

# The Holy Qur'an on Human Rights

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Understanding the interconnectivity between the Qur'an and Human Rights, as defined by the UN Human Rights Declaration (UN-HRD) of 1948, is critical for two reasons – defeating radicalism and improving the quality of life in Muslim societies. Unfortunately, the Muslim world has not only failed to acknowledge the ideals outlined in the UN-HRD, they – through the 57 member Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) – have rejected the document as un-Islamic and adopted an “Islamic” version that focuses on [legislative] shari'a,<sup>1</sup> the so-called Islamic Law. This article will establish that the ideals contained in the UN-HRD are embedded in the Qur'an – the primary source of Islamic teachings – and that the OIC's rejection of the UN-HRD is driven by short-sighted political motivations. The Qur'anic teachings on Human Rights are discussed in the first part followed by the cross referencing of the entire UN-HRD to the Qur'an in the second part. The third part will highlight the background behind the OIC's rejection of the UN-HRD and its destructive consequences.

Human Rights are based on the principle of respect for the individual and assume humans as moral and rational beings who deserve to be treated with dignity. The term *human rights* came into existence after widespread human sufferings caused by the two world wars, the use of nuclear and biochemical weapons, and the proliferation of nuclear weapon technology around the world. Human base instincts – greed, domination, and superiority – have caused untold destruction and misery on their fellow beings. Industrialization and technological developments in the past two centuries have only accelerated and amplified the scale and pace of this destruction.

Taken aback by the widespread human misery, the global powers created the United Nations (UN) in 1945 to prevent another global war. In addition to maintaining international peace and security, promotion and safeguarding human rights is one of the main UN objectives of this organization. On December 10, 1948 the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for safeguarding the fundamental freedoms for all individuals, irrespective of race, sex, language, or religion. Member states pledge to undertake “joint and separate action” to protect these rights.<sup>2</sup> The UN Declaration of Human Rights proclaims basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights common to all human beings and serves as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. This statement of ideals has been upheld and celebrated as: “... the broadest consensus of contemporary civilization on the subject of Human Rights”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oic-oci.org/english/article/human.htm> accessed Dec 14, 2103

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Charter: Chapter IX". United Nations. Retrieved 18 November 2013

<sup>3</sup> Zafrullah Khan, “Islam and Human Rights” Islam International Publications, Inc. 1967

## **PART 1: THE QUR'AN AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Muslims' worship consists of two major components – obligations towards God<sup>4</sup> and obligations towards His creation.<sup>5</sup> The obligations towards God – the five pillars – are meant to train humans for honoring commitments, inculcating discipline and cleanliness, first feeling for, and then helping the poor, and finally unity of all human beings. The outcome of this training is to prepare Muslims to help fulfill their obligations towards the Creation. The Qur'an prescribes a perfect gradation of moral values and defines three stages of human relations – absolute justice, granting someone more than their due, and to treat others with such grace and overwhelming benevolence as one would treat one's kindred. To act with absolute justice is the minimum requirement for Muslims; those seeking God's pleasure must be benevolent – that is, he must render good without any thought of return, and forgive wrongs and injuries till beneficence towards fellow beings becomes part of his nature and flows out of him as naturally as affection for close kindred. Simultaneously, every kind of trespass against person, property and honor should be eschewed and rude behavior and evil thoughts and designs must also be guarded against. These form the major Qur'anic teachings for ensuring that the rights of individuals are safeguarded as a matter of faith.

## **PART 2: THE QUR'AN AND THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION OF 1948**

This part is excerpted from *Islam and Human Rights*<sup>6</sup> and summarizes the core of each UN-HDR Article (Appendix 1) and cross references it to the Qur'an. Space limitations prevent a detailed analysis but interested readers are encouraged to review the source.

The Preamble summarizes the general terms and goals of the Declaration and the methods to accomplish them. The Preamble is adequately referenced by two Qur'anic verses<sup>7</sup> which exhort Muslims to perform and support all good deeds and suppress evil. They actually go further than the Preamble because the Qur'an incentivizes the good behavior with a reward in the hereafter.<sup>8</sup>

Articles 1 and 2 stress the freedom, equality and dignity of human beings; they urge people to interact with others as equals, without discrimination and in the spirit of brotherhood. The Qur'an stresses this equality which is derived from the unity of its common Creator who created humans from the same

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<sup>4</sup> The five pillars of Islam "Affirmation, obligatory prayers, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage to Mecca."

