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HUMAN



CHALLENGING 13 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

RIGHTS

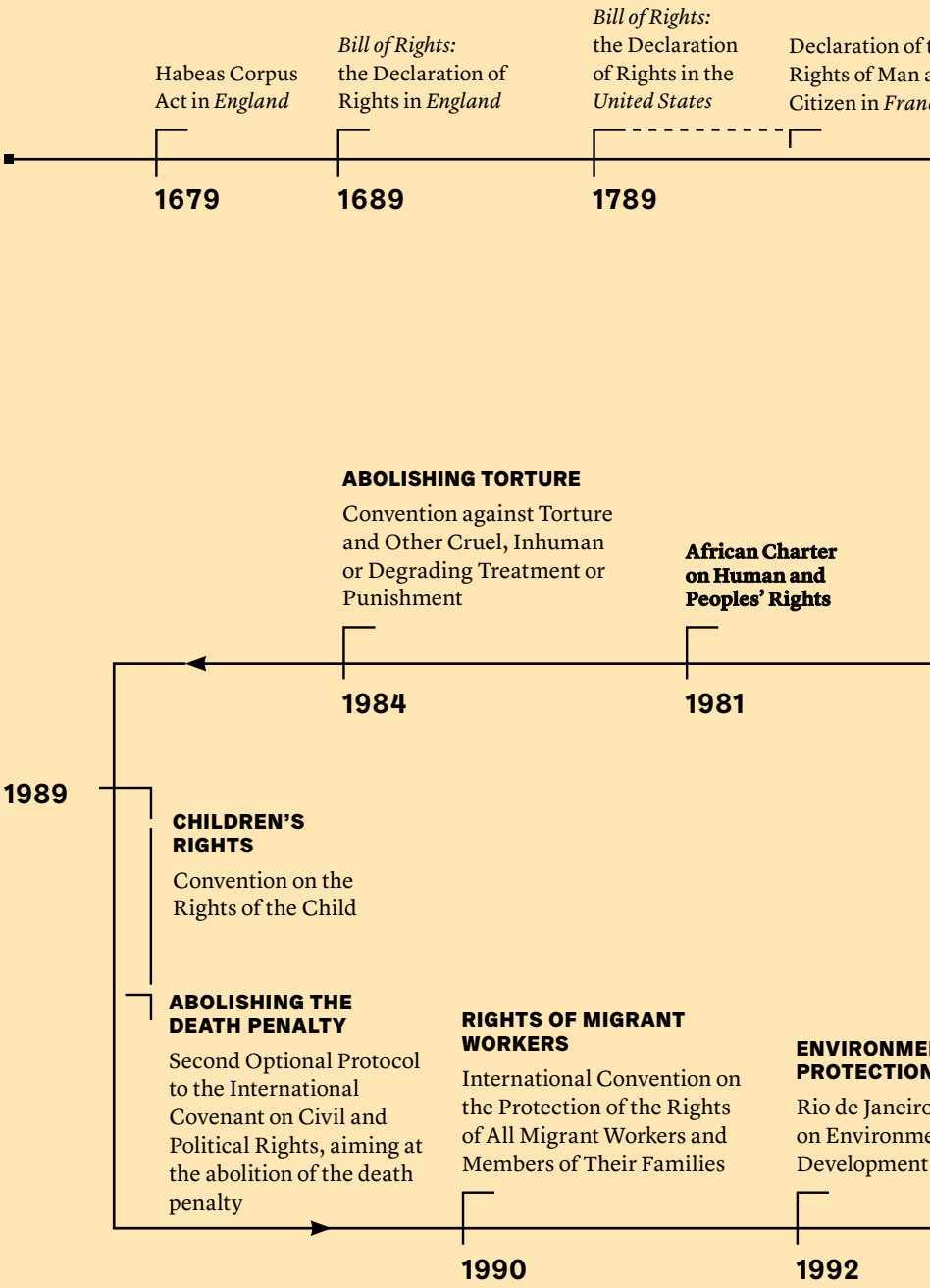
International edition

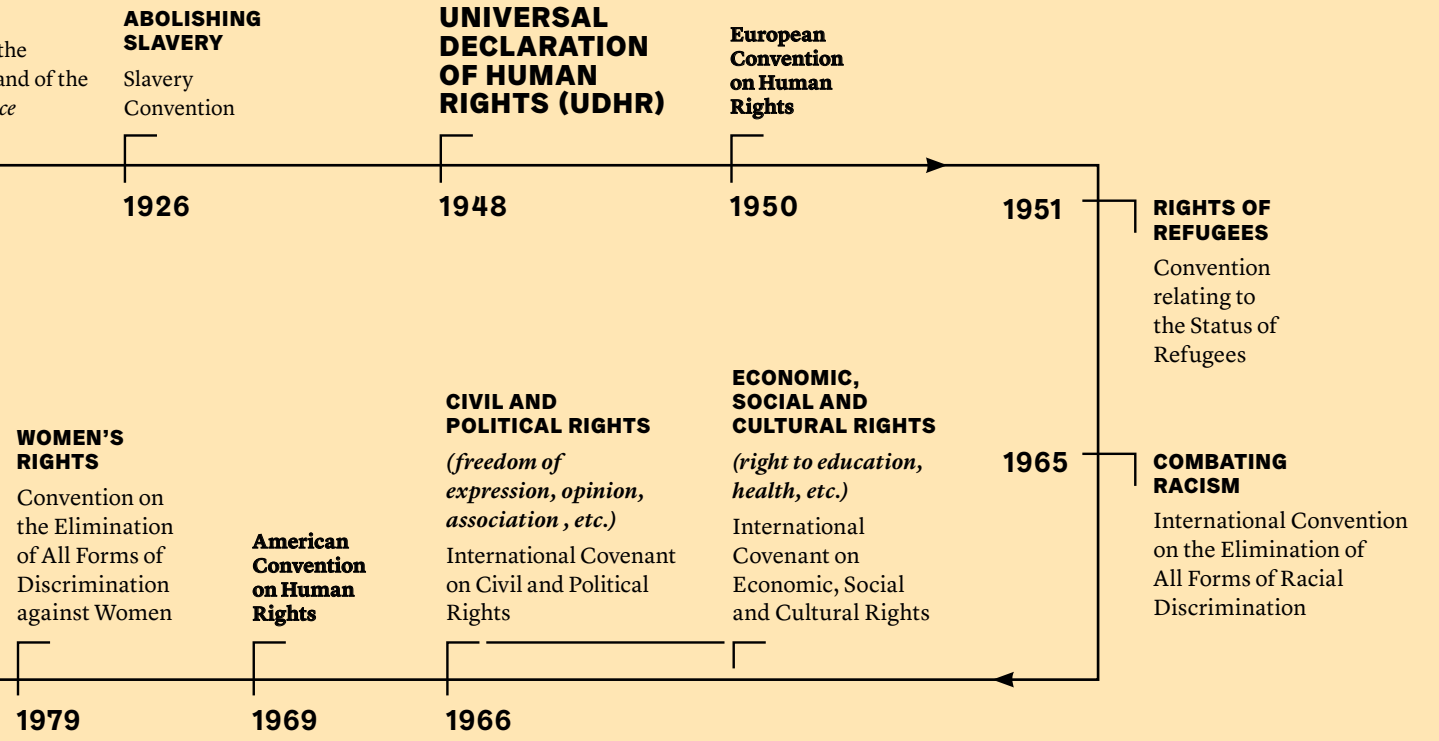
TIMELINE

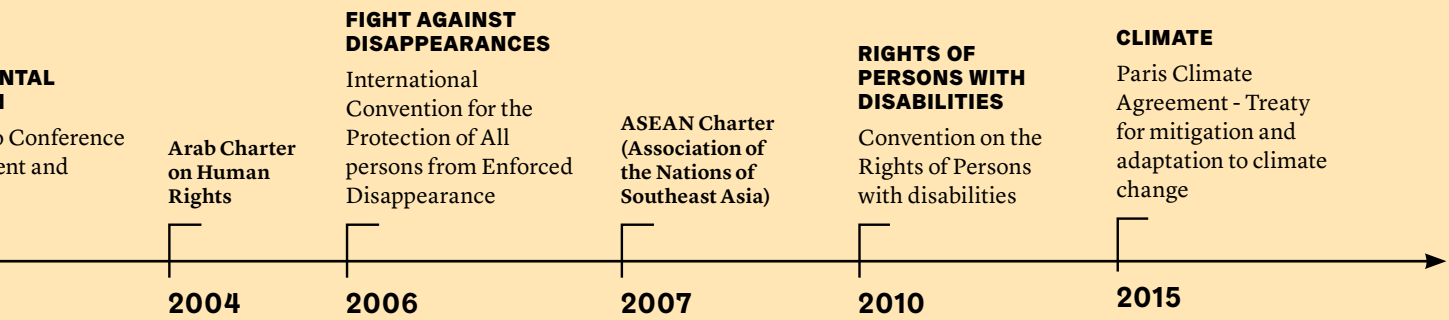
The assertion of human rights is the result of long-term progress across time and space.

