

HUMAN RIGHTS INDEX

*Prepared by the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights (UICHR)**

On December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), heralding a global commitment to the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings. So doing, it sparked a paradigm shift in international moral and legal outlook, giving rise to the principle that human beings as well as states have legal standing in the international order, a result unheard of since the Peace of Westphalia and the emergence of the nation-state system in 1648. While there still is much to do to fulfill the UDHR's many promises, it is fitting that, on its 60th anniversary, we celebrate how far we have come in creating norms, institutions, and procedures dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights the world over—a remarkable achievement by any measure.

- 3.5 Number of regional human rights systems (in Europe, the Americas, and Africa) through which states have given legal force to their human rights commitments, with a new human rights system presently emerging among the ASEAN countries of southeast Asia (BBC, 2002; Bangkok Post, 2008)
- 8 Number of Millennium Development Goals adopted by 189 states for achievement by 2015, including halving the number of people suffering from extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, and ending gender disparity in education (UNDP, 2008)
- 23 Number of countries authorizing same-sex marriage, civil union, or partnership benefits as of 2007, with the number steadily increasing because of new legislation and litigation around the world (Marriage Equality, 2008)
- 100 Percent of the world's states that have ratified at least one of the nine "core human rights treaties," separately and together demonstrating respect (in principle) for human rights norms worldwide—the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1966 Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced

- Disappearance, and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OHCHR, 2008)
- 143** Years since the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (abolishing slavery in the United States) that a person of African descent was elected head of state (UICHR, 2008)
- 1977** Year the U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices were first published, assessing the extent to which the UDHR is respected in 196 countries, with U.S. foreign and trade policy legally required to account for and act upon countries' human rights records (U.S. State Dept., 2008)
- 7,999** Number of women parliamentarians worldwide as of July 2008, approximately 18% of all parliamentarians today in contrast to 12.8% in 1998, an increase explained in part by expanded women's suffrage rights in more than a hundred countries since the adoption of the UDHR (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2008)
- 130,000** U.S. dollars disbursed in micro-grants to promote rights-based activities during the pilot phase of the 1998 Assisting Communities Together Project of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, established in 1993 as the UN office principally mandated to promote and protect human rights worldwide, based in Geneva and New York, and having presently 11 country and 7 regional offices around the globe (OHCHR, 2002)
- 180,000** Number of Brazilians having access to AIDS treatment following a 1996 presidential decree mandating "free and universal access to AIDS drugs," a developing country first, which, together with threatening production of cheaper generic drugs to persuade drug companies to reduce their prices, resulted in an AIDS rate similar to that of the United States (BBC, 2007)
- 2,000,000** Number of people currently living in non-self-governing territories, down from 750 million at the UN's birth in 1945, more than 80 former colonies having won political independence since that time, profoundly affecting the political, socioeconomic, and other human rights of their citizens (UN, 2008)
- 4,484,667,648** Estimated number of people now living in countries classified as electoral democracies, two-thirds of the world's population, though with uneven levels of adherence to democratic principles and practices (OHCHR, 2008; US Census, 2008)

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