<sup>5</sup> "Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed." (Qur'an Ch 19, v 91)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/library/books/Islam-HR.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> You are the best people, for you have been raised for the good of mankind, you enjoin what is equitable and forbid evil and believe in Allah. (Qur'an Ch 3, v 111). And let there be among you a body of men who should invite to goodness, and enjoin equity and forbid evil. And it is they who shall prosper. [Qur'an Ch 3, v 105]

<sup>8</sup> They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book there is a party who stand by their covenant; they recite the word of Allah in the hours of night and prostrate themselves before Him. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin what is good and forbid evil, and hasten, vying with one another, in good works. And these are among the righteous. And whatever good they do, they shall not be denied its due reward; and Allah well knows the God-fearing. [Qur'an Ch 3, v 114-6]

species and to whom all humans owe allegiance and obedience.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, this theme is captured in several additional verses<sup>10</sup> and is also reinforced by the Prophets exhortations (Ahadith).<sup>11</sup>

Article 3 embodies what has come to be regarded as truism. Several articles that follow spell out some of the specific elements “the right to life, liberty, and security of the individual.” Islam emphatically safeguards these rights. Suicide is forbidden<sup>12</sup> as is infanticide,<sup>13</sup> and a sense of horror is conveyed for taking innocent life.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the Qur’an provides comprehensive commandments for dealing with parents, children, and safeguarding the rights of orphans.<sup>15</sup> The Prophet also emphasized the contents of Article 3 in his Farewell address.<sup>16</sup>

Article 4 is designed to secure the abolition of slavery and all forms of servitude. By stressing equality among human beings, Islam prohibited slavery, discrimination, and servitude in all forms. The prophet freed all slaves against the prevalent practice of slavery in pre-Islamic Arabia and even adopted a slave as his son after he refused to accompany his parents.

Article 5 is directed against torture, cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Prophet, while prohibiting cruelty and torture, regularly admonished people to behave with calmness,

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<sup>9</sup> O ye men, worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may become righteous; Who made the earth a bed for you, and the heaven a roof, and caused water to come down from the clouds and therewith brought forth fruits for your sustenance. Set not up, therefore, equals to Allah, while you know. [Qur’an Ch 2, v 22-3]. O ye people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you. [Qur’an Ch 4, v 2]. And Allah has made for you mates from among yourselves, and has made for you, from your mates, sons and grandsons, and has provided you with good things. Will they then believe in vain things and deny the favor of Allah? [Qur’an Ch 16, v 73]. O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware. [Qur’an Ch 49, v 14]

<sup>10</sup> Qur’an Ch 35, v 40; Qur’an Ch 95, v 5; Qur’an Ch 32, v 7-10; Qur’an Ch 45, v 14; Qur’an Ch 75, v 3

<sup>11</sup> Bukhari IV under Good behavior; Tirmadi II under Virtue etc.; Chapter on Benevolence and Bukhari I under faith.

<sup>12</sup> O ye who believe! devour not your property among yourselves by unlawful means, except that you earn by trade with mutual consent. And kill not yourselves. Surely, Allah is Merciful to you. [Qur’an Ch 4, v 30]

<sup>13</sup> Kill not your children for fear of poverty. It is We Who provide for them and for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin [Qur’an Ch 17, v 32]

<sup>14</sup> On account of this, We prescribed for the children of Israel that whosoever killed a person — unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land — it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoso gave life to one, it shall be as if he had given life to all mankind. And Our Messengers came to them with clear Signs, yet even after that, many of them commit excesses in the land. [Qur’an Ch 5, v 33]

<sup>15</sup> Say, ‘Come, I will rehearse to you what your Lord has forbidden: that you associate not anything as partner with Him and that you do good to parents, and that you kill not your children for fear of poverty — it is We Who provide for you and for them — and that you approach not foul deeds, whether open or secret; and that you kill not the life which Allah has made sacred, save by right. That is what He has enjoined upon you, that you may understand. ‘And approach not the property of the orphan, except in a way which is best, till he attains his maturity. And give full measure and weight with equity. We task not any soul except according to its capacity. And when you speak, observe justice, even if the concerned person be a relative, and fulfil the covenant of Allah. That is what He enjoins upon you, that you may remember’ [Qur’an Ch 6:152-3].