Far from being exhaustive, this timeline highlights some of the major texts that inspired the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as many other texts that have emerged over the years, enabling the protection of all human beings around the world, without distinction.

See below ⟶


Habeas Corpus Act in *England*
1679
Bill of Rights: the Declaration of Rights in *England*
1689
Bill of Rights: the Declaration of Rights in the *United States*
1789
Declaration of t
Rights of Man a
Citizen in *Fran*
ABOLISHING TORTURE
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
1984
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
1981
1989
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
Convention on the Rights of the Child
ABOLISHING THE DEATH PENALTY
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
1990
ENVIRONME
PROTECTION
Rio de Janeiro
on Environme
Development
1992


ABOLISHING SLAVERY
Slavery Convention
1926
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)
1948
European Convention on Human Rights
1950
1951
RIGHTS OF REFUGEES
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
1965
COMBATING RACISM
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS
(right to education, health, etc.)
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS
(freedom of expression, opinion, association , etc.)
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
1966
American Convention on Human Rights
1969
WOMEN'S RIGHTS
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
1979


Arab Charter on Human Rights
2004
FIGHT AGAINST DISAPPEARANCES
International Convention for the Protection of All persons from Enforced Disappearance
2006
ASEAN Charter (Association of the Nations of Southeast Asia)
2007
RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities
2010
CLIMATE
Paris Climate Agreement - Treaty for mitigation and adaptation to climate change
2015

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Editors : UNESCO, CNCDH & the Delegation of the European Union to OECD/UNESCO and to the Principalities of Andorra and Monaco
Rédacteurs : Céline Branaa-Roche, Louise Pluyaud, Arnaud Gaillard, Louise Savri, Konstantinos Tararas

Editorial committee :

Maud Bernard d'Heilly, Véronique Bevin, Roland Biache, Laurène Chesnel, Geneviève Colas, Hugues de Courtivron, Ian Denison, Huguette Klein, Georges Kutukdjian, Ophélie Marrel, Jean-Pierre Raoult, Cécile Riou-Batista, Anaïs Schill, Michel Tabbal

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Translation: Davron Translations

Artistic coordination: Aurélie Colliot

Layout : Céline Branaa-Roche

Illustrations : Simon Bailly

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UNESCO 'young reviewers' team:

Siméon Campos, Manon Frezouls, Sapan Hamal, Sarra Messaoudi, Michèle Okala Nken, Nishina Previlon

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SUMMARY

Challenging common misconceptions: making human rights a living reality

Today, human rights are being challenged by various movements that question their usefulness, relevance, modernity or their universality. Yet, discrimination and acts of violence most often find their roots in prejudices and common misconceptions that people develop because they do not know and understand (well) people who are different.

Convinced of the importance of reaffirming that human rights are the foundation of a democratic and just society, UNESCO and the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) have joined forces to deconstruct 13 of the most commonly heard or disseminated misconceptions and bring forward new knowledge. Topics covered include the environment, digital technology, children's rights and conflict situations.

Today, the universal declaration of human rights has been translated into nearly **600 languages**

Through illustrated chapters, each corresponding to a common misconception, readers are invited to take action to promote human rights.

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'Since wars begin in the minds of women and men, it is in minds of women and men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

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CNCDH
COMMISSION NATIONALE CONSULTATIVE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

HUMAN

CHALLENGING 13 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

RIGHTS

International edition

In this book, the terms human rights, rights of the human person or fundamental rights are used interchangeably.



*In these pages, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is represented as a protective cloak for all **women**, **men** and **children** around the world, to emphasize that its aim is to protect **ALL** human beings.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary ..... Page 3

Foreword ..... Page 10

Common Misconception No. 1 ..... Page 14
'HUMAN RIGHTS ARE USELESS'

Common Misconception No.2 ..... Page 18
'SOME HUMAN RIGHTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS'

Common Misconception No.3 ..... Page 22
'HUMAN RIGHTS APPLY DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON THE PERSON'

Common Misconception No.4 ..... Page 28
'WOMEN DO NOT HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS MEN'

Common Misconception No.5 ..... Page 32
'HUMAN RIGHTS ARE FOR ADULTS'

Common Misconception No.6 ..... Page 36
'HUMAN RIGHTS ARE A WESTERN INVENTION'

Common Misconception No.7 ..... Page 42
'THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT BINDING ON ANYONE'

Common Misconception No.8 ..... Page 46
'FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ARE ONLY THE CONCERN OF THE STATE'

Common Misconception No.9 ..... Page 50
''HERE', WE DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS'

Common Misconception No.10 ..... Page 56
'IN TIMES OF WAR, THERE IS NO NEED TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS'

Common Misconception No.11 ..... Page 60
'FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION HAS NO LIMITS'

Common Misconception No.12 ..... Page 64
'DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ALWAYS PROMOTES FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS'

Common Misconception No.13 ..... Page 68
'PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HUMAN RIGHTS'

They defend fundamental rights ..... Page 74

Among the latest Nobel Peace Prize winners, several human rights defenders ..... Page 80

The text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ..... Page 82

FOREWORD

Everyone aspires to live in dignity; human rights proclaim the right to existence and to a dignified life. Everyone wants to be free to move, think and express themselves; human rights enshrine freedom of movement, freedom of opinion and freedom of expression. Everyone wants to be educated and cared for; the rights to education, health and the benefits of scientific progress and its applications have been recognised as fundamental rights. No one, anywhere, accepts being condemned without being able to defend themselves; human rights enshrine justice and fairness...

More than 75 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, many challenges remain: one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in her lifetime, 160 million children worldwide are forced to work, and more than a billion people could be displaced due to the climate crisis. While addressing these challenges would require the mobilisation of everyone, common misconceptions continue to question the relevance and even the usefulness of human rights.

Now more than ever, it is essential to assert that human rights concern us collectively and individually, regardless of our origin, status or beliefs. They are the common language of humanity. Human rights are not just a utopia but, on the contrary, a source of transformation for our societies. Practising, claiming and defending fundamental rights requires a better understanding of their content so that they can finally become a reality for all.

That is why UNESCO and the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) have jointly developed an international version of the book *Les Droits Humains: 13 Idées Reçues à Déconstruire*. Written for and with young people, this book revisits 13 common misconceptions to raise awareness, combat misconceptions and bring human rights to life.

Lidia Brito
UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences a.i.

Jean-Marie Burguburu
President of the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights

‘A WORLD IN WHICH HUMAN BEINGS SHALL ENJOY FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND BELIEF AND FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND WANT.’

Preamble to
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

‘

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE USELESS

’

COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.1



Human rights concern us all, without exception. Without them, we would not be able to express ourselves, receive healthcare, vote, work, protest or go to school. These fundamental rights are the basis for the fulfilment of every individual, for social harmony and for peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Every day, we exercise our human rights. These rights are embedded in our daily lives: the right to food, to go to school, to be protected from abuse and torture, to receive healthcare, to express ourselves freely, etc.

It is clear that the recognition of human rights and the commitment of States to uphold them have transformed the lives of women, men and children in many areas. In 1988, 34% of the world's population was living on $1.90 a day. Today, 8.5% of the world's population lives on less than $2.15 per day. Today, approximately 60% of United Nations Member States have abolished the death penalty, twice as many as in 1941.

