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Why Are Human Rights Important?

“It’s [of] no importance for me, on whose side power is, but on whose side law is.”

Victor Hugo

Everyone has natural rights from birth, which are included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. It is one of the most important events in the history of mankind. It symbolizes the beginning of a new era in the relationship between the state and the citizen. It gives cause for reasoning. Why did mankind, living on earth, begin the process of the universal recognition of human rights only in the second half of the 20th century? The history of human rights goes back thousands of years and is reflected in the religious, cultural, philosophical ideas and legal developments. A number of ancient documents from different continents, and later, religions and philosophies expressed certain concepts that can be considered human rights. Starting with the compilation of laws by King Hammurabi of ancient Babylon, to the mandates of the League of Nations, the issue of human rights gradually developed and became a social necessity. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Machiavelli laid the groundwork for the Declaration of Human Rights.

One needs to know one's rights, so that one knows what to expect from life. If one does not know his rights and duties, he/she cannot have an idea of what to do if a difficult situation arises; he/she will be unprotected from possible unpleasant developments.

The old Roman proverb says: "Where there is a right, there is a remedy." That is why you must know the laws and rights, to help protect yourself, so that you feel confident, and therefore also free. You must know your personal rights, while not ignoring the rights of others, in order to create your future confidently.

In my opinion, if all people respect their rights and the rights of others, there will be less injustice, grief and sorrow on earth. The most important human right is the right to life, liberty and personal security, and it should be worthy. We should humiliate others, neither mentally nor physically.

Human rights should be protected by the state and by laws. However, people are often forced to defend themselves from the state and its leaders. In the mid-late 19th century, mankind still witnessed phenomena such as slavery, serfdom, unbearable working conditions and meager wages, child labor; in the United States, there was also "the Indian question". Just 80 years ago after the Declaration of Independence, America was engaged in a bloody war, which resulted in the abolishment of slavery. At the same time, serfdom was prohibited in Russia. However, both the American black slaves and the Russian serfs that were set free still did not exercise basic human rights for decades. In 20th century Europe, unhealthy women were prohibited from having children for the sake of the "nation's purity". Fortunately, those times have passed. Mankind has become conscientious, but we cannot say that human rights are fully protected, and in our country as well. The rights of the rich and influential citizens seem to be protected, but those of ordinary citizens – not so much. I believe that each of us should follow that his rights and freedoms are not violated. And if each of us defends our rights as well as respects and does not violate the rights of others, only then will our state be governed by the rule of law. The current generation also plays a great role in the creation of a legal state. Living in the 21st century and feeling the influence of all the events that are taking place every day around us, and which directly or indirectly affects the quality of our lives, we must understand our rights; yes, understand, not just get to know legal acts related to this field, but understand. The more diverse opportunities we are given in this century, and with the newest technologies becoming more and more vital, one becomes more and more vulnerable to the violation of his/her rights. The environment in which we live, where our life passes, we may come across numerous cases of possible violations of our rights. When our rights are violated, when we are unable to protect ourselves from any type of harassment that the external world has directed against us; we become vulnerable, and we are not able to fully and within our ability integrate into the rows of the worthy members of society. In the 21st century, when such violations of human rights occur, putting at risk the sense of human dignity, it is imperative to know our rights. Nevertheless, the awareness of rights is not enough; we must know the world and the hidden or obvious possible dangers of modern life, that come from the outside world and that attract many with their charm and hopes for a beautiful future. We must integrate into the events happening around us, follow them, because no matter whether we want to be their focus or not, we are all at risk of becoming their victim: Anyone of us. Violations of our rights may start in the places where we live, even the house where we live, as well as beyond its limits, covering more global borders. The knowledge and fulfillment of our rights are of no less importance than our personal needs, it is in no way inferior to other requirements, and it is a necessary condition for ensuring a well-off and decent life.

My generation still faces many problems. People, especially Armenians, live with embedded stereotypes that very often become the main reason why people do not fight for the restoration of their violated rights. Consequences of violating the rights are generally evaluated with material parameters, without giving proper importance to the moral damage compensation. The moral damage – damage done to human dignity, pride and honor, even if it does not carry any element of material damage – is the hardest one, and can often influence one's whole life. In my opinion, this issue is the most painful one, even more painful than the fact that one does not have new clothes to wear or does not live the best life. All in all, we are born to enjoy life and it absolutely does not matter whether you are rich or poor; it is important that you have a sense of personal dignity and its acknowledgement by you and the community. Very often, people strive for more, strive to accumulate wealth, because of the damage caused to their rights and dignity. But what has taken root and settled inside one, no wealth can cure. Society and our country need healthy people – both physically and mentally.