



Mains Practice Question

Q. What ethical principles should guide decisions regarding issues such as human rights, conflict resolution, and the use of force in international affairs? (150 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly introducing ethical principles and their critical role.
- Discuss various ethical principles that should guide decisions in international relations.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- Ethical principles refer to a set of fundamental values and beliefs that guide individual and collective behavior in ethical decision-making.
 - They play a **critical role in shaping decisions regarding human rights, conflict resolution, and the use of force in international affairs.**
 - These principles provide a **framework for ensuring that individuals and groups are treated with respect, fairness, and dignity.** Further, these principles have been enshrined in international treaties and agreements and have helped to promote greater cooperation and understanding among nations.

Body

- There are several ethical principles that should guide decisions regarding human rights, conflict resolution, and the use of force in international affairs. Some of the most important ethical principles are:
 - **Respect for human dignity:** This principle asserts that all individuals have inherent worth and should be treated with respect and fairness. It is the basis for human rights and requires that governments and individuals do not treat others as means to their own ends.
 - An example of this principle in practice is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which sets out a framework for protecting the dignity and rights of all people.
 - **Non-maleficence:** This principle requires that we **do not harm others or cause them unnecessary suffering.** It is particularly relevant in issues such as conflict resolution and the use of force, where there is a risk of harm to innocent civilians.
 - An example of this principle in practice is the **Geneva Conventions**, which set out rules for the humane treatment of prisoners of war and civilians in conflict.
 - **Beneficence:** This principle requires that we act in the **best interests of others and promote their welfare.** It is particularly relevant in issues such as human rights, where the goal is to promote the well-being and freedom of individuals.
 - An example of this principle in practice is the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals**, which aim to promote economic and social development while also protecting human rights.
 - **Justice:** This principle requires that we treat people fairly and equitably, and that we distribute benefits and burdens fairly.

- It is particularly relevant in issues such as human rights, where the goal is to ensure that all individuals are treated equally under the law.
 - An example of this principle in practice is the International Criminal Court, which is responsible for prosecuting individuals for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.
- **Respect for autonomy:** This principle requires that we respect the rights of individuals to make their own decisions and to have control over their own lives. It is particularly relevant in issues such as human rights, where the goal is to protect individuals from coercion and oppression.
 - An example of this principle in practice is the right to freedom of expression, which allows individuals to express their opinions and ideas without fear of censorship or retaliation.

Conclusion

Overall, these ethical principles should guide decisions regarding human rights, conflict resolution, and the use of force in international affairs. By following these principles, we can work towards creating a more just, peaceful, and equitable world.

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