

# Markscheme

**November 2025**

**Global politics**

**Higher level and Standard level**

**Paper 1**

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## Unit 2: Human rights

Bulleted lists in this markscheme indicate likely points that candidate may include in their answer: they are not exhaustive, and examiners should credit other valid points not listed.

1. Outline what source A says about the protection of human rights. [3]

Possible answers include:

- Source A shows that some countries have a low score, indicating that there is less human rights protection in these areas. An example of this shown on the map is China.
- The source shows that some countries tend to have a higher score, indicating that they have a higher level of protection of human rights. An example of such a country is Australia.
- The source shows some countries having a neutral score towards, indicating there is room for improvement when protecting human rights. An example is the South Africa Republic.
- The source shows that many states that do not have democratic regimes such as Russia and China to have a lesser score, indicating that the protection of human rights is less effective in regimes that are not democratic.
- The source indicates that ineffective protection of human rights is widespread. Large parts of Asia, Africa and South America are shown to have scores indicating ineffective human rights protection.
- The source indicates that areas that are impacted by conflict have terrible human rights protection. For example, Yemen seems to have a bad track record in protecting human rights according to the source.
- The source illustrates examples of failure of foreign interventions meant to protect human rights. For example, Libya has one of the worst scores in protecting human rights despite the attempts of a coalition state to ensure stability in the country.

*Award [1] for each relevant point up to a maximum of [3].*

Other relevant points not listed can also be rewarded.

2. With explicit reference to source B **and one** example you have studied, explain why a state may fail to protect human rights. [4]

*Answers from source B can include:*

- Source B shows how the priorities in international relations have changed to such a degree that even worst atrocities such as war crimes are being ignored. Such a change in priorities is responsible for states failing to protect human rights. “States have abandoned their responsibilities towards protecting civilians and are ignoring moral or political arguments to protect human rights”.
- Source B mentions that the UN Security Council is paralyzed and not functional, largely because of the five permanent member states being unable to reach a consensus. As it is responsible for maintaining peace and security, states are just following a similar approach of ignoring human rights violations. “The UN Security Council is characterized by inaction due to rivalries between the permanent member states.”
- Source B specifically states that highly developed states are prioritizing their own national interests ahead of the desire for international cooperation around human rights. The arguments stated there illustrate why states are prioritizing their own interests ahead of following humanitarian arguments for intervention. “The world’s most powerful states are following narrower national interests and are making international cooperation around human rights issues impossible.”

- Source B shows how the international order has changed and human rights are often perceived to be barriers to the interests of states, “Any type of domestic policy or international goal has now become more important than protecting human rights.”

Answers from own knowledge can include:

- Some violators of human rights may be too powerful for many states to be able to act against them or such actions could lead to another global conflict. Violations of rights by states that have nuclear arsenals are often left unpunished. E.g. Russia.
- Human rights violations often go unnoticed or domestic governments are able to censor a lot of the information. For example, the reactions to China violating the civil rights of the Uyghurs can partially be attributed to a lack of verified information. Other examples can include, but are not limited to, the way Kazakhstan enforced a communications blackout as a result of the protests regarding cronyism and high prices as well as the way the military junta censored information in the aftermath of the coup in early 2021.
- The international conventions that we have today are limited and not all powerful states recognize them (such as the USA, China and Russia). As many states do not recognize the ICC, it is easier for others to step aside from their responsibility of protecting human rights. Other international conventions that are frequently disregarded include the 1966 Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Covenant (USA signed but not ratified), the 1979 Discrimination against Women Convention ((USA signed but not ratified), as well as the 1984 Convention against Torture (India signed but ratified).
- States are now more interdependent than ever before. One state perhaps may not have the economic or political will to intervene in the affairs of another for fear of retaliatory sanctions.
- The definition of human rights is widely different across states and the lack of a joint understanding of serious violations helps promote a climate where states are less likely to act. Some states may prioritize some types of rights or have a hierarchy of rights.

Other relevant points not listed can also be rewarded. Students are not expected to make four separate points in order to achieve full marks. For each valid point a maximum of [2] may be awarded, up to a total of [4]. If there is no reference to another example studied award a maximum of [3].

3. Using Source C **and** Source D, contrast how politicization has impacted the protection of human rights.

[8]

*Potential points of contrast include:*

- Source C believes that the politicization of human rights can lead to sanctions with the goal of protecting the interest of the state rather than human rights, while source D believes that sanctions are the best choice to protect human rights abroad, even if they are imperfect.
- Source C believes that the politicization of human rights negatively impacts the protection of human rights ‘politicizes human rights, makes it more difficult to protect human rights on a global scale’, while source D believes that politicization has helped raise awareness about the need to protect human rights, ‘If human rights were not politicized, there would be no widespread need or urgency to defend them.’
- Source C primarily promotes a grassroots-oriented approach that focuses on supporting and strengthening human rights protection on the ground through non-violent and non-damaging methods such as providing humanitarian assistance. In contrast, Source D

argues that sanctions are the “best peaceful option to punish those violating human rights.” While Source C emphasizes alleviating conditions for the most vulnerable and reinforcing protection from the bottom up, Source D focuses on holding human rights violators accountable through punitive measures.

