

Celebrating 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[10th December](#) holds a special significance on the global calendar, as it marks Human Rights Day, a day dedicated to honouring the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This foundational document, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, articulates all human beings' inherent dignity and equal rights regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The [UDHR](#) is a landmark document in the history of human rights, and its creation was deeply influenced by the aftermath of World War II. The atrocities committed during the war with widespread human rights abuses prompted the international community to establish a framework for protecting fundamental human rights and preventing such atrocities from happening again.

The heart of the UDHR lies in the proclamation that "*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*" This foundational principle serves as a rallying cry against the systemic inequalities and prejudices that persist in societies worldwide. Reflecting on the progress made over the past 75 years, we recognise the ongoing challenges in ensuring these rights are universally recognised and protected.

The theme for this year's Human Rights Day, '[Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All](#),' sums up the essence of the UDHR. It urges us to contemplate the importance of upholding human rights as the cornerstone of a just and equitable society. The principles of dignity, freedom, and justice resonate with the ongoing efforts to create a world where every individual, regardless of background, enjoys these fundamental rights.

On the 10th of December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the UDHR as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and nations. This year marks the 75th

anniversary of this landmark declaration, a testament to the enduring relevance of its principles in guiding the collective conscience of humanity.

The UDHR, according to the United Nations, is a *"milestone document that proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being."* It encompasses civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, laying the foundation for a just and inclusive society, such as the right to equality, freedom from discrimination and freedom of belief and religion, right to free movement in and out of the country, right to desirable work, right to adequate living standard, and right to education, amongst others.

In the context of Malta, the [National Commission for the Promotion of Equality \(NCPE\)](#), as the national equality body, plays a crucial role in promoting equality and combating discrimination. The NCPE envisions a society which is equal and free from discrimination and champions inclusiveness whereby everyone, irrespective of their gender and family responsibilities, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, and gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics, can achieve their full potential.

The ongoing efforts to strengthen the NCPE's powers through the Equality Bill demonstrate Malta's commitment to addressing and preventing discrimination across various protected characteristics. This legislative initiative aims to provide stronger protection of rights and facilitate access to justice in cases of discrimination.

As we commemorate Human Rights Day, the words of [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) resonate profoundly: *"We must stand firm against rising intolerance and build a future of dignity, security, justice & human rights for all."* In the face of evolving challenges, these words serve as a call to action, urging us to collectively uphold the principles of the UDHR.

In the context of the current conflicts in different parts of the world, let us recommit ourselves to fostering a world where everyone's human rights are respected, protected, and upheld. May the principles articulated in the UDHR not remain mere words on paper but become a



lived reality for all. In honouring Human Rights Day, let us envision a future where dignity, freedom, and justice are not just aspirations but the bedrock of our shared humanity.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) can be contacted on: 2276 8200, equality@gov.mt or NCPE's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter - NCPE.Malta)

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