



The Magna Carta, or Great Charter, was signed by King John of England in 1215, at the insistence of a number of barons or wealthy landowners. The following are some excerpts from this document.

*1. In the first place we have granted to God, and by this our present charter confirmed for us and our heirs forever that the English Church shall be free, and shall have her rights entire, and her liberties inviolate.*

*38. No bailiff for the future shall, upon his own unsupported complaint, put anyone to his "law", without credible witnesses brought for this purposes.*

*39. No freemen shall be taken or imprisoned or seized or exiled or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him nor send upon him, except by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land.*

*40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay, right or justice.*

*52. If anyone has been dispossessed or removed by us, without the legal judgment of his peers, from his lands, castles, franchises, or from his right, we will immediately restore them to him; and if a dispute arise over this, then let it be decided by 25 barons of whom mention is made below in the clause for securing the peace.*