

Human Rights Day

Thursday 10 December 2020

DECEMBER 10

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



What is Human Rights Day?

- Human Rights Day is held annually on **December 10th**. In 2020 this falls this Thursday.
- It commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations (UN) embraced the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.
- The UN was formed shortly after **World War Two** to protect the rights and freedom of people around the world. The massive and systematic human rights abuses committed during World War Two, including the Nazi genocide of Jews, Roma (Gypsies), and other groups, spurred the development of an international human rights instrument.
- Human rights are universal rights that mean that everyone should be treated equally and with respect. People should not be discriminated against because of:
 - Gender
 - Race
 - The colour of their skin
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion
 - The country in which they were born

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has been referred to as humanity's **Magna Carta** by **Eleanor Roosevelt**, who chaired the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that was responsible for the drafting of the document. It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948.

It was created to be a 'common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations'.

It has been translated into over 500 languages, and is the most downloaded document in the world.



**“All human beings are born free and equal in
dignity and rights”**

Eleanor Roosevelt

**Chairperson & driving force in the
development of the UDHR**

Influence of the UDHR

The UDHR was and remains the key reference point for international human rights discourse.

During the 1960s and '70s, several organisations of the United Nations system used the declaration's provisions to condemn racial discrimination in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

More than any other instrument, the UDHR is responsible for making the notion of human rights nearly universally accepted.





Women who shaped the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Eleanor Roosevelt

- First lady of the United States of America from 1933 to 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt was appointed, in 1946, as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly by United States President Harry S. Truman.
- She served as the first Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights and played an instrumental role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- At a time of increasing East- West tensions, Eleanor Roosevelt used her enormous prestige and credibility with both superpowers to steer the drafting process toward its successful completion. In 1968, she was posthumously awarded the United Nations Human Rights Prize.



Hansa Mehta

- Hansa Mehta of India, the only other female delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1947-48, was a staunch fighter for women's rights in India and abroad.
- She is widely credited with changing the phrase "All men are born free and equal" to "All **human beings** are born free and equal" in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Minerva Bernardino

- A diplomat and feminist leader from the Dominican Republic, Minerva Bernardino (pictured opposite on left) was instrumental in arguing for inclusion of “the equality of men and women” in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Together with other Latin American women (Bertha Lutz of Brazil and Isabel de Vidal of Uruguay), she had also played a crucial role in advocating for the inclusion of women’s rights and nondiscrimination based on sex in the United Nations Charter, which in 1945 became the first international agreement to recognize the equal rights of men and women.



Begum Shaista Ikramullah

- As a delegate to the General Assembly's Third Committee on social, humanitarian and cultural matters, which in 1948 spent 81 meetings discussing the draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Begum Shaista Ikramullah of Pakistan advocated for emphasis on freedom, equality and choice in the Declaration.
- She championed the inclusion of Article 16, on equal rights in marriage, which she saw as a way to combat child marriage and forced marriage.



Bodil Begtrup

- As Chairperson of the Sub- Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, and then of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1947, Bodil Begtrup of Denmark (pictured opposite on left) advocated for the Universal Declaration to refer to “all” or “everyone” as the holders of the rights, rather than “all men.”
- She also proposed including the rights of minorities in Article 26 on the right to education, but her ideas were too controversial at the time. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes no explicit mention of minority rights, but guarantees equal right to everyone.



Marie-Hélène Lefauchaux

- As Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1948, Marie-Hélène Lefauchaux of France successfully advocated for a mention of non-discrimination based on sex to be included in Article 2.
- The final text of the article states that, “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.”



Evdokia Uralova

- Evdokia Uralova of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (pictured opposite in the middle) was the Rapporteur of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Commission on Human Rights in 1947.
- She strongly argued for equal pay for women. Thanks to her, Article 23 states that “Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.”



Lakshmi Menon

- Lakshmi Menon, delegate of India to the General Assembly's Third Committee in 1948, was an outspoken advocate of the "universality" of human rights, strongly opposing the concept of "colonial relativism" that sought to deny human rights to people in countries under colonial rule.
- If women, and people under colonial rule, were not explicitly mentioned in the Universal Declaration, they would not be considered included in "everyone," she argued.



How to celebrate Human Rights Day

- Ways in which you can commemorate Human Rights Day include:-
 - Create or take over part of a notice board for human rights activities, news and issues.
 - Develop a human rights pledge for all students and staff.
 - Invite human rights speakers to the school.
 - Prepare a 'what to see' list for forthcoming film or television programs which have a human rights interest.
 - Support a human rights project eg Amnesty International

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands, one light-skinned and one dark-skinned, gently cupping a small, rectangular piece of white, torn paper. The paper has the words "HUMAN RIGHTS" written on it in bold, black, hand-drawn capital letters. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of colors, including red, orange, and purple. The lighting is warm and focused on the hands and the paper.

HUMAN
RIGHTS

Thanks!

- Now please watch the [Youtube video](#)

