# ASSIGNMENT REPORT

Human Rights

MUHAMMAD DAYYAN NAEEM
FA25-BBA-019-C
Submitting to: Ma'am Sameet Fatima

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

Human rights are universal, inalienable entitlements that protect human dignity and freedom. According to international human rights law, they apply to every person regardless of nationality, race, religion, or any other status. These rights form the foundation of equality, justice, and peace: as the UNDP notes, "human rights and human development share a common vision" of freedom, well-being, and dignity for all. The spatial distribution of human rights varies globally: for example, the 2024 V-Dem Human Rights Index shows higher scores in Western Europe and parts of Asia, while many conflict-affected countries score lower (see Figure 1). These data highlight how human rights conditions differ markedly between countries.

# Definition of Human Rights

Human rights are moral and legal entitlements inherent to all individuals by virtue of their humanity. Every person is born free and equal in dignity and rights[4], which means no one should be discriminated against based on nationality, gender, religion, or any other status. These rights are universal (applying everywhere) and interdependent: progress in one area (e.g., access to education) often supports advancement in others, whereas violations of any right can undermine others. They are also indivisible, meaning that civil, political, economic, and social rights must all be protected by law. For example, rights to a fair trial, free speech, and privacy have been enshrined in most national constitutions, and international treaties oblige states to respect these guarantees. Without such legal recognition, human rights remain abstract ideals rather than enforceable standards.

# Historical Background

The concept of human rights has ancient roots, but it achieved modern form as a check on arbitrary power. Key milestones include the Magna Carta (England, 1215), which limited the king's power and affirmed due process for nobles; the Enlightenment and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), which articulated the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity; and the emergence of democratic movements in the 19th century (e.g. abolition of slavery). In the aftermath of World War II, the international community enshrined these ideals in law. In 1948, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which listed the fundamental rights owed to every person. These principles also influenced newly independent nations: during decolonization, many constitutions included bills of rights for the first time.

# Types of Human Rights

Human rights are commonly divided into several categories, though all types are interrelated. The main categories are **civil and political rights**, **economic, social, and cultural rights**, and **collective or solidarity rights**. This grouping clarifies the scope of rights and obligations in different domains.

## Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights protect individuals' freedoms from unwarranted government interference and ensure political participation. Examples include the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, the right to a fair trial, and the right to vote. These rights were prominently featured in the UDHR and later codified in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). In practice, they mean that governments cannot arbitrarily arrest people, censor peaceful expression, or manipulate elections. Civil–political rights guarantee that citizens can participate in governance (e.g., by voting) and that basic liberties (like privacy and due process) are upheld.

## Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights guarantee basic well-being and social participation. They include rights to education, healthcare, work, housing, food, and an adequate standard of living. For example, Article 26 of the UDHR declares that elementary education shall be free and accessible for all children. Under international law (such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966), states commit to making these rights progressively real by investing in schools, hospitals, and social programs. For instance, the World Health Organization explicitly declares health "a fundamental human right" encompassing "complete physical, psychological and social well-being". Ensuring water, sanitation, and medical care are available and affordable is thus seen as a legal obligation, not just charity.

## Collective and Solidarity Rights

Collective or solidarity rights are held by people or groups and emphasize communal and environmental dimensions. They include the right to self-determination (each people determining its own political status), the right to development, the right to a healthy environment, and the right to peace. The UDHR and later UN instruments (such as the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development) recognize that social and economic progress is a collective entitlement. In practice, these rights support the idea that communities as a whole can claim rights to shared prosperity and long-term well-being. For example, the right to a healthy environment has been interpreted to demand collective action (such as pollution control) in order to protect the community's health and future.

# Importance of Human Rights

Human rights are crucial because they uphold fundamental human dignity and ensure essential freedoms for everyone. By setting universal standards, they protect people from abuses like torture, discrimination, or exploitation, and they guarantee minimum needs for a decent life (education, healthcare, etc.). Importantly, rights frameworks contribute to social stability and development: societies that respect rights tend to have stronger institutions, better health outcomes, broader education, and greater economic opportunity For example,

countries with strong civil liberties and the rule of law generally enjoy higher per capita income and better social indicators. In short, protecting rights is not only a moral imperative but also a practical path to peace and prosperity. As the UNDP has emphasized, "human freedom is the common purpose" of both rights and development.



