Human Rights

One of the most significant achievements of the United Nations is the creation of a comprehensive body of human rights law — a universal and internationally protected code to which all nations can subscribe and all people aspire. The United Nations has defined a broad range of internationally accepted rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. It has also established mechanisms to promote and protect these rights and to assist states in carrying out their responsibilities.

The foundations of this body of law are the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1945 and 1948, respectively. In 1966, the Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Together with the Declaration, they are known as the International Bill of Human Rights. Since then, the United Nations has gradually expanded human rights law to encompass specific standards for women, children, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and their families, refugees, minorities and other groups who are vulnerable to discrimination and violations of human rights in many societies and require special protection for the enjoyment of their human rights.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights works to strengthen and coordinate UN efforts for to promote and protect the human rights of all people. As human rights plays a central role in the Organization's work in the key areas such as peace and security, humanitarian assistance, and development, every UN body and specialized agency is involved to some degree in the protection of human rights.

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Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt of the United States holding a Declaration of Human Rights poster in English. 1 November 1949. United Nations, Lake Success, New York (UN Photo #1292)

UN Websites

- Human Rights 75 Initiative: https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights-75
- Protect Human Rights: https://www.un.org/en/our-work/protect-human-rights
- Global Issues on the UN Agenda – Human Rights: https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights

- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: http://www.ohchr.org
  - What are human rights? https://www.ohchr.org/en/what-are-human-rights
  - Human Rights Topics: https://www.ohchr.org/en/topics
  - "Stand Up For Human Rights": http://www.standup4humanrights.org/
- UN Human Rights Council: https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/home
  - Special Procedures: https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council
- Instruments & Mechanisms (Charter-based and Treaty-based): https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms
- General Assembly Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural): http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/index.shtml

Research & Documentation

- UN Libraries Research Guides
  - UN Documentation: Human Rights: http://research.un.org/en/docs/humanrights and http://libraryresources.unog.ch/
  - Human Rights Timeline: http://libraryresources.unog.ch/hrtimeline
  - Human Rights Special Procedures: https://libraryresources.unog.ch/specialhumanrights/
  - International Commissions of Inquiry, Fact-finding Missions: http://libraryresources.unog.ch/factfinding
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights: http://libraryresources.unog.ch/udhr
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights for Children and Youth: https://libraryresources.unog.ch/udhrforchildren
  - Drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: http://research.un.org/en/undhr
- Ask Dag - Questions on Human Rights: https://ask.un.org/
- Additional Sources for Human Rights Research: https://www.ohchr.org/en/library/external-human-rights-resources
- A Brief Guide to Finding UN Human Rights Documents: https://www.ohchr.org/en/library/brief-guide-finding-human-rights-documents
- Charter Based Bodies Document Search: https://ap.ohchr.org/Documents/gmainec.aspx
- Treaty Body Database: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/
- Universal Human Rights Index (the search engine for recommendations deriving from all human rights mechanisms): http://uhri.ohchr.org/en
- About the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Translation Project: https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/universal-declaration-human-rights/about-universal-declaration-human-rights-translation-project
- International Human Rights Law: https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms/international-human-rights-law
  - Status of Ratification (UN Treaties Collection): https://treaties.un.org/pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&lang=en
- UN Audiovisual Library of International Law
  - Historic Archives: http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/humanrights.html
  - Lecture Series: http://legal.un.org/avl/ls/humanrights.html
- UNHCR Refworld Special Feature - The UN Human Rights System: https://www.refworld.org/humanrights.html

Further Information

- Human Rights Day – 10 December: https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day
- The Essential UN - Take a moment to learn about the UN: http://www.un.org/en/essential-un/