Warmer - Discussion of human rights and freedoms

With your group, discuss the following statements. Which ones do you think are always true, which are sometimes true, and which are never true? In what circumstances might these statements not be true?

- It is wrong to force someone to work against their will.
- Everyone has a right to privacy.
- People accused of a crime have the right to a fair trial. Anything else is an injustice.
- It is not fair to expel someone from a country against their will.
- Liberty is an inalienable right.
- We all have the right to say whatever we want.
- Killing people is a violation of human rights.
- Everyone should be free to express their religious beliefs in the way they wish.
- It is wrong to take another person's possessions.
Task 1 - Rights established by Magna Carta

With your partner, read the following text and answer the questions below:

**MAGNA CARTA**

NO FREE MAN SHALL BE SEIZED OR IMPRISONED, OR STRIPPED OF HIS RIGHTS OR POSSESSIONS, OR OUTLAWED OR EXILED. NOR WILL WE PROCEED WITH FORCE AGAINST HIM. EXCEPT BY THE LAWFUL JUDGMENT OF HIS EQUALS OR BY THE LAW OF THE LAND. TO NO ONE WILL WE SELL, TO NO ONE DENY OR DELAY RIGHT OR JUSTICE.

1. Which human rights are covered in this extract from the Magna Carta?
2. Is there a group of people in society who are not mentioned in this document? Who are they? Why is this, do you think?
3. Which other important human rights would you include if you had to write a similar charter?
Task 2 - Vocabulary

Match the words and their definitions:

inalienable
violate
injustice
responsibility
trial
safeguard
right to privacy
liberty

hearing in court to decide whether someone is guilty or innocent of a crime
being able to keep one’s own personal life a secret
freedom or power to act or think in the way one chooses
destroy or disobey a law or right
unfair treatment
duty to act in a particular way
cannot be removed or taken away

Use one of the words from the list above to complete the following expressions:

1. Everyone has a _______________________ to protect the rights of others.
2. Documents such as the Magna Carta established the notion that we all have _______________________ rights, and nobody can take these from us.
3. It is illegal to _______________________ someone’s human rights.
4. In some places, there are many examples of _______________________, in spite of international human rights legislation.
5. ______________________ is one of the most fundamental human rights.
6. The right to a fair _______________________ in court and to be judged by one’s peers was established by the Magna Carta.
7. Amnesty International exists to _______________________ human rights all over the world.
8. Our personal lives are protected by the _______________________. 
Task 3

Place the rights below in what you consider to be the correct order, from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important). Be prepared to give reasons for your choices.

1. The right to an education
2. The right to freedom of expression (including freedom of the press)
3. The right to liberty
4. The right to vote
5. The right to choose who to marry — or not to marry
6. The right not to be harmed by others, to be safe and secure
7. The right to freedom of movement
8. The right to privacy
9. The right to a fair trial
10. The right to an education
Task 4 - Group debates

With your group, discuss one of these scenarios.

1a Mr Nick O'Teen likes to go to his local bar and have a pint and a few cigarettes with his friends. He doesn’t see why he should be made to stand outside to smoke in winter when it’s cold. Surely he has the freedom to do as he chooses and he can smoke indoors if he likes?

1b Ms Lily Fragrant is a vehement anti-smoker. She enjoys going to bars, but she hates the smell of tobacco on her clothes and hair, and furthermore, she doesn’t want to breathe in all that nasty smoke – after all, it’s bad for her health as well as everyone else’s.

2a Mr Romcom is a good-looking, rich, famous actor. Following marital difficulties, he had an affair to console himself. Unfortunately, the press found out and they have been harassing his girlfriend, chasing her wherever she goes and printing pictures of them together in private moments.

2b Ms Hack is a journalist who thinks celebrities are fair game. Well, they court the press when they have a new film to promote, don’t they? They can’t blame the public for wanting to read stories about their private lives.

3a Ms Josie Public has noticed some strange noises and clicks on her telephone line recently. She suspects the authorities may be listening to her phone calls. She has done nothing wrong, and is very upset and worried that someone could be listening in to her private calls.

3b Mr A Gent works for the government and listens in to the phone calls and reads the e-mails and personal messages of members of the public. He thinks loss of privacy is a price worth paying if his monitoring can help stop criminals and terrorists.