



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

New Delhi, India. London, UK. Accra, Ghana

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations

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MEDIA STATEMENT HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – 10th December 2015

Today, December 10th, 2015, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative joins people, governments and organisations around the world in marking the 65th Human Rights Day.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on this day in 1948, much has changed—but the struggle to ensure dignity, equality and justice for all continues. As we approach 2016, the 50th anniversary year of the two International Covenants on Human Rights, we recommit ourselves to the values of these foundational documents.

We especially bear in mind that, for many, standing up for human rights comes with great risk. In many Commonwealth countries, this danger has sadly grown in recent years. For the individuals who work tirelessly to defend these universal values: today we stand most of all with you.

We stand with the journalists and activists harassed and prosecuted for the legitimate exercise of their freedoms of speech and assembly in Malaysia. We stand with the union members violently dispersed for peacefully meeting in Swaziland. We stand with the bloggers in Bangladesh, who face murder for speaking their minds and the organisations in Uganda facing the prospect of a further restricted legal environment under recently passed legislation.

We stand with advocates for LGBT rights in Cameroon, Nigeria and other countries where calls for equality are met with legal censure and violent threats. We stand with refugees and asylum seekers, who deserve protection, aid and dignity whether they arrive in Australia or India, Malta or Kenya.

We stand with all those, across the Commonwealth and around the world, working for a more equal, just and peaceful planet.

The struggle for dignity depends critically on these brave advocates. We pledge them our constant support and encouragement. And we commit ourselves to creating a world in which all can work towards the realization of human rights without fear.

In solidarity,

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative