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Tibetan Centre For Human Rights and Democracy



For Tibetan Secondary School Children

A Guide to Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS!



NO VIOLENCE



Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is the first Tibetan non-governmental organisation (NGO) to be formed with the mission *"to highlight the human rights situation in Tibet and to promote principles of democracy in Tibetan community."* TCHRD is independent of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and is based in Dharamsala, India. It is funded by donations from individual supporters and foundations around the world.

TCHRD conducts regular, systematic investigations of human rights abuses in Tibet and publishes research documents on various human rights issues confronted by the Tibetan people in Tibet. TCHRD attends the UN Commission on Human Rights and takes part in other national and international conferences to highlight the human rights situation in Tibet.

TCHRD organises various educational programmes like workshops and seminars in an effort to empower the Tibetan community to play an important participatory and vigilant role in a democratic future Tibet. We produce various educational materials on human rights and democracy both in Tibetan and English languages.

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A GUIDE TO HUMAN RIGHTS

For Secondary School Tibetan Children

COURSE OBJECTIVE

As part of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy's (TCHRD) aims and objective,

- *To educate the community in-exile, including school children on the principles and concepts of human rights and democracy,*

This booklet has been especially written for Tibetan secondary school children.

A Guide to Human Rights should be used as a teaching aid for educators of Secondary School students. The course is designed to introduce the students to the concepts and principles central to human rights and how the subject is relevant to both themselves and the world in which they live.

Learning about human rights is very different from learning about many other subjects. While learning mathematics, for example, you are given a problem, and you are told that there is only one answer. While learning English, you are taught the right way to write a sentence, how to pronounce a word, and the exact definition of certain words.

However, while learning about human rights you are leaning about your own and other people's ideas, feelings, opinions and experiences. You are also learning about the need and freedom to use your human rights, and when to use them and when not to.

Although sometimes there are human rights questions that have only one answer (for example- what year was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights created?), many questions about human rights may have several answers, none of which are more correct than others. While reading through this booklet and doing the activities, you should first think about the lessons on your own, then talk to other people about what they think. Sharing your ideas and views with other people and listening to the ideas others have is the best way to learn about human rights.



Painting by
Tenzin Choedup
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Lesson #1

WE ARE ALL HUMANBEINGS

The first step towards learning about human rights is to understand what it means to be a human being. There are human beings all over the world- we all look very different, speak different languages, come from different countries, practice different religions, have different cultures, and so on. Even though all of us are different and live different lives, we are all still human beings.

Activity

Take some time to think about and answer these questions:

- * What do you think "**human being**" means?
- * What makes **human beings** different from animals?
- * Although all of us are different from each other, we have many things in common.
- * Make a list of these things.

For example, as human beings we have special brains that can think and understand the difference between what is right and what is wrong; we can communicate with each other; we have emotions (love, anger, etc.) and can express them; and we all have special talents and abilities.

Most importantly, all human beings have dignity. This means- we are proud and feel good about ourselves, and we have honour, self-respect and self-confidence. Even with all of our differences, all human beings are members of one big family, like a tree with many branches and leaves.

Lesson #2

WHAT IS FAIR? WHAT IS UNFAIR?

Human rights protect things that are fair, and prevent things that are unfair. So, to begin to understand human rights, we should think about and understand what is fair and what is unfair.

You may have seen the words “fair” and “unfair” before today and maybe you have used them in your writing or speaking. But, have you ever given a thought to what they mean? How would you define these words? Some people say fair means just, or honest. Some people say unfair means unjust or untrue. There are many things that occur in the world that are unfair, can you think of some examples?

Activity

*Brainstorm and write down what you think the words “fair” and “unfair” mean. Then ask your friends, classmates and family for their ideas and opinions. Are your ideas different from theirs? What are the differences? What are the similarities?

**Give some examples of situations or actions that are unfair. How would you change these situations or actions to make them fair?

Think about jail, or prison. Is jail fair? Always?

- Imagine you are walking down a street, doing nothing that is wrong, and the police come and arrest you and put you in jail. Is this fair?

- Imagine someone comes into your house and steals all of your belongings. Soon he is arrested by the police and is put in the jail. Is this fair?
- Imagine the police hear you talking to your friends about human rights and the police put in jail. Is this fair? What if one country invades another country? Is this fair or unfair? For example:
 - China invaded Tibet. Was this fair or unfair? Why?
 - America invaded Iraq. Was this fair or unfair? Why? Is it fair for any country to invade another country for no reason? What if there is a good reason? Then would it be fair? What would be the good, or fair, reasons to invade another country?



Painting by
Tenzin Choedar
T.C.V Bylakuppe

Lesson #3

YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS

“Human rights” is a difficult phrase to define. What do you think the term “human rights” means?

A right is something you are entitled to, something you deserve. Therefore, a human right is something you deserve just because you are a human being. Human rights are not a gift from someone, and you cannot buy them or earn them. They are yours because you are a human being. You were born with human rights, and you have the right to do and to have certain things just because you are a human being. All human beings in the world have the same rights.

Human rights are also known as natural rights, because you naturally have these rights from the moment you were born. When we are born, we are all equal to each other. Therefore, all human beings everywhere have the same human rights, and no one person deserves to have them more than other people. Everyone is a human being and it does not matter if your skin colour, nationality, sex, age, class, language, religion, or beliefs are different. Because you are a human being, your human rights cannot be taken away from you. Human rights are often called universal rights. This is because all the people in the universe have the same rights, and no matter where people go or live they have these rights.

If someone takes your human rights from you, you could still survive, but to enjoy all the things that make you a human being, you need to be able to do more than just survive. You need to enjoy and use your human rights in order to live a full and happy life. Human beings are all very special; we all have special talents

and abilities. Our human rights allow us to make the best use of them.

One example of a human right is your right to have your own opinions and to express them freely. This means you should be able to think and express yourself without fear. You are human, you have opinions, and you have the right to express those opinions.

Activity

*** Talk with your classmates, family and friends about what you all think **human rights** are. As a human being, what do you think you should have the right to do?*

*** Without looking at treaties or declarations, make a list of what you think are your **human rights**. Later, when we talk about different international agreements on human rights, you can compare your ideas to these agreements*

If you do not understand what **human rights** are, ask yourself, “Why did I leave Tibet?”

