



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2020
“RECOVER BETTER: STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS”
10 December 2020

Message of UN Secretary-General António Guterres

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced two fundamental truths about human rights.

First, human rights violations harm us all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups including frontline workers, people with disabilities, older people, women and girls, and minorities.

It has thrived because poverty, inequality, discrimination, the destruction of our natural environment and other human rights failures have created enormous fragilities in our societies.

At the same time, the pandemic is undermining human rights, by providing a pretext for heavy-handed security responses and repressive measures that curtail civic space and media freedom.

The second truth highlighted by the pandemic is that human rights are universal and protect us all.

An effective response to the pandemic must be based on solidarity and cooperation.

Divisive approaches, authoritarianism and nationalism make no sense against a global threat.

People and their rights must be front and centre of response and recovery. We need universal, rights-based frameworks like health coverage for all, to beat this pandemic and protect us for the future.

My Call to Action for Human Rights spells out the central role of human rights in crisis response, gender equality, public participation, climate justice and sustainable development.

On Human Rights Day and every day, let's resolve to act collectively, with human rights front and centre, to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and build a better future for all.
