



Human Rights Day 2021

“The United Nations stands for the rights of every member of our human family. Today and every day, we will continue to work for justice, equality, dignity and human rights for all.” Antonio Guterres

Each year the world commemorates **December 10th as Human Rights Day** - the day on which the UN General Assembly of the UN adopted the Universal Declaration on Human rights in 1948. Translated into more than 500 languages, this globally accepted Declaration serves as the foundation for an expanding system of universally recognised human rights protections. These are at the core of the UN’s Agenda 2030 and our RSHM advocacy for a more just world. This year’s theme for the day focused on **“Equality”**



–**“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1).**

➔ Listen to the [video message of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) to mark the day.

Photography 4 Humanity is an annual international competition that calls on photographers around the world to submit images that bring to life the power of human rights with the aim of inspiring people to take a personal stand for human rights.

➔ [Visit the virtual exhibition](#) of winning photographs in 2021.

Harnessing the Potential of Human Mobility.



December marked the **70th Anniversary** of the founding of **IOM – the International Organisation of Migration**. Founded to assist the vast number of Europeans displaced by World War II, today it facilitates the humane and orderly migration of people on the move because of necessity, forced by harsh economic conditions, displaced by conflict, political instability and environmental degradation worsened by climate change as well as those who have chosen to migrate in an effort to improve conditions of life. In 2016, IOM joined the UN as a related agency, giving migrants a needed voice on the global stage.

Today IOM provides emergency support and guarantees the safety, dignity and wellbeing of people on the move in more than 100 countries. International Migrants Day – December 18th – was commemorated this year with the theme **“Harnessing the Potential of Human Mobility”**, in recognition of the positive role that safe, orderly and managed migration can play in sustainable development for countries of origin, transit and destination. In his message for the Migrants’ Day, Secretary General Antonio Guterres noted that *“Solidarity with migrants has never been more urgent”*. He went on to stress the need for more effective international cooperation and a more compassionate approach to migration.

➔ Watch the [IOM Video](#)
➔ Read [Pope Francis’ message](#) for the occasion.

Fast Facts - Inequality and human rights

- *The **COVID pandemic** pushed 119 to 124 million people into extreme poverty in 2020 and food insecurity has now risen to an unprecedented 2.38 billion people.*
- *Every day, women and girls are engaged in **12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work**. This represents an unvalued contribution of approximately \$10.8 trillion a year to the global economy.*
- *Prolonged school closings and inadequate learning opportunities during COVID means that 70% of children in low and middle income countries are in **learning poverty** as compared to 56% before the pandemic*
- *The annual **UN Peacekeeping budget** currently supports more than 100,000 peacekeepers helping to keep the peace in 13 operations on 3 continents. It’s budget is **less than 0.5% of global military spending**.*
- *For there to be **climate justice**, the **richest 1 %** of the global population must reduce their emissions by a factor of 30 while the **poorest 50%** can increase their emissions by a factor of 3.*

UN Security Council : Climate Change, Peace and Security



A recent debate in the **UN Security Council** brought to the fore the contentious power of the veto that is given only to the **5 permanent members of the Council – UK, USA, China, Russia and France**. In mid December, a resolution led by Ireland and Niger and co-sponsored by 113 other member states, sought to integrate climate-related security risk as a key component of United Nations strategies of conflict prevention, resolution and mediation. The resolution was intended to define climate change as a threat to international peace and consider its impact – revealed in droughts, sea-level rises, floods and other extreme weather events – in shaping conflict and displacement worldwide. The resolution would have ensured that the Council discusses

climate security on a regular basis in the future, Although 12 members of the Council voted for the resolution, it was blocked by Russia's veto. Speaking in her capacity as the **Permanent Representative of Ireland** to the United Nations, and co-leader of the resolution, Geraldine Byrne Nason, regretted the wielding of the veto and assured the Council that the issue would not be dropped. Referring to it's urgency, **US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield** expressed regret for the failure to take a "small but significant" step in addressing climate change. "Russia may have blocked this one resolution", she added, "but the global movement cannot be stopped".

➔ [Read more on climate, peace and security](#)

UN Global Plan of Action – Human Trafficking.

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2010, the **UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons** has served as a foundation for coordinated global action among member states to address the heinous crime of Human Trafficking. 178 Member states of the UN are now parties to the Plan. In a two day high level meeting on November 22nd and 23rd, the **UN General Assembly reviewed the progress** achieved in its implementation, including the UN Voluntary Trust Fund which supports grassroots NGO efforts around the globe to empower women and girls who have been victimized by human trafficking. Significant gaps, shortcomings and challenges in implementation were identified. Of particular note is the increasing use of technology for the exploitation and trafficking of children, which has tripled over the last 15 years. The rise in demand for online child exploitation materials has increased during **COVID**. At the same time the link between trafficking, terrorism and forced displacement – whether due to conflict or climate change - has become ever clearer. The need for urgent progress on coordinating international efforts to address cyber crime is evident, in order to break up criminal trafficking networks, make visible the illicit financial flows on which trafficking thrives and reduce impunity for offenders.

➔ Learn about the [UN Voluntary Trust Fund](#) for Victims of Human Trafficking.
➔ Read the [summary](#)



RSHM Briefs



Participating in the virtual **Girls' Speak Out** during the 2021 commemoration of the Day of the Girl in October was not limited to selected New York panelists. The **Working Group on Girls** made a call for short videos from girls around the world and a composite video created. We were delighted that several short videos were submitted by the RSHM social projects in Brazil and proud when excerpts from two of them were briefly featured in the summary video at the start of the formal UN event. The voices of girls from "**Projeto Vida Ir. Maria de Aquino (in Uba)** and **RSCM São Sebastião (Brasilia)** were heard in the United Nations and around the world! Congratulations!

➔ Watch the [summary video](#)
➔ And one [submission](#)



On 3rd December, **Veronica RSHM** participated in an **online consultation** on the impacts of climate change on the human rights of people in vulnerable situations. The consultation was being carried out by the **Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights** in preparation for writing of the Secretary General's report on the topic to the UN General Assembly. Thirty representatives from different NGOs listened to an introductory briefing and then offered concrete information and experiences to be considered in the preparation of the **Secretary General's report**.

Also in early December, **Veronica RSHM** was invited to share her experience of participation in **COP 26 in Glasgow** with four different **NGO Committees** to which we belong. Short presentations were given to **RUN (Religious at the UN)**, an **interfaith Climate Working group**, the **Mining Working Group** and the **NGO Committee on Financing for Development**.



- In November 2021, the **RSHM Institute** formally pledged our commitment to participate in a transformative 7 yr journey towards sustainability and integral ecology with the **Laudato Si' Action Platform!** Among other things, the **Laudato Si' Action Platform Commitment Statement** signed by **Sr. Margaret Fielding RSHM** marks our willingness as an Institute "to take bold concrete actions, both corporately and individually, to address the multiple crises afflicting our common home – the planet and its people...." On January 7th our **Institute JPIC NGO Committee** is meeting to reflect on steps we need to take prior to drawing up an Action Plan.
- ➔ [Read the commitment](#)

Distribution

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