When a State commits to protecting a right, this can take many forms. Protecting and respecting the right to life means prohibiting the death penalty, but also combating domestic violence and infant mortality. The right to life also means taking measures to increase life expectancy by eliminating malnutrition and epidemics as well as preventing risks in the workplace.

HUMAN RIGHTS HELP MAINTAIN PEACE

In the aftermath of the Second World War, which claimed 55 million lives, including 30 million civilians, ensuring peace seems more necessary than ever. The challenge of ensuring that women, men and children can live in a world 'where human beings shall be free from fear and want' takes on its full meaning. This is what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, calls for.

A true landmark for the respect for and protection of human rights, the Declaration lays the groundwork for a peaceful world where women, men and children around the world can live free and equal in dignity and rights.

‘

SOME HUMAN RIGHTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS

’

COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.2



'Freedom of movement. What about you?'
'Freedom of expression.'
'They're equally important.'

What would the right to life be without the right to health and a healthy environment? What would freedom of opinion be without the right to education? All rights are interdependent. Just because some rights were enacted before others, it does not mean they are more important.

ALL INDIVISIBLE AND INTERDEPENDENT

Human rights impact different aspects of our lives. There is still a tendency to believe that the 'main' human rights refer only to civil and political rights such as access to justice, the right to life, etc. However, these rights cannot exist without economic, social and cultural rights.

In situations of poverty and extreme poverty, human beings find it difficult to enjoy some of their rights. A person who is homeless, or who lives on the streets or in informal housing, will find it difficult to exercise their right to vote, since this requires being registered on an electoral roll which implies having an address. Similarly, a person who cannot read or write will find it difficult to look for work (right to work), access social networks (right to information and leisure), access cultural heritage (right to cultural life), read a drug package insert (right to health) or read the programmes of the various political parties at election time (right to vote).

§.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE RIGHT TO ABORTION

Several States prohibit abortion or impose numerous restrictions. According to the World Health Organisation, each year, 4.7% to 13.2% of maternal deaths can be attributed to unsafe abortion. Violating the right to abortion has consequences for many other human rights, such as the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the right to life.

DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF RIGHTS

It is customary to group human rights into different categories. Civil and political rights are primarily intended to protect all individuals from the risk of arbitrariness and oppressive power, and are, in part, formulated as 'freedoms of...'. Another category of human rights is economic, social and cultural rights, which aim to guarantee the needs of the population (the right to education, health, decent work and housing). These two categories of rights emerged as people's aspirations evolved towards greater freedom, equality and solidarity.

With the arrival in the 1970s of new aspirations linked to decolonisation and the environmental and climate crisis, new rights emerged: the right to development, to peace and to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. Today, artificial intelligence, in particular, poses new challenges regarding human rights..

All these rights are complementary and indivisible.

§.

THE RIGHT TO SCIENCE

Despite its recognition in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits remains a somewhat unknown right. Only 0.2% of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review on freedom of expression relate to scientific freedom. There is still much to be done.

‘

HUMAN RIGHTS APPLY DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON THE PERSON

’

COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.3



'My address? Earth, of course!'
'Well, we're all from the same place in the end, aren't we?'

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights mentions the existence of a 'human family' and stipulates that everyone should have equal access to their rights. However, many people highlight differences (skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, poverty, etc.) to deny certain individuals access to their rights.

WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

Discrimination is treating someone differently and less favourably because of one of their characteristics. Discrimination does not always involve insults or physical violence, but it always prevents a person from accessing their rights. It can be perpetrated by an individual, a company or even a state. In many countries, discrimination is prohibited by law.

Being refused a rental property because you are a migrant or refugee, not being selected for a job interview because you belong to a minority group, being paid less because you are a woman, or being dismissed because of your religious beliefs. These are just a few examples of discrimination.

TAKING DIFFERENCES INTO ACCOUNT

In order for equal rights to be a reality for all, adjustments are sometimes necessary. To enable a person with a disability to move around a city or access certain services, modifications are required. These measures can also benefit other groups: widening pavements for wheelchairs also helps families to move around safely. Combating discrimination also requires measures to support marginalised groups. For example, quotas help to ensure better representation of women in decision-making positions (in businesses, the justice system, the police, political institutions, universities, etc.).

THE DANGER OF PREJUDICE

Often, a lack of knowledge about 'the Other' fuels prejudices and preconceived notions that lead to discrimination. The difficulty in understanding or accepting the differences of those around us leads to misunderstandings, rejection, and even violence, which sometimes goes so far as to violate their fundamental rights. Prejudices such as considering a group of people to be 'lazy', 'dirty' or 'useless' create the conditions for their exclusion and sometimes even expose them to acts of violence. Sociological studies show that awareness of differences and exchanges with others help to eradicate prejudice. Sharing, discovering and discussing religion, cultural practices, family organisation, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity leads to a better understanding of differences.

§.

DISABILITY AND INEQUALITIES

Approximately 16% of the world's population has some form of disability, whether it is visible or not (deafness, cognitive difficulties, etc.), temporary or permanent. However, inequalities related to disability remain widespread: one third of people with disabilities who are of working age are employed (50% less than people without disabilities).

§.

GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND DISCRIMINATION

In nearly 64 countries, discriminatory laws penalise homosexual relationships, meaning that people can be imprisoned, tortured or even sentenced to death because of their sexual orientation. In 2020, conversion therapies, practices based on the belief that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity can be 'corrected', were still in use in 68 countries.

‘HUMAN RIGHTS IS A UNIVERSAL STANDARD. IT IS A COMPONENT OF EVERY RELIGION AND EVERY CIVILIZATION.’

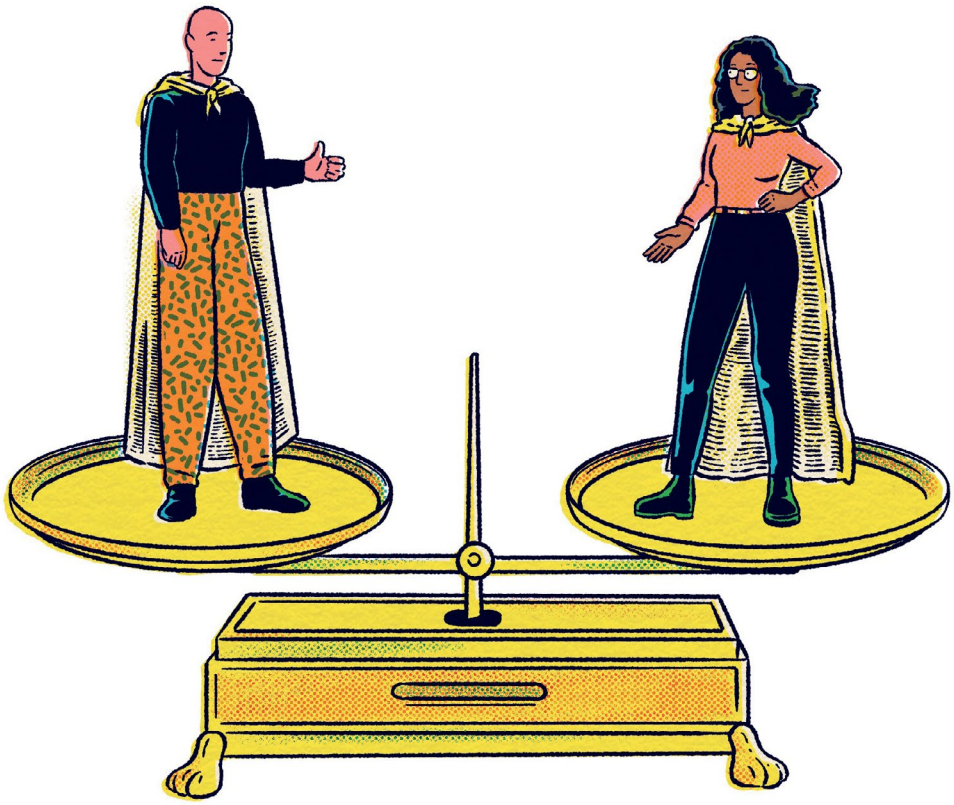
Shirin Ebadi,
2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner

‘

WOMEN DO NOT HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS MEN

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.4



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts in its preamble that 'men and women have equal rights' However, inequality, discrimination and violence against girls and women persist throughout the world.

