

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE PAST?

The atrocities, violence and devastation of World War II made many realize the importance of ensuring that people's dignity, human rights and freedoms are always respected and protected.



The United Nations was established in 1945 based on an international consensus that the sad history of war should not be repeated and that respect for people's dignity must underlie humanity's efforts to build enduring peace.

In 1948, representatives of the 58 Member States of the United Nations came together to define the fundamental rights and freedoms that should be enjoyed by all people. This became the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which sets out the ideals and standards that all states and peoples should strive toward.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has served as the basis for numerous international agreements, including those that outlaw genocide, protect the rights of refugees and seek to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Its principles have been incorporated into the constitutions and national laws of many countries.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (selected text)

- 1 All human beings are born free, and equal in dignity and rights.
- 2 These rights can be claimed by anyone, regardless of their sex, skin color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national origin or social group, economic status or property ownership, birthplace.
- 3 You have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.
- 4 You have the right not to be treated as a slave.
- 5 You have the right to not be tortured.
- 10 You have the right to a fair and public trial by an impartial and independent tribunal.
- 11 You have the right to be considered innocent until it can be proved that you are guilty.
- 15 You have the right to belong to a country.
- 16 As soon as you are legally entitled, you have the right to marry and have a family. Nobody should force you to marry.
- 17 You have the right to own property and nobody has the right to take these things from you without a good reason.
- 18 You have the right to profess and practice your religion freely.
- 19 You have the right to think what you want, and to say what you like, and nobody should forbid you from doing so.
- 20 You have the right to organize peaceful meetings or to take part in meetings in a peaceful way.
- 21 You have the right to take part in your country's political affairs.
- 23 You have the right to work. If a man and a woman do the same work, they should get the same pay.
- 26 You have the right to go to school. Primary schooling should be free.
- 29 You have duties towards the community within which your personality can fully develop. The law should guarantee human rights. It should allow everyone to respect others and to be respected.

Adapted from the simplified version of the UDHR:
www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/ABCannexesen.pdf



For the full list of human rights and freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, see:
www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

