

UN hails Human Rights Declaration as tool for conflict and poverty prevention

Adopted in Paris in 1948, the UDHR was drafted in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust. The text describes every individual's inalienable rights, through 30 carefully written articles.

Describing its “revolutionary impact”, UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said the Declaration “has permeated policies and constitutions, from the global level to national and regional frameworks”. He added that it had “unleashed the power of women’s full participation”, as well as “spurred the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance.”

Despite these important achievements, “that progress is under threat,” regretted Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. “In many countries, the fundamental recognition that all human beings are equal, and have inherent rights, is under attack. And the institutions set up by States to achieve common solutions, are being undermined.”

This lack of recognition is hampering the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and remains too often the root cause of various conflicts around the world, he said.

“We have ample evidence that state-sponsored human rights abuses are a sign of weakness, not strength. They are often precursors to conflict and even to collapse,” stressed UN chief Guterres.

The Secretary-General called on Governments that have not signed or ratified the two human rights Covenants, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, “to do so urgently”.

Every step towards greater implementation of the human rights agenda is an act of prevention – UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet

“Every step towards greater implementation of the human rights agenda is an act of prevention – strengthening the bonds between communities, and reinforcing inclusive development and peace,” said Ms. Bachelet. “Every step away from it tugs us down, towards suffering, injustice, hatred and conflict”.

Mr. Guterres, who [launched on Monday](#) a bold UN-wide strategy for the empowerment of global youth, entitled “Youth 2030”, stressed the important role that young people can play in the advancement of human rights worldwide.

“There is a special place in my heart for young women and men who are

speaking out for social justice”, he said, urging young people to bring their “energy and passion”, to challenge the ways that things are being done and “to take up the torch for our common humanity”.

“You are the true custodians of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the guarantee that it will not succumb,” he added.