

Overview of Human Rights

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(A concise, organized guide for quick reference and deeper study)

1. Definition & Core Idea

- **Human rights** are fundamental freedoms and protections entitled to every person simply because they are human.
- They are **universal** (apply to all), **inalienable** (cannot be taken away), **indivisible** (all rights are interdependent), and **interrelated** (the enjoyment of one often depends on others).

2. Historical Development

Period	Milestone	Significance
Ancient & Classical	Hammurabi's Code (c.1754 BC),	Early codifications of legal protections.
	Roman <i>jus gentium</i>	First formal limitation on sovereign power, guaranteeing certain liberties.
Middle Ages	Magna Carta (1215)	Concept of natural rights and social contract.
Enlightenment	Philosophers (Locke, Rousseau, Kant)	Expansion of rights beyond property owners.
19th Century	Abolition of slavery, women's suffrage movements	Global consensus on a common set of rights.
Post-World War II	United Nations Charter (1945); Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)	Legally binding treaties that operationalize the UDHR.
Late 20th Century	International Covenants (ICCPR, 1966; ICESCR, 1966)	Adaptation of human rights frameworks to new challenges.
21st Century	Emerging norms (digital privacy, climate justice)	

3. Main International Instruments

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Instrument	Year	Scope	Key Features
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	1948	Declarative (non-binding)	30 articles covering civil?political and economic?social rights. Guarantees freedoms of speech, religion, fair trial, etc.; includes an Optional Protocol for individual complaints.
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	1966	Binding treaty	Protects rights to work, health, education, adequate standard of living.
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	1966	Binding treaty	Rights of children in protection, development, participation.
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1989	Binding treaty	Focus on gender equality.
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	1979	Binding treaty	Accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	2006	Binding treaty	Tailor global standards to regional contexts.
Regional Instruments (e.g., European Convention on Human Rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights)	Various	Binding within regions	

4. Classification of Rights

Category	Typical Rights	Example Articles
Civil & Political (First? Generation)	Liberty, equality before law, participation	Freedom of expression, right to a fair trial, voting rights.
Economic, Social & Cultural (Second?Generation)	Welfare, standards of living	Right to work, health, education, cultural participation.
Collective / Solidarity (Third? Generation)	Group?based rights	Right to development, peaceful environment, self?determination.

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5. Core Principles (The “Four Pillars”)

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