

## Democracy and Human Rights

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Read the following statement prepared by the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights (2003). Prepare a summary in your own words of all the main ideas in this statement. Then, as a group, decide whether you agree with the concluding sentence in this article, stating your reasons.

*The United Nations has a strong mandate, rooted in the Charter, Universal Declaration and other international human rights instruments, to support the promotion of democratic ideals and practices. The General Assembly has sought to bolster UN system support to Member States for democratization and the Commission on Human Rights has contributed to a wider understanding of the human rights underpinnings of democracy...*

*While there is international consensus that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and to participate fully in all aspects of their lives, it is also accepted that there is no single universal model of democracy. Different societies may have reached different stages of democratic development and there are several routes to the democratic apex. Even mature democracies are constantly engaged in a dynamic exercise to maintain the right democratic balance. This being said, experience has proven that for all its ambiguities and elasticity, democracy is the best hope for a political order in which all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - can be effectively respected, protected and promoted.*

-United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Democracy and Human Rights":  
<[www.unhchr.ch/democracy/](http://www.unhchr.ch/democracy/)>

**Summary Statement:**