



DEMAND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The concept of Human Rights is a universal suffrage under the Habeas Corpus of 1948 given specific liberty and freedom from every form of inhibition and restriction. Human rights are the articulation of the need for justice, tolerance, mutual respect, and human dignity in all of our activity.

Human Right is at the very core of our values as human community. It is an intrinsic property of being human but the obligation for protecting such human rights rest on the institutions recognized by States' Authority. Institution such as Human Right Commission, Civil Liberties Organisations, Public Complaint Commission, Bill of Rights, Law Courts, Civil Police, NGOs etc are few of the recognized authorities established by statute, laws and bye-laws to protect, safeguard and ensure the confinement of all concern in making available enabling environment to enjoy such inalienable rights of people without fear of molestation or intimidation.

Similarly, countries in West Africa sub-region and Africa in particular have age long history of poor level of absolute implementation of fundamental components enshrined in human rights. As the region is confronted with frequent intimidating and discomfoting trend of insurgency couple with lack of transparency among the public office holders, and loaded with litany of reports of acute human rights abuses perpetrated by both the insurgents and state actors in the fragile communities, it becomes imperative to guard against subversion and indiscriminate violation of these privileges and rights by the perpetrators that undermine the rule of laws.

Also, taking into account that failure of State's authority to guarantee socio-economic rights leads to the inability of citizens to effectively enjoy civil rights and political liberties stipulated by the National constitutions and international human rights instruments. The extreme part of human rights violation is evident in forms of economic breakdown and oppression violate rights to self-determination and often contribute to further human tragedy like sickness, starvation, and lack of basic shelter. The breakdown of government institutions often result into denial of civil rights, including the rights to privacy, fair trial, and freedom of movement. In many cases, government is increasingly militarized, police and judicial systems are corrupted. Abductions, arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, political executions, assassinations, and torture often follow. All these vices are endemic to provide suitable environment to benefit from the provisions of human rights.

It is evident that the pervasive culture of impunity which begets the insidious combination of corruption, marginalization, systemic poverty and the serious human rights violations, we have been experiencing, pushes people to the edge of normality towards radicalized world views and violent extremisms.

States must create conflict resolution mechanisms and explore the potential in human right advocacy for deconstructing the rhetoric of hate speech and violent extremisms that pervades the region. Genuinely, embracing continuous intergenerational, intercultural and interfaith dialogues, particularly those engaging young people, rather than resorting to mortal and disproportionate militarized responses, can bring our communities closer to dousing inherent tensions and help in forging a path of mutual understanding and sustainable development.

With enormous resources constraint and limited opportunities at people's disposal, concerned citizens shall continue to reject every attempt to undermine human rights. In reality, masses and less-privilege people are exploited and repressed by minority rich rulers, who are powerful enough to access the legal frameworks at the expense of the public when such rights are violated.

Government of nation should be more sensitive to the needs of people and existing conflicts. Since the structures and institutions of governance are weak, there is need to review policies and introduce acceptable measures of preventing rights abuses and violation to enrich the larger society.

IVS' work recognizes the importance of human rights to achieve peace and development. CCIVS initiated the 'raising peace' campaign in 2014 to stimulate member organisation to promote human rights and peace globally. This has seen many organisations make an important and critical step towards assuring human rights and privileges for all. Several campaigns and partnership projects have been undertaken by the global and regional networks in this perspective. In a way, through workcamps and IVS actions, more awareness and dissemination of useful packages to reduce frequent conflicts prevalent in the larger community.

Meanwhile, many partners and NGOs in the continent have been working with other NGOs to advocate and educate the populace on provisions of Human Rights. The CBOs and VYOs have scaled down local and regional trainings / workshops to empower young leaders as advocates in promoting Human Rights Education, through non-formal, informal and formal educational approaches. By means of Raising Peace Campaign groups, Peace Messengers, Peace Builders and Peace Defenders of various networks, members of CCIVS in the sub-regional networks of Africa (WAVAN-West, EAVSN-East, SAWC-South and MENA-North) and beyond have immensely contributed to raising peace at all level.

Young professionals are empowered to engage others in learning about human rights thereby understanding the dimension and how to access their rights. Voluntary service can have more impact in human rights protection by working in conflict zones with Internally Displaced Persons (in conflict zones) and in the most marginalized urban communities (slums). However in these challenging context and face of lack of institutional support and recognition, major challenge confronting implementation of various actions is lack of funding and needed resources to work at the grassroots level.

It is pathetic to note that despite of the comportment of the citizenry to ensure free and fair election in some countries in Africa, there still exists the oppressive rule in some countries to subvert the mandate of the populace. Election cancellation, political manipulation, inequality distribution of resources and other vices has culminated in breaking down the trust in the governance to bring about public demonstration against oppressive rule. In the midst of this difficult situation with very toxic and polarized political atmosphere, rights and freedom of innocent citizen are suppressed. Pathetic to note that combine efforts of the NGOs and Civil Liberty organisations to ensure and guarantee enjoyment of these rights have at different times been fiercely opposed by the totalitarian leadership.

In conclusion, despite several treaties, conventions such as United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (domesticated as Cap. 10, LFN 1990) with the individual countries constitutions and establishment of formal and informal legally recognized civil liberties and NGO organisations, it is a panda that citizen full rights are still kept in the casket.

The various global, regional and sub-regional networks need to jointly rekindle the interest to combine resources and forces through various actions and projects to educate the masses, less-privilege communities and opinion leaders, students and youths on civil way of approaching human rights violation and abuses particularly in the complex continent of Africa with multi-ethnic groups polarized with multiple cultures.

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