

EFPA press release: December 10, 2018: Human Rights Day

December 10th: 70 years of Human Rights - a declaration that should affect all individual, professional and political conduct

<http://efpa.eu/news/70-years-of-human-rights-a-declaration-that-should-affect-all-individual-professional-and-political-conduct>

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 'the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations' (Preamble of the General Declaration)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the following further important international covenants, like the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights deliver a framework of minimal standards that have to be fulfilled for every human being, like the rights to live, liberty and security. Human Rights are indivisible.

Fundamental for promoting wellbeing of mankind

Modern psychology and psychologists know, on the basis of their research and professional practice, that the rights formulated in the Universal Declaration are fundamental for the promotion of wellbeing of mankind. The observance of Human Rights is a precondition for individual health and development as well as for societies worthy of human beings. Rights violations often result in heavy bodily damages and psychological impairments. On the individual level, Human Rights violations lead to individual suffering, depression, trauma and suicide. Human Rights violations are also often a significant preceding condition for political and religious extremism and radicalization ending up in war, repression and terrorism. Thus, Human Rights violations do not only cause severe injuries for the victims but also affect societies on the whole.

Psychologists can help to overcome or at least reduce the most severe consequences of Human rights violations. They have expertise of handling depression and trauma and they apply this professional knowledge when they work, for example, in refugee camps. They know about the conditions to be fulfilled so that victims may feel integrated into society of humans again.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not only a framework of preconditions that have to be fulfilled for a humane life. The Preamble of the 1948 declaration continues: "... that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction." That means, the United Nations expect responsibility of individuals, organizations and states for the promotion and acceptance of Human Rights. In this respect, professional psychologists have a special responsibility since they also know a lot about the conditions that promote human rights violations, such as poverty, unnecessary propagation of fake news, construction of prejudice and artificial enemy images. Therefore, psychologists have to speak out in the public if they observe societal and political developments that use such strategies of which will end up in Human Rights violations and severe individual and societal consequences.

More:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 70 Years

Lecture of Prof. em Gert Sommer University Marburg (Germany) – Member of EFPA Board Human Rights and Psychology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg3eG2JjxCw&feature=youtu.be>

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