



Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All

Statement from ITUC-Africa on Human Rights Day 2023

As we commemorate Human Rights Day 2023, ITUC-Africa stands resolutely committed to championing the principles of freedom, equality, and justice for all individuals across the African continent. This year's theme, "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All," encapsulates the fundamental aspirations of human rights laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

The UDHR, a seminal document in the quest for global human rights, has been instrumental in guiding nations and organisations toward ensuring the protection and promotion of human dignity. Over the years, it has expanded its scope to include marginalised and vulnerable groups, recognising the rights of persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants, and other disadvantaged populations.

Regrettably, the noble promise of dignity and equality guaranteed by the UDHR faces mounting challenges, particularly within the African context. Despite commendable strides in advancing human rights, the continent continues grappling with hurdles that undermine these fundamental principles.

Africa finds itself at a critical juncture, confronting multifaceted challenges that erode the rights and freedoms of its people. The continent bears witness to a distressing trend of diminishing space for human rights, manifested through various socio-economic and political upheavals. The widening gap between the affluent and the impoverished has been exacerbated by the skyrocketing cost of living, worsening inequality and undermining the foundational principles of equality enshrined in the UDHR.

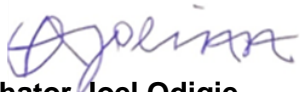
Moreover, the African working class confronts an intensified onslaught on their rights. The assault on freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, essential pillars in ensuring fair and equitable labour practices, has reached alarming levels. This infringement on the rights of workers not only stifles their ability to organise and advocate for better working conditions but also perpetuates a cycle of exploitation and inequality.

In alignment with the year-long Human Rights 75 initiative, ITUC-Africa remains steadfast in its unwavering commitment to raising awareness about the universality of the UDHR. This initiative aims to galvanise robust activism and concerted efforts to protect and uphold all individuals' fundamental rights and freedoms in Africa.

We urgently call upon governments, regional bodies, civil society organisations, and all stakeholders to reinvigorate their dedication to safeguarding human rights on the African continent. Collective action and solidarity are imperative in addressing the pressing issues of our time, including pandemics, conflicts, escalating inequalities, a flawed global financial system, racism, and the existential threat of climate change.

By reaffirming our commitment to freedom, equality, and justice, we can forge a path towards a fairer, more inclusive society in Africa that respects and upholds every individual's inherent dignity and rights.

We shall remain seized and vigilant in ensuring the enjoyment of the provisions of the UDHR. We shall commend reasonable efforts towards the enjoyment of rights and call out egregious acts whilst standing ready to collaborate with progressive actors in fashioning and deploying actions to achieve social justice for all.



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GENERAL SECRETARY

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