STILL TOO MANY INEQUALITIES

Gender equality is far from being achieved. Two-thirds of illiterate adults worldwide are women. One in ten women lives in extreme poverty, and in conflict zones, they are 7.7 times more likely to be affected. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 800 women die every day during pregnancy or childbirth due to lack of care. Women are also more likely to be victims of psychological, physical or sexual violence. Every day, 140 women are killed by their partner or a member of their family, despite the enactment of laws against domestic violence in at least 155 countries. In 2022, women and girls accounted for 61% of identified victims of human trafficking. In politics, to date, women hold the highest political positions in only 27 out of nearly 200 countries.

These inequalities, in all areas of life, are the manifestation of sexism on which the functioning of our societies is based. Stereotypes associated with girls (sensitivity, fragility, caring) and boys (power, strength, courage) are still conveyed by the media, artistic works, educational materials and toys. They have an impact on the lives of young people who internalise this culture of inequality: women are less likely than men to pursue careers in science, they hold fewer positions of responsibility, and their careers are very often held back by maternity leave.

§.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day, made official by the UN in 1977, is celebrated every year on 8 March. It is an opportunity to highlight the efforts being made to respect women's rights and to guarantee their participation in the political and economic process (in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

WOMEN ARE TAKING ACTION

Thanks to their mobilisation, women have brought about changes in laws and practices, for example by securing women's right to vote, access to abortion, access to property and, more recently, in a few countries, free access to sanitary protection.

In early 2017, the #MeToo movement encouraged women to speak out on social media to denounce the sexual violence they have suffered from. In some countries, this movement has also helped to break the silence on issues that particularly affect women, such as the importance of consent in sexual relationships and the time spent managing the household and caring for children and the elderly. However, these rights are never guaranteed: for example, globally, the number of women and girls intentionally killed reached a record high in 2022, with nearly 89,000 murders, the highest figure in the last 20 years.

§.

WOMEN IN POWER

Although women still find it difficult to attain the highest political offices, the situation is improving. In 1966, Indira Gandhi became India's first female Prime Minister. From 1969 to 1974, Golda Meir was Prime Minister of Israel. In 1980, Iceland's Vigdis Finnbogadottir became the first woman to be elected president of a country. She was re-elected three times. In 1988, Benazir Bhutto was appointed Prime Minister of Pakistan.

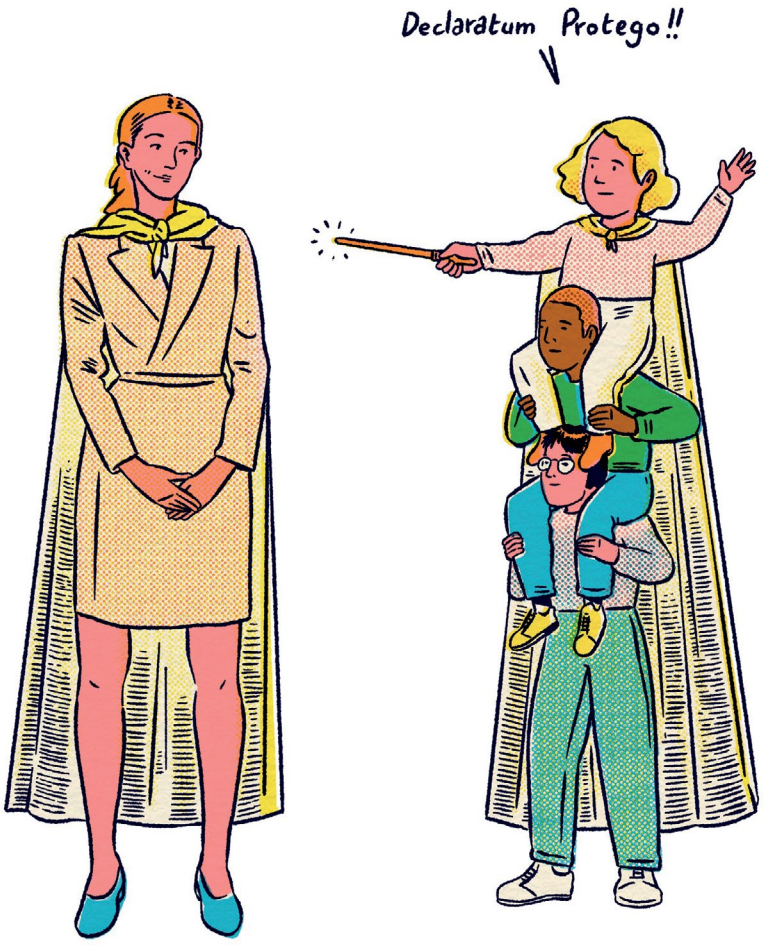
In 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected President of Liberia. In 2019, at the age of 34, Finland's Sanna Marin became the youngest leader of a country. In 2020, Jacinda Ardern was re-elected as Prime Minister of New Zealand. In 2021, Estonia became the first country in the world to be led by two women, at the head of state and government, and in Tanzania, Samia Suluhu Hassan became president. In 2024, Mexico elected its first female president, Claudia Sheinbaum.

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HUMAN RIGHTS ARE FOR ADULTS

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.5



'Declaratum Protego'

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies to everyone, regardless of age. However, because they are considered more vulnerable than adults, children have specific rights enshrined in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

In order to enable every child to develop physically and intellectually, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that every child (under the age of 18) has the right to an identity, to be cared for, to go to school, and to be protected from all forms of discrimination, abuse and violence.

Although working under the age of 16 is prohibited in many countries, forms of exploitation persist. These include sexual exploitation and forced labour, which is akin to modern slavery. In various parts of the world, girls are victims of forced marriage (according to UNICEF, more than 20 minors are married every minute) or sexual mutilation, including female genital mutilation (more than 4 million girls a year are threatened by these practices, according to the WHO). Many children are victims of bullying at school, which can have consequences for their mental and physical health, their education and their family and social life.

§.

STOP CHILD LABOUR

According to estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO), at the beginning of 2020, nearly one in ten children worldwide was working. Child labor is a violation of human rights. It deprives children of their fundamental rights to education, rest, and a protected childhood. Forced to work in often dangerous and exhausting conditions, these children are exposed to exploitation, violence, and long-term poverty. By preventing them from fully developing, child labor also jeopardizes their future and that of society as a whole.

YOUNG PEOPLE DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS

You do not have to be an adult to take action. Young people defend their rights and those of others through various actions: setting up associations, launching online petitions, organising demonstrations, etc. Mohammad Al Jounde is a very good example of this. At the age of 12, he built a school for displaced Syrian children living in a refugee camp on the Lebanese-Syrian border. In recognition of his work in defence of children's rights, he was awarded the International Children's Peace Prize. During the award ceremony, Mohamad Al Jounde said: 'Their future and that of Syria depend on their education. Let's help them prove their worth.' Today, his school welcomes nearly 200 refugee children every day. Some are taking action in other ways. For example, they are speaking out at major international forums. UNICEF's young ambassadors also meet with politicians in their countries and share their recommendations for a better world.

§.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Human rights education enables everyone to know, practise, claim and defend their rights. It promotes participation in decision-making and peaceful conflict resolution and encourages empathy, inclusion and non-discrimination. Human rights education is part of school curricula, popular education activities and professional training. It is intended for everyone, throughout their lives.

‘

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE A WESTERN INVENTION

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.6



'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights tailored for you!'

'Who can deny that we share the same horror of violence? Who can deny that we seek to live free from fear, torture and discrimination? Who can deny that we seek to express ourselves freely and achieve the goals we have set for ourselves?' Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

A COLLECTIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORT

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted by a committee of 18 members from various political, cultural and religious backgrounds. Alongside Eleanor Roosevelt, its chair, were René Cassin of France, Charles Malik of Lebanon, Emile Saint-Lot of Haiti, Hernan Santa Cruz of Chile, and Peng Chung Chang of China.

Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic and Lakshmi Menon of India contributed to the inclusion of equality '*between women and men*' in the preamble. In Article 1, Indian delegate Hansa Mehta succeeded in changing '*All men...*' to '*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*'. Without these women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would not be truly universal.

