported even though the Chinese government had already promised permits to allow people to protest in the parks.

Chinese citizen's freedom of press and religion are treated similarly as the government tries to censor the Chinese people from the different ways of life in the world.

## INDIA

In India there is a document in place that provides the Fundamental Rights, which is the Constitution of India. These rights include freedom of religion, speech, and freedom of movement both domestic and foreign.

Unlike the United States, the Constitution of India does not mention the actual word "press" but the Indian government sees that it falls under the clause of "freedom of speech and expression." This clause can be very widely defined. If someone asked me what I thought it meant, I would answer that this clause gives the citizens of India the right to say what they are thinking and how they feel as well as express themselves through whatever medium they feel gets their message across the best.

However, that also leaves room for the government to interpret the clause differently should a situation arise that would be unsavory if the freedom of speech and expression was fully granted.

While freedom of religion is granted in the Constitution of India, there have always been conflicts between the two major religious groups in India, which are the Hindus and the Muslims. The people of India, while they have the right to practice their religion freely, feel strongly about their religions and act upon their beliefs.

