

Human Rights:

Background
&
Current Practices

Definition

Respect for individual rights and civil liberties with the understanding that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

~Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 1, 1948.

Historical Background

- 1864 - Geneva Convention.
 - The first agreement that set out rudimentary standards of human decency during war
 - Provided minimal human rights in time of war
 - Provided protection of military medical personnel and for the humane treatment of the wounded.

Historical Background

- 1945 - United Nations Charter. (Article 55)
 - Promote conditions of economic and social progress and development;
 - Solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems...
 - Universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

Historical Background

- 1948 - Universal Declaration Of Human Rights
 - United Nations adopted and proclaimed
 - Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security.
 - Arbitrary Arrest Prohibited.
 - Torture Prohibited
 - Duty to Community

Historical Background

- 1966 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
 - No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.
 - No Cruel, Inhumane Or Degrading Procedures
 - Criminal Interference With Individuals, Family, Home And Mail Prohibited.

Historical Background

- 1975 – Helsinki Accords
 - Representatives of thirty-five nations gathered in Helsinki, Finland, in 1975 for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Final Act of the Conference, sets forth a number of basic human rights.

International Oversight Organizations

- European Court of Human Rights
- Helsinki Watch
- Amnesty International

European Court of Human Rights.

- Composed of a number of judges equal to that of the Contracting States (currently forty one Jan 2003).
- Reviews human rights cases within the EU

Helsinki Watch

A nongovernmental organization (NGO) established in 1978 to monitor and promote the observance of internationally recognized human rights in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the middle east and among the signatories of the Helsinki accords.

Amnesty International.

- An NGO founded in 1961 in Britain
- Active in in more than 140 countries
- Cooperates with other NGOs, the UN, and with regional intergovernmental organizations

Causes Of Human Rights Problems

- Lack of a clearly defined policy on the issue of human rights
- Ignorance of policy at working levels
- Excessive zeal in performing duties
- Hatred of organizations (criminal, ethnic, religious)

Solutions

- Clearly defined policy
- Dissemination of policy information
- **Professionalism**

Benefits

- Good Public relations
- Cooperation of prisoners
- Chances of collecting information increases
- Fewer problems maintaining control

Human Rights

**International Law & Formal Treaties Call
For It**

Laws of Most Countries Require It

Religious Teachings Demand It

Moral & Ethical Standards Expect It

International Public Opinion Watches for It