

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Still RIGHT after all these years



Question 1

Leaders of the main world powers met between 1942 and 1944 to shape a new organisation. What was this organisation called?

- a. Trócaire
- b. Amnesty International
- c. Red Cross
- d. United Nations

Answer - d. The United Nations (UN) works for peace, for justice, and for equal rights of all human beings. The UN conducts peacekeeping operations, establishes local development projects, promotes environmental sustainability and provides humanitarian aid.

Notes

Trócaire was set up in 1973 to aid the world's poorest and most oppressed people. It is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

For over 40 years Amnesty International has worked towards creating a world where every person enjoys all of the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights standards.

The Red Cross works both in Ireland and worldwide in countries that have been damaged by wars and natural disasters. As well as providing humanitarian assistance, the Red Cross also provides first aid training, a rescue service and a tracing and messaging service.

Question 2

What was the first human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations?

- a. The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- b. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- c. The Declaration on the Right to Development
- d. The Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples

Answer -b. Although the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is not legally binding among States, it is considered a landmark document and a set of human rights principles that everyone should aspire to follow. Membership of the UN represents an implicit acceptance of the UDHR. Although the UDHR began as an initiative of governments it has become a common goal and a recognised benchmark for everyone worldwide.

Notes

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1992. It defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years, unless a national law in a country recognises that a person has reached maturity before 18 years.

The Declaration on the Right to Development was adopted by the United Nations in 1986. The objective of this declaration was to focus on improving the social, economic, political and cultural development of all people.

The Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1959 was followed by the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideas of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples in 1965, and finally the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which was wider-reaching and reflected more contemporary issues.

Question 3

To whom does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights apply?

- a. To people living in prison
- b. To racist people
- c. To migrant workers
- d. To all people

Answer - d. The 30 articles in the UDHR establish the civil, political, social and cultural rights of all people. As stated in the preamble of the UDHR, the declaration is 'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations'. The UDHR was the first international recognition that all human beings have fundamental rights and freedoms and it continues to be a living and relevant document today.

Question 4

How many languages has the Universal Declaration of Human Rights been translated into?

- a. 12
- b. 25
- c. 100
- d. 360

Answer - d. The UDHR holds the Guinness World Record for being the most translated document in the world. During the World Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), a project to have the Declaration translated into as many languages and dialects as possible was developed. There are now more than 360 different language versions.

Question 5

When was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted?

- a. 1989
- b. 1948
- c. 1994
- d. 1961

Answer - b. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10th December 1948.

Notes

In 1989 The United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
In 1994 South Africa held its first free elections following the abolition of apartheid.

In 1961 Amnesty International was founded.

Question 6

Which of the following people worked tirelessly to promote the message and implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights worldwide?

- a. Eleanor Roosevelt
- b. Franklin D Roosevelt
- c. Navanethem Pillay
- d. Eamon de Valera

Answer - a. Eleanor Roosevelt is best known as someone who played an important role in the drafting process of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She was renowned for being a social and political activist and supported of the Civil Rights Movement. At the age of fifteen years she was sent to school in England. The school principal took a special interest in Eleanor and introduced her to various charitable organisations. When Eleanor returned to America she married Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd President of United States of America. As 'First Lady', Eleanor Roosevelt travelled extensively representing the President.

Navanethem Pillay has been the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights since September 2008. A South African national, she was the first woman to start a law practice in her home province of Natal in 1967.

Eamon de Valera was a former Taoiseach and former President of Ireland.

Question 7

In what country was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights initially adopted by the United Nations?

- a. United States
- b. France
- c. China
- d. United Kingdom

Answer - b. It was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, on 10th December 1948, at the Palais de Chaillot, in Paris, France.

Question 8

How many articles does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights contain?

- a. 20
- b. 60
- c. 122
- d. 30

Answer - d. The UDHR contains 30 articles.