Below are examples of some answers to this question:

- “I left Tibet because I had no human rights.”
- What are some examples of those human rights you didn’t have?
- “I left Tibet because I want freedom.”
- What do you want freedom to do?
- “I left Tibet to have the opportunity to go to school and receive an education”
- While in Tibet you had to pay large fees for your education. Maybe you thought to yourself, “This is wrong. I am a human and I have the right to learn- to have an education.”

- You have the human right to learn, and to have a free education.
- "I left Tibet because I wanted to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freely practice my religion."
- While in Tibet, maybe you were not able to freely pray or follow His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Maybe you thought to yourself, "This is wrong. I am a human and I should be able to pray freely and follow my religious leader."
- You have the human right to practice your religion, or no religion at all.

Are there limits to your human rights? Can a person do or say anything he or she wishes? If you have the human right to do anything you wish, does that mean you have the right to hurt others if you wish? There are some limits to your human rights. There are many laws and rules that limit human rights in order to keep society happy and safe. Can you think of some of these laws and rules?

Sometimes it is necessary for you to give up some of your freedom to allow others to enjoy their freedom and rights. For example, everyone has the human right to speak freely. However, if you are to express yourself by yelling "fire" in a crowded room when there is no fire, there is a possibility that people will get hurt trying to escape the room for no reason. Your human right to speak freely must be limited when it does more harm than good. You should ask yourself if using your human rights the way you would like disturbs and causes unhappiness to other people.

You must be sure that when you use your human rights you still respect the human rights of others.

Some Basic Human Rights-

- The Right to Learn and Have an Education
- The Right to Speak Freely
- The Right to Have Opinions
- The Right to Go Wherever We Want
- The Right to Pray Freely
- The Right to Life-The Right to Love and Marry Whomever We Want
- The Right to Vote for our Leaders



Painting by
Unknown
C.S.T Solan

Lesson #4

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to human rights, we all have responsibilities, which are also known as “duties”. As a human being, you have many responsibilities. Can you think of some of them?

One responsibility you have is the responsibility to take care of other people. Most importantly, you have the duty to look after children, the elderly, and people who are hurt or sick. All human beings have the responsibility to protect the environment and their culture. As a human being, you also have the responsibility to share what you have with others and to teach others what you now.

Your human rights also become your responsibilities. For example, you have the right to vote. You also have the responsibility to choose your leaders by voting. If your right you are given the opportunity to vote, you have the responsibility to use your right to choose your leaders. You also have the right to have to go to school and receive an education. It is your responsibility to go to school and learn. If your rights are respected, it is your duty to use those rights as much as you can

There are two very important responsibilities you have as a human being. First, all human beings have the responsibility to respect social order. You should think of social order as an order needed to make society happy and healthy. Here, “social order” refers to the laws and rules of society. The responsibility, or duty, to respect social order is important because if no one respects the social order there will be disorder and lawlessness. This would in turn create many problems in society.

Second, all human beings have the responsibility to respect the rights of other people. You have human rights, and you want them to be respected. All human beings have human rights, and everyone wants their human rights to be respected. Therefore, everyone has the duty to respect each other’s human rights. Therefore, while using your human rights, you have the responsibility to pay attention to the human rights of others and make sure the use of your human rights does not harm or disrespect the rights of others.

Activity

* Talk with and share ideas with your friends, classmates and family about responsibilities, then make a list of your responsibilities. Make your list something you will be proud of and would like to show others.

** When you are finished making your list, hang your list next to your bed so that you always see it and can remind yourself of what are your responsibilities everyday.



Painting by
Unknown
C.S.T Solan

Lesson #5

WHY SHOULD WE LEARN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS?

There are many reasons why all of us should learn about human rights. Why do you want to learn about them? You may think, "I want to learn about human rights because they are very important." Human rights are very important to learn and to understand; can you think of some reasons why? Maybe you think, "Everyone should learn about human rights because we are all human beings and we should know our rights." But why is it important for everyone to know their rights?

Activity

** On your own think about and make a list of why you want to learn about human rights. What is your aim? Also, what happens when people do not know or understand their human rights?*

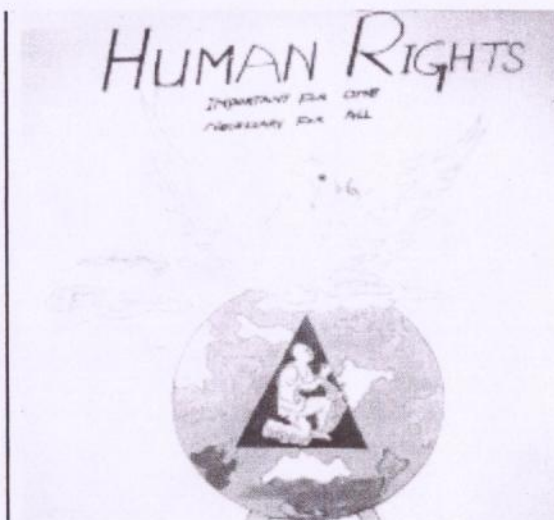
*** Then, interview 5 people. Ask the people you are interviewing if it is important for them to learn about human rights. Ask them why they think the way they do. Write down what the five people say. Compare their reasons to your reasons. Are they the same or are they different? Why?*

Everyone should learn about human rights is because everyone should know how to respect the human rights of others. Everyone deserves to be treated in the same way; it does not matter who they are or if they are different. When people understand that all human beings are equal and have the same human rights, they will then treat other people the way they would like to be treated.

Education is one of the best ways to spread awareness about human rights. When you know about and understand your human rights,

you will be able to teach others about their human rights. If you learn about human rights, you can then teach 10 people about their human rights, and those 10 people can teach 10 others about their human rights. Soon, 101 people will know and understand their human rights, and those 101 people can teach others. Eventually, everyone will know about and understand human rights and will respect the human rights of others.

The most important reason we should learn about our human rights is so we can fight effectively and peacefully to protect our human rights. All over the world human rights are not being respected. However, when people do not know that they have human rights their human rights will continue to be ignored. Only knowing about human rights is not enough; you must understand what each right says and what it means. Once you have a complete understanding of your human rights you will be able to talk about your rights with other people, including those people who have the power to make sure your rights are being respected. When you understand your human rights, you can lead the fight for your rights by writing letters, talking to people in your government and around the world, and educate others.



