

HUMAN RIGHTS ON GLOBAL AGENDA: AN INTERROGATION OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1945 –1995

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, Human Rights have become a major issue in international politics and a primary item on the global agenda. With the internationalization of the idea that the protection of the basic rights of man knows no boundaries or state jurisdictional authority, it became axiomatic that the members of the international community have an obligation to ensure that governments all over the world guarantees and protect internationally recognized human rights, without any prejudice to state sovereignty. This paper is an attempt to assess critically the role of the United Nations in advocating, promoting and protecting the rights of mankind across the globe. The paper in its submission argues that the United Nations has done creditably well in this direction and call for more measures in the protection of human rights.

Keywords: Human Right, United Nations, Global Agenda, Second World War, International Community

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations has played a major role in the process of placing human rights on the global agenda. It has been in the forefront in establishing the norms, institutions, mechanisms and activities for giving life to the idea that certain rights are universal. Sovereign States have not been prime movers of this concept, even though their consents and support for human rights is undoubtedly critical.

The international human rights movement, a growing network of human right oriented non-governmental organizations and a number of dedicated individuals have been responsible for drafting much of the legal regimes of human rights and for mounting transnational campaigns to promote human rights norms (Mingst and Karns 158).

This paper is an evaluation of the United Nations in the promotion of human rights. The paper considers a period of five decades to assess the score card of the UN in this direction. To achieve this objective, the paper is broken into six parts. Part one takes a look at the principles and organizational structure of the United Nations on human rights while part two examines the concept, standards and norms of human rights, including the three generational rights. Part three considers the universality of human rights and cultural relativism and part four is an assessment of the United Nations in the promotion of human rights from articulating the norms to monitoring, from monitoring to promotion and from promotion to enforcement of human rights. Part five highlights the emerging norms and practices of humanitarian interventions and part six is the concluding remarks.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS

Some have been critical to the role played by the United Nations in the development and promotion of human rights. The Holocaust – The Nazi Germany Campaign of genocide against the Jews, and other groups that consumed the lives of six million men, women and children during the Second World War was a critical and compelling reason. South Africa's obnoxious policy of apartheid – a systematic repression and violence against the majority blacks and indigenous people by reason of colour and race was additional impetus (Mingst and Karns 158).

Also, the demise of Communism and crumbling of the communist regimes across the globe, which came with liberalization and de-regimentation of societal values fuelled the international efforts to promote human rights from the ideological conflicts of the Cold War era. In the 1990s, events in Bosnia, Rwanda gingered the pressures for the prosecution of persons responsible for war crimes and genocide. Television pictures of starving and dying children in Somalia, Chad and Rwanda pricked the conscience of mankind that something substantial must be done (Mingst and Karns 159).

Going the memory lane, the League of Nations did very little in mentioning issues of human rights despite concerted and frantic efforts of some delegates at the Paris Peace Conference who called for the inclusion of and the protection of religious freedom and racial equality in the letters of the Covenant. However, the provisions of the Covenant captured specific provisions for protection of minorities, women, children and dependent people. In the 1930s, the League only discussed the possibility of an international human rights document but the idea was not followed by action. At the end of the Second World War, different circumstances influenced the drafting of the United Nations Charter.

President Roosevelt's famous "four freedom" speech after the Atlantic meeting of 1941 called for "a world founded upon four essential human

freedoms", and his vision the 'moral order' became a stepping stone for the Allied Powers against Germany and Japan (Sikkink 54). The liberation of Nazi concentration camps in the warring days of the Second World War showcased to humanity the full extent of the Holocaust and drew attention to human rights as an international issue that required more concerted action than slogan. Thus, the UN Charter made a giant leap above the Covenant of the League of Nations on matters of human rights. At the International Conference at San Francisco, groups of individuals from churches, Peace societies and delegates from States pushed for the inclusion of human rights provisions in the UN Charter. In response to these demands, the founding fathers of the United Nations placed the issue of human rights on the front burner of this global body, making it one of the central objectives of the organization (Donnelly 148).

PRINCIPLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the core objectives of the United Nations is to forge international cooperation in addressing international problems, including those of humanitarian character, promoting and encouraging respect for fundamental freedom and human rights without regard to sex, race, language, age, color and religion. Article 55 (c) and 56 amplify the role of the United Nations in the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedom for all (Weiss and Forsythe 116). These provisions obliged member states to take joint and separate actions in cooperation with the organization for the achievement of the purposes embedded in Article 55 of the Charter.

However, these provisions did not expressly define what was meant by 'Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms', but they established in very clear terms that human rights were matters of global concern and that member states had assumed international obligations relating to them. These provisions gave the United Nations the legal backing and moral authority to undertake the definition and codifications of these rights. The foundation stone in this direction was laid by the General Assembly of the UN when in 1948 passed and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to serve as road map, a blueprint and a common standard of achievement to all people of all nations (Weiss and Forsythe 116).

The UN Charter and the declaration of human rights represented a radical turning point that placed human rights on the global agenda and by extension at the epicenter of international politics. An organ of the UN; Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was given an express mandate to set up commissions in the area of human rights. In 1946 and 1947, it established the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Other related

bodies such as the UN High Commission for Human Rights have been created in the 1970s. The engine room of the UN activities on human rights is the UN Commission on the Human Rights. This body is also seen as the core of an international human rights regime which has been responsible for the drafting and negotiating the major legal regimes that defines and elaborate human rights norms; including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Human Rights Covenants. The Commission on Human Rights and other Commissions conduct studies and issues Report. These commissions received thousands of petitions of human rights violation and necessary steps taken to address these issues (Weiss and Forsythe 117).

The UN General Assembly thus often recorded a consensus on matters of human rights at a given time. During the Cold War era, some western powers pushed issues such as forced labour under communism. In the first session of the General Assembly in 1946, India and other states introduced the issue of South Africa's inhuman treatment of their nationals, setting the stage for what became the UN longest-running human rights violations – apartheid system in South Africa. Colonization was also regarded by many as a primary human right issue during the first twenty five years of the UN. Debates on various colonial issues occupied a large share of the General Assembly's agendas in the 1950s and 1960s. From this perspective, the Trusteeship Council's primary focus – the dependent trust territories and the movement of their people towards self determination were also related human rights issues (Jacobson 27).

The central theme of the UN's role in promoting international human rights is its activities in setting standards – defining and elaborating what constitute the internationally protected rights of individuals. That process began with the General Assembly's unanimous approval of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 9 December, 1948 and the passage of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide on 8 December 1948. Under the able leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt who served as the Chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations were able to articulate far reaching human rights agenda on a global scale (Henken 512).

CONCEPTS, STANDARDS AND NORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS

The purpose of the United Nations is to make national rights effective through national institutions. Since *strictosenso*, there are no international human rights. In an ideal situation, there would be no need for international human rights laws and institutions but the global situations is far from being ideal, hence, Henkin argues that "the Universal Declaration of Human Rights may be considered the basic international document of the twentieth century" (Sen 30).

The Universal Declaration drew inspiration from the French and American Revolutions and earlier Bills of Rights as well as principles of natural rights.

Among its copies of thirty principles, it elucidated rights critical for the exercise of political freedom, rights essential for the preservation of civil society, social and economic rights of individuals. The declaration listed those claims as a first step towards the articulation of international human rights standards. During the Cold War era, the controversy between the western and socialist views of human rights delayed the General Assembly's approval of regimes that legalize the rights enunciated in the Universal Declaration.

In the western view, rights reside in the individuals – the right to free speech, to freedom of religion, to a free press, and to associate willingly. These individual's rights viewed as critical for the functioning of political and civil society, must be protected against state intrusion. These rights are termed 'first generation rights', because they were the first rights to be incorporated into constitutions of independent states. Civil rights are meant to debar government authorities from interfering with individuals in civil society (Sen 31).

On the other hand, the socialist view place premium on economic and social rights – the right to employment, to healthcare and to social security. These are second generations rights, are the minimum material benefits that the state must provide to individuals. This designation stems from the association of these benefits with the 20th century concept of government's responsibility for social welfare.

