

12.5.1 Anti-Slavery International

Anti-Slavery International (previously Anti-Slavery Society), was founded in London in 1839. Its continuous lobbying and advocacy programmes with European governments led to the banning of slave trade. Due to its efforts the League of Nations adopted in 1926 the Slavery Convention which asked member states to eradicate slave trade practices through sale, exchange and gifts. This Convention was later amended by a UN protocol of 1953, and in 1956, it was further expanded and updated by the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery. It prohibits slavery or slave like practices like, bonded or forced labour, child labour, forced marriages, trafficking of women and children, prostitution and sexual exploitation – all modern forms of slavery. (See www.antislavery.org/)

12.5.2 MRG International

MRG has been active in promoting indigenous rights and the rights of women and minorities for more than 40 years. Its advocacy of these rights is pursued at the national, regional, and international levels, including with such bodies as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN), where it enjoys consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It offers training for individuals so that they can effectively participate in and raise concerns at the United Nations Group on Minorities annual meetings in Geneva. Its work addresses ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority groups, promoting forums where minority populations can meet with government officials and representatives of majority populations to pursue constructive dialogue. MRG works to promote peaceful resolution to ethnic and religious conflicts and to bring an end to conflicts producing ethnic cleansing and genocide. MRG also offers concrete programmes to promote educational curricula to overcome prejudice, and promote access of minority children to education. It seeks to ensure that minority issues are raised in governmental development planning to overcome poverty among minorities and indigenous groups. MRG has produced many reports on India, such as *Untouchability* (by Dileep Hero), *Sikhs, Adivasis, and Muslim Women in India* by Seema Kazi (1999). These MRG reports are highly critical of government policies and document the violations of minority rights in India. (See www.minorityrights.org)

12.5.3 International Committee of the Red Cross

Modern humanitarian law predates the development of international human rights standards. It began with the formation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863. The Red Cross /Red Crescent Movements arose out of the work of Henri Dunant, a Swiss humanitarian. The Red Cross movement includes not only the ICRC but also 183 national Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies, and an International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which helps to coordinate and stimulate the work of the national organisations.

The ICRC advocated the conclusion of international conventions making certain humanitarian rules applicable in the conduct of war. These initiatives produced the Geneva Convention of 1864, which was designed to protect medical personnel and hospital installations. It also provided that “wounded or sick combatants, to whatever nation they may belong, shall be collected and cared for”. In 1899, the Hague Convention No.III was adopted which established comparable humanitarian rules applicable to naval warfare. From time to time the laws contained in these treaties have been revised and modernized. Much of that law is codified in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two 1977 additional

protocols to these Conventions. In fact, it is not wrong to say that almost every significant treaty in IHL originates with the ICRC.

These four Geneva Conventions (on the laws of war) aim to protect the sick and wounded members of the armed forces, prisoners of war (POW) and civilian population. For instance, the Geneva Convention on POW requires that prisoners be treated “humanely” and that they not be subjected to physical or mental torture to secure from them information of any kind. It prohibits “measures of reprisal against POW” and provides that all POW be treated alike by the detaining Power, without any adverse distinction based on race, nationality, religious belief or political opinion. The fourth Geneva Convention, which seeks to protect civilian populations, establishes a massive code of conduct for the Occupying Power. It prohibits “not only murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation...of a protected person, but also...any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents.” It outlaws the taking of hostages, collective punishment and reprisals as well as “individual or mass forcible transfers” of protected persons or their deportations to the territory of the Occupying Power.

It is gratifying to note that the ICRC was rewarded on three occasions with receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize for its contribution to develop and implement IHL with cooperation of States parties to the four Geneva Conventions. (www.icrc.org/)

12.6 INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

India is a founding member of the both the global IOs – the League of Nations and the United Nations. Since 1945 India has been playing a significant and constructive role on the issues of peace and conflict. Its foreign policy is guided by principles of *Panchsheel*, a treaty between India and China signed in 1954 (the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence include, mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and national benefit; and peaceful coexistence), anti-colonialism, anti-racialism and promoting human rights and world peace. To pursue these policies, India took the following initiatives in the UN:

- In 1946 India brought a complaint to the General Assembly that South Africa was pursuing the policy of racial discriminating towards its citizens of Indian origin;
- India supported the idea of UN peacekeeping in 1950s when great powers (five permanent members of the Security Council) failed to enforce peace under the Doctrine of Collective Security to resolve inter-state conflicts during the Cold War era. During the last 70 years, India has contributed the largest contingent of military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations.
- By invoking the principle of “humanitarian intervention” in East Pakistan crisis and to prevent massive violations of human rights, it helped militarily East Pakistanis to exercise the right of Self-determination (outside colonial context). Hence, Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971.
- India presented to the 51st session of the General Assembly (1995-96) a Draft Comprehensive Convention for Combating International Terrorism (CCIT). This draft is under consideration of the General Assembly for the last two decades.
- On Indian initiative in 2007, the UN designated October 2 (birthday of Mahatma Gandhi) as the International Day of Non-violence.

12.7 SUMMARY

Two most important and extraordinary developments of the last 150 years are the establishments of thousands of governmental and non-governmental IOs. There are IOs in virtually every sector: political, economic, trade, social, and defense, etc. By every passing year their number is increasing. They are established to solve many international and national problems/ conflicts affecting peace and security.

Definitions, kinds, functions and role of international bodies have been discussed in the Unit. The role of the UN (which is the most global and all-purpose IO) and other IGOs, like ILO, the Commission on Human Rights, and ICC is significant in resolving international conflicts and creating conditions for peace in the world.

IGOs are created to deal with the issues of maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights and realising the principle of self-determination of people, combating terrorism and establishing rule of law in international relations; e.g., the UN is established to prohibit war or the use of force to settle differences between states. The UN obligates its members to solve interstate problems through dialogue and discussion and encourages them to use peaceful means, like conciliation, investigation, arbitration, mediation, judicial settlement, resort to regional bodies, or other peaceful means of their choice, to solve their problems.

Successful role of NGOs with special reference to Anti-Slavery International, MRG, and ICRC reveals that compared to IGOs, the NGOs are more successful in achieving their objectives. It is due to the fact that they are independent of government control. NGOs mobilize world public opinion to resolve conflicts through peaceful means. They motivate IGOs to create international legal frameworks to address the issues of peace and conflicts. International Campaign to Ban Landmines is the best example to illustrate this point as it led to the drafting and adoption of an international treaty on the subject. NGOs influence the IGOs in agenda setting, norms creation, monitoring compliance by states of their international obligations. They also play a significant role in distributing humanitarian aid and implementing development projects. IGOs, NGOs, and individuals associated with them have received around two dozen Nobel Peace Prizes for their important contribution to establish peace in the world. Thus today we cannot imagine a peaceful life without their presence. To conclude, it can be said that their presence may not have succeeded in bringing heaven on earth, but certainly they are trying to prevent the world from becoming a hell.

12.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Define international governmental and non-governmental organisations.
- 2) Discuss the kinds and functions of IGOs and NGOs.
- 3) Examine the role of the United Nations to resolve conflicts and peace-keeping.
- 4) What has been the contribution of the UN Commission on Human Rights?
- 5) Why was the ICC established?
- 6) Write short notes on Anti-Slavery International and MRG International.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Baehr, Peter R., *Non-Governmental Human Rights Organisations in International Relations*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Baehr, Peter R. and Gordenkar, Leone, *The United Nations: Reality and Ideals*, 4th edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Bennett, A. Leroy, *International Organisations – Principles and Issues*, 4th edn, (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988)

Karns, Margaret P. and Mingst, Karen A., *International Organisations – The Politics and Processes of Global Governance* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2005)

Mingst, Karen A, and Margaret P. Karns, *The United Nations in the 21st Century*, 4th edition (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 2012)

Moore, John Allphin, Jr., and Pubantz, Jerry, *The New United Nations: International Organisation in the twenty-First Century* (New Delhi: Pearson Education, 2006)



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY