



**UNIVERSAL DECLARATION  
OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS**

*WITH UNOFFICIAL SIMPLIFIED TEXT*



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Cambodia Country Office



UNIVERSAL  
DECLARATION  
OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS

Dignity and justice for all of us

This publication is produced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia in 1993.



United Nations  
**Human Rights**

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

# **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

*together with an unofficial simplified text  
to help everyone understand*

## **Preface**

*"All human beings are born free and equal in  
dignity and rights." (Article 1)*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

The General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations". The Universal Declaration provides a common understanding of human rights and fundamental freedoms which Member States pledged themselves to achieve in the United Nations Charter. It recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings without distinction. Over the years, the Declaration has acquired immense

moral force.

The Universal Declaration is legally binding in Cambodia by virtue of article 31 of the Constitution.

The provisions of the Universal Declaration have been directly translated into two legally-binding documents: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These treaties set out in detail how States should implement the rights and freedoms in the Declaration.

Other international treaties derived from the Universal Declaration include the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cambodia is a party to each of these treaties

which are incorporated into Cambodian Law through the Constitution.

In the Universal Declaration's words, every individual and every organ of society "*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*".

To mark the adoption of the Universal Declaration, 10 December has been designated as International Human Rights Day in Cambodia and throughout the world.

The year 2008 sees the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

OHCHR Cambodia, November 2008

## About the simplified text

The Declaration uses words that many people find difficult to understand. Here we have written out the basic ideas in simple words so that everyone can understand what it says and why it is important.

We have tried to use words that most high schoolchildren would understand. Some of the ideas are complicated—more complicated than it is possible to explain in simple terms. The simplified text is supposed to be just a guide to the Declaration, a first step on the way to understanding the full text. We have therefore presented the two texts side by side in this booklet.

Use the simple text as a help to understanding the official version. When in doubt, the official text gives the best explanation of what each right means.



សេចក្តីប្រកាស  
ថាសកល  
ស្តីពីសិទ្ធិបោះឆ្នោត  
១៩៩៨-២០០៨

សេចក្តីថ្លែង និង  
ប្តេជ្ញាចិត្តរបស់រាជរដ្ឋាភិបាល

# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*(Unofficial simplified text)*

Made simple for everyone to understand

## Introduction

All human beings can only live free in a peaceful and fair world if their human rights and their dignity are respected.

In the past, some people have done terrible and wicked things to other human beings because they did not care about human rights; now, everyone needs to come together to make sure that we are free to say and think what we want and that we do not have to live in fear or go hungry or suffer.

The law must protect and the courts must uphold our human rights so that we do not need to join together to fight against people who try to harm our rights;



# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*(Official text)*

## **Preamble**

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

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

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

Different countries should learn to live in peace together;

All the peoples of the countries that have joined the United Nations have agreed to work together to protect human rights and the welfare of all human beings, both men and women, in order to make a better life for everyone in the world;

The Governments of the countries that make up the United Nations have promised to make sure our human rights are respected;

But before we can ensure our human rights are respected, we all need to understand what our basic rights are.

Therefore,

**The General Assembly** of the United Nations, where all the countries of the world, meet together, has agreed on this **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.

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

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

*Whereas* Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in 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

All countries, and each of us, should promise to remember and follow what is written here and to work as hard as we can to make sure that we can all enjoy these human rights. Everyone should be able to enjoy human rights; everyone has a part to play in making sure this is possible.

**1** **Dignity**—From the day we are born, we are free and should all be treated in the same way as everyone else. We can think for ourselves and we can understand what is right and wrong. We should be friendly towards one another.

**2** **Equality**—The rights in this Declaration belong to all of us: to girls as well as boys, to women as well as men. They belong to all of us whatever our skin colour, to everyone even if we speak a different language, or have different ideas and beliefs or a different religion. They belong to the poor as well as the rich, to people from ordinary families as well as from powerful families. They belong to everyone, even if we come from another country.

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

It makes no difference whether our country is independent or not.

**3** **Life**—We all have the right to live, and to be free and to be safe from harm.

**4** **Slavery**—Nobody should treat us as a slave. We should not make anyone else a slave.

**5** **Torture**—Nobody should torture us or treat us cruelly or punish us in a way that makes us feel humiliated.

**6** **Law**—The law should make sure that all of us can claim our human rights through the law; nobody should be left out.

**7** **Law**—We should all be protected by the law in the same way as everyone else. The law should be the same for everyone; it should be applied in the same way to all of us.

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.

**8** **Law**—We should all be able to ask for help from people who know about the law when our rights under the law are not respected.

**9** **Prison**—Nobody should hold us or put us in prison or send us to another country unjustly or without good reason.

**10** **Justice**—If somebody accuses one of us of breaking the law, the matter should be decided at a trial open to other people. The people who decide should not let themselves be influenced by others; they should decide only from what is shown to be true or not true.

**11** **Justice**—If any of us is accused of a crime, we should be treated as innocent until it can be proved that we are guilty at a fair trial. Each of us should always be allowed to defend ourselves. Nobody should condemn us or punish us for something we have not done.



## **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.

**12** Privacy—Nobody should be allowed to say bad or untrue things about us, enter our house, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a good reason.

**13** Movement—We should all be able to move around as we wish within our country. We should be able to leave our country to go to another one; and we should be able to return to our country if we want.

**14** Refugees—If someone tries to hurt one of us, we are allowed to run away to another country and ask to be protected. But we cannot escape if we, ourselves, have done bad things like harm someone else or not respect human rights.

**15** Nationality—We should all be allowed to belong to a country. Nobody can prevent us, without a good reason, from belonging to our country or to a different country if we wish.

## **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.

**16** **Marriage**—As soon as we are old enough, each of us can marry and start a family if we want. We cannot be stopped from doing this because of the colour of our skin, the country we come from or our religion. Men and women have the same rights when they are married and also if they are separated. Nobody should force us to marry someone we do not want to marry.

The government and people of our country should protect our family and everyone in it.

**17** **Property**—We are all allowed to own things and nobody is allowed to take our belongings away from us without a good reason.

**18** **Religion**—We are all free to believe in our own religion, to change our religion, and to practise it either by ourselves or with other people.

## **Article 16**

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

## **Article 17**

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

## **Article 18**

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

**19** **Expression**—We are all free to think what we want to think and to say what we want to say. Nobody should forbid us from doing this. We should also be able to share our ideas—with people from our own or any other country.

**20** **Assembly**—We should all be able to get together with other people for peaceful purposes or to join in meetings in a peaceful way. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.

**21** **Democracy**—We should all be able to take part in how our country is run either by choosing someone who has the same ideas as we do to speak for us or by trying to be chosen ourselves to speak for others. Governments should be chosen regularly by asking the people what they think in an election. In the election, we should all get a vote and all our votes should have the same value. We do not have to tell others who we voted for if we do not want to. We all have the same right as anyone else to work for the public service.

## **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.

**22** Social Security—As members of society, we should be able to try to build a good life for ourselves and to make the most of the good things that life has to offer. If one of us is struggling for some reason, we should all join together to help as much as we can.

**23** Work—We should all be able to work and be free to choose which job we want to do. We should be treated well by our bosses and get paid enough so that we can look after our family. If we lose our job, the Government should help us until we can find another one. If a man and a woman do the same type of work, they should each get the same pay. Everyone who works can join together, if they like, to defend their interests.

**24** Rest—Each work day should not be too long, as everyone has the right to rest and should be able to take regular paid holidays.



## **Article 22**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

## **Article 23**

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and 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.

**25** **Want**—We should all have enough of what we need so that each of us and our families do not fall ill, do not go hungry, have clothes and a house. We should all be helped if we cannot find a job, if we get sick or are hurt, if we are old, if our wife or husband dies, or if we can-not earn a living for any reason we cannot choose.

Mothers and children should get special help. All children should be treated the same, whether or not their parents are married.

**26** **Education**—We should all be able to go to learn things. Everyone, especially the small children, should go to school. No one should have to pay to go to primary school. We should all be able to learn a skill or continue our studies as far as we wish.

At school, we should be able to develop all our talents and should be taught about human rights and how to get on with others, whatever their skin colour, religion or the country they come from. Our parents should be able to choose how and what we will be taught at school.

## **Article 25**

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

## **Article 26**

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

**27** **Culture**—We should all be able to share in our community's cultural life, to enjoy the arts and to benefit from new discoveries in science, and any good they do. If we create something special, like write a book or paint a picture, should be able to benefit from it and no one else should be able to steal our ideas.

**28** **Peace**—So that we can enjoy the rights we have been reading about in this Declaration, people should be able to live in peace, both within our communities and between countries.

**29** **Community**—We all have to play our part in the community so that we can enjoy the benefits of a good life.

The law should make sure we can enjoy our human rights in harmony with everyone else. It should allow everyone to respect others and to be respected.

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.

**30** No one can use this Declaration to justify destroying the rights of others by claiming that they are just trying to protect their own rights. It is never OK to destroy the rights of others.



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Note: this simplified text is not an official United Nations text and has not been approved by the General Assembly. It is produced for awareness-raising purposes by the OHCHR Cambodia Country Office. In case of doubt, refer to the official authorized text of the Declaration.

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.





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