

## Human Rights Defined

What are your human rights?

Let's start with some basic human rights definitions:

**Human:** *noun*

A member of the Homo sapiens species; a man, woman or child; a person.

**Rights:** *noun*

Things to which you are entitled or allowed; freedoms that are guaranteed.

**Human Rights:** *noun*

The rights you have simply because you are human.

If you were to ask people in the street, "What are human rights?" you would get many different answers. They would tell you the rights they know about, but very few people know all their rights.

As covered in the definitions above, a right is a freedom of some kind. It is something to which you are entitled by virtue of being human.

Human rights are based on the principle of respect for the individual. Their fundamental assumption is that each person is a moral and rational being who deserves to be treated with dignity. They are called human rights because they are universal. Whereas

nations or specialized groups enjoy specific rights that apply only to them, human rights are the rights to which everyone is entitled—no matter who they are or where they live—simply because they are alive.

Yet many people, when asked to name their rights, will list only freedom of speech and belief and perhaps one or two others. There is no question these are important rights, but the full scope of human rights is very broad. They mean choice and opportunity. They mean the freedom to obtain a job, adopt a career, select a partner of one's choice and raise children. They include the right to travel widely and the right to work gainfully without harassment, abuse and threat of arbitrary dismissal. They even embrace the right to leisure.

In ages past, there were no human rights. Then the idea emerged that people should have certain freedoms. And that idea, in the wake of World War II, resulted finally in the document called the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the thirty rights to which all people are entitled.



The decrees Cyrus made on human rights were inscribed in the Akkadian language on a baked-clay cylinder. In 539 B.C., the armies of Cyrus the Great, the first king of ancient Persia, conquered the city of Babylon. But it was his next actions that marked a major advance for Man. He freed the slaves, declared that all people had the right to choose their own religion, and established racial equality. These and other decrees were recorded on a baked-clay cylinder in the Akkadian language with cuneiform script.

Known today as the Cyrus Cylinder, this ancient record has now been recognized as the world's first charter of human rights. It is translated into all six official languages of the United Nations and its provisions parallel the first four Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**The Spread of Human Rights**

