

Global Concerns on Human Rights: A Comprehensive Overview

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Abstract:

There are several issues that have a profound global impact and have significantly influenced the protection of human rights. Human rights, intrinsic to all individuals, serve as the cornerstone of dignity and fairness across the globe. Despite the existence of country specific legal framework for human rights protection, the issue persists on global scale. The major issue faced among the pressing human rights concerns is the plight of children, whose rights are often infringed upon through exploitation or lack of adequate care, manifesting in issues like adoption complexities. Moreover, the escalating influence wielded by both developed and developing nations has intensified the threat of nuclear proliferation, posing a grave risk to global security. Henceforth this paper aims to elaborate on the mentioned issues as well as other aspects of human rights violation that is faced by people in contemporary times. In addition to the foundational principles of human rights, this paper seeks to delve into various dimensions encompassing social, economic, political, and environmental factors. It aims to illuminate the multifaceted nature of human rights and shed light on the prevalent exploitation and abuse faced by victims around the world. Moreover, the paper endeavors to propose feasible solutions aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with human rights violations.

Keywords: Human Rights, Violation, Exploitation, Protection, Fundamental

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations, human rights are inherent to all individuals, regardless of factors such as race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. These rights encompass fundamental principles such as the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the right to work and education, among others. Every person is entitled to these human rights without facing discrimination.

International human rights law places obligations and responsibilities on governments to uphold these rights and refrain from actions that may undermine the objectives of human rights. This framework aims to promote and safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and groups.

A significant achievement of the United Nations is the development of a comprehensive body of human rights law—a universally recognized and protected code that nations can endorse and individuals can aspire to. The UN has articulated a broad range of internationally accepted rights, spanning civil, cultural, economic, political, and social domains. Moreover, it has established mechanisms to advocate for and defend these rights, as well as to assist states in fulfilling their obligations.

The Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1945 and 1948, respectively, serve as the cornerstone of this legal framework. Over time, the

UN has expanded human rights law to include specific standards for women, children, persons with disabilities, minorities, and other vulnerable groups, thereby providing protection against the discrimination prevalent in many societies. Several organizations, such as Amnesty International, work tirelessly to protect human rights globally.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) serves as a global roadmap for freedom and equality, safeguarding the rights of every individual, everywhere. It represents the first instance where countries collectively agreed upon the freedoms and rights deserving of universal protection, ensuring that every individual can live their life freely, equally, and with dignity.

Adopted by the newly established United Nations on 10 December 1948, the UDHR was a response to the "barbarous acts which outraged the conscience of mankind" during the Second World War. Its adoption underscored the recognition of human rights as the foundation for freedom, justice, and peace.

EXPLOITATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

According to the United Nations Human Rights Council, numerous critical issues plague the contemporary world. Here are some prominent examples:

In Myanmar, the military coup orchestrated by the Myanmar military in 2021 has led to an ongoing state of emergency, which was further extended in 2023. Martial law has been declared and expanded, resulting in arbitrary detentions, arrests, and politically motivated convictions. Pro-democracy activists have faced severe persecution, including extrajudicial killings, systematic sexual and gender-based violence, and torture. These atrocities, inflicted upon civilians ranging from healthcare workers to children, exacerbate polarization and violence, worsening the humanitarian crisis in the country.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, the devastating earthquakes of February 2023 affected approximately 8.8 million people, compounding the existing crisis stemming from over a decade of conflict. The earthquakes worsened the already dire humanitarian situation, placing vulnerable populations at even greater risk of human rights violations and abuses. Urgent solidarity and swift, sustainable humanitarian aid delivery are paramount to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

The situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran is also alarming, particularly regarding women and children. Recent violent crackdowns on peaceful protests have led to arbitrary arrests, detentions, and reports of sexual and gender-based violence. Security forces have employed excessive force, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of protesters and thousands of arrests. Furthermore, women and girls exercising their human rights have faced arbitrary detention, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Communication restrictions, including Internet shutdowns and social media platform blockades, further infringe upon fundamental freedoms, such as the rights to expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

Another pressing concern recognized by the UNHRC is the global refugee crisis. With an escalating number of refugees in need of resettlement in 2024, urgent action is imperative. Resettlement is a vital lifeline for those most vulnerable, and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, emphasizes the necessity for states to step up and provide sustainable, multi-year resettlement commitments. This collective effort is essential to offer safety, protection, and uphold the international community's responsibility towards refugees.

