

Speaking at the Martin Ennals Award ceremony for human rights defenders, in Geneva, the High Commissioner said, «The Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders has become an important annual event for the human rights community, in this city which is so central to the architecture of the international system of human rights. We are here to recognize those who are extraordinary, who capture our imagination, like our nominees. There are of course tens of thousands of women and men - and children -who like them defy discrimination, corruption, the arbitrary abuse of power and every other kind of human rights violation, on the part of authorities of every weight and stripe - from school boards to community councils, from corporations to ministries - who have forgotten that they should serve the people.» He also commented, «Until we squeeze violence out of the human system altogether, and replace it with reason and kindness, compassion and common sense, we will live in the long shadows of a threatened life.»

Full text of the speech HERE:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15153&LangID=E>

Opening the 6th session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards, on discrimination and racism, the HC said, «The world is churning in turmoil; and in many States, there appears to be a rising tide of racism and xenophobia, with frightening implications. Discrimination, distinction, exclusion and marginalization on several grounds threaten the peacefulness and stability of societies. They infringe the enjoyment of civil and political rights, and impede the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Today we see that individuals are persecuted, even murdered because they believe in a religion other than their persecutors, or do not believe in any, or belong to a particular ethnic group, or have certain skin colour. We all have the responsibility to think about what we can do to make the world safer place for them... More progress is essential»

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