

Religion and “Rights”

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted and proclaimed by a United Nations general assembly in December 1948. We'll focus on 3 of the 30 articles today.

1. Freedom of Religion

#18 Everyone has the right to freedom of religion and belief, to choose a religion freely, to change their religion, and to practice it alone or with others.
United Nations UDHR (simplified English)

a/ Do you think that everyone in the world has been granted these freedoms? Give examples to support your view.

b/ Do you think a country's government policy (or law) should have more power than a resolution decided on by the United Nations? Provide examples to support your view.

2. Right to Medical Care

#25. Everyone has the right to a basic standard of living, including food, clothing, housing, social services and medical care. ... Mothers and children are entitled to special care. United Nations UDHR (simplified English)

a/ In the past, the Jehovah Witness (religious group) believers were not allowed to accept any type of blood by transfusion. Over time, the rules have slowly changed, and now some blood products can be accepted, but not platelets (the cells in blood that help with healing because they help the blood to clot). However, believers are still strictly not allowed to donate blood.

- Should people who do not donate blood be allowed to accept blood products? Why or why not?

b/ If you were a Jehovah Witness 12 year old child with cancer or leukemia, would you want to follow your religion's policy and not be allowed treatment with platelets, or would you want to have this kind of medical care? How would you decide?

2. Right to Education

#26. Everyone has the right to education and to go to school. All primary schools should be compulsory and free. ... Parents have the right to decide on their children's education. United Nations UDHR (simplified English)

a/ What if the parents want to send their teenage child to a religious school and the teenager does not believe in their religion? Should the child follow the parents or his/her own beliefs and go to a public school?

b/ Many Islam believers around the world do not agree with the actions and ideas of the *Taliban* (means - students of the Koran). It is considered an extremist and fundamentalist sect of Islam. In Afghanistan, the Taliban was removed from government in 2001, but they are still fighting for control of the country. They have banned females from attending any level of school and have destroyed schools that were built for girls.

- Would you give money for a girl's schools or go to volunteer in an Afghani girl's school?
- If you were asked to convince the Taliban that girls should be allowed to go to school, what points would you make?