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mei.columbia.edu/HANDOUT15.PDF>

dignity, and courtesy and subjecting people to inhumane or demeaning treatment. He even expressed displeasure at the practice of branding a donkey on the face.<sup>17</sup>

Articles 6-8 are designed to secure recognition and equality before the law and the protection of the law without discrimination for all people. Several Qur'anic pronouncements are emphatic about justice and upholding the law.<sup>18</sup>

Articles 9-12 have a similar message. While Articles 9-11 safeguard against the arbitrary exercise of executive or administrative authority and for the due administration of justice where a criminal charge is involved and a penalty might be incurred, Article 12 deals with the same matters but from the perspective of protecting the individual's privacy. The Qur'anic pronouncements for dispensing justice and dealing with people fairly have already been discussed under Articles 6-8. Islam seeks to uphold the basic values through legislative safeguards and strives constantly to ensure their observance in every sphere by emphasizing the moral responsibility of the individual, society and the State. Likewise, the Qur'an categorically defends the individual's right to privacy.<sup>19</sup>

Articles 13-15 relate to nationality, freedom of movement and residence and asylum. The Qur'an encourages travel and the pilgrimage – the fifth pillar of Islam – requires travel to Mecca. The purpose of travel and movement stressed by the Qur'an is more comprehensive than the referenced Articles. Travel is encouraged so people can witness the signs of God, educate themselves and reinforce their faith.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Islam encourages granting asylum and protecting those who are persecuted.<sup>21</sup> Providing asylum to the persecuted who migrated is a decent act.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Muslim II (Book of Ahadith). Section Dress and Adornment. Chapter Prohibition against beating or branding an animal on its face.

<sup>18</sup> But no, by thy Lord, they are not believers until they make thee judge in all that is in dispute between them and then find not in their hearts any demur concerning that which thou decided and submit with full submission [4:66]. To this, then, do thou invite mankind. And be thou steadfast as thou art commanded, and follow not their evil inclinations, but say, 'I believe in whatever Book Allah has sent down, and I am commanded to judge justly between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us is the reward of our works, and for you the reward of your works. There is no quarrel between us and you. Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the return' [Qur'an Ch 42, v 16]. Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. And surely excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing [Qur'an Ch 4, v 59]. And those who bear not false witness, and when they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity; [Qur'an Ch 25, v73]. O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do [Qur'an Ch 5, v 9]. O ye who believe! be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do [Qur'an Ch 4, v 36].

<sup>19</sup> O ye who believe! enter not houses other than your own until you have asked leave and saluted the inmates thereof. That is better for you, that you may be heedful. And if you find no one therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. And if it be said to you, 'Go back' then go back; that is purer for you. And Allah knows well what you do. It is no sin on your part to enter uninhabited houses wherein are your goods. And Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal. [Qur'an Ch 24, v 28-30]

<sup>20</sup> And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors. In that surely are Signs for those who possess knowledge [Qur'an Ch 30, v 23]. See they not how Allah originates creation, then repeats it? That surely is easy for Allah. Say, 'Travel in the earth, and see how He originated the

Article 16 deals with the right to marry, equal rights for spouses, consent to marriage and the protection for the family. In Islam, family is recognized as the natural and fundamental unit of the society. Islam regards married life as a natural state;<sup>23</sup> celibacy and monasticism is prohibited.<sup>24</sup> It not only accords it the fullest protection, but also shows how the protection can be made effective. Here are some Qur’anic pronouncements about marriage in the footnotes.<sup>25</sup>

Article 17 recognizes the individual’s right to own property and accords it full protection. There is no prohibition against owning property in Islam and it applies to both men and women.

