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HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: OBSERVANCE OF THE THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ADOPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Secretary-General

In resolution 423 (V) of 4 December 1950 the General Assembly invited "all States and interested organizations to adopt 10 December of each year as Human Rights Day, to observe this day to celebrate the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948 and to exert increasing efforts in this field of human progress". It also invited all States to report annually through the Secretary-General on the observance of Human Rights Day.

Human Rights Day 1961, the thirteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration, was observed in many countries throughout the world. Reports were received on the observance of the thirteenth anniversary from nineteen countries. These reports are briefly summarized in the following pages.

Afghanistan

Human Rights Day was celebrated in the capital and provinces of Afghanistan. The importance of this day was stressed by speakers and newspapers. In Kabul, the day was celebrated at Kabul University, in the Ministry of Education, and at a meeting of the Newspaper Association.

Argentina

Human Rights Day was celebrated by governmental and non-governmental groups. Newspapers gave space and radio and TV stations allotted time to items commemorating the day.

Australia

The message of the Declaration of Human Rights was carried to large audiences through mass media. Press and radio coverage was arranged in all States and in the Australian Capital Territory and television programmes were broadcast in some States. In certain areas there were capital receptions and meetings commemorating the day. Churches were supplied with materials and requested to observe the day at Sunday services. The Minister of External Affairs made a statement on the occasion of the thirteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration.

Austria

Human Rights Day was celebrated at the Austrian "Liga für Menschenrechte", and at all Austrian universities and high schools. In other schools the attention of students was drawn to the meaning and importance of the day.

Cambodia

The Government sponsored observance of Human Rights Day.

The Head of the Government addressed the nation on the occasion of the anniversary of the Declaration.

Posters illustrating various articles of the Declaration were distributed throughout the country.

National colours, and those of the United Nations, were flown on public and private buildings. Throughout the night these buildings were illuminated.

Meetings and lectures were organized to celebrate the anniversary.

Ethiopia

The celebration of Human Rights Day was covered extensively in local newspapers, which also carried the Human Rights Day messages of the President of the General Assembly and of the Acting Secretary-General.

Iran

The Iranian Association for the United Nations reports that various aspects of human rights were dealt with at a press conference scheduled by the Association, in a television conference on human rights broadcast during the evening of 10 December, and in articles written by members of the Association and published in a number of newspapers and magazines. Brochures were distributed to the public. The Ministry of Education distributed materials to teachers and pupils all over the country.

Israel

The Director-General of the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture circulated materials to school principals, in which they were invited to explain the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to their pupils in the context of contemporary circumstances. The materials circulated also contained information for teachers on the history, aims and meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. A public meeting was held in Tel Aviv on 9 December 1961, and was addressed by the Chairman of the Israel Association for Human Rights.

Japan

The "Thirteenth Human Rights Week", ending on 10 December 1961, was observed in Japan. A nation-wide celebration was organized by various governmental agencies, in collaboration with semi-public and private organizations, and with the co-operation of the All-Japan Federation of Consultative Assemblies of Civil Liberties Commissioners. In addition to lectures, film showings, symposia, radio and television commentaries, posters, leaflets, pamphlets and newspaper articles, all of which were devoted to publicizing Human Rights Day, the week-long celebration was marked by the functioning of 1,877 special offices for receiving complaints of violations of human rights. These offices were located in department stores, public halls, municipal, town or village government buildings, and public temples.

Mexico

The observance of Human Rights Day was marked by a programme held at the "Palacio de las Bellas Artes" under the auspices of the Secretary of Public Education. Commemorative speeches were made by the Sub-Director General de Enseñanza Superior e Investigación Científica of the Department of Public Education, and the Director of the Information Centre of the United States.

Netherlands

Local UNESCO committees and the Netherlands Association for the United Nations in various localities drew attention to Human Rights Day by arranging lectures and promoting the publication of relevant articles in the press.

Pakistan

Human Rights Day was celebrated with commemorative radio programmes over various radio stations.

Republic of China

Human Rights Day was celebrated with a commemorative ceremony sponsored by the Chinese Association for the United Nations. On the eve of Human Rights Day, the President of the Association made a public address relating to human rights.

Turkey

The celebration of Human Rights Day was marked by numerous activities, including public conferences and ceremonies organized in all universities. The principal newspapers published special articles, drawing the attention of the public to the significance of the Declaration.

United Arab Republic

The Government requested all Ministries, services and organizations to duplicate last year's programme for the celebration of Human Rights Day on 10 December 1961. This included public lectures, film exhibitions, newspapers and magazine articles, public symposia, the distribution of human rights literature and radio broadcasting.

United States of America

The Department of State assumed the primary responsibility for encouraging observance of Human Rights Day throughout the country. On 9 December 1961, the President issued a Proclamation, designating the period from 10 to 17 December 1961 as Human Rights Week. The Governors of a majority of the States followed this example and issued similar proclamations, calling upon citizens of their respective States to observe the occasion. Government offices, schools, religious groups and local civic organizations all shared in making Human Rights Day and Week better known throughout the United States.

Uruguay

In observance of Human Rights Day, various official and non-governmental groups sponsored lectures, held meetings, and exhibited films relating to human rights. The press and radio gave coverage to the Day.

Yugoslavia

The celebration of Human Rights Day was observed throughout Yugoslavia, with the co-operation of government bodies, social organizations and the Federation of United Nations Associations of Yugoslavia.

A booklet relating to the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, together with the text of the Declaration, was prepared and sent to all schools. Lectures on the significance of the Declaration were given in all schools. In a large number of schools students participated in special programmes. Institutions, enterprises and military units also participated in the celebration.
