

THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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***Annotation:** this article examines the key principles of international law regarding human rights, exploring how these principles are codified in international treaties, conventions, and customary law. It provides an overview of the foundations of international human rights law and its impact on global governance, with a particular focus on the role of international organizations, such as the United Nations, in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.*

***Keywords:** international law, human rights, international treaties, United Nations, customary law, global governance, human dignity, civil rights, international conventions.*

International human rights law is a body of legal norms that aim to protect the rights and dignity of individuals across the globe, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. It represents a commitment by the international community to uphold and defend basic human freedoms and ensures that governments and other actors are held accountable for violating these rights. The principles of international law on human rights are grounded in various international agreements and conventions that set out the rights individuals are entitled to and the obligations states must fulfill to protect them.

One of the primary sources of international human rights law is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The UDHR is a foundational document that articulates a broad range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

Although the UDHR itself is not legally binding, it has influenced many subsequent human rights treaties and conventions, making it a crucial reference point for international human rights law. The UDHR is based on the principle of human dignity and the idea that all people, by virtue of their humanity, are entitled to certain fundamental rights that cannot be violated.

Following the UDHR, several key international treaties and conventions have been adopted, solidifying the commitment to human rights. These include the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**, both of which were adopted in 1966. Together, these covenants form the core of international human rights law, with the ICCPR focusing on civil and political rights, such as the right to life, freedom of expression, and protection from torture, and the ICESCR emphasizing economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the right to work, education, and an adequate standard of living.

Another important legal instrument is the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**, which was adopted in 1950 by the Council of Europe. The ECHR established the **European Court of Human Rights**, which serves as a mechanism for individuals to seek justice when their rights are violated by states that are parties to the convention. This regional system of human rights protection has served as a model for other regions, highlighting the importance of both legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms in protecting human rights.

The principles of international human rights law are also reflected in **customary international law**, which consists of practices that are accepted as binding by the international community, even if not codified in formal treaties. Customary law includes principles such as **non-discrimination**, the **right to life**,

freedom from torture, and the prohibition of slavery. These principles have become so widely recognized and accepted that they are considered part of customary international law, obligating all states to respect them, even if they have not ratified specific treaties.

One of the core principles of international human rights law is **universality**. This principle asserts that human rights are inherent to all people, regardless of their nationality, culture, or background. Human rights are universal because they are based on the inherent dignity of the individual, and no person should be denied these rights because of where they live or what their government believes. This universality is further emphasized by the idea of **indivisibility**, which states that all human rights are interconnected and should be protected equally. The violation of one right can often lead to the violation of others, and thus, human rights cannot be selectively applied.

Another fundamental principle is **non-discrimination**. This principle asserts that all individuals should enjoy their human rights without distinction based on race, gender, religion, language, or any other status. Non-discrimination is essential to ensuring that all people are treated equally and that vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and minorities, are not marginalized or subjected to unequal treatment.

States have a primary responsibility for protecting human rights within their own borders, but international law also provides mechanisms for holding states accountable when they fail to meet their obligations. The **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** is one of the key bodies responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The UNHRC monitors

human rights situations, conducts investigations, and makes recommendations to member states on how to improve their human rights practices.

In cases where a state is unwilling or unable to uphold human rights, international law provides the **right of intervention**. This is most notably embodied in the principle of the **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)**, which was adopted by the United Nations in 2005. Under R2P, the international community has the responsibility to intervene, including through military action, when a state fails to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

Despite the robust framework of international human rights law, there are challenges in ensuring its full implementation. Many states have been criticized for violating human rights, and there is often a gap between international human rights standards and their enforcement in practice. The effectiveness of human rights law depends not only on international treaties and conventions but also on the political will of states to comply with these norms. The international community, through both diplomatic pressure and legal action, continues to push for stronger mechanisms to protect human rights and ensure accountability for violations.

In conclusion, the principles of international human rights law represent a global commitment to protecting the dignity and freedoms of individuals everywhere. While there are challenges to the implementation of these principles, the ongoing development of international human rights law continues to shape global governance. Through multilateral cooperation, treaties, customary law, and international bodies like the United Nations, the international community strives to create a world where human rights are respected and upheld for all.

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