



The following table lists the major human rights instruments in force today.

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Summary</i>	<i>No. of ratifying states</i>	<i>Selected countries yet to ratify (June 2006)</i>
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	10 Dec 1948	The most important human rights instrument of them all – although not technically legally binding, many legal experts believe that it has entered customary international law.	N/A	N/A
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	21 Dec 1965	Deal with discrimination based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, as well as sex or language.	170	Angola, Grenada* Malaysia, North Korea, Singapore
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	16 Dec 1966	Only came into force in 1976. The rights of fair trial, assembly, conscience and to vote are amongst the topics it deals with.	156	Bahamas, China*, Cuba, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	16 Dec 1966	Establishes that human beings have the right to work, establish trade unions, housing, health and education, amongst others.	153	Brunei, Cuba, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, USA*
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	18 Dec 1979	Prohibits discrimination against women in any sphere of life, and obliges state parties to take positive action to advance gender equality.	183	Iran, Somalia, Sudan, USA*
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	10 Dec 1984	State parties must take effective measures to prevent torture and other such treatment, and ensure that any torture victims are granted redress. States must also refrain from extraditing people to countries where they may face torture.	141	Barbados, North Korea, Eritrea, India*, Iran, Iraq, Sudan* Thailand, Vietnam
Convention on the Rights of the Child	20 Nov 1989	Seeks to protect and promote children's rights, including their rights to privacy, freedom of expression, education, protection from abuse and protection in times of war.	192	Somalia*, USA*

* Indicates that a country has signed but not yet ratified the Convention