Notes

The UDHR does not have a single author. The most significant contributors were René Cassin, a French legal scholar, and John Humphrey, the UN's first director of Human Rights. The initial draft of the UDHR was over 400 pages long. It was negotiated down to 30 articles over a two year period between 1946 and 1948. Before the final draft was voted upon by the General Assembly of the United Nations, over 168 amendments were proposed and debated.

Question 9

When is International Human Rights Day observed?

- a. 17th March
- b. 10th December
- c. 20th June
- d. 27th January

Answer - b. International Human Rights Day is celebrated on 10th December. This is the date, in 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was voted upon by the General Assembly of the United Nations. It was adopted without any dissenting votes, though eight countries abstained at the time (South Africa, the USSR, Byelorussia, Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Saudi Arabia).

Notes

On the 17th March we celebrate the patron saint of Ireland, St. Patrick.

20th June is World Refugee Day. The first World Refugee Day was celebrated across the globe on 20th June 2001.

Holocaust Memorial Day is marked each year on 27th January, in remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides.

Question 10

Which of the following organisations works towards promoting the message of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights worldwide?

- a. Focus Ireland
- b. Amnesty International
- c. Age Action Ireland
- d. Irish Refugee Council

Answer - b. Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. Amnesty International has over 2 million members worldwide, in 150 countries, with 20,000 members in Ireland. They depend on subscriptions and donations from their members and supporters.

Notes

Focus Ireland aims to respond to the needs of people out of home or at risk of becoming homeless by providing a range of services including accommodation. They also lobby for the rights of their target group.

Age Action Ireland is a national organisation on ageing and older people. It promotes better policies for services for older people.

The Irish Refugee Council was set up in 1992. It works to promote the rights of refugees in Ireland. Their vision is of a just, fair and inclusive Irish society where people seeking refuge are welcome and valued.

Question 11

Where does the Human Rights Council of the United Nations meet?

- a. Geneva
- b. New York
- c. Sydney
- d. Tokyo

Answer - a. The Human Rights Council, consisting of 47 member states of the United Nations, meets approximately three times per year at the United Nations Building in Geneva. Under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, every UN member state will have their human rights record reviewed once every four years.

Notes

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is also based in Geneva. It is the principle UN office for promoting and protecting human rights, which it does through research, education and advocacy. Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland was the High Commissioner for Human Rights until 2004. Navanethem Pillay has been the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights since September 2008. A South African national, she was the first woman to start a law practice in her home province of Natal in 1967.

Question 12

Who is a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency?

- a. Victoria Beckham
- b. Colin Farrell
- c. Angelina Jolie
- d. Roy Keane

Answer - c. Angelina Jolie has been a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador since 2001 and has travelled the world with the UNHCR to help raise the profile of refugee issues.

Notes

Victoria Beckham supports the Children in Need Charity.
Colin Farrell supports the Special Olympics.
Roy Keane works with the Irish Guide Dogs Association.

Question 13

Two international covenants were created to ensure that the aspirations of the UDHR became law:

- o The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- o The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

When did these enter into force?

- a. 1982
- b. 1966
- c. 1954
- d. 1974

Answer - b. Both covenants were created in 1966 and entered into force in 1967. Ireland signed both covenants in 1973 but did not ratify them until 1989.

Notes

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, along with their protocols, are referred to as the 'International Bill of Human Rights'.

Question 14

The United Nations set up special tribunals to judge war crimes committed in which two countries?

- a. Ireland and France
- b. Rwanda and former Yugoslavia
- c. Australia and China
- d. Canada and Poland

Answer - b. The Security Council of the United Nations set up two special tribunals, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, specifically to prosecute violations of the customs of war, genocide and crimes against humanity that occurred in those countries.

Notes

Because of the success of these tribunals, international legal experts began to believe that instead of creating ad hoc tribunals for specific cases, there was a need for a permanent international court to try individuals. As a result, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established by the Rome Statute in 2002.

Question 15

List four rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Notes

The students identify any four rights they believe people are entitled to. Examples include: the right to education, the right to vote, the right to an identity, etc.