

Justice Cyriac Joseph

(Former Judge, Supreme Court of India)

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National Human Rights Commission

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**HUMAN RIGHTS DAY MESSAGE FROM SRI JUSTICE
CYRIAC JOSEPH, ACTING CHAIRPERSON, NHRC INDIA**

Tomorrow (10th December) is Human Rights Day. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December, 1948. It is to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to spread awareness about human rights and to motivate people and governments to protect and promote human rights that 10th December is observed as Human Rights Day. On this year's Human Rights Day, the U.N. Human Rights Office is launching a year-long campaign with the slogan : "Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always."

In simple words, human rights means all rights and freedoms essential for a person to live with dignity. In India, protection of human rights is a Constitutional value and a Constitutional goal and it is the Constitutional obligation of the State to uphold and protect human rights. This is evident from the Preamble of the Constitution of India and the Articles relating to the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy. Protection of human rights is the duty of a citizen as well. Article 51A(a) of the Constitution commands that it shall be the duty of every citizen to abide by the Constitution



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and to respect its ideals and institutions. This duty can be performed by a citizen only through upholding and protecting human rights, which is a Constitutional value and a Constitutional goal.

The National Human Rights Commission was constituted in the year 1993 for better protection of human rights. The Commission is committed to the protection of human rights and the protection of the rights of Human Rights Defenders. During the last 22 years, the Commission, with the assistance and cooperation of Human Rights Defenders, spread better awareness about human rights, tried to prevent violation of human rights and extended relief to the victims of violation of human rights. On the eve of the Human Rights Day, the Commission rededicates itself to continue with more vigour its mission to promote and protect human rights of every person, within the territory of India.

On the occasion of observing Human Rights Day, on behalf of the National Human Rights Commission, I appeal to the Central and the State Governments to discharge their Constitutional obligation to uphold and protect human rights. I also appeal to all my brothers and sisters in India to perform their duty to protect human rights. Such protection of human rights by a citizen has two dimensions:-

- (i) He/she should not directly or indirectly violate the human rights of others;



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- (ii) He/she should act as a Human Rights Defender, to prevent violation of human rights of others and to protect the victims of any violation of their human rights.

Let us join hands to create a better society in which the human rights of every individual will be safe and protected.

New Delhi
9th December, 2015

Justice Cyriac Joseph
Acting Chairperson