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UPHOLDING RESPECT  
FOR THE ETHICS OF SECURITY

In the eyes of the law, we are all equal

**Défenseur des droits**  
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

# RESPECT FOR THE ETHICS OF SECURITY

The rules of ethics governing the activities of public and private security professionals are laid down in various codes and charters: professional secrecy and discretion, probity, discernment, impartiality, respect for the population, rules on use of force, etc. In France, the Defender of Rights is the authority responsible for ensuring compliance with these rules of conduct.

## WHICH PROFESSIONALS ARE INVOLVED?

National and municipal police officers, military personnel from the gendarmerie, prison officers, customs officials, public transport inspectors and employees of private security services.

## FOR WHAT TYPES OF SITUATIONS?

- Disproportionate use of force
- Dishonourable behaviour (rude gestures or words, insults, threats, overfamiliarity, etc.)
- Inappropriate body search
- Identity check under abnormal conditions
- Difficulties filing a complaint
- Dispute of measures of restraint or deprivation of liberty (interrogation, restraint, custody, detention, etc.)

## IN WHAT SITUATIONS SHOULD YOU FILE A CLAIM?

- If you believe that you are a **victim** of abusive behaviour by somebody engaged in a security activity in France (or if you are an interested party)
- If you **witness** anything that constitutes such abuse

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“I WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SEE A DOCTOR WHEN  
I WAS IN CUSTODY DESPITE ASKING TO.”

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“I WAS INSULTED DURING AN IDENTITY CHECK.”

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“I WAS PREVENTED FROM FILMING AN INTERROGATION.”

# WHAT CAN THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS DO?



INVESTIGATE



PROPOSE  
AN AMICABLE  
SETTLEMENT



MAKE  
RECOMMENDATIONS



PRESENT  
ITS OBSERVATIONS  
BEFORE THE JUDGES



REQUEST  
DISCIPLINARY  
ACTION



MAKE PROPOSALS  
FOR LEGAL REFORM

# ONE INSTITUTION, 5 AREAS OF OPERATION

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## “THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS UPHOLDS RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS”

Article 71-1 of the Constitution

The Defender of Rights is an independent institution responsible for defending individual rights and freedoms within the framework of 5 areas of expertise determined by law:

- ★ Defence of the rights of users of **public services**
- ★ Defence and promotion of the **rights of the child**
- ★ Combating **discrimination** and promoting **equality**
- ★ Respect for the **ethics of security**
- ★ Orientation and protection of **whistleblowers**

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### TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION, THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS:

- ★ **handles the claims** addressed to it by offering appropriate solutions;
- ★ **acts in favour of equal access to rights for all** through information, training, the development of partnerships and the proposal of reforms.

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**MORE THAN 45% OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED  
ON THE ETHICS OF SECURITY RELATE TO VIOLENCE  
AND NON-COMPLIANCE WITH PROCEDURES**

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# DELEGATES: PROVIDING A UNIQUE LOCAL SERVICE

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## THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS RELIES ON A NETWORK OF ALMOST 550 DELEGATES

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The delegates of the Defender of Rights are present throughout the national territory. Anyone seeking assistance in asserting their rights can contact them free of charge at **more than 870 centres** in mainland France and overseas: Maison de la Justice et du Droit (MJD), Point d'accès au droit (PAD), prefectures, town halls, etc.

### DELEGATES CAN:



LISTEN TO WHAT  
YOU HAVE TO SAY



GUIDE YOU THROUGH  
THE PROCESS



HELP YOU ASSERT  
YOUR RIGHTS



FORWARD YOUR FILE  
TO THE HEAD OFFICE

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**80% OF THE CLAIMS OF THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS  
ARE RECEIVED BY DELEGATES WITHIN THEIR CLINIC**

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SEE THE LIST OF CLINICS:

[defenseurdesdroits.fr](https://defenseurdesdroits.fr)

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**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR RIGHTS  
HAVE BEEN VIOLATED?**

**CONTACT THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS FREE OF CHARGE**

★ **THROUGH THE DELEGATES**

Online at [defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://defenseurdesdroits.fr) /  
“How to get answers?” or at a centre.

★ **BY POST FREE OF CHARGE, WITHOUT POSTAGE**

Défenseur des droits - Libre réponse 71120 -  
75342 Paris Cedex 07

★ **USING THE ONLINE FORM**

Online at [defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://defenseurdesdroits.fr) / “File a Claim”.

★ **+33 (0)9 69 39 00 00 FROM 9 AM TO 6 PM**

Information can be obtained by telephone or during  
an appointment with a delegate.

**IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ATTACH ALL USEFUL DOCUMENTS  
(COPY OF ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS, LETTERS, EMAILS,  
TESTIMONIALS, ETC.) TO ENABLE THE DEFENDER OF RIGHTS  
TO PROCESS YOUR FILE.**

**GOOD TO KNOW**

Recourse to the Defender of Rights is free of charge.  
The Defender of Rights cannot challenge a court  
decision. Referral to it does not interrupt or suspend  
the limitation periods for civil, administrative  
or criminal actions or those of administrative  
or litigation appeals.