Painting by
Migmar Tsering
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Lesson #6

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

During World War II (1939-1945), millions of people suffered and died at the hands of their fellow men and governments. The international community was deeply shocked and wanted to ensure that steps were taken to prevent such atrocities ever happening again.

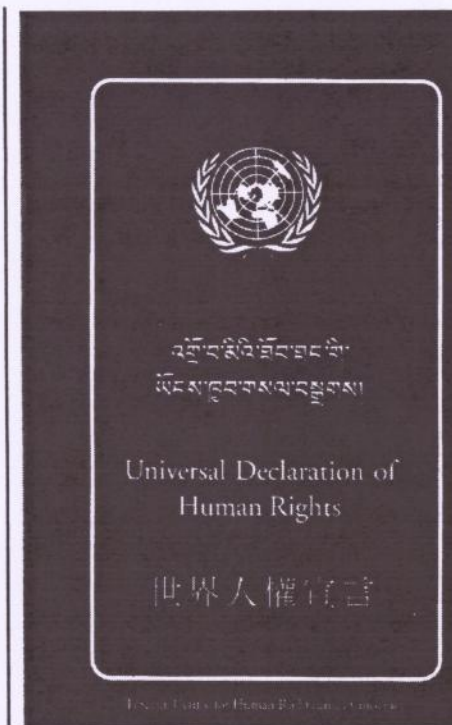
Representatives of the five main world powers at the time (USA, Soviet Union, France, China and the UK) met to discuss the formation of an international assembly (United Nations) whose principle aims would be maintaining world peace and the protection of human rights. These proposals were laid out in the form of the **United Nations Charter**.

In 1945, representatives from many countries gathered together in San Francisco, U.S.A., to discuss the proposed Charter. 51 countries signed the UN Charter and the United Nations (UN) became an official organisation on 24 October, 1945.

Given the principle aims of the UN, the issue of human rights was high on the agenda and one of the first matters that needed to be addressed. Although the *concept* of human rights had existed for thousands of years, there had never been a universal consensus on exactly what should be included. As you can imagine, there was much discussion and disagreement between the countries involved, as they all had very different opinions, politics, religions, histories and traditions. This was of course the purpose of the discussion: to agree upon a list of human rights that transcended our differences and could be applied to all of mankind equally.

The **UDHR** is a declaration, not a treaty. Therefore, it is not official law but is a statement of intent or suggestion. The UDHR gives ideas and suggestions to all the countries around the world about human rights. However, some parts of the Declaration have become very similar to law because of the pressure by some countries to respect the UDHR. This declaration has also influenced rights adopted by many 'constitutions' of individual nations and has also been used to create international treaties that are official law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was proclaimed on 10 December 1948 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.



UDHR is now available in over three hundred different languages

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A simple version

ARTICLE 1

All human beings are free when they are born, and everyone should be treated in the same way. All of us have the ability to use reason and make use of our conscience. We should all act towards each other like brothers and sisters.

ARTICLE 2

Everyone has the same rights and freedoms no matter how different you are. For example, the colour of your skin, your sex or religion, the language you speak, what your opinion is, how much money you have, which country you are from, etc.

ARTICLE 3

Everyone has the right to protect their life and to live in freedom and safety.

ARTICLE 4

Slavery of all kinds should be illegal. No one has the right to make anyone else a slave or to force anyone to serve someone else.

ARTICLE 5

No one has the right to torture you, humiliate you, hurt you, or treat you in an inhuman way.

ARTICLE 6

All laws should recognize everyone everywhere as a human being

ARTICLE 7

Everyone has the right to be protected by the same law in the same way as everyone else.

ARTICLE 8

Everyone has to ask for legal help when his or her rights are not being respected, or are violated.

ARTICLE 9

No one should be arrested, put into prison, or sent into exile unless there is a very good reason.

ARTICLE 10

Everyone has the right to a fair trial with an independent, fair judge. Everyone has the right to a public trial, meaning others can watch and make certain the trial is done in a fair way.

ARTICLE 11

Anyone accused of doing a crime should be considered innocent (not guilty) until the government proves that they are guilty in a fair and public trial. No one can be accused of a crime that was not written down before the act was done. No one can be given a punishment that is worse than the one that was written down at the time the crime was done.

ARTICLE 12

Everyone has the right to privacy. For example, no one can enter your home, open your letters or disturb you or your family unless there is a good reason.

ARTICLE 13

Everyone has the right to move freely within his or her own country. Everyone has the right to leave any country and to return to his or her own country.

ARTICLE 14

Everyone has the right to ask other countries for asylum (protection) if he or she is being persecuted (treated very badly due to your nationality, race, sex, etc.). You lose this right only if you have done a non-political crime or do not respect the rights in this Declaration.

ARTICLE 15

Everyone has the right to belong to a nation and to change his or her nationality if he or she wishes. No one can take away your nationality without a good reason.

ARTICLE 16

Everyone has the right to marry when they are the legal age to do so. Everyone has the right to have a family. No one should force anyone to marry if he or she does not wish to.

ARTICLE 17

Everyone has the right to own property. Your property should not be taken from you unless there is a good reason.

ARTICLE 18

Everyone has the right to believe in any religion he or she wishes. Everyone has the right to practice and celebrate his or her religion freely. Everyone has the right to change his or her religion whenever he or she wishes. No one can force you to practice or celebrate a religion if you do not wish.

ARTICLE 19

Everyone has the right to have his or her own opinions and to express these opinions freely. Everyone has the right to look for, receive, and give information and ideas to other people through the media (i.e., television, radio, and newspaper).

ARTICLE 20

Everyone has the right to belong to a group and to gather together, share ideas, and protest in a peaceful way. No one should be forced to join a group if he or she does not wish to.

ARTICLE 21

Everyone has the right to take part in his or her government; for example, by voting for leaders, becoming a leader, etc..

ARTICLE 22

Everyone has the right to social security (a government program that gives money to individuals and their families if that individual becomes unable to work because of old age, disability, death, etc.). Everyone has the right to economic, cultural and social rights.

ARTICLE 23

Everyone has the right to work and the working environment should be safe and fair. Everyone has the right to be paid a fair amount for his or her work; this includes equal pay for equal work.

ARTICLE 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure (free time).

ARTICLE 25

Everyone has the right to the things he or she needs to live a full, healthy and happy life, including: food; clothing; housing; medicine; and help if he or she has no work or is old, sick or disabled. All children have the same rights no matter who their parents are.

ARTICLE 26

Everyone has the right to have a free primary education, and all children must go to school. Education should teach respect for human rights and freedoms and encourage understanding, friendship and peace.

ARTICLE 27

Everyone has the right to freely enjoy and express his or her culture and the culture of his or her community.

ARTICLE 28

Everyone has the right to live in a safe society in which all of these rights and freedoms are respected.

ARTICLE 29

Everyone has duties, including the duty to respect the rights and freedoms of others. All laws should protect human rights.

ARTICLE 30

No one can take these rights and freedoms away from you.

Lesson # 7

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

(This lesson summarises the special rights afforded to children by the United Nations, in addition to those provided by the UDHR)

In Lesson 2, we mentioned that the UDHR applies to all men, women and children of the world. However, in addition to those rights afforded to adults, children have some additional rights, as they need extra protection to ensure that they grow up to be healthy, happy, responsible and productive adults. This was understood as far back as 1959 when The Declaration on the Rights of the Child was first proposed. Many years of discussion followed between governments, specialised UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (such as Save the Children) until agreement was reached as to what should be included in this treaty. Finally, in 1989, the United Nations proposed a document called the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This sets out the civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of all children throughout the world. The convention was adopted in 1989 and came into force in 1990. It ensures that there are international standards set to defend and protect children against abuse and that, in any given situation, the best interest of the child must be of primary concern.

Here is a summarised and simplified list of what is laid out in the Convention:

Summary of Rights from the Convention on the Rights of the Child

(Sourced from UNICEF, UK)

- Children have the right to be with their family or with those who will care for them best.
- Children have the right to enough food and clean water.
- Children have the right to an adequate standard of living.
- Children have the right to health care.
- Disabled children have the right to special care and training.
- Children have the right to play.
- Children have the right to free education.
- Children have the right to be kept safe from harm or neglect.
- Children must not be used as cheap workers or as soldiers.
- Children must be allowed to speak their own language and practise their own religion and culture.
- Children have the right to express their own opinions and to meet together to express their views.

Although children's rights have been specifically protected by international law for over a decade, violations of those rights continue all over the world, even today.

In the next lesson, we will look in more detail at the United Nations as an organisation, how it is structured and what each department is responsible for.

Activity

****** Think about the kind of child rights abuse that you see around you. Give two examples of child rights abuse that you know of or have seen.

****** Do people in your area – your school, friends, neighborhood know about child rights? How will you explain to them? Write down few two ways in which you will bring awareness on child rights.

Lesson # 8

THE UNITED NATIONS

As you know by now, the United Nations is the world's response to the horrors of the Second World War. Originally, there were 51 member states but this number has grown significantly over the years and now stands at 191 (July 2004). The primary concerns of the United Nations can be summarised as follows (with emphasis placed on the promotion and protection of human rights in all circumstances):

- to preserve world peace and security
- to encourage nations to act 'justly'
- to help nations solve disputes
- to serve as an agency through which nations can work towards these goals

The UN is divided into six major bodies or 'organs'.

1. General Assembly
2. Security Council
3. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
4. The International Court of Justice
5. The Secretariat
6. The Trusteeship Council

For the purposes of this course, the most important ones are the General Assembly and the Security Council. However, we will also take a look at one of the smaller bodies (overseen by ECOSOC), the Commission on Human Rights.

General Assembly

The General Assembly is made up of every UN member and constitutes the main body of the organisation. If the Assembly is called upon to make a decision about a problem affecting the world community, every member country has one vote. Decisions are decided by a simple majority for ordinary matters, or by a 2/3 majority for 'special' matters. At other times, the Assembly serves as an important forum for discussion amongst member States about matters concerning the world community. The body meets regularly but special meetings can be arranged if the majority of members demand, or if a request is made by another very important body of the UN, the Security Council.

Security Council

The Security Council has 15 members. Five members are permanent (China, France, Russia, the UK and USA). The other ten members are non-permanent and are elected by the General Assembly every two years. The Security Council's primary purpose is to maintain world peace, either by stopping wars before they start or by trying to end wars that have already begun.

If two countries have a disagreement, the Council can act as a mediator, helping them to find a peaceful solution. If the negotiations fail and fighting breaks out, the Council can send in a special peacekeeping force to separate the countries' armies, giving them a chance to rethink their position and try again to find a peaceful solution. In the event that the Council is ignored and war breaks out again, economic sanctions can be imposed until the fighting stops. In very rare cases, the Security Council can also take military action against countries that threaten world peace and stability.

Decisions agreed by the Council need nine 'yes' votes. However, all five of the permanent member states have the power of 'veto'

which means that if they disagree with any decision made, they can prevent it being implemented.

Commission on Human Rights

In 1946, the UN established the Commission on Human Rights, the principal policy-making body for human rights within the UN system. When it first came into being, there were 18 members but since that time, membership has grown significantly. The Commission now has 53 member States who meet annually in Geneva, Switzerland to review human rights issues, discuss and develop new international standards and make recommendations to world governments. As for the General Assembly, 'special' meetings can be called if necessary.

The Commission reports its findings to the ECOSOC, which in turn reports to the General Assembly. It is important to note that non-governmental organisations play a big role in aiding and advising the Commission and its work, together with a number of human rights committees, working groups and special rapporteurs.

In the next lesson, we will study what steps the UN took, and continues to take, to ensure that member nations keep their promises about protecting and promoting human rights.



The United Nations
Organisation Logo

Lesson #9

HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

(In this lesson, we will look at how and why the UDHR was made into international law)

Although many countries have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, still it is not official law. The Declaration does not say what should be done to protect human rights when a country does not respect it. Soon after the UDHR was created, the United Nations began to talk about creating official international law to protect the human rights written in the Declaration. In 1966, the human rights listed in the UDHR were divided into two covenants (also called treaties). A covenant is international law that must be respected by the countries that sign it. The two covenants created explain the rights written down in the UDHR and give some additional rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two covenants are known as the **International Bill of Human Rights**. The two covenants were proposed in 1966 and came into force in 1976.

I. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

This treaty covers our basic rights to freedom and security (Articles 3-21 of the UDHR).

II. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

This treaty covers our right to have our basic needs provided for and to be taken care of if we are poor or sick (covers Articles 22-27 of the UDHR).

These two Covenants, in combination with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, make up what is known as the **International Bill of Human Rights** (a strong legal document that protects our rights by international law).

The issue of human rights is constantly evolving and consequently the UN continues its mission to protect our rights by expanding and redefining the laws whenever necessary. At present, the UN has a number of treaties in force with specific relevance to human rights (including the two above), covering topics such as torture, racism, environmental rights, women's and children's rights. A special body of independent experts (known as a Committee) is attached to each of these treaties. Their purpose is to monitor the human rights situation in all the member countries. This is achieved by:

- Reviewing the annual reports that each party State is required to submit showing what steps they have taken to implement and protect the terms of the relevant treaty.
- Investigating reports of non-compliance. These accusations can be made by one member State against another or in some circumstances, an individual against a member State.
- Reporting their findings and recommending action in the event that party States are believed to be in violation of an agreement.

Sadly, human rights violations continue to take place all over the world. Many countries that have signed and ratified human rights treaties break their promises and abuse their citizens. In the next lesson, we will look at human rights abuses in greater detail and the kind of difficulties faced by the world community in deciding how best to tackle them.

Ratification

When a country agrees with what a declaration or covenant says, it signs its name to the document. When the country is ready to respect and protect the human rights explained in the declaration or covenant, the country will "ratify" it. After a country ratifies a declaration or covenant it is called a "party" to that document. For example, China has ratified the International Covenant to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and is therefore a party to that Covenant. A country that is a party to a covenant or declaration must respect and protect the rights of its citizens. A party must also ensure that other individuals and groups do not violate the human rights of its citizens.

152 countries have ratified the ICCPR.

149 countries have ratified the ICESCR.

International Human Rights Instruments Signed and/or Ratified by the People's Republic of China

Instrument	Signed on	Ratified on
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	27-Oct-97	27-Mar-01
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	5-Oct-98	Not Ratified
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)		29-Dec-81
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	17-Jul-80	4-Nov-80
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	12-Dec-86	4-Oct-88
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	29-Aug-90	2-Mar-92

Lesson #10

Human Rights violations

In the last lesson, we looked at how the UN brought the issue of human rights under the protection of international law using treaties. In ratifying a treaty, a State is agreeing to:

- Adopt the terms of the agreement.
- Change their domestic laws if they conflict with the terms of the treaty.
- Allow experts to come and check that the agreement is being fulfilled. At the very least, they need to convince these monitoring bodies that every possible measure is being taken to implement the terms of the treaty as quickly as possible.

A country "violates" the human rights of its citizens when it does not respect or protect their human rights. Although most countries of the world are members of the United Nations and many international laws have been created to protect human rights, some countries continue to violate the human rights of its citizens.

In many cases, human rights violations continue to happen because the members of the United Nations cannot agree to punish countries that abuse human rights. The members of the United Nations often have different ideas and interests, and it is difficult for them to see things in the same way. Imagine that someone in your class broke a rule and everyone in the class had to decide what the punishment would be. Everyone would have different ideas about the punishment, and it would be very difficult for the class to agree.

Before the United Nations can punish a country that is violating human rights, the majority of U.N. members must vote to punish the country. Unity between countries is difficult because some countries may be thinking about other things than human rights. Some countries may be thinking more about business and money than human rights. For example, many countries have made business agreements with each other that make them very rich. Even if one of the countries is violating human rights, other countries might not vote to punish the country with which it does business. This is because the country that is violating human rights may get angry and stop doing business with all the countries that voted in favour of punishing it. Also, a small country might be afraid of a larger, more powerful neighbour country. If the larger country is violating human rights, the smaller country might be afraid to vote to punish the larger country because the larger country may get angry and do something that will hurt the smaller country.

China is one example of a country that violates the human rights of its citizens. Since China invaded Tibet in 1949 the Tibetan people have not been able to enjoy their human rights. The Tibetan people cannot live with dignity and enjoy a life of freedom without their human rights. However, because China is a very wealthy and powerful country the members of the United Nations have not agreed to punish China for its human rights violations.



Painting by
Jangchub
T.H.F Mussorie

Lesson # 11

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN TIBET

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), through its research and findings, believe that the human rights of the Tibetan people in Tibet are being violated. Through interviews of Tibetan refugees fleeing Tibet and others, the TCHRD has learned that the Chinese are abusing the human rights of Tibetan people in many ways. Below are just some examples of the ways China violates the human rights of Tibetan people.

All human beings are free when they are born, and everyone should be treated in the same way.

Everyone has the same rights and freedoms no matter how different you are.

(Summary of Articles 1 and 2 of the UDHR)

Ever since China invaded Tibet in 1949 the Tibetan people have been treated very differently from the Chinese people who are taking over their homeland. The Chinese are **discriminating** against Tibetans as a group of people. This **discrimination** is constant and is based on the race, religion and culture of the Tibetan people. For example, Mandarin is the official language used throughout China, including Tibet. The Mandarin language is used in all government and public offices. Therefore, everyone who works for the government or in the offices must speak perfect Mandarin. Also, most job applications and selection tests are in Mandarin, and Tibetans who are not able to speak fluent Mandarin are not given jobs. As a result, Tibetans face discrimination because they speak Tibetan, not Mandarin.

Lesson 11: Human Rights Violations in Tibet

Tibetans have become second-class citizens in their own country and do not have human right because their race, language, religion and culture are different from the Chinese.

Everyone has the right to have a free primary education, and all children must go to school.

