

World Russian People's Council: DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY



The World Russian People's Council, recognizing the fact that the world is passing through a crucial point in its history and facing the threat of conflict between civilizations with different understandings of human beings and their callings, has adopted this declaration in the name of the unique Russian civilization:

Each person as an image of God has singular unalienable worth, which must be respected by every one of us, including the society and the state. It is by doing good that a human being gains **dignity**. Thus we distinguish between human worth and dignity. Worth is given, while dignity is acquired.

Eternal moral laws have a solid foundation in the human soul, which is independent of one's culture, ethnic origin, or life circumstances. This foundation is laid down by the Creator within human nature and is manifested in human conscience. The voice of conscience, however, can be muffled by sin. Precisely for this reason, **a religious tradition that has God as its Origin is needed to help discern between good and evil.**

We can discern **two kinds of freedom: inner freedom from evil and the freedom of moral choice.** Freedom from evil is valuable per se, while freedom of choice gains value and a person gains dignity when the chosen alternative is good. Conversely, freedom of choice leads to self-destruction and the loss of human dignity when the choice is evil.

Human rights are based on an individual's worth and should have as their goal **the realization of that person's human dignity.** Therefore, at their essence, human rights involve morality. Any separation of these rights from morality results in their profanation, **the very concept of "immoral dignity" is an oxymoron.**

We support the right to life and oppose the "right" to death; we are for the right to create and against the "right" to destroy. Human rights and liberties are effective inasmuch as they help an individual to ascend toward what is good, defend an individual from evil within and without, and promote that individual's positive role in society. It is from this perspective that we respect not only civil and political rights and liberties, but also social, economic, and cultural rights.

Rights and liberties are inseparable from human obligations and responsibilities. An individual in pursuit of his personal interests is called upon to balance them against those of his neighbor, family, community, nation, and all humanity.

Other values also exist that are no less important than human rights. These are faith, morality, the sacred, and the motherland. Whenever these values come into conflict with the implementation of human rights, the task of society, the state, and the law is to bring both into harmony. It is unacceptable, in the pursuit of human rights, to oppress faith and moral tradition, insult religious or national feelings, cause harm to revered holy objects or sites, or to place one's motherland in jeopardy. **Likewise, we view as dangerous the "invention" of "rights" such as the legitimization of behavior condemned by both traditional morality and historical religions.**

We reject the policy of double standards with regard to human rights, as well as attempts to use them for political, ideological, military, or economic purposes, or to impose a particular sociopolitical system.

We are willing to cooperate with the state and all benevolent forces to ensure human rights. Particularly important in this cooperation is the preservation of the rights of nations and ethnic groups to their religion, language, and culture, defense of the freedom of conscience and the right of believers to their own way of life, the battle against ethnically and religiously motivated crime, protection against arbitrary actions taken by the authorities or employers, concern for the rights of servicemen, defense of the rights of children, responsibility for inmates and other persons in state custody, protection for the victims of destructive sects, opposition to the idea of total control over private life and personal convictions, and measures to protect the public from being caught up in crime, corruption, the slave trade, prostitution, drug addiction, or compulsive gambling.

We seek a dialog with people of diverse faiths and views regarding human rights and their place in the hierarchy of values. More than anything else today, this dialog will help to avoid a conflict between civilizations while leading to a **peaceful diversity of worldviews, cultures, and legal and political systems around the globe.** Human beings will find that their very future depends on their success in this endeavor.

Moscow, April 14, 2006