

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

(Unofficial summary)

- This Covenant was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966 and entered into force on 23 March 1976. By the end of 2001, the Covenant had been ratified by 147 states.
- The Covenant elaborates further the civil and political rights and freedoms listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Under Article 1 of the Covenant, the states commit themselves to promote the right to self-determination and to respect that right. It also recognises the rights of peoples to freely own, trade and dispose of their natural wealth and resources.

Among the rights of individuals guaranteed by the Covenant are:

Article 2

The right to legal recourse when their rights have been violated, even if the violator was acting in an official capacity.

Article 3

The right to equality between men and women in the enjoyment of their civil and political rights.

Article 6

The right to life and survival.

Article 7

The freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 8

The freedom from slavery and servitude.

Article 9

The right to liberty and security of the person and freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention.

Article 11

The freedom from prison due to debt.

Article 12

The right to liberty and freedom of movement

Article 14

The right to equality before the law; the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty and to have a fair and public hearing by an impartial tribunal.

Article 16

The right to be recognised as a person before the law.

The Covenant is legally binding; the Human Rights Committee established under Article 28, monitors its implementation.

Article 17

The right privacy and its protection by the law.

Article 18

The freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 19

The freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 20

Prohibition of propaganda advocating war or national, racial or religious hatred.

Article 21

The right to peaceful assembly.

Article 22

The right to freedom of association.

Article 23

The right to marry and found a family

Article 24

The rights for children (status as minors, nationality, registration and name).

Article 25

The right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected and access to public service.

Article 26

The right to equality before the law and equal protection

Article 27

The right, for members of religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities, to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

(Unofficial summary)

Cultural Rights (1966), together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), make up the International Bill of Human Rights. In accordance with the Universal Declaration, the Covenants recognize that "... the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can be achieved only if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights."

Article 1

All peoples have the right of self-determination, including the right to determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 2

Each State Party undertakes to take steps to the maximum of its available resources to achieve progressively the full realization of the rights in this treaty. Everyone is entitled to the same rights without discrimination of any kind.

Article 3

The States undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all rights in this treaty.

Article 4

Limitations may be placed on these rights only if compatible with the nature of these rights and solely for the purpose of promoting the general welfare in a democratic society.

Article 5

No person, group or government has the right to destroy any of these rights.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to work, including the right to gain one's living at work that is freely chosen and accepted.

Article 7

Everyone has the right to just conditions of work; fair wages ensuring a decent living for himself and his family; equal pay for equal work; safe and healthy working conditions; equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted; rest and leisure.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to form and join trade unions, the right to strike.

Article 9

Everyone has the right to social security, including social insurance.

Article 10

Protection and assistance should be accorded to the family. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of both spouses. Special protection should be provided to mothers. Special measures should be taken on behalf of children, without discrimination. Children and youth should be protected from economic exploitation. Their employment in dangerous or harmful work should be prohibited. There should be age limits below which child labor should be prohibited.

Article 11

Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing. Everyone has the right to be free from hunger.

Article 12

Everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Article 13

Everyone has the right to education. Primary education should be compulsory and free to all.

Article 14

Those States where compulsory, free primary education is not available to all should work out a plan to provide such education.

Article 15

Everyone has the right to take part in cultural life; enjoy the benefits of scientific progress.

Source: The Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center, based on based on UN Centre on Human Rights, The International Bill of Rights, Fact Sheet #2.