

# THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### WHAT IS IT?

- In 2018, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It remains as relevant today as it was in 1948. To highlight what the Universal Declaration means for people in their everyday lives, UN Human Rights has launched a year-long campaign building on the existing Stand Up for Human Rights campaign. It will culminate on 10 December 2018.

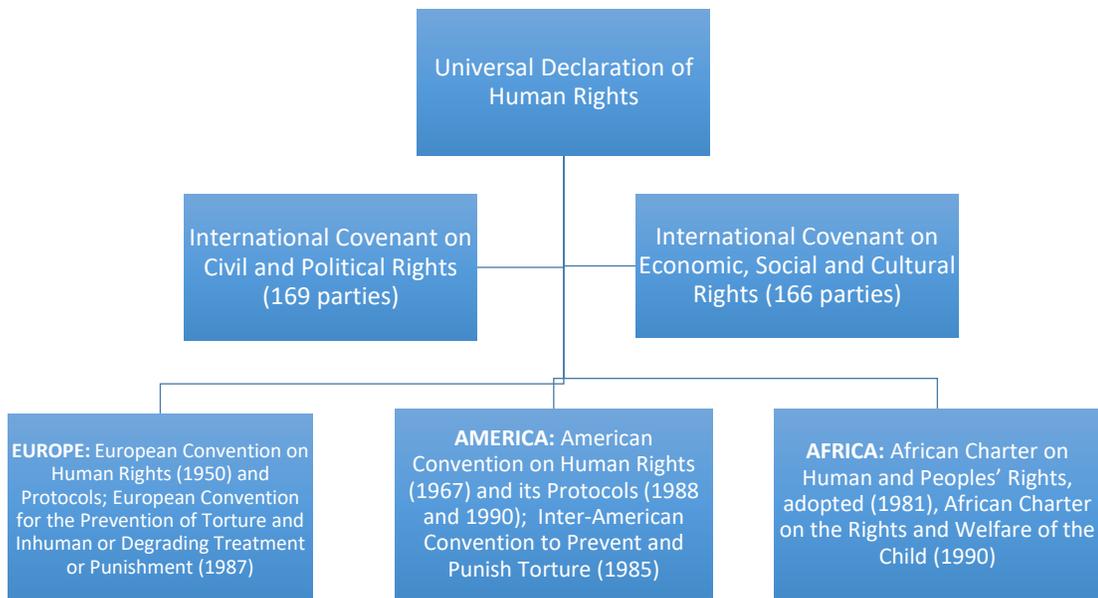
### PURPOSE OF CAMPAIGN:

- To celebrate the unique Universal Declaration, and to highlight and reaffirm the importance of its enduring human rights principles and standards worldwide.

### ABOUT THE DECLARATION AND ITS DRAFTERS. (For more information, see: <http://research.un.org/en/undhr>)

- Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on **10 December 1948**, the Declaration was designed to prevent the repetition of the horrific human rights violations that had been committed during **World War II**.
- **Did you know?** It was drafted by a **diverse** group of people from Australia, Canada, Chile, China, France, Lebanon, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, including:
  - **Eleanor Roosevelt** was the first chair of the fledgling United Nation's Commission on Human Rights;
  - **Chang Peng-Chun**, the Chinese playwright, philosopher and diplomat was vice-chair of the commission;
  - Dr **Charles Malik**, the Lebanese academic, philosopher, and ethicist who, as rapporteur, played a vital role in shaping the ethical contents of the UDHR.
  - **Rene Cassin**, a jurist, judge, and legal advisor to Charles de Gaulle, played a major drafting role.
- The Declaration holds the **Guinness World Record** as the world's **most translated document**, in over 500 languages.

### THE WORLD'S INVISIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK:



The UDHR's principles are now **embedded in the Constitutions** and laws of **over 90 countries**.

**STILL EXPANDING:** The UDHR has also spawned many other important international treaties, including the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (179 states)**; the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (189)**; the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (196)**; and the **United Nations Convention Against Torture (162)**. Furthermore, the UDHR continues to inspire new treaties. One of the most recent, the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, is also one of the most rapidly ratified, with 175 states signing onto it in its first decade, and the **International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance**, which entered into force in 2010, has so far been ratified by 58.

### TO CELEBRATE:

- **500 languages:** UDHR holds the [Guinness Book of World Records](#) as the most translated document in the world, with translations ranging from Abkhaz to Zulu.
- **18 treaties and optional protocols** advancing human rights have been agreed since 1948.
- **198 countries** now allow women the right to vote, compared to 91 countries in 1948.
- **104 countries** have now outlawed capital punishment, compared to only 9 in 1948.
- **57%** of countries have a national human rights institution today.
- **111 countries** have adopted freedom of information laws & policies, at least 15 of them in the past 4 years.

### ONGOING CHALLENGES

- **880 million** people today live in urban slums.
- **1 in 10 children** worldwide are still engaged in child labour.
- **65 million** men, women and children were forced from their homes by war and persecution in 2015, which is **1 in every 113 people**.
- **101 journalists** were killed in 2016: **1 death every 4 days**.
- **Almost 1 in 3** people in detention are held without being tried or sentenced for a crime.
- **59 million children** were not in primary school in 2014. 52% of these were girls.
- Women represent only **24% of national parliaments**.
- **700 million** women today were married before age 18; **250 million** were married before age 15.

### WHY DOES THE UDHR MATTER IN 2018?

#### CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES:

- **Global multilateral frameworks** for peace and human rights are increasingly under threat.
- **Rights to privacy, data, and consent** are facing new challenges in the internet age.
- **Climate change:** a threat to right to life, food, water & housing.
- **Right to work:** emerging problems of automation and challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- **Inequality:** global, national, and urban inequalities
- **Women and gender:** issues such as sexual assault, rape, exploitation, violence against women, and pay gaps.
- **Freedom of Expression:** complications in internet age.
- **Migrants and refugees:** growing global migrant crises.
- **Democracy:** under threat around the world.

#### INTERESTING TOPICS:

- **UDHR Drafting Committee:** Contrary to common perception, a deeply diverse committee.
- **Hidden histories:** the crucial role of non-Western female delegates (from India, Pakistan and the Dominican Republic) such as Hansa Mehta, Shaista Begum Ikramullah, and Minerva Bernardino in drafting the Declaration.
- UDHR in **literature, art, film and poetry**.
- **World Record Breaker:** From 298 languages in 2000, to 370 in 2010, to over 500 languages today.
- **Human rights for the 21<sup>st</sup> century:** for example, rights to work and choice of employment, rights to privacy, rights to social security, rights of older persons, freedom of movement, emergence of potential "Human Rights Cities."

**Historical UN video footage is available** at [www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary](http://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary) where low resolution files can be viewed. High-resolution video files are available upon request. Please submit an [AV Library Request Form](#) for any items needed in high-resolution. Fees may apply. For more information, please see the UN Audiovisual Library's *Copyright & Licensing page*. Contact: [avlibrary@un.org](mailto:avlibrary@un.org)

**Historical UN photos** related to the UDHR: see [https://www.flickr.com/photos/un\\_photo/sets/72157677599327615](https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/sets/72157677599327615). High-resolution files can be downloaded from [www.unmultimedia.org/photo](http://www.unmultimedia.org/photo). Contact: [photolibrary@un.org](mailto:photolibrary@un.org)