

What is documentation?

In a Human Rights Violations context, documentation is a process in which a survivor or a person known to the victim acknowledges and documents their testimony on paper. The documentation will reflect the victim's personal narration/testimony about their traumatic experiences caused by the community or society in which their human rights are violated.

Why do we have to document?

We need to document human rights violations for the following reasons:

1. In order to obtain relief for human rights violation victims through the use of UN mechanisms, we need to have a "systematic documentation" process in which details of violation incidents are reported in accordance to the UN criteria.
2. Systematic collection and documentation of violations can form a trend and pattern based on authentic facts which in turn will enable evidence based reporting.
3. Evidence based reporting would result in a better understanding of the issues concerned and the adoption of good practices in governance that could lead to policy orientation to meet the challenges based on the perspectives that come to light.
4. The juridical implications of testimony through interviews of victims and witnesses, as well as the testimonies of the survivors of human rights violations will be documented and can be used for advocacy purposes, international tribunals or published for educational purposes.
5. The psychotherapeutic role of a victim testifying can foster inner healing and reconciliation through relieving feelings of revenge by being able to tell the story to the public. Testifying is also found to be helpful in restoring the victim's dignity and reducing post-traumatic symptoms.
6. In the context of Human Rights Violations, if permissible by the client, these testimonies and reports of victims/witnesses can be used for documentary purposes.
7. Finally, if we do not document, who will? It is our responsibility to document each and every violation that occurred, as it is part of our history.

How does CWVHR document a case story?

CWVHR has a team of trained staff to document case stories. Our web application uses technologies such as SSL and encryption to ensure full security of the system. All CWVHR members are trained to abide the rules and regulations of the Canadian Privacy Act.

As most of our information collected about victims is from their relatives or friends, we first will have to verify the reporter's identity. We then document the information objectively, and collect all supporting documents. Then, our research team crosschecks the information with media reports, public records and with other resources.

What is your responsibility?

If you are a victim or know of a victim/survivor whose human rights has been violated, please come forward and help us document your story.

How can you help us?

In order for CWVHR to address all violations of basic human rights encountered by all victims, we are in need of documenting all such violations perpetrated or sustained by political or other organized and non-organized actors.

You can help us by:

- Documenting your own personal case stories with CWVHR.
- Advocating the importance of documenting to your family and friends and encourage them to document.