



# **PANAMANIAN LAWS AFFECTING FOREIGN CITIZENS**



# PANAMA LAW AFFECTING EXPATS

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*The supreme law of Panama is the Panamanian Constitution.*

- **Article 7:** Spanish is the official language of the Republic
- **Articles 8 through 16:** Naturalization and Foreigners
- **Article 15:** both Panamanians and foreigners within the territory of the Republic are subject to the Constitution and the Laws.
- **Article 17:** authorities are instituted to protect life, honor, property of both nationals and foreigners anywhere within their jurisdiction.

# However....

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- **Article 20:** Both Panamanians and foreigners are equal under the law.
- ... **HOWEVER**, because of reasons associated with work, health, morality, public and national economic security,
  - equality may be subordinated to special conditions or some determined activities may be denied.
  - the law or authorities may take measures that exclusively affect foreigners of certain countries in case of war or in conformity with international treaties.





# HUMAN RIGHTS



- The Panamanian Constitution provides for freedom of speech, religion, the press, assembly, and to petition.
- Your home or place of residence is sacred. You may deny entry unless there is a warrant by a competent authority for a specific reason or when there is exigent circumstance.
- You have the right to transit.
- Your correspondence and personal documents are private and may not be searched without a warrant.



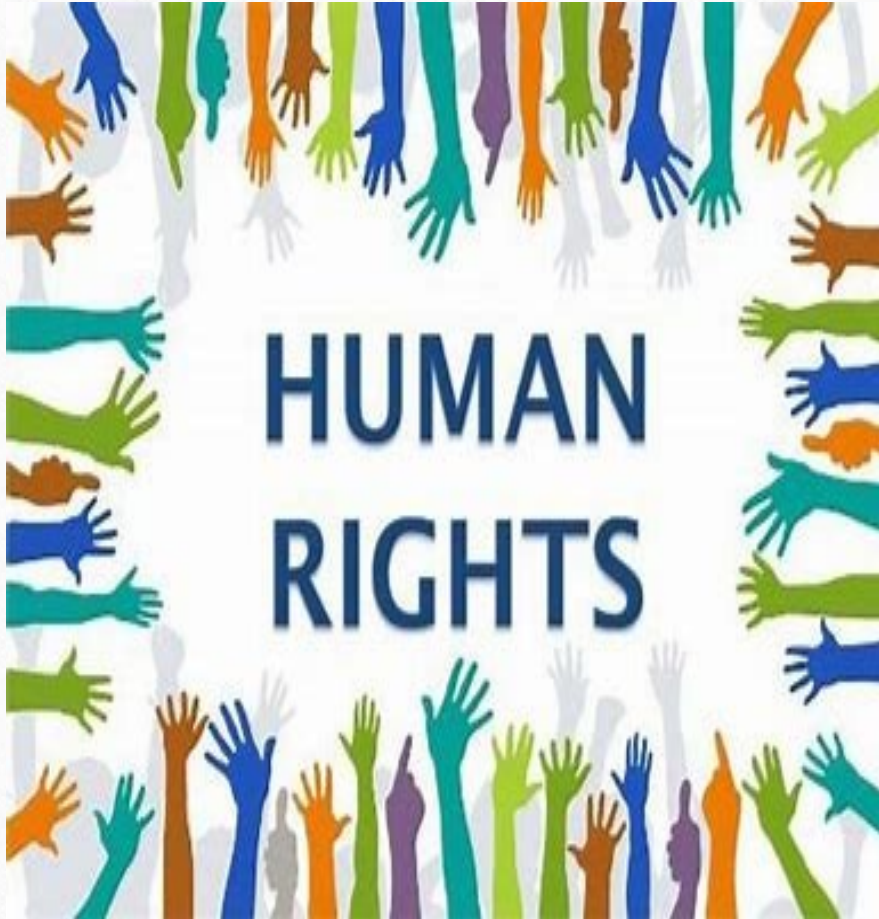


# HUMAN RIGHTS



- You may not be arrested without a written order by a competent authority, and you are entitled to a copy if you request. You may be arrested by anyone if caught in the in the process of committing a crime and turned into the authorities. In any event, you may not be held more than 24 hours without competent orders.
- You must be informed immediately why you are being detained, along with your right to an attorney to assist you in judicial and police matters, and you are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a public trial.





You may **NOT**:

- be imprisoned, detained or arrested for debts or civil obligations
- be tried for the same crime twice (prohibition against double jeopardy)
- testify against yourself, spouse or family
- be sentenced to death
- be expatriated, and your property may not be confiscated





# HABEAS CORPUS



You have the right of **HABEAS CORPUS** (a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, regardless of time or holidays, especially to secure the person's release unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention).

[Art. 23 of the Constitution/2574 Judicial Code](#)

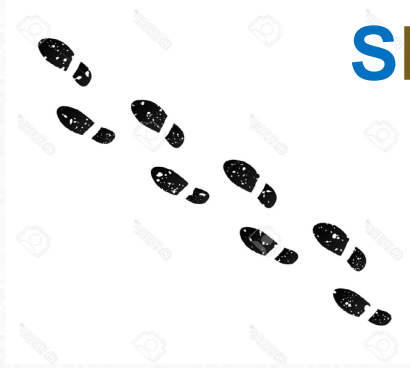


# The **LAW** and **REALITY**



- Police officers are minimally trained and seldom get continuing education updates. This may be trouble.
- Be on your best behavior when dealing with the police. Regardless of whether you know you are right, they may involve you in judicial and financial nightmares. **You may ultimately win, but at what expense?**





# SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)



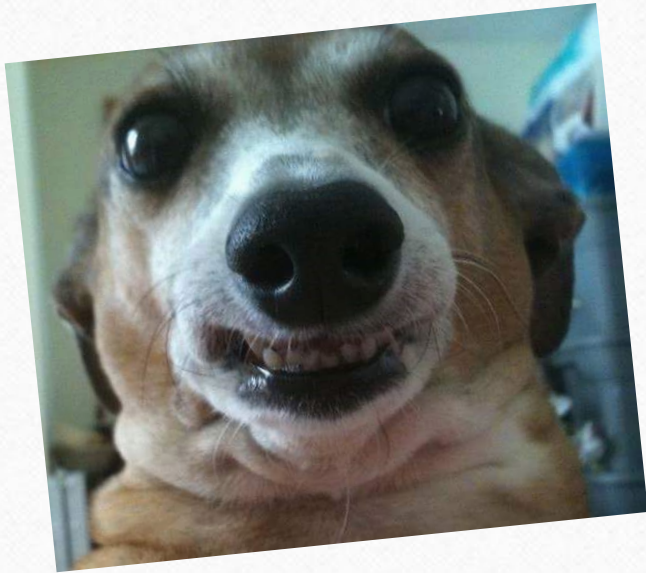
**STEP** is U.S. Department of State program allowing U.S. citizens traveling abroad to enroll with the local U.S Embassy or Consulate.

- **STEP** enrollment helps the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest or family emergency.
- You can receive the latest:
  - security updates
  - travel advisories
  - messages about U.S. Embassy events and services
- Enroll at: <https://travel.state.gov>





# QUESTIONS





**Thank**

*Mahalo*

**You**

*Kiitos*

*Obrigado*

*Grazie*

*Tack*



*Toda*

*Thanks*

**Takk**

*Merci*

**Gracias**