The Universal Declaration incorporated these two generations of rights, thereby producing two regimes to surmount the political and ideological impasse. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were both approved by the General Assembly in 1966 and came into force in 1976. By the mid 1990s, more than 135 states were parties to both Covenants, excluding the United States which it refused to ratify the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights until 1992. These two Covenants, together with the Universal Declaration are usually referred to as the International Bill of Rights (Sen 31). These Covenants exemplify the standard setting charter of the UN's role in human rights. Since 1948, the world has witnessed the birth of more than one hundred independent states with new constitutions as well as the adoption of new or significantly amended constitutions by older states. The constitution of the old and new states bears the mark of the Universal Declaration. National courts of various states jurisdiction utilized the declaration to interpret Constitutional Rights (Cena 740).

The UN has brought into existence an array of other human rights treaties which articulate an increasing variety of rights. These rights concerns women, slavery, forced labour, torture, refugees, apartheid, among others. Some of these conventions are International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination of 1966 which came into force in 1976, International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid of 1973, came into force in 1976, Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 1953, came into

force in 1954, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979, came into force in 1981, Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, came into force in 1990, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948, came into force in 1951, Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984, came into force in 1987, among others (Jacobson 28).

The most recent effort to produce a legal regime on the Rights of Indigenous People is illustrative of third generation rights – those rights concerns groups of persons. Post Cold War conflicts have revived concern about the protection of minorities. The decolonization process could also be read in part as most of the world's colonial peoples exercising their collective rights of self determination. Also added to the list of third generation rights is the right to a safe environment, to peace, to democracy and to development. The Declaration on the Right to Development was endorsed by the UNGA in 1986 (Mingst and Karns 160).

THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AGAINST CULTURAL RELATIVISM

One pertinent question to ask is 'are all human rights truly universal, applicable to all people, all states, religion, cultures and climes?' In recent years, the debate over universal rights versus cultural relativism was reopened by a group of developing states including China, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, among others. The strongest advocates were Asian states whose ancient cultures had been insignificantly affected by colonialism and whose rapid economic growth and large populations had renewed national confidence. They argued that the principles of the Universal Declaration and other regimes on human rights represented western norms and values that were being imposed on them, and that the west was interfering in their internal affairs with its own definition of human rights. This debate was part of the issues discussed at the plenary session of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993.

Amartha Sen, an Indian economist and essayist explored the question whether there are Asian values that are distinct from the west? His survey of the diverse Asian cultural and religious tradition from Confucianism to Buddhism found conscious theorizing about tolerance and freedom in substantial parts of the Asian traditions. Sen argues that "if there is no grand dictionary, then the case for Universal human rights is stronger." Also, as Abdullahi Au-Naim notes "detailed and credible knowledge of local culture is essential for the effective promotion and protection of human rights in any society" (Mingst and Karns 160).

Much of the debate was clearly political, taking place between authoritarian states concerned about human rights intervention in their domestic affairs and western states eager to promote political change. The debate over

universality versus cultural relativism is sensitive with respect to issue of religion, culture, women's status, protection of children, family planning, divorce, female circumcision, etc. The Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights issued at a meeting of Asian States in March 1993, found a middle path. The Declaration states thus:

Universal human rights standards are rooted in many cultures. We affirm the basis of universality of human rights which affords protection in all of humanity. While advocating cultural pluralism, those cultural practices which derogates from universal accepted human norms, including women's rights, must be tolerated. As human rights are of universal concern and are universal in value, the advocacy of human rights cannot be considered to be an encroachment upon national sovereignty (Mingst and Karns112).

The final declaration and programme of action of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, issued on June 24, 1993 states:

All human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Regional arrangement should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments and their protection (Donnelly 150).

The United States and other western states worked hard to achieve consensus of the reaffirmation of 172 States that participated in the Vienna Conference. As Kofi Anan, former UN Secretary General argues:

It was never the people who complained of the universality of human rights, nor did the people consider human rights as a western or northern imposition. It was often their leaders who did so (Buergenthal 703).