(Summary of Article 26 of the UDHR)

China claims that they have improved the condition of schools and education of Tibet. However, most of the new schools have been built for Chinese children and the children of Tibetan government officials. Also, many of the new schools have been built in the cities and there has been little effort to build schools in the countryside. As a result, Tibetans who do not live in the cities or who are not the children of government officials are often denied of the right to have an education. Tibetans are also required to pay very large fees to go to primary school. This violates the human right to have a free primary education.

The people of Tibet who have enough money to go to school face many problems, such as racial discrimination. Lessons are often taught in Mandarin and the Tibetan students are treated as inferior because they cannot speak the language or understand the lessons. Many Tibetans cannot speak their own Tibetan language and have never had an opportunity to learn to read and write it. Lessons on Tibetan Culture are not allowed and the "Tibetan language" classes are mostly about Chinese history. As a result, thousands of Tibetan children are forced to leave their families and homeland and escape to another country so that they can learn about their own language and culture.

Everyone has the right to work and the working environment should be safe and fair. Everyone has the right to be paid a fair amount for his or her work; this includes equal pay for equal work.

(Summary of Article 23 of the UDHR)

No one has the right to make anyone else a slave or to force anyone to serve someone else.

(Summary of Article 4 of the UDHR)

China claims that since 1959 more jobs have been created throughout the TAR and as a result the economy of Tibet and the lives of Tibetans are improving. However, the complete opposite seems to be true. Although there are countless construction and development projects being undertaken in Tibet, many Tibetans who once had work are now unemployed (do not have a job). This is because China is regularly sending thousands of Chinese people into Tibet to do the work that is being created by these projects instead of giving the work to the Tibetans who do not have any work. This violates the human right to work. If a Tibetan is given a job, the nature of the work is often very dangerous for very a small wage. In addition, when a Tibetan man and a Chinese man do the same work, the Chinese man will be paid a much higher wage than the Tibetan man. This violates the human right to have equal pay for equal work. This means if two people are doing the same work, they should be given the same wage. There have also been many reports of Tibetans being forced to do very difficult work for no money. If a Tibetan refuses to do this work, he will be beaten or put into prison. This violates the human right to be free from slavery.

Everyone has the right to the things he or she needs to live a full, healthy and happy life, including: food; clothing; housing; medicine; and help if he or she has no work or is old, sick or disabled.

(Summary of Article 25 of the UDHR)

As a result of being unemployed or being paid a very low wage, a majority of Tibetans in Tibet do not earn enough money to buy

food, clothing, housing or medicine for themselves and their families. This violates the human right to have the things one needs to live a full, healthy and happy life. In addition, it is extremely difficult and expensive for Tibetan people to receive treatment and medicine when they become sick or hurt. Tibetans who do not live in a city or large town often must travel for hours or days to go to a doctor or hospital. If a Tibetan does go to a hospital, he or she is required to pay a very large fee before he or she can see the doctor. Sometimes the required fee is more than that person can earn in an entire year. It does not matter if the person is very sick or hurt, if he or she does not have enough money to pay the fee the doctor will not give any treatment. Also, medicine and treatment is very expensive for Tibetans. On the other hand, the Chinese do not have to pay a fee before seeing a doctor, and the cost of the medicine and treatment is much less for Chinese. This is another example of how China discriminates against Tibetans and violates their human right to have medical care.

Everyone has the right to privacy. For example, no one can enter your home, open your letters or disturb you or your family unless there is a good reason.

(Summary of Article 12 of the UDHR)

While living in Tibet, Tibetan people have very little privacy. Chinese officials are always watching them and listening to everything they say. Chinese officials often come into a Tibetan's home or monastery and disturb the people who live there. This is a violation of the human right to privacy. The privacy of Tibetan people who no longer

live in Tibet is especially not respected. For example, all phone calls to Tibetans living in Tibet are taped recorded and listened to by Chinese officials. And, all letters mailed to a Tibetan person living in Tibet are opened and read by Chinese officials. As a

result, Tibetans are able to talk or write freely to their families and they must be very careful about what they say or write.

Everyone has the right to have his or her own opinions and to express these opinions freely.
(Summary of Article 19 of the UDHR)

Everyone has the right to belong to a group and to gather together, share ideas, and protest in a peaceful way.
(Summary of Article 20 of the UDHR)

China constantly violates the Tibetan people's human rights to speak freely, organize meetings, and protest in a peaceful way. In Tibet, people are arrested, beaten, and put in prison for handing out human rights information or talking about Tibetan independence. Chinese officials will quickly react to any gathering of Tibetan people. Even a person who is participating in a very small and peaceful protest lasting only a few minutes might be sent to prison for many years. Tour guides working in Tibet will lose their job if they do not say official Chinese lines and propaganda, or if they talk about the political situation in Tibet with the tourists. In addition, any books, music or other forms of expression which the Chinese believe include independent Tibet ideas are not allowed anywhere in Tibet.

No one has the right to torture you, humiliate you, hurt you, or treat you in an inhuman way.
(Summary of Article 5 of the UDHR)

Each year there are reports that the Chinese government uses torture in the Chinese Administration prisons and also to force Tibetans to confess crimes they did not do. This violates the human right to be free from torture. Chinese officials and the guards at the prisons torture Tibetan people in many ways. For example: hanging prisoners from the ceiling with a fire burning underneath;

shocking and beating prisoners with electric batons; beating prisoners with iron bars and rifle butts; pouring boiling water over a prisoner; not allowing a prisoner to sleep and not giving a prisoner anything to eat or drink for days. Many times prisoners are locked in a small, empty and dark solitary confinement cells for months.

Every year there are many reports of Tibetans who have been arrested and put in prison, telling about the extreme torture methods used by Chinese officials and guards. As a result of being tortured, many Tibetans have very serious, permanent injuries or death resulting from torture. Although most tortures are physical, it also regularly causes permanent damage to a person's mental health.

Everyone has the right to believe in any religion he or she wishes. Everyone has the right to practice and celebrate his or her religion freely.
(Summary of Article 18 of the UDHR)

Buddhism has long been regarded as Tibet's religion. Since China invaded Tibet, though, Beijing has been attempting to eliminate the faith of the Tibetan people. The Chinese military has destroyed most of the monasteries in Tibet and the Chinese government controls the majority of the monasteries that have not been destroyed. In addition, people are often put in prison, tortured, and treated very cruelly because of their religious beliefs. Photographs of the Dalai Lama are strictly prohibited, which means if the Chinese finds a photo of the Dalai Lama inside someone's home or in the pocket of a Tibetan, he or she will be put into jail or made to pay a large fine. This violates the human right to believe in whatever religion one wishes and to practice that religion freely.

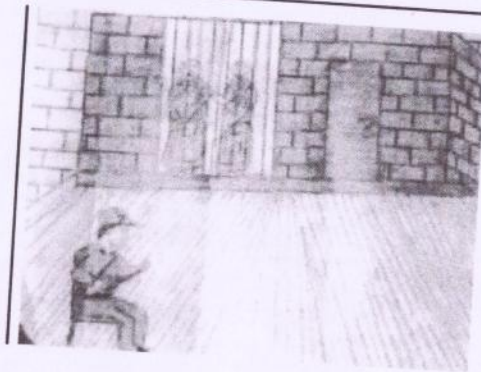
In 1996, China started the "Re-education" Campaign in Tibet to teach all monks and nuns about Communist ideas. Under this Campaign, they are also forced to disregard the views and teachings of the Dalai Lama, to forget about the idea of an independent

Tibet, and to sign promises of dedication to the beliefs and ideas of the Chinese government. China also limits entrance into monasteries and nunneries. No person under the age of 16 years can join a monastery. The aim of this limitation is to make the population of monks and nuns smaller.

Currently, 90 percent of political prisoners in Tibet are monks and nuns. A majority of them were arrested and put in prison because they continue to express their loyalty to the Dalai Lama. Keeping and displaying a picture of the Dalai Lama, praying for his long life and refusing to sign pledges expressing their loyalty to the Chinese government, are some forms of expressing their loyalty to the Dalai Lama.



Paintings by
Dorjee Tsering
Class VIII
C.S.T Kurseong



Lesson #12

HOW TO FIGHT TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS

Now you know about your human rights and you have the ability to fight for them in a peaceful and effective way. One of the best ways to fight for your human rights is to write letters to people and groups working for the United Nations.

There are also many groups all over the world that work for human rights that are not a part of a government or the U.N. These groups are called Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), and they are made up of citizens that are very interested in protecting human rights. The members of these groups write letters to representatives of countries that commit human rights abuses and ask them to stop. They also write letters to the United Nations, and sometimes they visit the United Nations to talk about the human rights violations of some countries. Most importantly, these groups get the attention of countries and people around the world and tell them about the human rights violations that are taking place.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is an NGO that works to protect the human rights of the people of Tibet. It collects stories of human rights abuses from Tibetan refugees that come to India. The Centre then publishes these reports and send them to the United Nations. The work of the TCHRD gives information to people around the world about the human rights situation in Tibet.

In Appendix 2 you will see the names and addresses of people and groups that work for the U.N. and the names and addresses of NGO's that fight for human rights. You can use these names and addresses to write letters to the U.N. and NGO's. When you write a letter to these organisations, you should use formal English and

tell about all of the ways that the Chinese violated your human rights while you were living in Tibet.



Painting by
Phuntsok Namgyal
L.T.C.V School



Painting by
Sangay Choedak
C.S.T Miao

APPENDIX - I

China's Treaty Status

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
Ratified—27 March, 2001
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
Signed—5 Oct. 1998 [China has not ratified the ICCPR as of November 2004]
- International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
Acceded—29 Dec. 1981
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
Ratified—4 Nov. 1980
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
Ratified—4 Oct. 1988
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
Ratified 2 March 1992

APPENDIX - II

Contact Details for Relevant NGOs:

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
Narthang Building, Top Floor
Gangchen Kyishong
Dharamsala, H.P. 176215, India
web-site: www.tchrd.org
E-mail: dsala@tchrd.org



Amnesty International
5 Penn Plaza - 14th floor
New York
NY 10001
USA
web-site: www.amnesty.org
E-mail: admin-us@aiusa.org

Human Rights Watch
Advocacy Manager
Human Rights Watch
485 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10017
USA
web-site: www.hrw.org
e-mail: hrwnyc@hrw.org

Human Rights in China
Human Rights in China
350 Fifth Ave.
Room 3309
New York, NY 10118
USA
web-site: www.hrichina.org
e-mail: hrichina@hrichina.org

Save the Children Fund
54 Wilton Road
Westport, CT 06880
web-site: <http://www.savethechildren.org>

Appendix



Tibet Information Network
City Cloisters
188-196 Old Street
London EC1V 9FR
United Kingdom
web-site: <http://www.tibetinfo.net>
e-mail: tin@tibetinfo.net

It is also possible to write directly to the United Nations with views and concerns. Contact details of the relevant bodies within the UN are as follows:

Important United Nations Addresses

Human Rights Committee (ICCPR)
Secretariat of the Human Rights Committee
Room 1-066
Palais des Nation
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
email: mschmidt.hchr@unog.ch

*This Committee was created to protect the rights covered by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
(China has signed this Covenant but has not yet ratified it).*

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
Secretariat of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Room 1-025
Palais des Nation
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

email: atikhonov.hchr@unog.ch

*This Committee was created to protect the rights covered by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
(China ratified this Covenant on 27 June, 2001).*

UN Special Rapporteur on Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on
Freedom of Religion or Belief

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva

8-14 Avenue de la Paix

1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

*This Special Rapporteur is an expert on the right to freedom of religion.
Her reports are submitted to the General Assembly.*

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the
Right to Education

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva

8-14 Avenue de la Paix

1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

*This Special Rapporteur is an expert on the right to education. His reports
are submitted to the General Assembly.*

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on
Torture

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

United Nations Office at Geneva

8-14 Avenue de la Paix

1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

*This Special Rapporteur is an expert on the right not to be tortured or
treated in a cruel or inhuman way. His reports are read by the General
Assembly.*

UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Room 3-053

Palais des Nation

1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

*This Working Group concentrates its efforts on the right not to be arrested
without good reason. Many people in the U.N., including the General
Assembly, read its reports.*

