REFLECTION PAPER ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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What it means to violate Human Rights

There is now near-universal consensus that all individuals are entitled to certain basic rights under any circumstances. These include certain civil liberties and political rights most fundamental of which is the right to life and physical safety. Human rights are the articulation of the need for injustice, tolerance, mutual respect, and human dignity in all of our activity. Speaking of rights allows us to express the idea that all individuals are part of the scope of morality and justice.

To protect human rights is to ensure that people receive some degree of decent humane treatment. To violate the most basic human rights, on otherhand; is to deny individuals their fundamental moral entitlements. It is in a sense, to treat them as if they are less than human and undeserving of respect and dignity. Examples are acts typically deemed “crimes against humanity,” including genocide, torture, slavery, rape, enforced sterilization or medical experimentation, and deliberate starvation. Because these policies are sometimes implemented by governments, limiting the unrestrained power of the state is an important part of international law. Underlying laws that prohibit the various “crimes against humanity” is the principle of nondiscrimination and the notion that certain basic rights apply universally.