



Human Rights in Guyana

The right to life, some aspects

UPR-Info Pre-sessions

The primacy of life

The right to life is the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted, (...).

The right to life has crucial importance
both for individuals and for society as a whole.

It is most precious for its own sake as a right that inheres in every human being,
but it also constitutes a fundamental right, the effective protection of which is
the prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other human rights (...)

Human Rights Committee, General Comment 36 on the right to life, § 2, 2019



*“From the politics of taking life
to the politics of affirming it”*

- ✓ **Constitutional review**
- ✓ **Decriminalization of suicide**
- ✓ **Some essential ratifications (Genocide, Disappearances, etc.)**
- ✓ **The adoption of violence prevention plans**
- ✓ **The immediate abolition of the death penalty**

The Constitutions of Commonwealth Countries

**Antigua and
Barbuda**

Bahamas

Barbados

Belize

Botswana

Cyprus

Dominica

**Gambia (incl. draft
2019)**

Ghana

Grenada

Kiribati

Mauritius

Nauru

New Guinea

St-Kitts and Nevis

St-Lucia

**St-Vincent and
the Grenadines**

Samoa

Sierra Leone

Solomon Islands

Swaziland

Tuvalu

Zambia

The Constitution of Guyana

138. PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE

1. No person shall be deprived of his or her life intentionally save in execution of the sentence of a court (...).
2. (...), a person shall not be regarded as having been deprived of his or her life in contravention of this article if he or she dies as the result of the use of force to such extent as is reasonably justifiable in the circumstances of the case-
 - a. for the *defence of any person* from violence or for the defence of property;
 - b. in order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;
 - c. for the purpose of suppressing a riot, insurrection or mutiny; or
 - d. in order to prevent the commission by that person of a criminal offence, or if he or she dies as the result of a *lawful act of war*.

Human Rights Committee, General Comment 36 on the right to life, § 10 to 19, 2019

The Constitution of Guyana

General Comment 36 on the right to life, § 12

(...) [The potentially lethal use of force] cannot be used, for example, in order to prevent the escape from custody of a suspected criminal or a convict who does not pose a serious and imminent threat to the lives or bodily integrity of others. The intentional taking of life by any means is permissible only if it is strictly necessary in order to protect life from an imminent threat.

See also:

Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials

<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/BASICP~3.PDF>

The Constitution of Guyana

Recommendation:

We urge the People and the Authorities of Guyana to inscribe,
by a participative process,
in their constitution,
the primacy and the beauty of life,
the full promotion and protection of the right to life,
the abolition of the death penalty,
strict life preserving limitations of any use of force
and autonomous control therefore.

The Prevention of Suicides

With a suicide rate of 30.2 deaths for 100,000 inhabitants in 2014, Guyana, was at the time the country in the world with the highest suicide rate.

Tremendous efforts have been made to lower the figure, now at 18.8, yet still higher than world average (10.5).

Nevertheless Guyana's criminal code still reads:

“97. Attempted suicide.

Everyone who attempts to commit suicide shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and liable to imprisonment for two years”

The Prevention of Suicides

SDG 3.4:

By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

3.4.2 Indicator Suicide mortality rate



The Prevention of Suicides

Recommendation:

Recognizing that suicide prevention is a full duty under the protection of the right to life and that persons attempting suicide need help rather than repression, we require of the Authorities of Guyana the urgent decriminalization of suicide.

Other recommendations:

In international law:

Ratification of:

- The genocide convention
- The enforced disappearances convention
- Second protocol of CCPR of death penalty

At the national level:

- Adopt violence and homicides prevention programs as demanded by WHO and as required by SDG 16.1
- Henceforth, abolish the death penalty and commute all sentences

Please take some time to enjoy
Switzerland



Swiss chalet presently located below the flags entrance