



## Stand up for human rights on December 10

For nearly 70 years, Human Rights Day has been observed by the international community on December 10. It commemorates the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adoption in 1948 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.”

In 1950, the UN officially declared December 10 as International Human Rights Day. And it's on this day that the five annual Nobel Peace Prizes and United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights are traditionally awarded.

Human Rights Day serves as a reminder that every human being has basic rights that no one should violate. Unfortunately, human rights violations are still rampant all over the world – people are oppressed, incarcerated, marginalized and discriminated against because of their skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, and culture. Some are even killed.

As Canadians, some of our fundamental human rights include freedom of expression, association and opinion; participation in government; social equality; and no discrimination based on gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

In B.C., the new NDP-led provincial government has announced it will re-establish the Human Rights Commission – dismantled by the previous Liberal government. HEU strongly supports this move, and will be recommending that the new government include “social condition” as prohibited grounds for discrimination under the *Human Rights Code*.

The inclusion of social condition would recognize discrimination based on social or economic disadvantage that results from poverty, source of income, illiteracy and other circumstances.

HEU urges members to continue the fight for social, economic and human rights for everyone, and to stand up for our own rights and those of others. The UN theme for 2017 is *Stand Up for Human Rights*. Take the pledge at: <http://www.standup4humanrights.org>.

HEU's five equity standing committees and the union's Global Justice Subcommittee recognize the importance of continuing to educate members around human rights issues and advocate for protections against all forms of discrimination – at home and abroad.

Their work focuses on people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, ethnic diversity, women, and LGBTQ+ members.

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