

Do we live in Peace? Human Rights Cities, Democracy and Practice
2017 World Human Rights Cities Forum, Gwangju

Local voices for Human Rights

#Cities4Rights



UCLG Committee
on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights



World Human Rights Cities Forum

2017 세계인권도시포럼

The **World Human Rights Cities Forum** is an international forum held annually in Gwangju, aimed at promoting the world human rights cities network and the values of the “*Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City*”

[Know more about the Forum](#)

[Read the principles](#)

Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights Cities

- 1) *Right to the City*
- 2) *Non-discrimination and affirmative action*
- 3) *Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity*
- 4) *Participatory Democracy and Accountable Governance*
- 5) *Social justice, solidarity and sustainability*
- 6) *Political leadership*
- 7) *Human Rights mainstreaming*
- 8) *Effectiveness and Policy coordination*
- 9) *Education and training*
- 10) *Right to remedy*

What is the Gwangju Spirit?

Gwangju is a city known for its public spirit and strong commitment with human rights. Its citizens have collectively fought against injustice on many occasions, such as the 1980 Gwangju uprising: a mass protest against South Korea's military government that gathered nearly a quarter of a million people.



"Although brutally repressed and initially unsuccessful in bringing about democratic reform, the 1980 uprising is considered to have been a pivotal moment in the South Korean struggle for democracy"

Encyclopaedia Britannica

[Know more about the May 18 Uprising](#)



The **Gwangju Human Rights Office** was the first office of its kind in Korea. It has created a master plan for a "*Human Rights City*" including the vision, strategy and practical tasks for its development.

What is the Gwangju Spirit?



Yoon Jang Hyeon

Mayor of Gwangju



[Read Mayor Yoon speech on the Right to participate](#) and see [our full news](#) about it

“Gwangju brings with pride the spirit of the city in the promotion of Human Rights, peace and democracy through all its history; that is why we promote the World Human Rights Cities Forum, to demonstrate that cities are key to defend and fulfil Human Rights”

2017 edition: Do we live in peace?

The WHRCF 2017 edition gathered more than 700 participants. It hosted **two** plenary sessions, **nine** thematic sessions and **seven** special sessions and events focused on “*exploring implementable measures to expand and strengthen participatory democracy and civil autonomy as a practical mechanism for guaranteeing human rights*” as well as on “*seeking a human rights-based approach to the right to the city (...) as a way to overcome social conflicts and to build tolerant cities*”

[Check the overview to the 2017 edition](#)



[Check the programme](#)

Check the Forum's final declaration in

[French](#)

[Spanish](#)

[English](#)

*“The **Right to the City** has become a shared vision for local governments and civil society organizations where to work together for the same goals; nonetheless, **strong social movements** are still necessary to fight for **social, economic and cultural rights** such as the **Right to Housing**”*



Irene Escorihuela

Directress at the Observatori DESC on Social,
Economic and Cultural Rights

Explore the work of the [Barcelona-based Observatori DESC](#)



“Bethlehem, the **city that spreads peace**, love and justice to the whole world, **does not live in peace** due to the arbitrary measures of Israeli occupation; walled with discrimination, continuous land confiscation and multiple checkpoints along the way, **our daily life is drastically affected**”

Anton Salman

Mayor of Bethlehem (Palestine)

Read [Mayor Salman speech on Palestinian cities under Israeli occupation](#)

Participatory democracy and Human Rights Cities Special session



This **plenary session** gathered local authorities from Indonesia and France, as well as scholars and activists from Korea's Candlelight Movement, Spain's Right to Housing movement and the Global Platform for the Right to the City. It aimed at discussing **how can local governments and civil society collaborate in advancing participatory democracy at the local level** in a moment where *“human rights are threatened by neoliberalism, authoritarianism and militarism”* all over the world.

Read [the session's concept paper](#)

Fatou Houel

UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights



“The Office of the High Commissioner has already stressed the importance of local governments in implementing human rights. In the following years it will continue to engage with them and their representing network, UCLG, supporting all their initiatives aimed at making cities places to live in security, dignity and peace”

Read the Human Rights Council Report
[“Local Administration and Human Rights”](#)

Bernard Macret

Deputy Mayor of Grenoble on International Relations

*“Grenoble resists and **wants to be a welcoming and solidary city** towards migrant population. The City Council has created a **Foreign Residents’ Consultative Council** to enhance their participation in local decision-making on the basis of residence. A foreign residents’ guide has also been published to brief migrants on the **universal rights** they hold”*



Know more about the [Conseil Consultatif des Résidents Étrangers Grenoblois](#)



Promoting Human Rights, Peace and Democracy in Asia

The Forum was a good opportunity to bring forward the **human rights cities agenda in Asia**. Local governments and leaders from South Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal and India were well represented in the Forum. A motion was adopted denouncing **the situation of Rohingya people and human rights defenders in the Philippines**, calling for the international community's attention. A motion also called for a **diplomatic resolution** of the conflict between the United States and North Korea, as well as to advance the agenda for **peace and reconciliation between the two Koreas**. The process of boosting the **Asian Human Rights Charter** (1998) was advanced in several meetings during the Forum and received wide attention by worldwide local leaders and press.

*“Global problems demand local actions: in Mexico City we approved **a new Constitution that is based on Human Rights and the Right to the City**, mainstreaming these values into all our local action. Our city is equally engaged in **fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals at the local level**”*

Stefany Campins
Social Development
Secretariat of Mexico City



Read [Mexico City's 2016 Constitution](#)

Mauricio Valiente

Deputy Mayor of Madrid on Human Rights



See [Madrid's Strategic Plan for Human Rights in the City](#)

*“Human Rights **should be a priority** for every local administration; because when we speak about rights we speak about **daily needs** of our citizens (...) In Madrid we developed a **Strategic Plan for Human Rights in the City** aimed at mainstreaming the Human Rights approach into local action in order to turn citizens from policy recipients into **human rights holders**”*

Mainstreaming Human Rights!

The 2017 Forum hosted up to **nine** thematic sessions with representatives of **more than twenty** nationalities. These thematic sessions were focused on (T1) **City and gender**, (T2) **Social Economy and Community Vitalization**, (T3) **City and Elderly**, (T4) **City and Child**, (T5) **Village Democracy**,

(T6) **City and Environment**, (T7) **State Violence and Human Rights**, (T8) **Disability and Human Rights**, (T9) **Migrants, refugees and Human Rights**.

Read [the concept notes of all thematic sessions](#)



Magali Fricaudet

Coordinator of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy and Human Rights



Explore [the work of the UCLG-CISDP Committee](#)

*“For local governments, Human Rights **are strong principles for democracy and governance**. Proposing guiding principles in this regard constitutes the basis for **a renewed social contract between elected officials and citizens** at the local level (...) When calling **for more decentralization**, local governments should also **reclaim all the necessary resources** to be able to fulfil these rights. Otherwise, in a moment of harsh budgetary cuts, this **would actually threaten human rights fulfilment**”*

Emmanuel Carroz

Deputy Mayor of Grenoble on Rights Equality



Read [Grenoble's guide on foreign residents' Rights](#)

*“Local authorities **face restrictive control mechanisms** from the national level preventing them from developing an **inclusive idea of local democracy** (...) We only want our country to respect the first sentence of its own Constitution, which states that **people born and live equal in Rights**. We don't care if someone is a woman, a migrant or LGBTI, we just want this sentence to be true”*

Village and Democracy

Special session

The **Village and Democracy session** explored concrete ways to implement participatory democracy mechanisms at the city level, with a special focus on the Korean scenario after the Candlelight Movement. The Korean [WAGL](#) platform and [Decide Madrid](#) were presented as

positive examples in this regard. Miguel Arana, from Decide Madrid, noted how *“citizen participation is deeply related with Human Rights, that is why Madrid developed its Plan for Human Rights in the City hand by hand with its citizens”*



See [our full interview with Miguel Arana on Decide Madrid](#)

Michael Scott

United States Human Rights Cities Alliance

*“Although Human Rights are openly dying in the United States, we have **also seen an increase of local mobilization** and the importance of **local administration in promoting Human Rights**. More space and **concrete participation mechanisms** should be cleared for civil society organizations in this regard”*



Know more [about the National Human Rights Alliance](#)

*“It is vital that the **Right to the City** and **Human Rights** are well included in **global agendas** for sustainable development; in order to make them effective on the ground, however, we must count with **communities participation**, encouraging and recognizing their contribution. Local governments **have a key role to play** in tackling this gap”*

Explore the [work of Kota Kita Foundation](#) and [its outcome of the 2017 WHRCF](#)



Kaori Cabrera
Kota Kita Foundation
(Indonesia)

Sweden's Human Rights policy

A Plenary Session was devoted to **showcase the Swedish system of Human Rights protection**. It counted with a varied representation of Diplomats, a representative from the city of Lund, as well as scholars and activists from organizations such as the [Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights](#), the Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility and the University of Gothenburg.



Mugiyanto

Senior programme officer at INFID (Indonesia) and representative of Asia Democracy Network

*“Several factors pervade Human Rights fulfillment at the local level: **corruption, lack of corporate accountability** in the light of human rights as well as **weak institutional leadership**. Local action and commitment between communities, local governments and the national level can effectively tackle these phenomena and build sustainable human rights cities’ systems”*



Know more about [INFID](#) and [Asia Democracy Network](#)

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Sources: UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights & World Human Rights Cities Forum