**Human rights**

- What document guarantees international human rights?

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees international human rights. The United Nations General Assembly passed this document in 1948.

- What international organizations are responsible for protecting human rights?

- International concern for human rights has been evident outside of the United Nations. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which met in Helsinki in 1973-75, produced the Helsinki Final Act. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which first met in 1950, produced the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Social Charter; the Ninth Pan-American Conference of 1948 adopted the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man; and the Organization of African Unity in 1981 adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. There are also a number of private groups involved in human-rights advocacy. One of the best-known international human rights agencies is Amnesty International (founded in 1961). This organization is responsible for broad casting violations of human rights, especially freedoms of speech and religion and the right of political dissent.

- When was the notion of human right worked out?

- Human rights belong to an individual as a consequence of being human. They refer to a wide range of values that are universal for all human beings. The origins of the concept of human rights are traced to the Greco-Roman natural-law doctrines of stoicism. According to the doctrines a universal force penetrates all creation and that human conduct should therefore be judged ac cording to the law of nature, and in the "law of nations", in which certain universal rights were extended beyond the rights of Roman citizenship. From the Renaissance until the 17th century the beliefs and practices of society so changed that the idea of human (or natural) rights took hold as a general social need and reality. The modernist conception of natural law (natural rights) was elaborated in the 17th and 18th centuries. The struggle against political absolutism in the late 18th and the 19th centuries further advanced the concept of human rights. In the 20th century the notion of human rights achieved universal acceptance.

- What are the basic human rights?

- The right to life and liberty are the basic human rights. They are proclaimed in the Covenant on Civil and Political rights and its optional protocol. One of the most vital rights granted in this Covenant is the right of people to self-determination. This document guarantees such rights as personal security, equality before the law, fair trial, freedom of religion, freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, right to marry, participation in public affairs and elections, and minority rights. Propaganda of war is prohibited. The right to security and privacy of person is very important too. The document insures fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

- Do people have any social guarantees?

- Yes. Certainly we have such guarantees. Social guarantees of people are set forth in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural life. This document deals with the right to work, the conditions of work, trade unions, social security, protection of the family, standards of living and health, education and cultural life. The European Commission of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights provided the most effective means for the implementation of the protection of human rights. The efforts of government in this area should be guided by these two Covenants.

- What can you say about human rights in Russia?

- Now, when Russia has entered the way of democracy it is directed by the international covenants in the field of human right as the rest democratic countries of the world. Despite its great economic, political, and social difficulties the fundamental rights of the people are guaranteed by the Russian government. The protection of human rights is secured by the Russian constitution. Such human rights as freedom of religion, freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, right to marry, participation in public affairs and elections are guaranteed and embodied in different political, cultural, and social institutions, religious confessions, secular organizations, in a variety of mass media productions. Although not all human rights are equally put into life in our country so far, we are moving along the way of democracy and the new generation will enjoy all the human rights which are set forth in the international covenants.