- Source C mentions the example of Belarus as a country where the implementation of sanctions has caused more harm to human rights, while source D defends the use of sanctions in the case of Venezuela, arguing that the adverse economic conditions were already present before the sanctions were implemented.
- Source C primarily offers an approach that is focused on non-violent and non-damaging methods such as offering humanitarian assistance, while source D considers sanctions to be the “best peaceful option to punish those violating human rights”.
- The focus of Source C is on alleviating the problems of those most vulnerable ‘important to offer necessary humanitarian assistance and prioritize the needs and rights of vulnerable people’, while that of Source D is on punishing human rights violators, “Ultimately, sanctions are the best peaceful option we have to punish those violating human rights.”
- Source C believes that the sanctions caused by the politicization of human rights are detrimental to individuals and may not have an impact on removing dictators who are responsible for human rights abuses. Source D provides a contrasting viewpoint by mentioning that the regime of Nicolas Maduro was weakened. This could imply that the regime had less resources at its control to cause human rights violations.

Only points of contrast can be credited.

The origin/provenance of the source cannot be credited as a contrast unless accompanied by relevant source content.

The response should be written as a running contrast including clear content from sources C and D.

Award **[2]** per effective point of contrast up to a maximum of **[8]**.

Do not expect all of the points above, and allow other valid points.

4. Using **all** the sources **and** your own knowledge, discuss the claim that the politicization of human rights promotes justice.

[10]

The candidates are expected to make a link between how the politicization of human rights can impact the human rights of individuals. When doing so, candidates need to make an explicit connection to how this connects to justice.

*Question 4 is assessed according to the markbands that follow, in conjunction with these marking notes.*

*Source material may include, but is not limited to:*

**Source A**

- The source illustrates the weakness that even countries engaging in politicization may not have an ideal track record in human rights on their own territory. For example, the United States seems to have a neutral track record when protecting human rights which indicates that they may not be doing enough to ensure justice domestically.
- Source A illustrates the lacking enforcement of human rights and how this may contribute to lacking justice. This is shown by the many areas around the world where human rights are not effectively protected.

**Source B**

- The source argues that human rights have never been more politicized and yet this is not leading to a more just world.
- The source illustrates how states are prioritizing their own interests ahead of achieving justice for human rights.
- The source believes that human rights are under constant attack, implying that the politicization of human rights has not led to greater justice.

**Source C**

- Source C believes the politicization of human rights is endangering the human rights of others
- Source C illustrates that states are using human rights as a means of accomplishing their interests rather than working towards accomplishing justice as a final outcome.
- Source C emphasizes that despite the human rights violations in Belarus there was no justice achieved through sanctions as the sanctions just led to the regime to act more aggressively.
- Source C shows how attempts to politicize human rights can lead to less justice for individuals. As a result of states implementing sanctions on autocratic regimes, there may be more injustice as dictators use the armed forces to maintain control as they did in Myanmar.

**Source D**

- Source D believes that the politicization of human rights can have a positive impact on justice. It justifies this claim by arguing that there would be no awareness about the need to protect human rights without politicization
- Source D defends actions where the use of sanctions has caused scenarios where human rights violations lead to even less justice such as in the case of Venezuela.
- Source D justifies this with the poor conditions in Venezuela even prior to the sanctions being implemented.
- Source D establishes that sanctions are the best way of promoting human rights and justice internationally. In doing so, the source implies that this could help keep states accountable as the source also states that the international community is not doing enough to protect human rights.

*Own knowledge could include, but is not limited to:*

- Even when politicization of human rights leads to higher awareness for the need for more justice, this is not always the case. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, most of the countries either returned to some form of authoritarian government or were under long-standing conflicts.
- Implementing sanctions and providing support for protesters has been known to cause less justice. China hardened its stance towards Hong Kong after accusing Western countries of politicizing the protests taking place there, thus leading to less justice for the people of Hong Kong.
- Politicizing human rights is the only way actors from civil society can gain standing and legitimacy. As a result, they are then able to argue for more justice within a society.
- The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has not been codified in international law. Had this been done, the politicization of human rights would have had a more profound impact. Despite this, the politicization of human rights has helped raise awareness about the need to protect human rights and it just lacks a universal enforcement mechanism that would help achieve justice for human rights violations.
- Human rights are not truly universal or implemented consistently around the world. As a result, the politicization of human rights may lead to greater justice in democratic political systems where such a debate can take place with less potential for retaliation from the government.

Do not expect all of the above, and reward other relevant points not listed.

**Markbands for question 4**

Marks	Level descriptor
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.</li> </ul>
1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is little relevant knowledge and a very limited awareness of the demands of the question.</li> <li>● There is little or no attempt to synthesise own knowledge and source material.</li> <li>● Responses at this level are often largely descriptive and contain unsupported generalizations.</li> </ul>
3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is limited awareness of the demands of the question or the question is only partially addressed.</li> <li>● There is some knowledge demonstrated, but this is not always relevant or accurate, and may not be used appropriately or effectively.</li> <li>● Responses at this level are often more descriptive than evaluative.</li> </ul>
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answers show some awareness of the demands of the question.</li> <li>● Knowledge is mostly accurate and relevant, and there is some limited synthesis of own knowledge and source material.</li> <li>● Counterclaims are implicitly identified but are not explored.</li> </ul>
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answers are focused and show good awareness of the demands of the question.</li> <li>● Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated, there is some synthesis of own knowledge and source material, and appropriate examples are used.</li> <li>● The response contains claims and counter claims.</li> </ul>
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answers are clearly focused and show a high degree of awareness of the demands of the question.</li> <li>● Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated, there is effective synthesis of own knowledge and source material, and appropriate examples are used.</li> <li>● The response contains clear evaluation, with well-balanced claims and counter claims.</li> </ul>