Articles 18 and 19 are about securing the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expression, including the freedom to change one’s religion and to manifest it in teaching, practice, worship, and observance, and the freedom to seek, receive and impart information. Islam accords absolute freedom, even in matters of faith; the Qur’an affirms that “there should be no compulsion in religion”<sup>26</sup> and several verses reaffirm this point.<sup>27</sup>

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creation. Then will Allah provide the latter creation.’ Surely, Allah has power over all things. [Qur’an Ch 29, v 20-1]. And how many a city have We destroyed, while it was given to wrongdoing, so that it is fallen down on its roofs; and how many a deserted well and lofty castle! Have they not travelled in the land, so that they may have hearts wherewith to understand, or ears wherewith to hear? But the fact is that it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that are blind [Qur’an Ch 22, v 46-7]. And remember the time when We assigned to Abraham the site of the House and said, ‘Associate not anything with Me, and keep My House clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow down and fall prostrate in Prayers; ‘And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant track, [Qur’an Ch 22, v 27-8]

<sup>21</sup> And whoso emigrates from his country in the cause of Allah will find in the earth an abundant place of refuge and plentifulness. And whoso goes forth from his home, emigrating in the cause of Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward lies on Allah, and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. [Qur’an Ch 4, v 101]

<sup>22</sup> And those who had established their home in this city before them and had accepted faith, love those who came to them for refuge, and find not in their breasts any desire for that which is given them (Refugees), but prefer the Refugees to themselves, even though poverty be their own lot. And whoso is rid of the covetousness of his own soul — it is these who will be successful [Qur’an Ch 59, v 10].

<sup>23</sup> And one of His Signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect [Qur’an Ch 30, v 22]

<sup>24</sup> “...But monasticism which they invented for themselves — We did not prescribe it for them — for the seeking of Allah’s pleasure; but they did not observe it with due observance. Yet We gave those of them who believed their due reward, but many of them are rebellious [Qur’an Ch 57, v 28].

<sup>25</sup> “....They [wives] are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them....”. [Qur’an Ch 2, v 188]. O ye people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you. [Qur’an Ch 4, v 2]. O ye who believe! it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will; nor should you detain them wrongfully that you may take away part of that which you have given them, except that they be guilty of a flagrant evil; and consort with them in kindness; and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing wherein Allah has placed much good. [Qur’an Ch 4, v 20]

<sup>26</sup> There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing [Qur’an Ch 2, v 257].

<sup>27</sup> And say, ‘It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve.’ Verily, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose flaming canopy shall enclose them. And if they cry for

Article 20 secures the right of free peaceful association which is, in fact, consequent upon the right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression. The need for this specific formulation was felt with the advent of the industrialization and capitalism when people were forced to work under dangerous and inhumane conditions. Islam's stand on freedom of conscience is uncompromising, even in matters of faith (as shown in Articles 18 and 19). Islam encourages association with others for attainment of righteous actions.<sup>28</sup>

Article 21 recognizes every individual's right to participate in the government and to have equal access to public services in their country, and that peoples' will should be the basis of government. The Qur'an does not specify any form of government but defines that the government be based on the principles of equality, peace and justice, prescribing that authority in public matters be vested in the people best capable of exercising it<sup>29</sup> and that the state conduct its affairs in consultation with the people.<sup>30</sup>

Articles 22 to 28 can be grouped together because these are directed towards securing a reasonable standard of living for everyone through proper education, appropriate and adequate training, and gainful employment so the individual may have full opportunity to develop. Moreover, the individual's dignity should be safeguarded. Most of these have already been covered in previous sections but the Qur'an makes the state responsible for providing the basic necessities to its subjects.<sup>31</sup>

Articles 29 and 30 represent the truism that every right carries with it a corresponding duty and responsibility. Freedom rightfully occupies a place in the front; yet to ensure due freedom for everyone, the freedom of each must be curbed, restrained and regulated. As has been widely observed, our real freedom is the right to discipline our freedom.

