

Covenants and an Optional Covenant. Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights elaborates on Article 3 of the Universal Declaration. It states that every human being has the right to life; that this shall be protected by law; and, most importantly, that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life. When the ravages of war rent the economic and social fabric of a society, the ability of the state to provide adequate food and medical care for its citizens is diminished. When this lack of food or medicine is potentially life-threatening, a state's refusal to permit provision by outside international or humanitarian organizations could be interpreted as arbitrarily depriving the civilian recipient of his/her right to life.

Article 12, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, develops and improves upon the reference in the Universal Declaration to the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living. Paragraph 1 of Article 12 states that everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Paragraph 2 stipulates that the full provision of this right includes provision by states parties for: (a) the reduction of the still-birth rate and of infant mortality, and for the healthy development of the child; (b) the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene; (c) the prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases; and (d) the creation of conditions which would assure to all, medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

Article 12 is important for several reasons. The requirement that states parties provide their citizens with the highest standard of physical and mental health attainable could be interpreted to allow for the possibility of outside intervention if this high standard cannot be met by the state. The reference to high, rather than merely adequate, standards of health, suggests the possibility of humanitarian action early in a conflict, before standards have dropped too far. Article 12 is important also because it identifies child and infant-mortality rates as particular concerns and cites the responsibility of states parties to prevent epidemic and other diseases. This is an especially useful clause for those seeking to argue in support of humanitarian, and particularly immunization, ceasefires. No less important in this regard, is the responsibility of states parties to "create conditions" that will assure