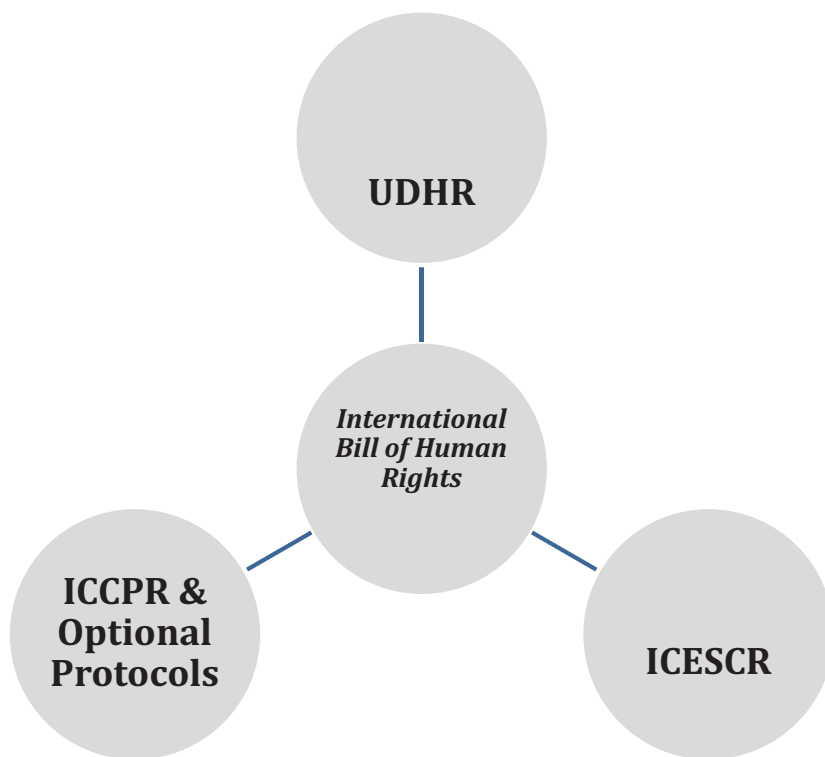


The international human rights movement was strengthened when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948. Drafted as 'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations', the Declaration for the first time in human history, outlined basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all human beings should enjoy.

The UDHR, together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, form the *International Bill of Human Rights*.



## Core International Human Rights Treaties

The core international human rights treaties set international standards for the protection and promotion of human rights to which States can subscribe by becoming a party to these treaties. Each State party has an obligation to take steps to ensure that everyone within the State can enjoy the rights set out in the treaty.

There are nine core international human rights treaties which address a wide range of economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights, the elimination of racial and gender discrimination, protection against torture and forced disappearance and the rights of women, children, migrants, persons with disabilities.

The human rights treaty system has expanded enormously over the past few decades in terms of acceptance and ratification of international human rights treaties by States. Acceptance of the treaties confers concomitant legal duties upon state actors, to protect against, prevent, and remedy human rights violations. The treaty system establishes definitive validity of international supervision and accountability on the implementation of these treaties at the domestic level, with treaty standards serving as the benchmark for assessment.

Core International Human Rights Treaties	Date of Adoption
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	21 December 1965
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	16 December 1966
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	16 December 1966
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	18 December 1979
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	10 December 1984
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	20 November 1989

International Convention on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMRW)	18 December 1990
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	13 December 2006
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPAPED)	20 December 2006

## Optional Protocols

Often, human rights treaties are followed by "Optional Protocols" which may either provide for procedures with regard to the principal treaty or address a substantive area related to the treaty. Optional Protocols to human rights treaties are treaties in their own right, and are open to signature, accession or ratification by countries who are party to the main treaty.

An Optional Protocol to a United Nations treaty thus, is an additional document added to an existing treaty, sometimes years after the treaty has come into force. An optional protocol can include more detail about matters that are in the original treaty or it can deal with issues that have come up since the treaty was written. The optional protocol can add rights and obligations that were not in the original treaty and/or provide for procedures related to the principal treaty.

Optional Protocols	Date of Adoption
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	16 December 1966
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty	15 December 1989
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	6 October 1999
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	25 May 2000
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	25 May 2000
Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	18 December 2002
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	13 December 2006
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	10 December 2008

## Treaty Bodies

Each of the core international human rights treaties has a monitoring body within the UN human rights system which monitors the implementation of the treaty provisions by its States parties. A United Nations Treaty Body is a group of specialists or experts that is set up/established to monitor the implementation of an international treaty by its states parties. Most treaty bodies also consider individual complaints, where a state party has recognized the competence of the committee to do so.

In addition to its obligation to implement the substantive provisions of the treaties to which it is a party, each State party is required to submit regular reports on how it has implemented a treaty's provisions. The relevant human rights treaty body considers these reports in the presence of a delegation of the State party and in the light of all information, including further written information provided by the State party. The committees also receive information from United Nations agencies, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society actors, in particular non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations and academic institutions.

All of the treaty bodies are empowered to consider initial and periodic reports of states parties on how they are implementing the provisions of the treaty. The reports that state parties are obliged to submit provide information about legislative and practical measures taken to implement the treaty. The reports are considered through a public dialogue between representatives of the government concerned and members of the treaty body.

The treaty body experts enquire on a series of issues of particular concern and on violations under the treaty to which the concerned government must respond. The treaty body then formulates its concluding observations to the government as a collective assessment of the report, listing positive aspects as well as factors and difficulties

impeding the application of the treaty, principal subjects of concern and recommendations.

UN Treaty Body	International Treaty
Human Rights Committee (HRC)	ICCPR
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)	ICESCR
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	ICERD
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	CEDAW
Committee Against Torture (CAT)	CAT
Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	CRC
Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)	ICMRW
Committee on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	CRPD
Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)	ICPAPED