UNIVERSAL RIGHTS

Human rights are linked to the individual. They respond to the common aspiration of every person to be taken into account, respected and protected, regardless of status, socio-economic context, culture, sexual identity, origins or opinions. They apply at all times and in all places. Human rights must be protected and respected for the entire human family. Any violation of these rights jeopardises our common aspiration to live in dignity and peace, '*free from fear and want*'.

CHALLENGING UNIVERSALITY

The universality, interdependence and indivisibility of fundamental rights and the values that underpin them are contested by certain States or by certain schools of thought that seek to reduce their scope.

Several arguments are put forward:

- human rights are seen as a mark of Western imperialism, or even a manifestation of neo-colonialism, aimed at imposing its ideology and idea of development.
- human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights give priority to the rights of the individual over the rights of the community;
- human rights can only be realised once a certain level of economic development has been achieved.

Despite these objections, all United Nations Member States have accepted the same principles set out in the Declaration. The most striking example is the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by 197 countries.

§

ORIGINS

Throughout history and across the globe, attempts have been made to protect human rights in various forms. In Mesopotamia, around 1750 BC, the Code of Hammurabi sought to establish certain rules for living in society. In the 12th century, in a territory corresponding approximately to in present-day Mali, the Manden Charter proclaimed social peace in diversity, the inviolability of the human person, education, the integrity of the homeland, food security, the abolition of slavery (through raids) and freedom of expression and enterprise.

‘PEACE DOES NOT MEAN JUST PUTTING AN END TO VIOLENCE OR TO WAR, BUT TO ALL OTHER FACTORS

THAT THREATEN PEACE, SUCH AS DISCRIMINATION, SUCH AS INEQUALITY, POVERTY.’

Aung San Suu Kyi,
1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner

‘

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT BINDING ON ANYONE

’

COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.7



'Before you sign, just remember: you are agreeing to every word!'

Adopted on 10 December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines a 'common ideal to be achieved' for all countries that recognise it. These countries then commit to doing everything in their power to ensure that human rights are upheld within their borders.

A DECLARATION WITH LEGAL EFFECTS

In international law, a declaration is not legally binding. However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a very special status, as it has become a reference and a basis for the drafting of numerous binding legal texts.

At the national level, a large number of constitutions refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thus considering that the principles of the Declaration should guide the functioning of the State.

At the regional level, the Declaration has inspired various texts: the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man in 1948, supplemented in 1969 by the American Convention on Human Rights; the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in 1950; the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1981; the Asian Charter on Human Rights in 1986; and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam in 1990.

At the international level, various treaties and conventions are based on the articles of the Declaration (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the fight against discrimination against women). The Declaration also structures the activities of many international bodies*.

*Find out more about these international bodies on page 74.

A COMMITMENT BETWEEN STATES

UN Member States are committed to respecting human rights. To this end, they have created councils composed of independent experts who periodically monitor each country's compliance with its international commitments. In addition, the United Nations organises a 'Universal Periodic Review'. This exercise involves Member States evaluating each other based on information collected from various sources and making recommendations to encourage respect for and the development of human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is also often used by NGOs and civil society as the basis for their human rights advocacy strategies.

§.

A COMMITMENT BY 'ALL PEOPLES AND ALL NATIONS'

In its preamble, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights specifies that it is addressed to 'all peoples and all nations…' but what does this really mean? In 1948, forty-three countries voted in favour of adopting the Declaration. Today, the United Nations counts 193 Member States out of the 324 countries in the world. These States must enforce the fundamental rights of the people living on their territory. Although the Declaration is not universally accepted around the world, it has now been translated into nearly 600 languages, enabling the majority of human beings to fight for their fundamental rights.

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FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ARE ONLY THE CONCERN OF THE STATE

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.8



'Vigilance...'
'...is the mother...'
'...of wisdom'
'Woof!'

Since the 17th century, the idea that human beings are born with natural rights that the state must guarantee, has become widely accepted. The protection of human rights is also the responsibility of associations, trade unions, businesses and the responsibility of each individual.

THE COMMITMENT OF THE STATE

By becoming members of the United Nations, States commit to promoting universal respect for human rights. The State has a responsibility to develop rules and enable all people to enjoy their rights.

The State must organise public services, including the justice system, law enforcement, infrastructure and transport (right to freedom of movement), education (right to education) and health (right to health).

To ensure that all these services function properly, the State acts at all levels – national, regional and local – and mobilises a wide range of professionals (judges, police officers, teachers, ministers, prefects, mayors, etc.). It must also commit to protecting citizens from abuses that may be committed by its agents.

The State also has a responsibility to preserve and expand civic space, i.e. to allow associations, trade unions, businesses, journalists, human rights defenders and individuals to inform, meet and share their opinions, thereby contributing to the development of the policies and rules that govern our daily lives.

Beyond protecting their citizens, States must also protect the rights of indigenous peoples and refugees.

IT'S UP TO EVERYONE TO BE AWARE

Non-governmental organisations work to end human rights violations committed by one or more States or by companies. For example, they can take action against state violence such as torture or the death penalty, or promote access to rights and fair justice for the most vulnerable.

The protection of human rights is also the responsibility of each individual. Being informed and knowing your rights enables you to identify and report violations such as abusive identity checks, harassment at work or child exploitation. It is also possible to get involved through your consumer choices, by paying attention to the conditions under which products are manufactured, where they come from and what they contain.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility to protect human rights also lies with businesses, which are increasingly taking up this issue. Some are committing themselves to changing their practices and better respecting human rights and the environment. At the same time, governments are creating new rules to compel businesses to do the same.

§.

RANA PLAZA

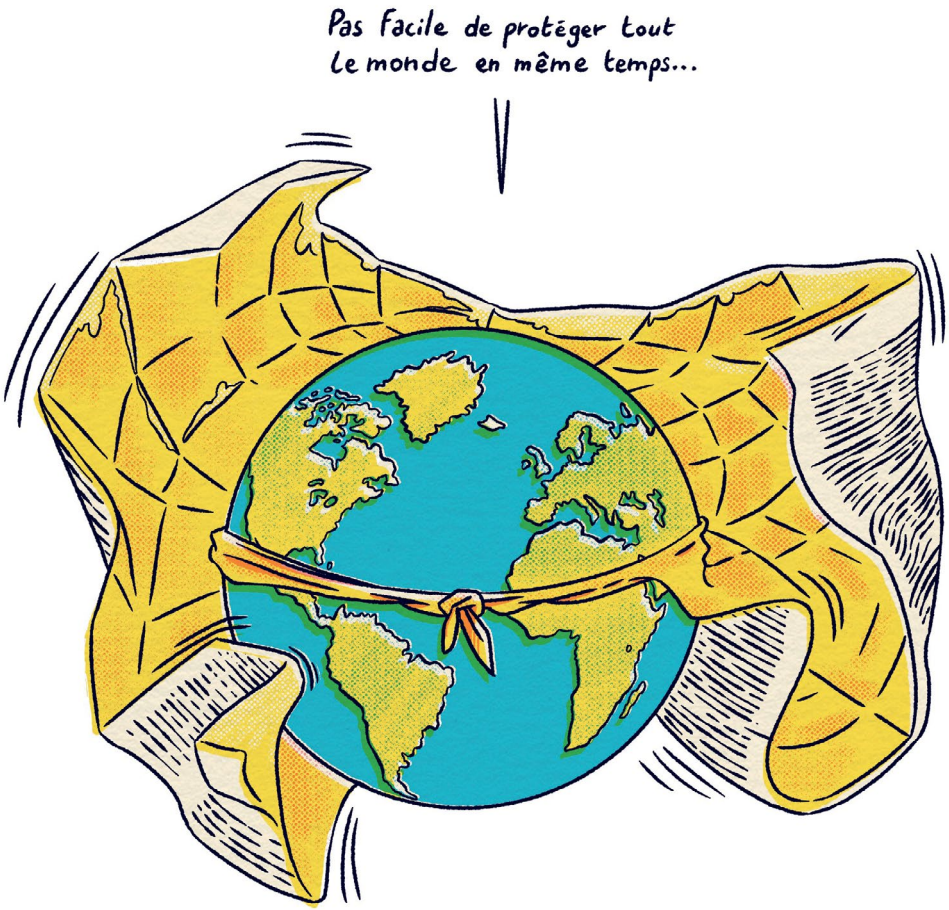
The Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013 marked a turning point in corporate responsibility when the collapse of a building housing garment factories for major international brands killed nearly 1,130 people working in appalling conditions.

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‘HERE’ WE DON’T HAVE TO FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.9



'It's not easy to protect everyone at the same time...'

Today, some people believe that their country is not developed enough to concern itself with such a 'luxury'. Others consider that the country in which they live is already developed and that the ideal of human rights has already been achieved there. Regardless of the level of development of the place where we live, the fight for human rights is a daily struggle.

AN IDEAL TO BE ACHIEVED

Human rights concern all people, regardless of the context in which they live. We cannot think in terms of 'rich countries' and 'poor countries' because a country can be exemplary in one area while falling short in another. Indeed, violations of these rights can concern respect for fundamental freedoms as well as material living conditions or human dignity.

The Declaration refers to the '*human family*' in order to encourage solidarity and bring all human beings together around common goals such as '*maintaining peace*' in the world. '*Fraternity*' between people is just as important. Human rights are embedded in our daily lives, and we all have a role to play. Inviting a homeless person to lunch or defending a friend who is being discriminated against is a way of committing to fundamental rights.

The Declaration defines human rights as a '*common ideal to be achieved by all peoples and nations*', reminding us that, regardless of standard of living, political context or any other consideration, we must all uphold human rights.

STAY VIGILANT

Sometimes human rights backslide. For example, several countries or territories have chosen to ban voluntary termination of pregnancy (abortion) when it was previously legal. The fight for human rights is still ongoing, both to advance them and to prevent any form of regression.

Crises are often used as a pretext to call rights into question. The Covid-19 health crisis has had a major impact on human rights. While governments have restricted freedom of movement to protect everyone's health, several countries have used the health crisis as a pretext to restrict citizens' fundamental rights, such as the freedom to protest. The health crisis has also contributed to a significant worsening of inequalities between people living in the same country, as well as between women and men.

Human rights are a precious but fragile commodity and can easily be undermined, even in democracies, economically developed countries or countries at peace. In some cases, conflicts between populations have even led to genocide. It is our duty to remain vigilant and to raise our voices to denounce human rights violations around the world.

‘IF WE THINK ABOUT THE RIGHT TO LIFE, ARE WE NOT WITHIN OUR RIGHT TO SAY THAT IT INCLUDES NOT ONLY THE RIGHT TO NOT BE KILLED, BUT ALSO THE RIGHT TO WORK,

AND TO RECEIVE FOOD, SHELTER, CLOTHING AND CARE?’

René Cassin,
1968 Nobel Peace Prize winner

‘

IN TIMES OF WAR, THERE IS NO NEED TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.10



It is wrong to think that human rights are 'suspended' during a war or armed conflict. Furthermore, a set of rules – known as international humanitarian law – has been created to limit the effects of armed conflicts due to their impact on human dignity.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

International humanitarian law (IHL) applies only in cases of armed conflict. These conflicts may pit States against each other, or States against independent armed groups, or armed groups against each other. IHL is based on international agreements signed by a large number of States, specifying their duties and rights in the event of a war: the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

International humanitarian law aims to regulate the means and methods by which armed conflict is conducted. The use of certain weapons, such as anti-personnel mines or chemical and biological weapons, is prohibited. Certain principles also govern the conduct of hostilities, such as the principle of distinguishing between combatants and civilians. Furthermore, during armed conflict, IHL protects persons and property such as the wounded, sick, shipwrecked, prisoners of war and detainees, or more broadly, civilians and civilian property. For example, detainees must not be subjected to torture or other cruel or degrading treatment, they must be treated with dignity and, in particular, they must be able to receive news from their families and benefit from judicial guarantees.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Unlike IHL, human rights apply both in times of peace and in times of armed conflict. IHL and human rights have many points in common, such as the protection of human dignity, life and health, and the prohibition of discrimination. There are also rules for judging the most serious crimes, particularly war crimes. These two sets of rules pursue different objectives, however: IHL focuses more specifically on the conduct of hostilities during armed conflict while human rights concern all rights inherent to human beings, in all circumstances.

§

M.I.A., FROM REFUGEE TO INTERNATIONAL MUSIC STAR

Some people are forced to flee their country because of war or a situation where they risk persecution on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and seek refuge in another country. The 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines the term 'refugee' and sets out their rights, as well as the legal obligations of States to ensure their protection. The famous singer M.I.A., born Mathangi Arulpragasam, had to flee Sri Lanka with her family when civil war broke out in the 1980s. Through her songs and a documentary, she recounted the difficulties faced by refugees, the discrimination they suffer and, above all, the desire for freedom that drives people into exile.

‘

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION HAS NO LIMITS

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.11



Can we say whatever we may think? Is all freedom infinite? While we can think whatever we want at any time, we cannot say everything. Nevertheless, freedom of thought and expression are fundamental freedoms for human beings and for democracies.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, A PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY...

Freedom of expression allows individuals to exchange ideas on all subjects, to convince others or to be convinced themselves. It allows citizens to make their opinions known to leaders, to express their criticisms and to claim their rights. Freedom of expression is closely linked to freedom of opinion and freedom of information.

Freedom of expression is a pillar of democracy, and is essential to building an open, tolerant and pluralistic society. It prevents the domination of a single way of thinking or of a particular social group (men over women, the rich over the poor, believers over atheists, etc.). This freedom gives meaning to the democratic process.

...IS NOT WITHOUT LIMITS

While freedom of opinion enjoys absolute protection, freedom of expression is not unlimited. The limits set by international law are respect for others (no racist, misogynistic, LGBTphobic, xenophobic, ableist comments, etc.) and respect for state secrets.

In our daily lives, freedom of expression is often governed by rules of politeness, particularly to allow for calm and democratic debate. For example, in class, students cannot all speak at the same time.

THE DIGITAL CHALLENGE

The internet has become an essential tool for enjoying freedom of expression and information.

But, as in real life, not everything is possible or permitted on the internet, and everything we do or say can be traced. Certain behaviours, such as online harassment, are dangerous for those who suffer them, for their mental health, and can even put their lives at risk.

To prevent the internet from becoming a lawless zone, more and more countries are passing laws to better protect their citizens. The platforms themselves are working to remove hurtful and aggressive content and to raise awareness among users. And while it may seem like you are anonymous online, most authors of malicious posts can be tracked down and prosecuted.

§.

JOURNALISTS IN DANGER!

The number of journalists imprisoned around the world has never been higher. In 2024, there were 550 journalists and media workers, including 77 women. In addition, 55 journalists lost their lives in 2024, including 4 out of 10 journalists in countries considered to be at peace. Finally, 55 journalists are being held hostage and 95 are missing.

§.

