

**UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**  
**FACULTY OF LAW**  
**BACHELOR OF LAWS HONOURS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Semester Examination Year III - 2025**

**Law 31302 - Human Rights Law**  
(Duration: 2 ¼ Hours)

Total Number of Questions: 04

Answer **Two (02)** questions **ONLY** and **no more**.

(Candidates will be penalized for illegible handwriting.)

1. The historical evolution of international human rights law is often seen as rooted in western centric foundations leading to criticisms due to its inability to reflect global diversity. In contrast, the contemporary discourse of human rights has increasingly drawn from perspectives of the Global South.

Discuss this debate with reference to historical development of international human rights law. Support your answer at least with two examples for each side of the debate.

(30 marks)

2. The debate between universality of human rights and cultural relativism continues to be shaped by tensions between Global South and Global North. Scholars from the Global North are of the view that cultural relativism is often invoked to justify and preserve discriminatory practices, especially against women, in the name of tradition.

Do you agree with the above proposition? Support your answer with relevant examples from treaty provisions as well as with a minimum of three selected case studies.

(30 marks)



3. Answer both (A) and (B):

(A) In 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) replaced the Commission on Human Rights. The UNHRC introduced innovative mechanisms aimed at enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights globally. Select **ONE** of innovative Charter-based human rights mechanisms of your choice and evaluate to what extent it has contributed to promotion and protection of international human rights. Your answer should include important features attached to selected mechanism and at least **TWO** suitable examples to demonstrate its contribution. Support your answer with relevant provisions of international instruments.

(20 marks)

(B) The Federal Republic of Ceylonica is a member of the United Peace Organization. Tina, a university student in Ceylonica, writes feature articles on contemporary issues of the society in a student-led online journal. The Government of Ceylonica recently started the process of implementing its national development agenda 2025-2035 and it has been subjected to criticisms by wider community. Many claims that the agenda disregard sustainable development goals and fails to adhere to key elements of Right to Development of the people of Ceylonica. Tina intends to write her article discussing Ceylonica's responsibility on implementing its development agenda for the betterment of its citizenry. She seeks your contribution as a co-author to include human rights perspective to this article. Prepare a legal analysis of the right to development under international human rights law to include in the article. Your draft should include relevant international instruments, provisions and key elements relating to Right to Development.

(10 marks)

4. Sugari, an executive member of 'Voice for Justice' (VFJ), an internationally funded civil society organization in Suri Land, recently engaged in an access to justice project. Under this project, Sugari took the initiative to promote access to justice for families of missing persons through a public campaign. Although the expressed objectives of the campaign aligned with truth seeking and reconciliation, VFJ chose not to disclose its broader agenda to the public and deliberately selected a specific ethnic group in the southern part of Suri Land to lead the initiative. As the campaign gained popularity, it was perceived to be inconsistent with the national access to justice policy. In response, the Terrorist Investigation Division of Suri Land began monitoring and surveilling Sugari and her team. Additionally, government representatives issued sarcastic, intimidating, and critical statements against VFJ. Subsequently, the organization held peaceful demonstrations and public campaigns, but its leaders were arrested and charged with obstructing state policies on access to justice and threatening public order. The government claims that civil society organisations must not undermine national security and accused VFJ of being influenced by foreign actors.

Assume that you are a human rights lawyer. Discuss the role of civil society in the protection of human rights. Further, analyze how VFJ can defend its rights in this situation. Assume that the fundamental rights chapter of the constitution of Suri Land is similar to that of Sri Lanka. Support your answer with reference to international conventions, declarations, domestic legal provisions, and relevant case studies.

(30 marks)

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