



Day 16 – A Day of Reflection

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Today is International Human Rights Day, the last day of the 16 Days of Activism. Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December — the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR is a milestone document that proclaims the inalienable rights which everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. What are these inalienable rights?

“Human rights are like armour: they protect you; they are like rules, because they tell you how you can behave; and they are like judges, because you can appeal to them. They are abstract – like emotions; and like emotions, they belong to everyone and they exist no matter what happens.

They are like nature because they can be violated; and like the spirit because they cannot be destroyed. Like time, they treat us all in the same way – rich and poor, old and young, white and black, tall and short. They offer us respect, and they charge us to treat others with respect. Like goodness, truth and justice, we may sometimes disagree about their definition, but we recognize them when we see them.” -- Council of Europe



This year's Human Rights Day theme relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on the need to “build back better” by ensuring Human Rights are central to recovery efforts. We will reach our common global goals only if we are able to create equal opportunities for all, address the failures exposed and exploited by COVID-19, and apply human rights standards to tackle entrenched, systematic, and intergenerational inequalities, exclusion and discrimination. We all need to take action to ensure EVERYONE has these rights, not just the

privileged few. We need to demand fair and equal laws and policies. We need to support organizations that promote human rights. As Eleanor Roosevelt stated, “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home -- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Take the time to reflect today on what you learned during the 16 Days of Activism and what changes you can make in the future reaffirm the importance of human rights in re-building the world we want and the need for global solidarity, as well as our interconnectedness and shared humanity.

