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HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM - THE PRACTICE FOR CHANGING

10 December, 1948 was the day on which United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has become a universal standard to defend and promote human rights. It is observed every year around the globe as a special day among the peoples of the world. Because it was the day on which the fact that all human beings are born with equal dignity and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms was recognized thorough the Universal declaration of Human Rights, and spread to the world nations.

A theme is chosen every year for the Human Rights' Day. This year's theme of observance of the Human Rights' Day is "***inclusion and the right to participate in public life***". It was taken from Articles 19, 20, and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that elaborate on the right to freedom of expression and opinion, the right to freedom of assembly and association and the right to take part in government, either directly or through freely chosen representatives.

From the outset, the message "***Know your human rights***" from the United Nations was sent to the citizens of all countries; because human rights are the same for all, regardless of race, color, sex, language or religion. The message was important; because those who are aware of their rights would stand up for the realization of those rights. Learning about one's own rights builds respect for the rights of others, and shows the way to building a more tolerant and peaceful society. Knowledge of human rights also helps as a tool for the observance and the promotion of human rights. But, still

millions are suffering in the hands of dictators because of their low level of knowledge and understanding of their fundamental rights.

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted over 64 years ago, there have been dramatic advances in crafting different human rights instruments as covenants, conventions, protocols and treaties to be used for the realization or implementation of the Declaration. Today, there are about ten such international human rights instruments in place to be followed by the member states. These binding human rights documents, which were created at different times after 1948, were adopted by the majority of member states at UN General Assembly and open for signature and ratification to member states. Once it is signed and ratified by a member state, it the responsibility of the member state to implement and submit every four years a progress report on the protection and promotion of human rights in their territory. All international human rights instruments are delegated by independent committees created by UN and are responsible for monitoring the proper implementation of the documents by member states.

However, many signatory states have been seen while underperforming their responsibilities and duties to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms; and in the contrary becoming human rights violators. Today, millions of citizens are suffering in the hands of their own governments who claim they have a democratic system. Genocide, torture, abduction, killing, and kidnapping are some of the human rights violations still we witness after sixty four years of the declaration of human rights. All civil, economic, political, social, and cultural rights have been denied in such countries. When rights to adequate food, housing, employment, cultural life are denied and large group of people are excluded from the society's decision making processes, they are likely to follow social unrests. A very good example is the Arab Spring, which has been going on for over a year. Such conditions often facilitate the rise of justice conflicts, in which citizens demand that their basic needs be met.

Indeed, many conflicts were sparked or spread due to violations of human rights. For example, massacres or torture may inflame hatred and strengthen an adversary's

determination to continue fighting. Violations may also lead to further violence from the other side and can contribute to a conflict's spiraling out of control.

To stand up against the dictators, the civic organizations such as human rights organizations should play a decisive role in educating the people about their human rights. This can increase human rights activism which will bring change in practice as seen in the Middle East and North Africa countries from 2010 to present.

It seems that the UN needs to work towards changing its mechanism of monitoring the member states' human rights protection and promotion. Of course the activities of UN Human Rights Council should encourage the human rights activism. But, in practice the Human Rights Council condemns only the atrocious situations of human rights in different countries instead of taking practical measures. The respect of human rights should not depend only on the willingness of the member states. The member states also have responsibilities and duties to respect international human rights standards. So, we would like to recommend that the UN organization in general and the Human Rights Council in particular take more stronger steps, such as ranking the member states human rights protection and promotion performances along with some legal measure wherever and whenever needed. In order to take such decisive action, the UN Human Rights Council should first and foremost look within its internal organization. The Organization must clean itself from embracing human rights violator as its member states.