Articulation of standards is not enough to ensure the observance of human rights. Those rights have to be effective in natural settings where states are both the initiators and violators of the human rights norms. The United Nations has moved from articulating to monitoring, promoting and enforcing these standards (Tolley106). However, this paper shall examine first UN's role in monitoring the observance of human rights by States before looking at promotion and enforcement of such rights.

UNITED NATIONS AND MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

The first era of UN involvement in human rights from 1948 to 1968 focused on setting human right standards. Monitoring the implementation of those standards requires procedures for receiving complaints of violations from affected individuals or interested groups and reports of State practices. It was also accompanied with the power to comment on reports, make recommendations to States, and appoint working groups or special rapporteurs, and votes on resolutions of condemnation. Publicity and public sharing are key tools of multilateral monitoring of state compliance.

The International Labour Organization was the first international organization to establish procedures for monitoring human rights; in this case, workers right in 1926, the ILO instituted the system of annual meetings of the Committee of Experts, to examine State reports on treaty implementation. When problems are found, the committee may seek further explanations or call for a change in State policies. The dipartite structure of State representative in the ILO facilitates this monitoring. Delegations to ILO Conferences are composed of representatives from government, labour and management, making it easier for the ILO to take human rights initiatives that criticize State government practices (Tolley 106). With only state represented in the UN and on the Commission on Human Rights, monitoring is much more problematic than standard settings. Development in the 1970s provided a major impetus for the further evaluation of International human rights protection.

First, the number of human rights Non – governmental Organisations increased dramatically and emerged as a potent political force, gathering and publicizing information on human rights violations in many states and pressing for action of government, the UN and regional organization.

Second, events in several part of the world fuelled these activities efforts. Among these were the repressive military regimes in Chile and Argentina which launched reign of terror, apartheid's repression regime in South Africa and the 1975 Helsinki Accords between the then Soviet Union, Eastern European States and the United States. The provision in the Helsinki Accords for human rights protection opened up the communist States to scrutiny and pressure for political liberalization ((Tolley 107).

Third, States like United States, introduced human rights into their bilateral foreign policies in the 1970s. President Jimmy Carter's public support for human rights provided a major boost. A broad coalition of West, East, and Non-aligned States helped bring much greater attention to UN human rights activities. Most states decided to give support to international human rights efforts. In 1967, the fifty three (53) member commission on human rights was empowered to examine gross violations of human rights in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Further investigation against specific states followed, setting a new precedent for

monitoring. In 1970, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 1503 authorized the Commission to undertake confidential investigations of individual complaints that suggest a consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations. This 1503 procedure has proved weak; the examination occurs in private and terminates with only a report to the commission. Nonetheless, the commission significantly expanded its activities during the 1970s, creating working groups to study specific civil rights problems; problems such as forced disappearances, torture, religious discrimination and the situation in Chile, after the 1972 coup (Eide⁷⁸).

The sub commission on the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities was reactivated in the 1970s. It has the advantage of being composed of independent experts and plays a key role in screening petitions from individuals and NGOs, prior to their consideration by the commission. In this wise, it has been an important platform for NGOs activities. Since 1982, its working group on indigenous people has been the central forum for promoting the indigenous people's rights. Further initiatives in UN monitoring activities accompanied the ratification and entry into force of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1976, the Convention on the elimination of racial discrimination, torture and discrimination against women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each required States to submit reports of their progress towards implementation of the treaty (Eide⁷⁹).

The Assembly, in that spirit, established committee of independent expert elected by the parties to each treaty to review the reports. The treaties vary in their provision for individual petition. Thus, in 1977, the General Assembly established the Human Rights Committee to process State report under Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It conducted meetings using State report, thereby exposing State human rights practices and its own action to international media. The committees monitoring procedures was weak and cannot guarantee on a binding decisions against offending States. Only 45 out of 135 States that are party to the Covenant have accepted the optional provisions that allow individuals petitions and out of thousands of compliments filed with the Secretary General each year, every of such petitions are considered by the committee. The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights carries a provision for reporting, but no procedure for individual petitions on interstate complaints. Few NGOs and States have shown interest in monitoring these rights (Buerghenthal⁷⁰⁴).