PRESS FREEDOM

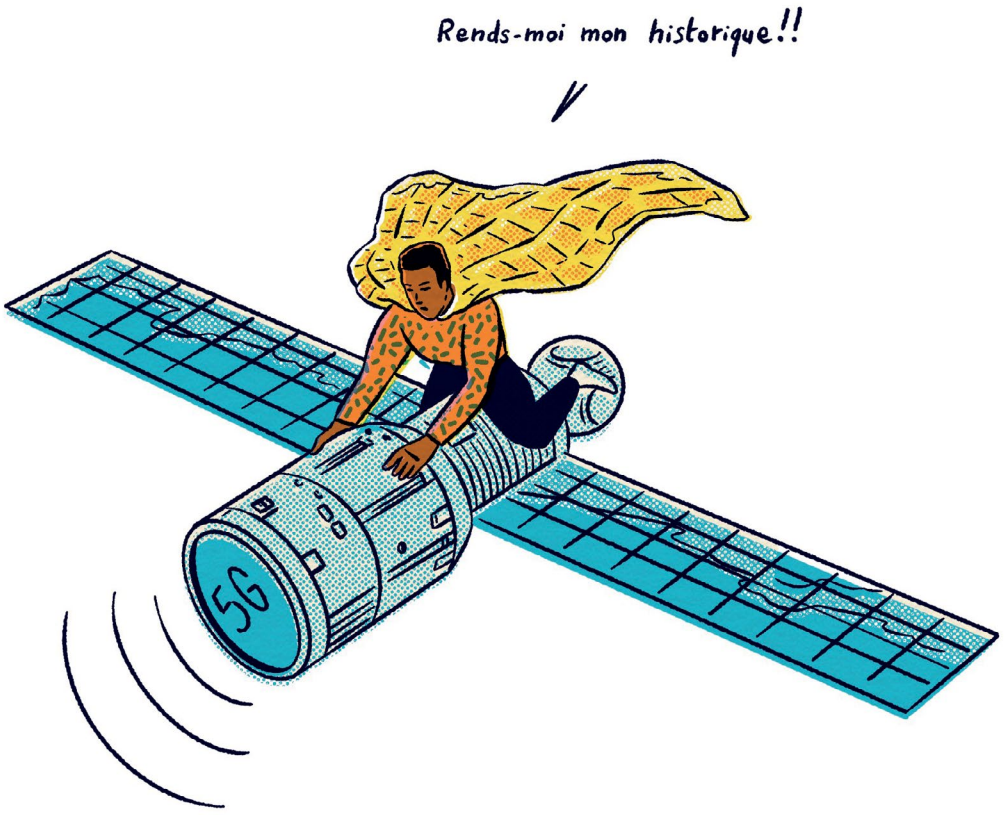
Every third of May is World Press Freedom Day, an opportunity to remember that press freedom is the foundation of democracy, freedom of expression and human rights. Without this independence, we would not have access to neutral and comprehensive information, leaders would be able to influence the choices of populations, and freedom of opinion would be curtailed.

‘

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ALWAYS PROMOTES FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.12



'Give me back my browsing history!!'

Whether you're looking for information, studying, communicating with friends or entertaining yourself, the Internet offers many advantages. However, the Internet also carries risks (fake news, cyberbullying, personal data theft, etc.). The digital sphere is a public place and, just like in real life, internet users have rights but also responsibilities.

PRIVACY ALERT!

Imagine this: you meet a stranger on the street and you give them your age, your phone number or your address. Does that seem normal to you? No! Yet that is what we do when we connect ourselves to the Internet. The problem is that this personal data can then be used and sold to companies to target us with advertising. Governments, whether democratic or not, can use it to spy on their citizens. What's more, the Internet stores everything we post.

Today, some NGOs are calling for the adoption of a Declaration of Fundamental Digital Rights, Article 2 of which would state that '*Everyone has the right to digital privacy*', an idea that is gaining ground...

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Since 2016, access to the Internet has been considered a human right by the UN, as it is a major lever for social and economic integration. However, in 2024, it was estimated that one third of the world's population was still not connected to the Internet. Among these people, 37% live in South Asia and 33% in Africa.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In recent years, systems using artificial intelligence (AI) have experienced rapid growth and are revolutionising the digital world (access to information, education, creativity, etc.). However, they present numerous risks to human rights. For example, AI systems can lead to discrimination and reinforce stigmatisation when used in selection processes for jobs or education, or when used for surveillance.

To mitigate this risk, UNESCO Member States adopted the *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* in 2021, which establishes standards and guidelines for action to ensure that AI develops in a manner that respects human rights, the environment and cultural diversity.

§.

MOBILISING THROUGH THE INTERNET

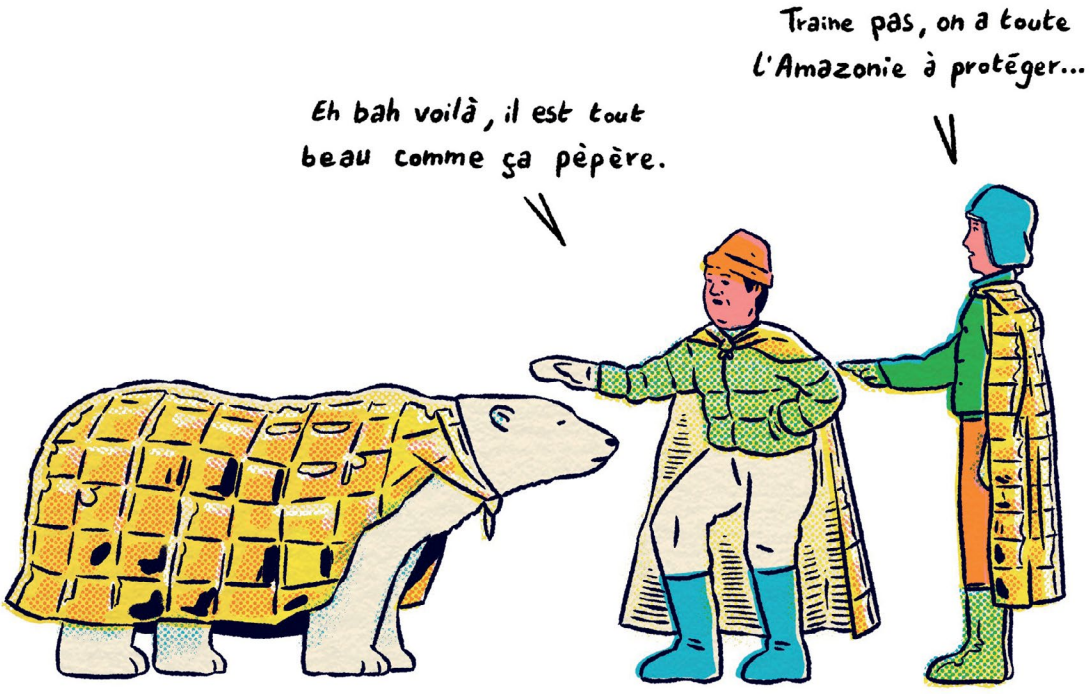
The internet is a powerful tool for mobilising millions of people around the world in real time (petitions, appeals for donations, etc.) around common causes (climate, #MeToo, Black Lives Matter). However, based on misinformation or motivated by malicious intentions (controlling the population, stigmatising certain groups), the Internet can also pose a threat to people's safety and respect for their rights.

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PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

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COMMON MISCONCEPTION NO.13



'There you go, he looks great like that—nice and chill.'
'We can't take all day, we've got the Amazon to protect as well.'

When the place where we live is polluted or degraded, we are often in poor health. It is also more difficult to find decent housing, eat well or even travel to school. It is therefore unthinkable to imagine human rights without taking into account the environment that allows human beings to live.

LIVING IN A SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT IS A RIGHT

For human rights to be a reality, people must live in a favourable environment. Today, we are facing a triple global crisis: global warming, pollution and resource depletion, and biodiversity loss. This crisis is affecting our lives through rising sea levels, population displacement and agricultural production, which is impacting the food supply in certain regions. People in less developed countries suffer more from the consequences of global warming than those in developed countries, even though developed countries are the most responsible for it.

Since the Stockholm Conference in 1972, the link between economic growth, globalisation, pollution of the planet and the well-being of populations has been recognised by all States. Their leaders meet every year to take stock of the state of the planet and promote sustainable development at the 'Conferences of the Parties' (COP).

In response to climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, on 28 July 2022 the UN General Assembly adopted a historic resolution declaring that access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a universal human right.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

More and more citizens and NGOs are bringing lawsuits at national and international level on the basis of human rights. Their aim is to force companies and States to respect and protect the environment. Some citizen initiatives have even succeeded in having states condemned for climate inaction. In this context, the European Court of Human Rights recognised in 2024 that climate change posed a serious threat to the enjoyment of human rights and that the state should provide effective protection against its adverse effects on life, health, well-being and quality of life. The recognition of the term 'ecocide', which refers to the 'genocide' of natural environments, represents a real challenge.

Concerned about their future, young people around the world are also taking action. For example, 27 students from the University of the South Pacific launched World's Youth for Climate Justice. This global campaign led by young people has succeeded in bringing the issue of climate change, human rights and the obligations of States to protect the rights of current and future generations before the International Court of Justice.

§.

SHE SAID

'Some say I should be in school, but why study for a future that may not exist (...) How dare you? You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words,' said Greta Thunberg at the opening of the World Climate Conference (COP24) in 2019. At the UN headquarters in New York, the Swedish teenager addressed world leaders to denounce their weak and ineffective climate policies.

