



## **Edinburgh Declaration**

### **Renewing our Commitment to Human Rights**

08 September 2018

As we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, we, the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI), meeting at the University of Edinburgh on 8 September 2018, call for firm and unreserved human rights engagement in times of turmoil. We need to confront and to respond to the wave of racism, populism and violent language we see in politics, the media and society. We reject the anti-human rights ideas which have entered mainstream political discourse. Humanity should always trump nationality. We strongly reaffirm the universality and indivisibility of all human rights as the foundation of international peace, sustainable development and human dignity.

We should engage with today's rather than yesterday's battles. But, are the challenges truly different than they were 70 years ago? The drafters of the Universal Declaration found that 'disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind.' In response to the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, world leaders in 2005 unanimously decided that governments and the international community have a responsibility to protect populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Today, we are appalled by the fact that the international community again is allowing gross and systematic human rights violations, including genocide, to happen before our eyes. We are also deeply disturbed by the attacks against human rights defenders in Colombia, Venezuela and countless other countries. As we meet, we cannot fail to be shocked by the outrageous war crimes in Syria, South Sudan and Yemen and the ongoing genocide of the Rohingyas. We call upon States Parties to the Genocide Convention to hold both individual perpetrators and States responsible for violations with a view to preventing and stopping them and to seek accountability and reparation.

In line with the Universal Declaration we, as a global network of academic human rights institutes, call on every individual and every organ of society to stand up for a new social and international order in which all human rights can be fully and effectively realized.