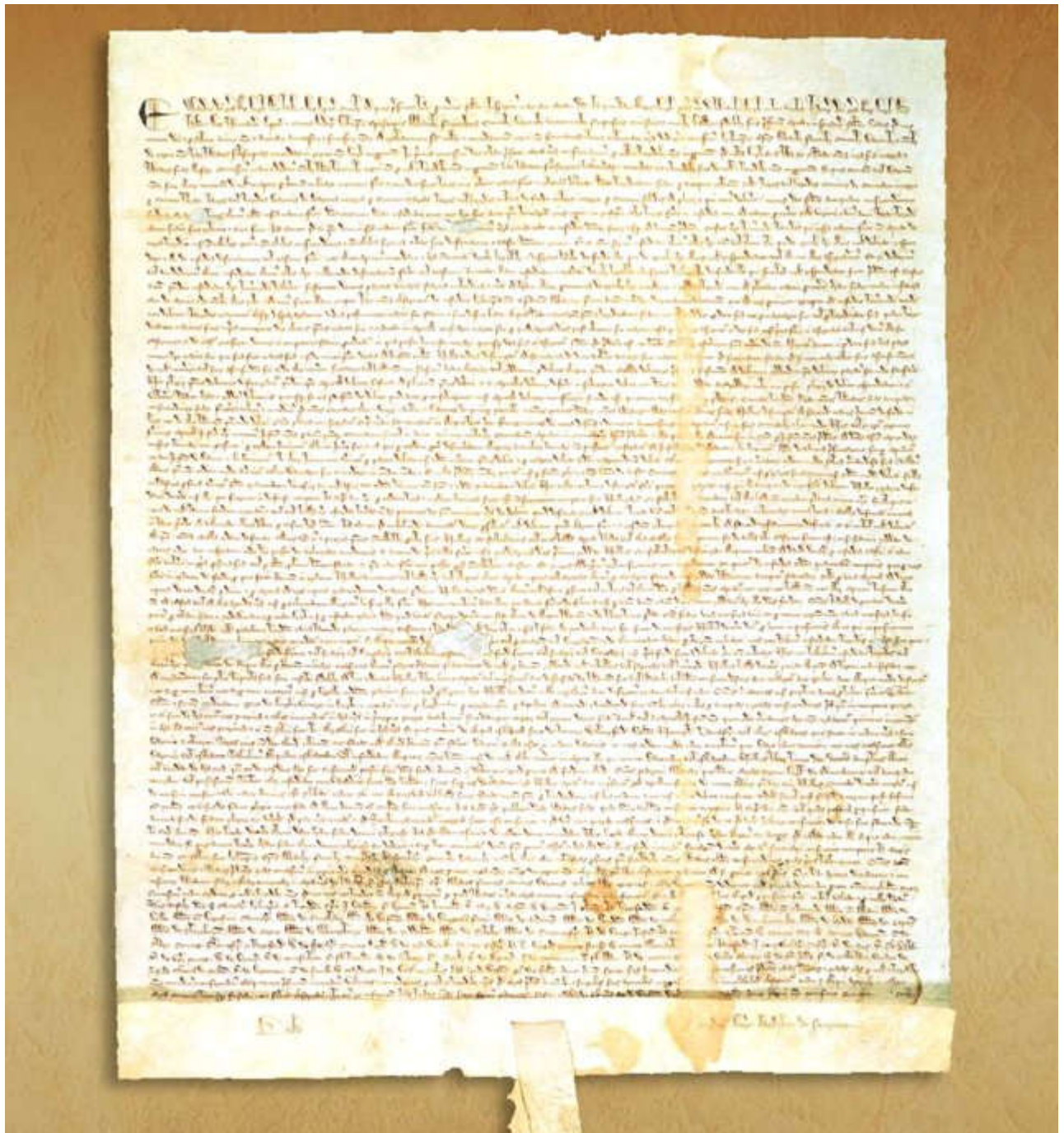


Cyrus the Great, the first king of Persia, freed the slaves of Babylon, 539 B.C.

From Babylon, the idea of human rights spread quickly to India, Greece and eventually Rome. There the concept of “natural law” arose, in observation of the fact that people tended to follow certain unwritten laws in the course of life, and Roman law was based on rational ideas derived from the nature of things.

Documents asserting individual rights, such as the Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right (1628), the US Constitution (1787), the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), and the US Bill of Rights (1791) are the written precursors to many of today’s human rights documents.

### **The Magna Carta (1215)**



Magna Carta, or “Great Charter,” signed by the King of England in 1215, was a turning point in human rights. The Magna Carta, or “Great Charter,” was arguably the most significant early influence on the extensive historical

process that led to the rule of constitutional law today in the English-speaking world.

In 1215, after King John of England violated a number of ancient laws and customs by which England had been governed, his subjects forced him to sign the Magna Carta, which enumerates what later came to be thought of as human rights. Among them was the right of the church to be free from governmental interference, the rights of all free citizens to own and inherit property and to be protected from excessive taxes. It established the right of widows who owned property to choose not to remarry, and established principles of due process and equality before the law. It also contained provisions forbidding bribery and official misconduct.

Widely viewed as one of the most important legal documents in the development of modern democracy, the Magna Carta was a crucial turning point in the struggle to establish freedom.

### **Petition of Right (1628)**



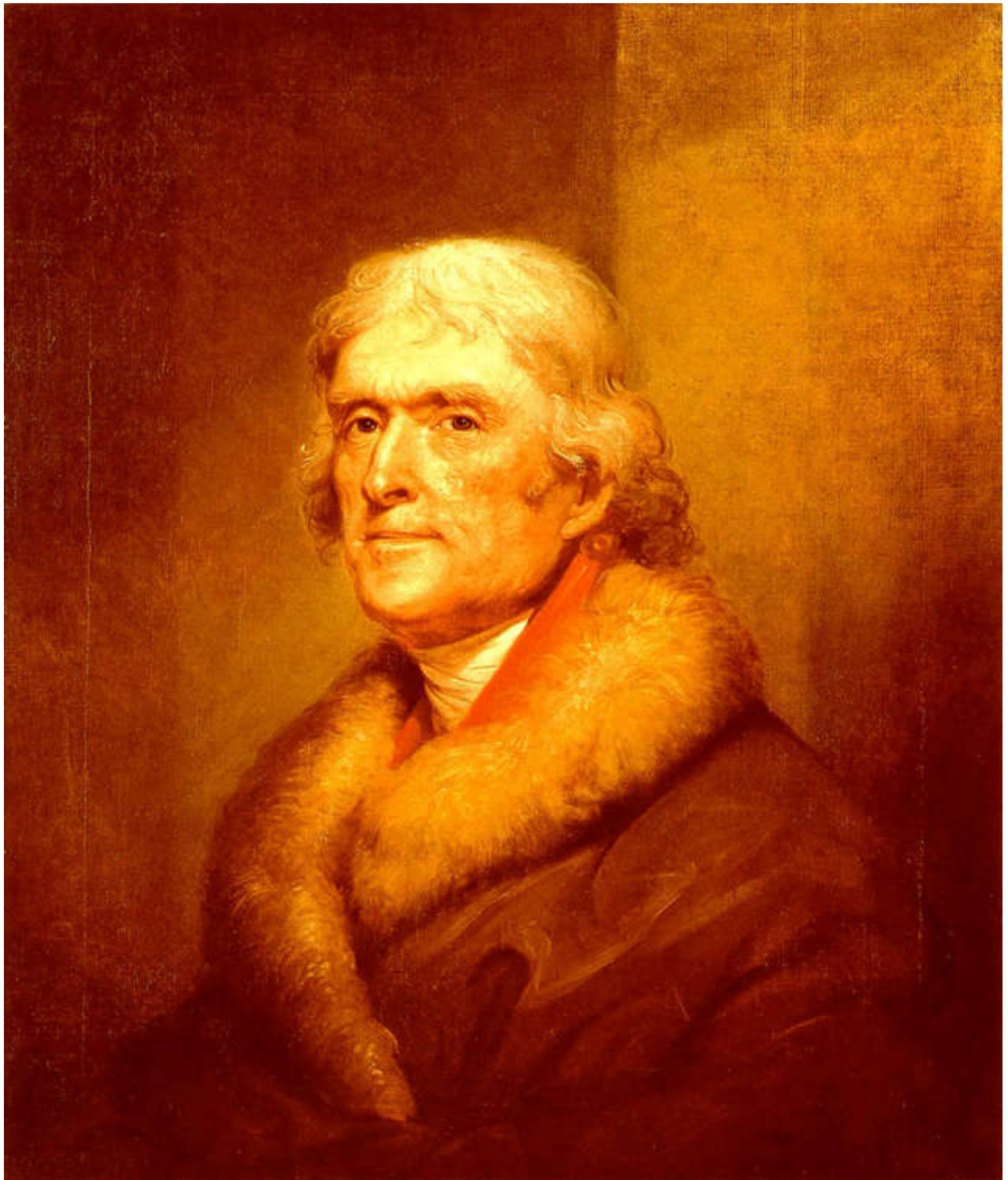
In 1628 the English Parliament sent this statement of civil liberties to King Charles I.

The next recorded milestone in the development of human rights was the Petition of Right, produced in 1628 by the English Parliament and sent to Charles I as a statement of civil liberties. Refusal by Parliament to finance the king's unpopular foreign policy had caused his government to exact forced loans and to quarter troops in subjects' houses as an economy measure. Arbitrary arrest and imprisonment for opposing these policies had produced in Parliament a violent hostility to Charles and to George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham. The Petition of Right, initiated by Sir Edward Coke, was based upon earlier



statutes and charters and asserted four principles: (1) No taxes may be levied without consent of Parliament, (2) No subject may be imprisoned without cause shown (reaffirmation of the right of habeas corpus), (3) No soldiers may be quartered upon the citizenry, and (4) Martial law may not be used in time of peace.

**United States Declaration of Independence (1776)**



In 1776, Thomas Jefferson penned the American Declaration of Independence.

On July 4, 1776, the United States Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. Its primary author, Thomas Jefferson, wrote the Declaration as a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2 to declare independence from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War, and as a statement announcing that the thirteen American Colonies were no longer a part of the British Empire. Congress issued the Declaration of Independence in several forms. It was initially published as a printed broadsheet that was widely distributed and read to the public.

Philosophically, the Declaration stressed two themes: individual rights and the right of revolution. These ideas became widely held by Americans and spread internationally as well, influencing in particular the French Revolution.

**The Constitution of the United States of America (1787) and Bill of Rights (1791)**

# Bill of Rights

Congress OF THE United States,  
begun and held at the City of, New York, on  
Wednesday, the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.

*The* Conventions of a number of the States having, at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best insure the beneficent ends of its institution:

*Resolved*, by the SENATE and HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA in Congress assembled, Two thirds of both Houses concurring, That the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as Amendments to the Constitution of the United States; all, or any of which articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid in all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution, viz.