§.

THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

For a long time, the law has focused on protecting human beings in the present. Today, the rights of future generations are developing: it is a question of systematically taking into account the impact of our actions on future generations. The Declaration adopted in September 2024 as part of the Pact for the Future marks a decisive turning point, committing UN Member States for the first time to preserving the interests of future generations.

‘I RAISE UP MY VOICE NOT SO THAT I CAN SHOUT, BUT SO THAT THOSE WITHOUT A VOICE CAN BE HEARD. THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS: THEIR RIGHT TO LIVE IN PEACE.

THEIR RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY. THEIR RIGHT TO EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY. THEIR RIGHT TO BE EDUCATED.’

Malala Yousafzai,
2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner

THEY DEFEND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS...

... THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The United Nations system is composed of the United Nations Organisation and numerous programmes, funds and specialised agencies. Together, they work to maintain peace and international security, and protect human rights.

UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation has its headquarters in Paris. Human rights are at the heart of the institution's mandate and guide all its activities to promote education, culture, science and communication around the world.
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund, based in New York, aims to improve the situation of children worldwide and promote the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. This organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965.

OHCDH	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is based in Geneva. It is the main United Nations entity dealing with human rights. Its purpose is to promote, monitor and provide information on compliance with international human rights law around the world.
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a UN organisation based in Geneva. Its mission is to protect refugees and ensure they have acceptable living conditions. This organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954 and 1981.
WHO	The World Health Organisation is a specialised agency of the UN responsible for public health. Based in Geneva, its objective is to improve the health and well-being of people around the world.
ILO	The International Labour Organisation is based in Geneva. It promotes the improvement of working conditions throughout the world. This organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.
UN WOMAN	UN Women is a United Nations agency founded in 2010 and based in New York to '*promote gender equality and empower women everywhere*'.

... ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

European Court of Human Rights	Based in Strasbourg, its role is to ensure that signatory States comply with the European Convention on Human Rights. Since its creation in 1950, it can be called upon by a State, an individual, an NGO or a group of people who claim to be victims of a violation.
Inter-American Court of Human Rights	This Court was established in 1979 by the Organisation of American States (OAS). It aims to ensure respect for human rights on the continent. It is based in San José and is involved in the application of the American Convention on Human Rights. At the same time, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) promotes human rights by issuing recommendations to States and bringing cases before the Court.
African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights	This Court was established in 1998 following the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights by the African Union (AU) and is based in Arusha, Tanzania. It aims to ensure respect for human rights in Africa, promote them and ensure the self-determination of the peoples of the continent. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights participates in this mission, in particular by periodically monitoring the human rights commitments of signatory States.

Arab Committee for Human Rights	The Committee was established in 2009 in Cairo and is based on the Arab Charter on Human Rights. It reviews reports produced by signatory states on their human rights performance. At present, the Committee has no case law or individual complaint mechanism.
Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations	Established in Cha-Am Hua Hin in 2009, its role is to ensure cooperation in promoting the human rights defined in the ASEAN Charter. The Commission does not serve as a mechanism for implementing the Charter.

... NGOS REPRESENTING CIVIL SOCIETY

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are not part of any State or international institution and are made up of members of civil society. There are tens of thousands of them working around the world to defend human rights. Often specialised, they are active in the medical, food, legal, educational and environmental fields, and in all areas that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They also intervene in emergency situations in the event of humanitarian disasters. Whether small or international in scope, NGOs frequently use the media to mobilise public opinion in favour of the causes they defend.

AMONG THE LATEST NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNERS, SEVERAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Shirin Ebadi	An Iranian lawyer, who defends dissidents and human rights activists campaigning for women's and children's rights. In 2003, she became the first Iranian woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.
Wangari Muta Maathai	Nicknamed '*the mother of trees*', she founded the Green Belt Movement to reforest her country, Kenya, which was threatened by deforestation. She believes that improving the living conditions of women in rural areas and protecting nature are linked. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.
Liu Xiaobo	A Chinese writer, who campaigns for human rights and democracy. In 2009, he was accused of subversion of state power and sentenced to 11 years in prison. In 2010, Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for '*his long and non-violent struggle for human rights in China*', but he was not allowed to travel to Oslo, Norway, to receive it.
Malala Yousafzai	A young Pakistani women's rights activist, who has been committed since childhood to promoting access to education for girls, which has earned her international renown but also fierce criticism and even hateful comments and acts in her own country. In 2014, at the age of 17, she became the youngest human rights defender to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (shared with Indian Kailash Satyarthi, who fights against child trafficking and exploitation).
Denis Mukwege	Nicknamed '*the man who mends women*', this gynaecologist has been treating women victims of genital mutilation and sexual violence in his clinic in the Democratic Republic of Congo for more than twenty years. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 alongside Yazidi activist Nadia Murad for his efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Whereas it is essential to encourage 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, 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 realisation of this commitment.

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 individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive, through teaching and education, to develop respect for these rights and freedoms and to secure, by progressive measures of national and international character, their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the populations of Member States themselves and among the populations 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
1. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, notamment de race, in particular on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
2. 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 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.

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 arbitrarily arrested, detained or exiled.

Article 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of their rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11
1. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which they have had all the guarantees necessary for their defence.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than that which was applicable at the time the criminal offence was committed.

Article 12
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with their or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon their 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 their own, and to return to their country.

Article 14
1. Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries.
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 their nationality nor of the right to change their nationality.

Article 16
1. From the age of marriage, men and women, without any restriction as to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They have equal rights with regard 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 their property.

Article 18
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change their religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

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 their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in their 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.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for their dignity and the free development of their personality, through national effort and international co-operation and, in particular, through the provision of social security services.

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 has the right to equal pay for equal work without any discrimination.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and their 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 join trade unions for the protection of their interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of their family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services; and is entitled to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All 87 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 vocational 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 and all racial or religious groups, as well as the development of United Nations activities for the maintenance of peace.
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 they are 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 realised.

Article 29
1. The individual has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of their 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.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the aims 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 perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

THE FRENCH NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CNCDH)

Created in 1947 at the instigation of René Cassin, Nobel Peace Prize winner, the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) is the national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights. The CNCDH's mission is to advise the public authorities on the respect and protection of human rights and to ensure that France complies with its international commitments.

The CNCDH is a collegial institution composed of 64 members. It acts independently. It has special status with the United Nations, to which it reports on the respect and effectiveness of human rights in France.

The CNCDH also has a mission to educate and raise awareness about human rights; it produces a wide range of educational resources (films, brochures, etc.), organises conferences and seminars, and runs training courses.

THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION (UNESCO)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was born out of the strong conviction that, in order to build lasting peace after two disastrous world wars, peoples must be united through cultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Since its inauguration in 1945, UNESCO has sought to establish peace by promoting international cooperation in education, science and culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

The work of UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector covers a wide range of issues, including: combating economic inequalities in income and opportunities, promoting social inclusion and gender equality. The sector also oversees the youth support programme, the fight against racism and discrimination, the operationalisation of the right to science and the promotion of science ethics. Recent milestones for the sector include the adoption of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017) and the development of the first global instrument to promote ethics in artificial intelligence, adopted by acclamation in 2021 at the UNESCO General Conference.

CNCDH
COMMISSION NATIONALE CONSULTATIVE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
20, Avenue de Ségur | 75007 PARIS
www.cncdh.fr



unesco
Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture
7 Pl. de Fontenoy-Unesco | 75007 PARIS
https://www.unesco.org/en/recommendation-science



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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

HUMAN RIGHTS

CHALLENGING 13 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Today, human rights are being challenged by various movements that question their usefulness, relevance and universality.

Yet, discrimination and acts of violence most often find their roots in prejudices and common misconceptions that people develop because they do not know and understand (well) people who are different.

Convinced of the importance of reaffirming that human rights are the foundation of a democratic and just society, UNESCO and the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) have joined forces to challenge 13 of the most frequently heard and propagated common misconceptions, thereby raising awareness of human rights. This book addresses topics such as the environment, digital technology, children's rights and rights in conflict situations. Through illustrated chapters, each corresponding to a common misconception, readers are invited to take action to promote human rights.

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