

## The Federal Charter of 1291

In the name of God. Amen. Public esteem and welfare presuppose that charters of peace and order be made valid henceforth.

Thus, all people of the valley community of Uri, the entirety of the Schwyz valley and the community of people from the lower Unterwalden valley recognise the malice of the times and for their own protection and preservation they have promised to assist each other by every means possible with every counsel and favour, with persons or goods within their valleys and without against any and all who inflict on them or any among them acts of violence or injustice against persons or goods.

And each community has solemnly sworn to universally succour the others at its own expense in order to withstand and avenge malicious attacks and wrongdoings. They have thereby renewed the old oath of association, yet in such a manner that every man shall serve his overlord as it behoves him according to his estate.

We have further unanimously vowed and established that we in these valleys shall accept no judge who has gained his office for money or for any other price and who is not our resident or native.

Should disputes arise among any of the people bound by this oath, the most prudent among the confederates shall settle the conflict between the parties. All other confederates shall defend this verdict against anyone who rejects it.

Above all has it been established that anyone who intentionally slays another without provocation shall be sentenced to death unless he can prove his innocence; and those who flee shall never be allowed to return. Those who conceal and protect him shall be banished from the land until they are recalled by the confederates.

Anyone who injures another confederate by fire shall forever forfeit his rights as a fellow countryman and anyone who nourishes and protects such a perpetrator shall be liable for the damages to the one injured.

Anyone who steals from a confederate or injures him in any other way shall be held liable for damages to the extent of his possessions in the valleys.

No confederate shall seize the goods of another for debts, unless he is recognised as his debtor or surety, and even then only with permission from his judge.

Apart from that, every man shall obey his judge and, where necessary, indicate the judge in the valley before whom he must appear.

Anyone who disobeys a verdict and thereby injures another confederate as a consequence shall be compelled by all other confederates to give satisfaction.

Should war or conflict arise between confederates and should one party refuse to obey the verdict or to give proper satisfaction, all confederates are required to protect the acceding party.

God willing, these statutes shall endure forever. In witness thereof and at the request of the aforementioned parties, this charter has been created and confirmed with the seals of the three aforementioned communities and valleys. So undertaken at the beginning of the month of August in the year of the Lord 1291.