Most of the UN Human Rights Monitoring further focused on the civil rights associated with such practices as torture, detention, execution or on the political rights associated with democracy. One third of the General Assembly Resolutions in recent years have dealt with human rights issues, providing a barometer of acceptable human right policies. The 1990s have witnessed several significant developments in the UN Monitoring. This includes the first involvement of the Security Council in human rights monitoring in conjunction

with the El-Salvador's civil war. The UN involvement in election monitoring in more than twenty countries and its decisions to publish its general conclusion after review of States' report – removed the veil of secrecy on its activities. The UN also appointed rapporteurs and special missions to deal with massive human rights violations in Rwanda, Georgia, Colombia, Yugoslavia and Zaria (Ineka 776).

In sum, while the UN human rights monitoring has come a long way in the last fifty years, it has also remained limited in its measurable impact. It is one thing to point to complex procedures, and quite another to link those procedures to change in attitudes and behaviours. The developments of the 1990s were pressured by the unprecedented actions of the sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination in August 1989 following the Tiananmen Square massacre. It approved a resolution criticizing human rights in Ghana – the first direct action against a major power. Thereafter, China was a regular target of the sub-commission's attention, NGO interventions, and a strong pressure from the western nations. Yet China fought back, challenging the most aggressive monitoring actions by the sub-commission and drawing a strong support from many developing countries. Together, they challenged the extent of the NGO involvement, the independence of the sub-commission members, the opening proceedings and the secret voting. In 1993, when China succeeded in blocking a vote on any resolution dealing with its human rights situations, the limit of the UN monitoring of the systematic abuse of human rights by powerful States became clear. Translating norms and rhetoric's into actions that goes beyond stopping violations to change a long term attitudes and behavior is the challenge of promoting human rights. The UN efforts in this regard, have been everywhere throughout the UN system as well as many economics and social programmes (Weiss and Collins 201).

UNITED NATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: FROM MONITORING TO PROMOTION

In the Post Cold War era, the UN promoted democratization through its electoral assistance programme, in conjunction with peace building missions such as those in Namibia, Nicaragua and Cambodia. These programmes have provided aid to more than twenty member states in organizing and holding free and fair elections. Previously, the cold war and the predominance of non democratic government among UN member states precluding the UN from taking an active role in promoting democratization and associated political rights (Weiss and Collins 201).

Only in the 1990s has the language of human rights been linked to the UN development activities and other operational programmes by the specialized agencies. Boutros Ghali's 'Agenda for Development' helped to make this connection through its emphasis on the right to development that had been

endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1986. Also, the World Bank Programme on good governance, including political and civil rights, its aid recipient, along with the empowerment of women and participation by civil society brought to the fore the United Nations promotion of human rights.

The UN is playing an active role in human rights promotion in the post cold war era, owing to the conceptual links that have been forged between the ideas and norms of human rights and the operational activities of many parts of the system of the UN. Also, the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1993, centralized responsibilities and provided a visible interactive spoke person for human rights in the same way that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees focuses international attention on its area (Weiss and Collins 202).

UNITED NATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: FROM PROMOTION TO ENFORCEMENT

The foundation for UN enforcement actions is embedded in the provisions of chapter VII of the charter, which was utilized only twice prior to the Cold War. Under this provision, if the Security Council deemed it fit to establish a link between human rights violations and a threat or breach of international peace, it has the authority and mandate to take economic and military actions. The Council's authorization of enforcement during the Cold War was on both occasions, a response to the persistent gross violation of the human rights of black majorities by white minority government, first in the breakaway British colony of Southern Rhodesia and in South Africa. In neither case, did the Council make an explicit linkage between human rights violations and security threats.

The post Cold War era witnessed a series of unprecedented enforcement actions authorized under chapter VII to deal with humanitarian emergencies in northern Iraq after the Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda. These marked the emergence of a new norm of humanitarian intervention. The Security Council linked human rights violations to security threats and undertook enforcement actions without the consent of the States concerned. These actions represented a substantial step beyond the previous UN humanitarian relief through the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near East. These developments led to the emergence of new norms and practices of human rights interventions (Thakur 146).

Ethnic conflicts have produced some of the worst human rights violations, the most massive suffering, and the toughest policy dilemmas during the post Cold War era. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, genocide in Rwanda, famine in Somalia and the flight of thousands of Kurds from Iraqi repression provoked media attention and public demands that the international community should do something to prevent these situations. The UN responded in two ways. First it provided materials and economic aid to victims. The UN High Commission for

Refugees coordinated these activities, working alongside NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Medicens Sans Frontiers (Doctors without Borders) and Oxfam to deliver food, medicine, shelter and supplies to innocent victims. Second, humanitarian intervention also involved the use of UN Peacekeeping forces to protect relief workers, guard medical and food supplies, run envoys and shield civilians from further violence and sufferings.

However, the UN has applied the norms and practices of humanitarian intervention selectively. The UN paid little attention to the brutal civil wars and humanitarian disasters in Sudan, Liberia, Serra Leone and Afghanistan. It was sidestepped by NATO in Kosovo (Loescher 62). Nonetheless, the very fact that the UN has undertaken humanitarian interventions, reflect the increased importance of human rights norms in international diplomacy. Without the acceptance of such norms, it would be difficult to argue that international peace was at stake in Bosnia, Somalia or Rwanda. The UN, after all, was founded to deal with inter-state not intra state conflicts. The limited role played by the UN in enforcing international human rights norms should not be surprising. This is so because governments in many member States are suspicious of strengthening the UN's power to intervene in what many still regard as their domestic jurisdiction. Yet the UN has set some important precedents in the field of human rights since the end of the Cold War. In addition to humanitarian intervention, the UN has enforced the emerging rights to democracy, one of the third generation rights by authorizing peacekeepers under the American leadership to restore the democratically elected Aristide government to power in Haiti (Baunch488).

Having analyzed the various steps taken by the UN in the monitoring, promotion and enforcement of human rights, the remaining part of the paper provide the United Nations' score card on human rights.

UNITED NATIONS SCORE CARD ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The failure of the UN to avert the atrocities in Somalia, Bosnia and Burundi in the 1990s called into questions the organization's human rights record, just as its inability to put a prompt end to apartheid system in South Africa. Unquestionably, the UN has also failed to address many human rights violations, turning deaf ears and blind eye to some cases. Where its attention is drawn to human rights abuses, its follow up activities too often have been weak and ineffective. The fund allocated for these activities are quite limited, about 1% of its budget. However, this indictment does not tell the whole story (Baunch 489).

The UN has played a central role in the institutionalization of human rights norms in world politics. In 1948, only slavery, genocide and abuses against aliens were legally prosodies. By the mid 1990s, that list had expanded to include excessive protection by both individuals and special groups, including women, children, minorities and indigenous peoples. States still asserts domestic jurisdiction to justify non interference in internal affairs but that justification is

heard less often. More often, states like China expand enormous amount at diplomatic capitals to defend itself and averts the publicity of public 'shaming'. The vast majority of states have ratified international Covenants and other human rights regimes. It is recognized that human rights are internationally protected and universally applicable even if enforcement is lacking (Thakur 148).

CONCLUSION

The UN has gone a long way from the time when mere reporting of abuses by States was the only mechanism of monitoring and enforcement. The focus of public monitoring of violations and activities has moved far beyond the traditional rhetoric of attaching pariah States to State like Israel, South Africa, etc. Non Governmental Organizations have played a key role in this direction, providing independent monitoring of human activities, publicizing gross violations in a good way and also initiates international campaigns against these violations, including boycott and sanctions. Moreover, the human rights non-governmental organisation community has been increasingly integrated into the works of the United Nations agencies and bodies. The United Nations activities on human rights have been complimented by extensive development of human rights norms and institutions in Europe and other parts of the world.

In sum, the United Nations has placed human rights on the global agenda. Through the use of effective measures of reporting, monitoring, promotion and enforcement, the global body has done well and also institutionalized the norms and standards of human rights. The paper is of the view that much is left to be done in the area of enforcement. This can be achieved if the structures of United Nations are strengthened and its powers to enforce human rights are increased. This call for the amendment of the necessary provisions of the charter and the political will of member States.

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