# Challenges in Protecting Human Rights

Despite widespread recognition on paper, many obstacles hinder the realization of human rights. Armed conflict, political instability, and authoritarianism remain major threats: wars destroy institutions and often lead to mass atrocities. The UNHCR reports that by the end of 2024, a record 123.2 million people (about 1 in 67 globally) had been forcibly displaced by persecution, violence, or human rights violations. Vulnerable groups often suffer disproportionately – for example, children are more likely to become refugees or victims of exploitation. Other challenges include systemic discrimination (based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or caste) and extreme poverty, which leave many without access to basic health care, clean water, and education. Weak rule of law, corruption, and lack of accountability further undermine rights protections. Together, these factors mean that significant portions of the world's population still lack many rights that others take for granted.

# Human Rights in Islam

Islamic teachings encompass principles that align closely with human rights ideals. The Quran affirms human dignity (e.g., Q. 17:70 states that God has ennobled all people) and commands justice and compassion (Q. 4:135; 5:8) regardless of faith. The Charter of Medina (7th century CE), an early Islamic social contract, guaranteed security, property rights, and religious freedom to the diverse communities of Medina, illustrating an early pluralistic rights approach. Classical Islamic law (Sharia) emphasizes social welfare, family rights, and justice; for instance, it grants women inheritance and property rights, and it proscribes torture and unjust harm. In modern times, many Muslim-majority countries incorporate these ideals into their legal frameworks, though interpretation varies. For example, the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam frames human rights within an Islamic context, emphasizing dignity, justice, and social welfare for all. Overall, Islamic principles of compassion, equality, and the welfare of the community have often been cited as supporting education, health care, and justice for all members of society.

# Measures to Protect Human Rights

Effective protection of human rights requires a multifaceted approach. Nations must **strengthen legal frameworks** by ratifying international treaties and enacting robust constitutional and statutory protections. An **independent judiciary** and courts can then uphold rights by hearing cases and enforcing laws. **Training for police, military, and**

**officials** in human rights standards is essential to prevent abuses and ensure accountability. **Public education and awareness campaigns** (in schools, media, and communities) help people understand and claim their rights. Civil society and NGOs play key roles by **monitoring abuses** and providing legal aid or rehabilitation for victims. Finally, empowering marginalized groups through measures like affirmative action, language rights, or accessibility policies ensures that all communities can participate fully and that rights are applied equally. Together, these measures (legal, institutional, and educational) create an ecosystem where human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled.

## Conclusion

Human rights are fundamental to the dignity, equality, and well-being of all people. They provide a universal framework for justice and peace by setting minimum standards of treatment and guaranteeing basic needs. When governments, organizations, and individuals uphold rights through fair laws, just institutions, and a culture of respect, societies tend to thrive with stability and prosperity. Conversely, neglecting human rights often leads to conflict, oppression, and poverty. Protecting human rights is a shared, ongoing responsibility. By learning from past abuses and working cooperatively to strengthen rights at home and abroad, humanity can move closer to the ideals of justice, equality, and dignity for everyone.

# References

1. United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Adopted in 1948.

2. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2024*. Geneva: UNHCR; 2025.

3. World Health Organization. *Human rights and health* (Fact sheet). 1 Dec 2023. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-rights-and-health

4. UNESCO. *What you need to know about literacy*. 5 Sept 2025. Available from: https://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/need-know

5. UNESCO. *250 million children out of school: What you need to know*. 21 Sept 2023. Available from: https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data

6. United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Human Development*. New York: UNDP; 2000.

7. Rovesti M, Fioranelli M, Petrelli P, Satolli F, Roccia MG, et al. *Health and Illness in History, Science and Society*. Open Access Maced J Med Sci. 2018;6(1):163–165. doi:10.3889/oamjms.2018.056.

8. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *Figures at a Glance: Global displacement data*. UNHCR; 2025.