



# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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## Why in News?

Human Rights Day is observed annually on **10<sup>th</sup> December** to commemorate the approval of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#) by the [UN General Assembly](#) in 1948.

- This year 2023 marks the **75<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the UDHR.
- 2023 Theme: **Freedom, Equality and Justice for All.**

## What is Human Rights?

- These are rights **inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.**
- These include the [right to life and liberty](#), **freedom from slavery and torture**, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many More.
- Nelson Mandela had stated '**To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity**'.
- **Article 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states** that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."
  - **And Article 2 says that** everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms the declaration sets out, "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.
- [Articles 12 to 35 of the Indian Constitution](#) provide for the Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, Right Against Exploitation, Right to Freedom of Religion, Cultural & Educational Rights, Saving of Certain Laws and Right to Constitutional Remedies.

## What is Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)?

- **About:**
  - The 30 rights and freedoms include civil and political rights, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education, etc.
    - India took an active part in the drafting of the UDHR.
  - The UDHR is not a treaty, so it does not directly create legal obligations for countries.
  - The UDHR, together with the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and its two Optional Protocols (on the complaints procedure and on the death penalty) and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and its Optional Protocol, form the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.
  - This declaration, established as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations, played a **foundational role** in shaping the international order that emerged after the devastation of [World War II](#).
- **Achievements:**
  - **The Non-Binding Nature of the Declaration:**
    - The UDHR, established in 1948, **is not a legally binding treaty in itself.** However, its principles have been widely adopted and integrated into the legal

frameworks of numerous countries.

- **Influence and Global Impact:**

- The UDHR's significance transcends its non-binding status, having served as a catalyst for over 70 human rights treaties globally. Its influence is evident in movements such as [decolonization](#), **anti-apartheid**, and **various freedom struggles worldwide**.
- Without the UDHR, **a fragmented landscape with differing standards could have emerged**, creating a potentially more challenging situation.

- **The Universal Standard and Ongoing Relevance:**

- Despite some criticisms asserting its inapplicability to specific religions, cultures, or regions, UNDR's arising from agreements building on the 1948 declaration, underscores its enduring relevance.
- The **Vienna Declaration and Program of Action in 1993**, for instance, further solidified the principles set forth in the UDHR.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. Other than the Fundamental Rights, which of the following parts of the Constitution of India reflect/ reflects the principles and provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)? (2020)**

1. Preamble
2. Directive Principles of State Policy
3. Fundamental Duties

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a)** 1 and 2 only
- (b)** 2 only
- (c)** 1 and 3 only
- (d)** 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**