

## Human Rights

**Human Rights** – a fundamental right that every person is entitled to have, to be or to do.

**European Court of Human Rights** – the European court which hears cases where people feel their human rights have been breached.

**International Humanitarian Laws** – laws which cover the treatment of civilians and prisoners of war, as well as setting out what is illegal in a conflict.

**Torture** - inflicting severe pain or suffering on someone as a punishment or in order to force them to do or say something.

## Key agreements and treaties



## The role of international law in conflict situations

Within a conflict there are certain laws which are supposed to be adhered to. There are two very important International Humanitarian Laws:

- The Geneva Conventions – originally signed to ensure the help for wounded soldiers by local people, but they were extended after WW1 and WW2 to include protection for civilians, the banning of chemical and biological weapons, landmines, laser weapons, cluster munitions and the protection of children in armed conflict.
- The Hague Convention – deals with the conduct of warfare.

If individuals/governments violate international humanitarian laws, they can be tried for war crimes at the International Criminal Court in The Hague (Netherlands).

## Legal rights: When can I.....?

**Democracy** - refers to a system of government, where the citizens are able to vote in regular and fair elections for representatives, who will make laws and decisions on their behalf.

**Representative democracy** - When the citizens of a country elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf.

**Direct democracy** - Where the people decide on the policy directly, for example through a vote or referendum on each issue.

**Rule of law** – where no one is above the law in a country, and all citizens are entitled to a fair trial where they are innocent until proven guilty,

## Types of government

For	Against
<p>A) Currently a young person from the age of 16 has a legal right to get married and join the armed forces (but not fight). If they're able to take on these serious responsibilities surely they should be allowed to vote.</p>	<p>B) People believe that the ages for making these important decisions should be raised to 18 rather than lower the voting age.</p>