

**United Nations Human Rights Standards Regarding  
Elections in General**

**A. Basic standards**

19. International standards on elections involve three central rights: the right to take part in government; the right to vote and to be elected; and the right to equal access to public service. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights further states that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. The relevant standards read as follows:

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
Article 21**

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
Article 25**

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

- (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;
- (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.