



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

**TO ALL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS  
TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Brussels, 6 December 2012

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**10 December - Human Rights' Day**

Dear Colleagues,

As trade unions mark the International Day for Human Rights on December 10<sup>th</sup>, Education International pays tribute to teachers and education workers around the world who fight for the right to live and work in dignity, for the freedoms of expression, assembly and association, the right to bargain collectively, and for all other democratic rights.

As citizens, professionals or union activists, they contribute actively to on-going struggles to secure and advance rights across all areas of social and political life. They advocate for equal opportunities, quality public education, social justice and the achievement of all human rights standards, sometimes risking prosecution, imprisonment or worse, as is the case today in countries such as Iran, Turkey, Bahrain, Colombia, Djibouti, Swaziland and Fiji

In 2012 education unions in all parts of the world have reported many infringements of international human rights conventions and recommendations as well as serious attacks on trade unions and their freedoms. In some countries hit by the economic and debt crisis, those freedoms, particularly in the public sector, have been restricted when austerity measures were taken without consultation with employees' organizations, or when collective bargaining rights were revoked altogether, including the right to resort to industrial action. In Southern and Eastern Europe, in the Arab countries, in the United States and in many other places education unions mobilized their members to remind the public authorities of their duty to respect the values that underpin democratic societies.

Respecting the democratic rights of teachers will also help the profession carry out its professional responsibility to impart democratic values and human rights principles to future generations, bearing in mind that "freedom is always only one generation away from extinction" (Ronald Reagan).

Education International is the voice of the teaching profession in the international community. It challenges every single abuse of teachers' rights with the appropriate UN agencies. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, education unions around the world stand up with all those men and women showing commitment and courage to demand universal respect for fundamental rights, thereby strengthening democracy and social justice worldwide.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary