

**SOME PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION  
RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN TIME OF ARMED CONFLICT  
12 AUGUST 1949**

**Arts. 13, 32**

Civilians are to be protected from murder, torture or brutality, and from discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, religion or political opinion.

**Arts. 33-34**

Pillage, reprisals, indiscriminate destruction of property and the taking of hostages are prohibited

**Arts. 33, 49**

They are not to be subjected to collective punishment or deportation.

**Art. 40**

Civilians cannot be forced to do military-related work

**SOME PROVISIONS OF THE ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS**

**Art. 35**

Use of weapons that cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering are prohibited

**Arts. 15, 79, Arts. 76-77**

Special protections are provided for women, children and civilian medical personnel, and measures of protection for journalists are specified.

**Art. 77**

Recruitment of children under age 15 into the armed forces is forbidden.

**HUMAN RIGHTS  
VIOLATIONS  
IN ARMED CONFLICT**



“It is enough to recall that the blood of millions, countless unheard-of sufferings, useless massacres and frightening ruins have sanctioned the agreement that unites you with an oath that ought to change the future history of the world: Never again war, never again war! It is peace, peace that has to guide the destiny of the nations of all mankind!”

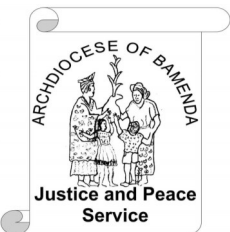
**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION**

*Monday, 4 October 1965*

**WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?**

Human rights (HR) are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person from birth until death, regardless of sex, age, colour, race, religions or where you are from. They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted - for example if a person breaks the law, or in the interests of national security.

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## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### I. INTERNATIONAL HUMANI RIGHTS LAW

International human rights law is reflected, inter alia, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in a number of international human rights treaties and in customary international law;

### II. INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL)

This is a set of rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflict on people, including civilians, persons who are not or no longer participating in the conflict and even those who still are, such as combatants.

Particularly relevant here are the **Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949** and their **Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005**.

These are founded on the idea of respect for the individual and his or her dignity. Persons not directly taking part in hostilities and those put out of action through sickness, injury, captivity or any other cause must be respected and protected against the effects of war; those who suffer must be aided and cared for without discrimination.

The Additional Protocols extend this protection to any person affected by an Armed Conflict. They furthermore stipulate that the parties to the conflict and individual combatants must not attack the civilian population or civilian objects and must conduct their military operations in conformity with the recognized rules of International Humanitarian Law.

At the regional level, the Responsibility to Protect has been embraced strongly by the African Union. Article 4 of its Constitutive Act proclaims its right to intervene in instances of grave violations.

The foundational principle of Catholic Social Teaching therefore is respecting the life and dignity of the human person whatever its condition or stage of development. Human rights, according to the Church stem both from reason ([\*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church\*, #153](#)) and from our inherent dignity as human beings, because all human beings were given life by God and are made in his image and likeness ([\*Genesis 1:27\*](#)).

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. International human rights law lays down the obligations of States to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

*Examples of HR include;* the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, right to fair trial, freedom of expression.

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Human rights violations occur when actions by state (or non-state) actors abuse, ignore, or deny basic human rights of an individual or group of persons (including civil, political, cultural, social, and economic rights).

## SPECIFIC VIOLATIONS

In Armed Conflict there is a greater likelihood for the violation of all the human rights; right to life, right to fair trial, freedom of speech, thought, conscience and religious, freedom from torture & slavery, freedom of movement, personal rights, legal rights and etc. e.g.

- **Sexual Harassment**
- **Rape**
- **Child Abuse**
- **Trafficking in Persons**
- **Genocide**
- **Gender Based Violence**
- **Kidnapping & Hostage Taking**
- **Killing & Maiming of Children**
- **Denial of Humanitarian Access**
- **Collective Punishment**
- **Prostitution**
- **Attacks on Schools & Hospitals**