



December 9, 2020

## International Human Rights Day: Be Relentless in Your Fight!

December 10 is the day we commemorate the 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that sets out the fundamental rights of all human beings, irrespective of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

A fifth of the way through a new century, one might think we had progressed in this world. Unfortunately, people are still oppressed by colonialism, neoliberalism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and racism. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone the spotlight on the travesty of trampled rights. Most of the frontline workers who put their own lives at risk to make sure others are safe, come from oppressed groups, be they women, racialized people or working-class members who have insufficient protections and pay.

Meanwhile, 2020 was marked by police brutality against racialized people in Canada and the United States, although there are other places where racialized people are mistreated, brutalized and killed with regularity. With alarming ease and impunity, police robbed Black and Indigenous people of their lives. This list is tragically long.

There are jurisdictions in the world where the LGBTQ+ community still suffer and are killed at the hands of homophobic and transphobic leaders, police and fellow community members.

Those who are differently-abled remain marginalized and can have invisible conditions that we do not see while facing discrimination and a lack of opportunities.

Indigenous people have lived through what has been referred to as a genocide with a legacy of land theft, imprisonment, and the theft of their children, to say nothing of the brutality and torture they suffered at the hands of civilians and clergy alike, in residential schools.

The climate emergency disproportionately affects working class people everywhere, most notably people living in the Global South.

Storms, floods, fires, heat, famine and lack of potable water are all regular features of our scorched earth.

There is hope and resistance too, oppressed communities are rising to confront historical abuses. They require the rest of us to be allies to create a fair and equitable world that celebrates all humanity.

Human rights struggles and worker struggles go hand in hand. We must stand in solidarity with each other and ensure human rights are respected across the board. This means in our workplaces, our unions, our communities and beyond.

We must continue to fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by dismantling the fossil fuel oligarchy, pressure governments to step up the manufacture and production of green alternatives, and establish or protect collectively owned institutions that truly serve workers and the communities in which they live.

Today, CUPW calls on world leaders to take human rights seriously, and undertake a 'Just Recovery' for all people. This means dismantling neoliberalism and patriarchy, defunding the police, taxing the rich, and ensuring an equitable distribution of resources for all.

In solidarity,



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