

Human Rights Day 2011

Human Rights Day on 10 December recognizes the work of human rights defenders worldwide who act to end discrimination. Acting alone or in groups within their communities, every day human rights defenders work to end discrimination by campaigning for equitable and effective laws, reporting and investigating human rights violations and supporting victims.

While some human rights defenders are internationally renowned, many remain anonymous and undertake their work often at great personal risk to themselves and their families. Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on 10 December. It commemorates the day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When the General Assembly adopted the Declaration, with 48 states in favor and eight abstentions, it was proclaimed as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations", towards which individuals and societies should "strive by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance".

Although the Declaration with its broad range of political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights is not a binding document, it inspired more than 60 human rights instruments which together constitute an international standard of human rights.

Today the general consent of all United Nations Member States on the basic Human Rights laid down in the Declaration makes it even stronger and emphasizes the relevance of Human Rights in our daily lives. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, as the main United Nations rights official, and her Office play a major role in coordinating efforts for the yearly observation of Human Rights Day.