

Justice Institute Guyana
Statement on the occasion of the
Walk for Equality
in celebration of Human Rights Day
10th December 2012

The Justice Institute Guyana was set up to promote the rule of law, to increase access to justice, and to work for social and environmental justice.

We believe that each and every human being has dignity. That dignity must be respected. Human dignity is respected through recognising and enforcing human rights.

We celebrate today the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the 10th December 1948. This declaration aimed to turn mankind away from the genocide, murder and horrors of the second world war. It aimed to create a new world based on respect for one another. Respect for friends and family. Respect for neighbours. But respect also for strangers. Respect for those who are different. Respect even for those we do not like.

Human rights are rights that all human beings have. They include the right to life, freedom from torture, freedom from slavery, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom from discrimination, the right to education and the right to equal protection of the law.

A civilised society respects the fundamental human rights of others.

An uncivilised society violates the rights of those it does not like.

The Constitution of Guyana, protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of all. Today, we are proud to walk through the streets of our national capital in celebration of human rights.

But let us also remember there is much to be done. There are still too many violations of human rights in Guyana. Access to justice remains a serious problem. The courts are too slow and too expensive for many. Our system of justice needs to be improved.

But we ourselves must also show greater respect for the rule of law, for one another and for the land of our birth.

Human rights carry with them human responsibilities.

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