

Fifty Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan

**IDHRB, Ministry of Law, Justice and
Parliamentary Affairs**

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Universal Declaration of
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Foreword

Fifty years ago, on 10 December, 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It did so because "the inherent dignity . . . the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of . . . peace in the world". This historic document - a 'Magna Carta of Mankind', in the phrase of the former Secretary General of the United Nations U Thant - is the standard for mankind and nations who strive to promote the purposes and aims of the United Nations Charter.

The 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration coincides with Five-year Implementation Review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA). The event affords us a unique opportunity for making an assessment of the progress made in fifty years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. It provides us also an occasion to evaluate the progress in implementing the VDPA and taking cognizance of the impediments to its implementation. The rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration appear meaningless for those whose basic needs - food, clothing, shelter, health care and education are not fulfilled.

On this occasion it is pertinent to mention that the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent country, under the leadership of our father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on 26 March, 1971, was a vindication of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of our people. We view the issue of human rights in holistic terms and see it linked to the practice of democracy, to respect for the rule of law, to the pursuit of justice, to the search for peace, and to the quest for development. We believe that these must be addressed in a concerted and comprehensive manner.

I thank Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan for his laudable efforts to prepare this publication on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration. I believe this study will be a valuable reference for those who concern themselves with assessing the meaning, significance and impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Abdul Matin Khasru

(Abdul Matin Khasru) M.P.

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