Human rights and environmental concerns are inherently intertwined: a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is essential for the realization of human rights, while environments that are polluted, hazardous, or otherwise unhealthy can potentially violate these rights.

The concept of environmental rights denotes a proclamation of the human right to environmental conditions of a specified quality. This implies that these rights are not abstract or remote; rather, they are measurable, significant, and functional aspects of society and its ecology. Over 100 countries have incorporated constitutional rights to a healthy environment, emphasizing the importance of environmental protection in safeguarding human well-being. When environmental rights are violated, both people and the planet suffer, leading to reduced health and overall quality of life.

Governments play a pivotal role in safeguarding human rights, and inadequate policies for protecting these rights can have adverse effects. Without proper measures in place, there is a high risk of exploitation and abuse of basic human rights by individuals or groups.

Poverty and economic factors also play a significant role in human rights violations. Individuals living in poverty often lack access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare, which are essential for the fulfillment of their rights. Moreover, gender inequalities persist in terms of employment opportunities and wages, with women frequently facing discrimination and being paid less than their male counterparts. Such disparities contribute to the exploitation of human rights and perpetuate social injustices.

Discrimination, another pervasive issue, continues to undermine human rights on a global scale. Whether based on gender, race, ethnicity, or other factors, discrimination deprives individuals of their rights and perpetuates inequality and injustice. Addressing these systemic issues is essential for upholding human rights and promoting equality and justice for all members of society.

AVAILABLE SAFEGUARDS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

The genesis and development of human rights as enshrined in international human rights law and its associated establishments and mechanisms represent a significant aspect of the legal and normative shifts that global society has experienced since the conclusion of World War II. Scholarship on human rights has traditionally concentrated on the emergence of specific human rights assertions and their integration into obligatory legal principles through international legal procedures. The foremost institution, The International Council on Human Rights Policy, was founded in Geneva in 1998 with the purpose of conducting applied research on contemporary human rights concerns. Its investigations are tailored to offer practical insights to decision-makers in international and regional organizations, governmental bodies, intergovernmental agencies, and various voluntary organizations.

At the national level, constitutional protections, legislative frameworks, and independent judiciaries serve as primary safeguards for human rights. Constitutional guarantees enshrine fundamental rights and freedoms, while laws and regulations provide mechanisms for their enforcement. Independent judiciaries ensure the impartial adjudication of human rights disputes and hold accountable those responsible for violations. Regionally, human rights are safeguarded through treaties, conventions, and regional human rights bodies. Internationally, the United Nations and its specialized agencies play a central role in safeguarding human rights through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international treaties, and monitoring mechanisms such as treaty bodies and special rapporteurs. The UN Human Rights Council is tasked with addressing human rights violations and promoting human rights globally.

Despite the existence of these safeguards, challenges persist in ensuring their effectiveness in the contemporary world. Some of these challenges include:

Weak implementation: In many countries, legal frameworks for human rights protection exist on paper but are not effectively implemented in practice due to lack of political will, inadequate resources, or corruption.

Violations in the name of security: In the context of counterterrorism and national security measures, governments may infringe upon human rights under the pretext of maintaining public safety, leading to abuses such as arbitrary detention, torture, and surveillance.

Emerging technologies: Rapid advancements in technology present new challenges to human rights, including issues related to privacy, freedom of expression, and discrimination. Ensuring that human rights safeguards adapt to these technological developments is essential.

Global inequalities: Economic, social, and political inequalities persist globally, exacerbating vulnerabilities and hindering access to basic rights such as healthcare, education, and housing. Addressing these structural inequalities is essential for effective human rights protection.

Threats to freedom of expression: The rise of authoritarian regimes and the spread of disinformation pose significant threats to freedom of expression and media freedom, undermining democratic values and human rights norms.

In addressing these challenges, concerted efforts are needed from governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and the international community to strengthen human rights safeguards, promote accountability for violations, and ensure that human rights are protected and respected for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

METHODS TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights stands as a foundational element of the United Nations. Every personnel member within peace operations bears the duty to guarantee the safeguarding and advancement of human rights in the course of their duties.

The majority of multi-faceted UN peace operations include a human rights unit. These units execute the mandates related to human rights given to missions and facilitate the integration of human rights into all mission endeavors.

The objectives of human rights teams are:

To aid in safeguarding and advancing human rights through both immediate and enduring measures.

To empower communities to assert and demand their human rights.

To facilitate the implementation of human rights obligations by state and other domestic institutions and to uphold legal principles.

Some of the primary activities carried out by the human rights division include:

Conducting monitoring, investigations, and analysis of human rights situations.

Publishing public reports on critical human rights issues.

Preventing human rights abuses through early warning systems deployed mission-wide.

Responding to human rights violations by offering guidance, aiding institutional change, enhancing capacity, supporting the establishment of accountability mechanisms, and collaborating closely with host governments, national institutions, and civil society.

Advising and aiding other mission teams in integrating human rights into their mandated duties.

Human rights teams collaborate closely and coordinate efforts with other civilian and uniformed components of peace operations. This collaboration is particularly significant in:

Safeguarding civilians.

Addressing sexual violence and violations against children stemming from conflict.

Supporting transitional justice processes and mechanisms for accountability.

Enhancing compliance with human rights and the rule of law through reform in legal and judicial systems, security sectors, and prison facilities.

CONCLUSION

In the ever-evolving landscape of international affairs, the global concern for human rights stands as a foundational principle that transcends borders, cultures, and ideologies. From the ashes of World War II emerged a collective acknowledgment of the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, laying the groundwork for a system of international human rights law that seeks to protect and uphold these fundamental rights.

Over the decades, the concept of human rights has evolved from a mere aspiration to a universally recognized standard by which the conduct of nations and individuals is measured. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 marked a pivotal moment in human history, proclaiming in unequivocal terms the inherent rights to which all human beings are entitled – regardless of race, nationality, religion, or any other status. Since then, numerous international treaties, conventions, and mechanisms have been established to further codify and safeguard these rights.

However, despite significant progress in the realm of human rights, challenges persist on a global scale. Authoritarian regimes continue to suppress dissent and violate the rights of their citizens with impunity. Discrimination and inequality persist in various forms, denying marginalized communities access to basic rights and opportunities. Conflict and instability exacerbate humanitarian crises, leading to widespread human rights abuses, including atrocities such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and mass displacement.

In the face of these challenges, the international community must remain steadfast in its commitment to upholding human rights as universal values that transcend geopolitical interests. This requires collective action and cooperation among nations, as well as a renewed focus on addressing the root causes of human rights violations.

First and foremost, efforts must be made to strengthen the institutions and mechanisms tasked with promoting and protecting human rights at both the national and international levels. This includes supporting the work of the United Nations and its various human rights bodies, as well as investing in capacity-building and technical assistance for states with weak governance structures.

Furthermore, education and awareness-raising play a crucial role in fostering a culture of respect for human rights. By promoting human rights education in schools and communities, individuals can become empowered to recognize and defend their rights, while also fostering greater tolerance and understanding across diverse societies.

Additionally, accountability must be prioritized in the face of human rights violations. Perpetrators of atrocities must be held accountable for their actions, whether through domestic legal systems or international mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court. Justice and reconciliation are essential components of any sustainable peace process, providing a sense of closure for victims and deterring future abuses.

Moreover, efforts to address the root causes of human rights violations – including poverty, inequality, discrimination, and lack of access to education and healthcare – must be integrated into broader development agendas. Sustainable development is intrinsically linked to the realization of human rights, and investments in areas such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, and inclusive governance can help create the conditions for a more just and equitable world.

In conclusion, the protection and promotion of human rights remain a pressing global concern that requires sustained attention and concerted action from the international community. By upholding the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and working together to address the root causes of violations, we can build a more just, peaceful, and inclusive world for future generations.

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