*Articles* in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the Original Constitution.

*Article the first* ..... After the first enumeration required by the first Article of the Constitution, there shall be one Representative for every thirty thousand, until the number shall amount to one hundred, after which, the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall be not less than one hundred Representatives, nor less than one Representative for every forty thousand persons, until the number of Representatives shall amount to two hundred, after which, the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall not be less than two hundred Representatives, nor more than one Representative for every fifty thousand persons. [Not Ratified]

*Article the second* .... No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened. [Not Ratified]

*Article the third* ..... Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

*Article the fourth* ..... A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

*Article the fifth* ..... No Soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

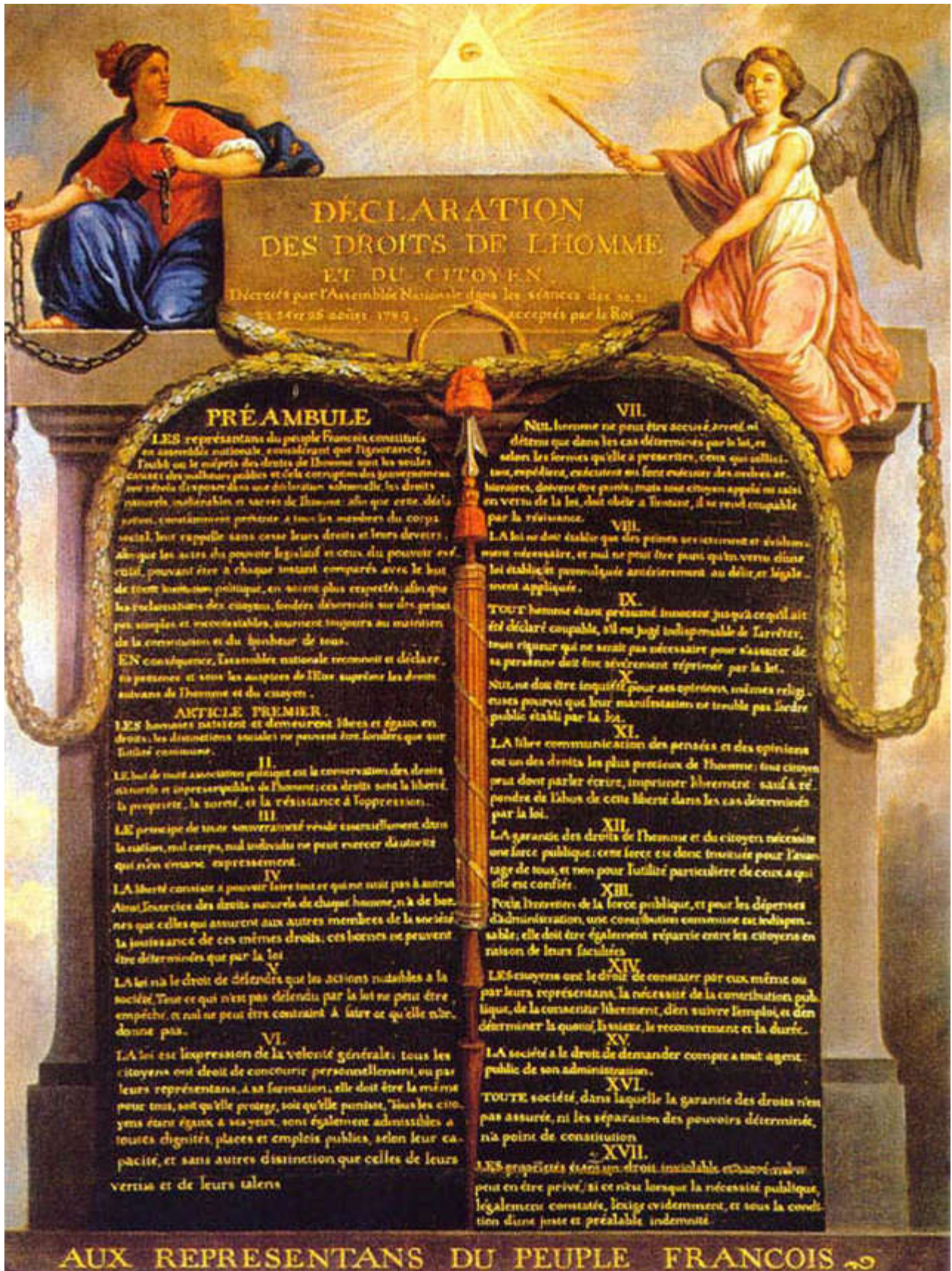
The Bill of Rights of the US Constitution protects basic freedoms of United States citizens.