GLOSSARY

- Accommodate** allow in/invite/include/make room for
Accountable to be responsible (or held responsible) for your actions
Accusation to claim that another has acted incorrectly/illegally/immorally, etc
Act justly to behave correctly/with fairness/equally towards all
Addressed dealt with/discussed/acted upon
Adequately sufficiently, enough to do what is wanted, fine/good
Affirmed confirmed/reiterated/reinforced
Agenda agreed or suggested subjects to be discussed or acted upon
Amended changed or altered
articles sections of a declaration that relate to different issues
Aspire to a desire for the future/a wish/something that is wanted
Asylum seeker someone who asks protection from a country other than their own
Atrocities terrible events or actions
Bigoted to have: a strongly held but incorrect opinion/a blind attachment/an unreasonable view
Category a collection of things that are related in some way
Commission on Human Rights the main policy-making body for human rights within the UN
Communication the exchange of information
Community a group of people that have things in common
Compare to look at more than one thing and see if they are the same or different
Compiled gathered together/collated/collected
Complex difficult/detailed/complicated
Compromise to reach an agreement acceptable to all parties
Concept an idea/plan
Conflict a fight/severe disagreement/argument
Convention (see 'treaty')
Covenant (see 'treaty')

- Defend** to protect/repel/fight off
Defined described
Differ to be different/not the same
Dignity self-respect/pride
Drawing attention get or encourage people to notice something
Economic sanctions trade restrictions enforced to influence the activities of other countries
Education teaching and being taught/giving and receiving information
Emotional relating to emotions/feelings: happiness or sadness, positive or negative
Entitled a right, something that is yours or is due to you
Evolving changing/altering/progressing
Excluded (see 'included')
Expel order or force to leave
Extended made longer or bigger/an increase
Fair trial fair = that which is just/correct/equal/the same for everyone; trial = legal proceedings/the deciding of someone's guilt or innocence by judge and/or jury
Faith belief/trust
Fellow men every other human being
Formation the creating or forming of something
Forum area of or place for debate and discussion
Fostered encouraged/supported/boosted
Freedom to be able to do, say, travel and think as you like, whatever, wherever and whenever you want (liberty)
Fulfilled happy/content/satisfied
Granted that which is given or allowed to you by others
Human rights the things to which every human being is absolutely entitled, regardless of age, sex, nationality, religion, beliefs, thoughts or actions. (Also known as 'Natural Rights')
Illustrate indicate/explain
Inalienable that which cannot be withdrawn, removed, ignored or denied
Information facts, feelings, emotions, details, data
Inherent an essential part of

Innocent not guilty/to have acted correctly or within the law
Intellectual relating to thought, ideas, concepts
International Bill of Human Rights legal document that protects our rights by international law
interpreted a version of/viewed as/someone's way of seeing something
Irrespective despite everything and anything else/regardless/ignorant of outside influence
Judgement decision about how to deal with a situation
Legally binding regulated and protected by law
Leisure free time/the time when you are not working/the time when you get to decide what you do
Majority the largest category within a group
Mediator a person or organisation who attempts to resolve conflicts between other parties/a neutral adviser
Medical help visiting a doctor or nurse when ill or injured
Military action the active use of soldiers and weaponry against another party
Minority the smallest category within a group
Monitor to observe/to keep an eye on/to watch
Moral weight the pressure of the accepted and correct way of doing things/the influence of what is known to be fair and right
Natural rights the essential/inalienable/undeniable things that, from birth to death, enable every single human being on the planet to be free and enjoy a reasonable quality of life
Necessary required/essential/needed
Neglected left alone/ignored/allowed to deteriorate or get worse
Non-compliance not acting within the law, regulations or guidelines/behaviour that is not allowed/breaking the rules.
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) organisations that are not attached to any government and therefore have varying degrees of independence and power
Overlap to share similar qualities or features
Peacekeeping force a group that attempts to separate the armies of opposing countries, giving them a chance to find a peaceful solution

Persecuted unfairly treated
Physical relating to the body
Preamble an introduction before the main subject or topic
Principles rules/guidelines for moral behaviour
Promote to support/recommend/encourage
Protect defend/support
Punished penalised/to be hurt/to received negative or unpleasant action when deemed to have done 'something wrong'
Racist to have negative views of other people because of their colour or nationality
Ratify to agree to be legally bound by a treaty
Rations food or supplies (often essential) only provided in limited and regulated quantities
Reinforce a forceful reminder
Rely depend upon/an essential requirement/to need
Representatives those that speak on behalf of others e.g. democratically elected politicians
Reputation how you are viewed or known to others
Respect to speak/act/think in line with the wishes of others
Responsibility understanding the effect of your actions/realising what you do and how it influences others/that for which you are accountable
Rule of law rules and regulations enforced by authorities
Safety being free from danger/free from injury or risk/being safe
Security Council international organisation whose primary purpose is to keep world peace, either by stopping wars before they start or by trying to end wars that have already begun
Shelter a safe place (to shelter = to be safe from harm, to protect)
Slavery the possession or control of human beings by other human beings without their consent
Social order the current or agreed or understood state of society/the status quo/as things are
Solution the answer to the question or problem
Special rapporteurs experts who investigate and report on behalf of and to the UN

Spiritual relating to spirit: a person's innermost thoughts and feelings; or spirituality: their religious beliefs

Stealing to steal/taking what is not yours without permission

Stood up for to have supported/encouraged/defended

Survival to stay alive/continue living adequately

The Declaration on the Rights of the Child UN document defining children's rights

The General Assembly the main decision-making body of the UN

Trade union organisation created to protect the rights of workers

Transcended moved beyond/to go past/to exceed/rise above in an emotional sense

Treatment interaction/dealings with/attitude/behaviour towards

Treaty (also known as a 'convention' or 'covenant') an agreement between nations which cannot be broken without serious consequences

United Nations (UN) international organisation whose main aims are to maintain world peace and protect human rights

Universal applies to all people and all things everywhere and equally

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) a UN document defining Human Rights

Universal standard a level of quality/a way of doing things agreed upon by everyone

Universally defined a description of something that is agreed upon and accepted by everyone

Unrest unhappiness/dissatisfaction/agitation

Uphold maintain/defend/support

Veto the power to prevent a decision being made that you disagree with or dislike

Violate/violation to break the rules/to exceed agreed limits/to do something that is wrong

World powers powerful and dominant countries/countries with the most influence over world affairs