



The 61st Annual DPI/NGO Conference
“Reaffirming Human Rights for All: The Universal declaration at 60”

Midday Workshop : Reconciling State Security and Human Rights

Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Fellow NGO Delegations,
Esteemed Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Safety and security are elemental human needs.

For ages, individual security relied upon tribal security or larger communal body policy such as the sovereign state today. As it was then and as it is today, the state is duty-bound to repulse attacks, violations of its boundaries and peoples or institutions by military or police force, in disregard of life and liberty, or other interests being subdued.

This archaic idea, that state security has a pre-eminence over individual rights, stems from the monarchic system of government.

While this traditional understanding of security now for long has been abrogated by the constitutional system “of the people, by the people, for the people”, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizing, that all power resides in and emanates from the people, affirms the democratic system by stating: “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government...” (Art 21 (3))

Stressing the overall importance of dignity, worth of the human person, the spirit of brotherhood, the Declaration endows every human being with individual rights “ as a common standard of achievement...” such as right to life, liberty, security, exclusion of inhuman treatment, right to work, right to a standard of living adequate for the

health and well being for himself and of his family, including food, housing and medical care ...

In pursuance of the high standards of the Universal Declaration of HR, the Human Development Report of 1994 was the first to indicate that the scope of global security should comprise economic security, food -, health -, environmental -, personal -, community - and political security. By that it anticipated the reconciliation of state security and human rights as fostered in the broad approach to human security years later by the UN Commission on Human Security and now by the Advisory Board on Human Security.

For instance, in the Report "Human Security Now", issued by the Commission on Human Security in 2003, the scope of human security as protection was shifted to the well being, the empowerment of individuals, addressing people's dignity as well as their material and non-physical concerns.

Already before (in 2000), the MDG campaign was established, seeking to realize the absolute minimum of human security and global survival within a definite time limit (by 2015).

Clearly, the UN is the essential actor in motivating, monitoring and activating the implementation of the human rights throughout the world.

Yet, it is necessary to stress that the primary responsibility to guarantee and concretely enforce and protect human rights in respect of all citizens and those under its jurisdiction lies with each state. This implies that the protection and implementation of human rights depends on the norms and rules underlying and governing life in a society.

And it is our duty as NGO' s and participants of our society to observe, if legislation, judiciary and the executive of our own country is severe about implementing human rights as well as to establish a global human rights-based culture. This implies new structures, relying on reconciliation as the leading principle in safeguarding human rights. In order to approach the ideal state of life, the awareness of higher values and principles, such as sanctity of life and human dignity, respect for cultural diversity, religious tolerance and high-mindedness in all human activities and on all levels have to become the core of the endeavours.

Such a reconciliation-based culture of human rights requires broadening our mindsets. It needs our continuous vision of the simultaneousness of our own human rights as well as that of our fellows, it requires a permanent vision of the essence of life with the values connected to that and shared by all of us. And it obliges all of us to renew our own path to that essence each day again.

There will be no consistent human security without a new culture of embedding human rights in a reconciliatory process.

This is our own obligation and we have to demand this fusion of state security and human rights through a new reconciliatory culture from all who are responsible for the enforcement of human rights in our countries.

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