Written during the summer of 1787 in Philadelphia, the Constitution of the United States of America is the fundamental law of the US federal system of government and the landmark document of the Western world. It is the oldest written national constitution in use and defines the principal organs of government and their jurisdictions and the basic rights of citizens.

The first ten amendments to the Constitution—the Bill of Rights—came into effect on December 15, 1791, limiting the powers of the federal government of the United States and protecting the rights of all citizens, residents and visitors in American territory.

The Bill of Rights protects freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to keep and bear arms, the freedom of assembly and the freedom to petition. It also prohibits unreasonable search and seizure, cruel and unusual punishment and compelled self-incrimination. Among the legal protections it affords, the Bill of Rights prohibits Congress from making any law respecting establishment of religion and prohibits the federal government from depriving any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law. In federal criminal cases it requires indictment by a grand jury for any capital offense, or infamous crime, guarantees a speedy public trial with an impartial jury in the district in which the crime occurred, and prohibits double jeopardy.

### **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)**



# DÉCLARATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DU CITOYEN

Établie par l'Assemblée Nationale dans les séances des 20, 21, 23, 24 et 26 août 1789. Approuvée par le Roi le 26 août 1789.

## PRÉAMBULE

LES représentants du peuple Français constitués en assemblée nationale, considérant que l'ignorance, l'oubli ou le mépris des droits de l'homme sont les seules causes des malheurs publics et de la corruption des gouvernements, ont résolu d'établir une déclaration solennelle des droits naturels, inaliénables et sacrés de l'homme; afin que cette déclaration, constamment présente à tous les membres du corps social, leur rappelle sans cesse leurs droits et leurs devoirs; afin que les actes du pouvoir législatif et ceux du pouvoir exécutif, pouvant être à chaque instant comparés avec le but de tout gouvernement politique, en soient plus respectés; afin que les réclamations des citoyens, fondées désormais sur des principes simples et incontestables, tournent toujours au maintien de la constitution et du bonheur de tous.

EN conséquence, l'Assemblée nationale reconnoît et déclare, en présence et sous les auspices de l'Être suprême les droits suivants de l'homme et du citoyen.

**ARTICLE PREMIER.**  
LES hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits; les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune.

**II.**  
Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme; ces droits sont la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté, et la résistance à l'oppression.

**III.**  
Le principe de toute souveraineté réside essentiellement dans la nation; nul corps, nul individu ne peut exercer d'autorité qui n'en émane expressément.

**IV.**  
La liberté consiste à pouvoir faire tout ce qui ne nuit pas à autrui. Ainsi l'exercice des droits naturels de chaque homme n'a de bornes que celles qui assurent aux autres membres de la société la jouissance de ces mêmes droits; ces bornes ne peuvent être déterminées que par la loi.

**V.**  
La loi n'a le droit de défendre que les actions nuisibles à la société. Tout ce qui n'est pas défendu par la loi ne peut être empêché, et nul ne peut être contraint à faire ce qu'elle n'a pas donné.

**VI.**  
La loi est l'expression de la volonté générale; tous les citoyens ont droit de concourir personnellement, ou par leurs représentants, à sa formation; elle doit être la même pour tous, soit qu'elle protège, soit qu'elle punisse. Tous les citoyens étant égaux à ses yeux, sont également admissibles à toutes dignités, places et emplois publics, selon leur capacité, et sans autres distinctions que celles de leurs vertus et de leurs talents.

**VII.**  
Nul homme ne peut être accusé, arrêté ni détenu que dans les cas déterminés par la loi, et selon les formes qu'elle a prescrites; ceux qui sollicitent, expédient, exécutent ou font exécuter des ordres arbitraires, doivent être punis; mais tout citoyen appelé ou saisi en vertu de la loi, doit obéir à l'instant, il se rend coupable par la résistance.

**VIII.**  
La loi ne doit établir que des peines strictement et évidemment nécessaires, et nul ne peut être puni qu'en vertu d'une loi établie et promulguée antérieurement au délit, et légalement appliquée.

**IX.**  
TOUT homme étant présumé innocent jusqu'à ce qu'il ait été déclaré coupable, s'il est jugé indispensable de l'arrêter, tout rigueur qui ne serait pas nécessaire pour s'assurer de sa personne doit être sévèrement réprimée par la loi.

**X.**  
NUL ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, soit religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la loi.

**XI.**  
La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme; tout citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sauf à répondre de l'abus de cette liberté dans les cas déterminés par la loi.

**XII.**  
La garantie des droits de l'homme et du citoyen nécessite une force publique; cette force est donc instituée pour l'usage de tous, et non pour l'utilité particulière de ceux à qui elle est confiée.

**XIII.**  
Pour l'entretien de la force publique, et pour les dépenses d'administration, une contribution commune est indispensable; elle doit être également répartie entre les citoyens en raison de leurs facultés.

**XIV.**  
LES citoyens ont le droit de constater par eux-mêmes ou par leurs représentants la nécessité de la contribution publique, de la consentir librement, d'en suivre l'emploi, et d'en déterminer la quotité, l'assiette, le recouvrement et la durée.

**XV.**  
La société a le droit de demander compte à tout agent public de son administration.

**XVI.**  
TOUTE société, dans laquelle la garantie des droits n'est pas assurée, ni la séparation des pouvoirs déterminée, n'a point de constitution.

**XVII.**  
LES propriétés étant un droit sacré et inviolable, nul ne peut en être privé, si ce n'est lorsque la nécessité publique, légalement constatée, l'exige évidemment, et sous la condition d'une juste et préalable indemnité.