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help, they will be helped with water like molten lead which will burn the faces. How dreadful the drink, and how evil is the Fire as a resting place! [Qur'an Ch 18, v 30]. Say, 'O ye men, now has the truth come to you from your Lord. So whosoever follows the guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul, and whosoever errs, errs only against it. And I am not a keeper over you.' [10:109]. Verily, We have revealed to thee the Book with truth for the good of mankind. So whoever follows guidance, follows it for the benefit of his own soul; and whoever goes astray, goes astray only to its detriment. And thou art not a guardian over them. [Qur'an Ch 39, v 42]

<sup>28</sup> O ye who believe! when you confer together in secret, confer not for the commission of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger, but confer for the attainment of virtue and righteousness, and fear Allah unto Whom you shall all be gathered. Holding of secret counsels for evil purposes is only of Satan, that he may cause grief to those who believe; but it cannot harm them in the least, except by Allah's leave. And in Allah should the believers put their trust. [Qur'an Ch 58, v 10-11]. There is no good in many of their conferences except the conferences of such as enjoin charity, or goodness, or the making of peace among men. And whoso does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We shall soon bestow on him a great reward. [Qur'an Ch 4, v 115]

<sup>29</sup> Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. And surely excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing [Qur'an Ch 4, v 59].

<sup>30</sup> And it is by the great mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in matters of administration; and when thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him [3:160]; And those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them [Qur'an Ch 42, v 39]

<sup>31</sup> 'It is provided for thee that thou wilt not hunger therein, nor wilt thou be naked. 'And that thou wilt not thirst therein, nor wilt thou be exposed to the sun.' [20:119-20]

### **PART 3: OIC's rejection of the UN-HRD and its destructive consequences**

The ironic contradiction between the Qur'anic pronouncements and their convergence with the UN-HRD on the one side and the OIC's rejection of the UN-HDR on the other is hard to rationalize. The OIC rejection cannot be ignored because the OIC claims to be "... the collective voice of the Muslim world and ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world...."<sup>32</sup> In the past few weeks, two non-Muslims – a university professor and an office bearer from a large interfaith group – have shared their views, based on the OIC's position, that Islam and the UN-HRD are incompatible. The only obvious explanation to this unexplainable phenomenon is that the OIC is pursuing a political agenda by suppressing the individual freedoms of expression and association under the guise of apostasy, blasphemy and sharia. The stated objective of several Islamist groups is the establishment of an Islamic State and global domination. OIC's 2013 Report on Islamophobia<sup>33</sup> cites "freedom of speech as the main cause of Islamophobia." With this mindset, OIC is exploiting the so called Islamic Sharia laws (jihad, apostasy and blasphemy) to suppress dissent and any opposition to their nefarious objectives. This has resulted in widespread radicalism in Muslim societies, increase in intolerance and the persecution of minorities.

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The UN Human Rights Declaration is a set of guiding principles for preventing exploitation and enabling humans to reach their true potential in life. These guiding principles, encapsulated in the UN-HRD of 10 December 1948 are fully consistent with and are embedded in the Qur'anic affirmations. The IOC's rejection of the UN-HDF as "un-Islamic" is motivated on political considerations and is not supported by the Qur'an.

**Author's note:** *Two conventions for numbering Qur'anic verses are commonly used – one numbers each verse of the chapter while in the other, the first verse which is common in all but one chapter, is not numbered. The first convention is used in this article.*

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<sup>32</sup> [http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/page/?p\\_id=52&p\\_ref=26&lan=en](http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/page/?p_id=52&p_ref=26&lan=en)

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/upload/islamophobia/2013/en/islamophobia\\_report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/upload/islamophobia/2013/en/islamophobia_report_2013.pdf)

**Appendix 1.**  
**UN Human Rights Declaration (adopted 10 Dec 1948)**

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

*Now, Therefore,*

The General Assembly *proclaims*

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

**Article 1:** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**Article 2:** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitations of sovereignty.

**Article 3:** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4:** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 5:** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Article 6:** Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

**Article 7:** All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**Article 8:** Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**Article 9:** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**Article 10:** Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

**Article 11:**

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

**Article 12:** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13:**

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 14:**

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15:**

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16:**

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17:**

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**Article 18:** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**Article 19:** Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20:**

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**Article 21:**

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedure.

**Article 22:** Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the

organization and resources of each State of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

**Article 23:**

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

**Article 24:** Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

**Article 25:**

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26:**

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship, among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**Article 27:**

1. Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in the scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**Article 28:** Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29:**

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 30:** Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.