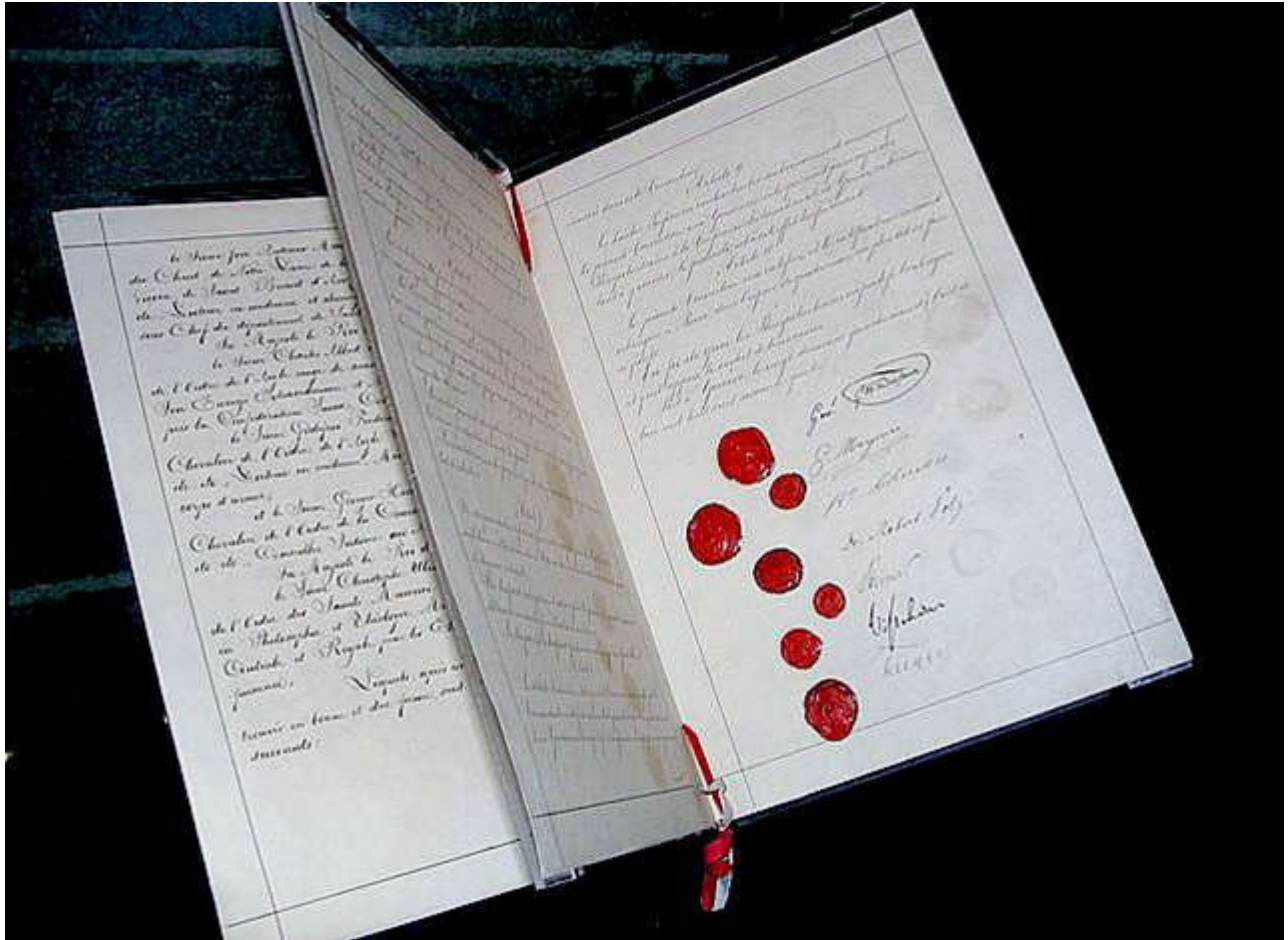
AUX REPRESENTANTS DU PEUPLE FRANCOIS

Following the French Revolution in 1789, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen granted specific freedoms from oppression, as an “expression of the general will.”

In 1789 the people of France brought about the abolishment of the absolute monarchy and set the stage for the establishment of the first French Republic. Just six weeks after the storming of the Bastille, and barely three weeks after the abolition of feudalism, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (French: La Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen) was adopted by the National Constituent Assembly as the first step toward writing a constitution for the Republic of France.

The Declaration proclaims that all citizens are to be guaranteed the rights of “liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” It argues that the need for law derives from the fact that “...the exercise of the natural rights of each man has only those borders which assure other members of the society the enjoyment of these same rights.” Thus, the Declaration sees law as an “expression of the general will,” intended to promote this equality of rights and to forbid “only actions harmful to the society.”

### **The First Geneva Convention (1864)**



The original document from the first Geneva Convention in 1864 provided for care to wounded soldiers.

In 1864, sixteen European countries and several American states attended a conference in Geneva, at the invitation of the Swiss Federal Council, on the initiative of the Geneva Committee. The diplomatic conference was held for the purpose of adopting a convention for the treatment of wounded soldiers in combat.

The main principles laid down in the Convention and maintained by the later Geneva Conventions provided for the obligation to extend care without discrimination to wounded and sick military personnel and respect for and



marking of medical personnel transports and equipment with the distinctive sign of the red cross on a white background.

## **The United Nations (1945)**



Fifty nations met in San Francisco in 1945 and formed the United Nations to protect and promote peace.

World War II had raged from 1939 to 1945, and as the end drew near, cities throughout Europe and Asia lay in smoldering ruins. Millions of people were dead, millions more were homeless or starving. Russian forces were closing in on the remnants of German resistance in Germany's bombed-out capital of Berlin. In the Pacific,

US Marines were still battling entrenched Japanese forces on such islands as Okinawa.

In April 1945, delegates from fifty countries met in San Francisco full of optimism and hope. The goal of the United Nations Conference on International Organization was to fashion an international body to promote peace and prevent future wars. The ideals of the organization were stated in the preamble to its proposed charter: “We the peoples of the United Nations are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”

The Charter of the new United Nations organization went into effect on October 24, 1945, a date that is celebrated each year as United Nations Day.

# The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)



## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF Human Rights

**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

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 cooperation 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, colour, 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 limitation 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 defence. (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 honour 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 faith, to teach, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**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 procedures.

**ARTICLE 22** Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation 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 favourable 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 favourable 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 wellbeing 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 freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in 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, religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

# UNITED NATIONS

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the 1948 meeting held in Paris on 10 December 1948.  
Revised by the Department of Information.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has inspired a number of other human rights laws and treaties throughout the world.

By 1948, the United Nations' new Human Rights Commission had captured the world's attention. Under the dynamic chairmanship of Eleanor Roosevelt—President Franklin Roosevelt's widow, a human rights champion in her own right and the United States delegate to the UN—the Commission set out to draft the document that became the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Roosevelt, credited with its inspiration, referred to the Declaration as the international Magna Carta for all mankind. It was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

In its preamble and in Article 1, the Declaration unequivocally proclaims the inherent rights of all human beings: “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... All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

The Member States of the United Nations pledged to work together to promote the thirty Articles of human rights that, for the first time in history, had been

assembled and codified into a single document. In consequence, many of these rights, in various forms, are today part of the constitutional laws of democratic nations.