

<http://www.un.org/en/events/righttotruthday/2015/sgmessage.shtml>

International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims 24 March

Secretary-General's Message for 2015

Earlier this year, I had the honour of paying my respects at the gravesite of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was murdered in El Salvador on this day in 1980. Monsignor Romero was an icon for human rights and social justice.

Every year, the United Nations marks the anniversary of his death by honouring the memory of the victims of gross human rights violations and promoting the importance of the right to truth and justice.

The right to the truth – which is both an individual and collective right – is essential for victims but also for society at large. Uncovering the truth of human rights violations of the past can help prevent human rights abuses in the future.

That is why the United Nations supports fact-finding missions, commissions of inquiry, and truth commissions to uncover the truth about gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law. We work to promote justice, propose reparations, and recommend reforms of abusive institutions.

Over the last twelve months, the United Nations supported Commissions of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the recent conflict in Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic. We are also providing advice and assistance to a number of transitional justice processes, including in Cote d'Ivoire and Tunisia. I once again call for the full implementation of recommendations of commissions of inquiry and truth commissions.

The best way to honour Monsignor Romero's legacy of fighting for human rights and human dignity is by taking concrete action to fulfil the right to truth and other fundamental human rights in our time. On this vital day, let us together pledge to help victims, their families and societies realize their right to truth and protect all who strive to see the truth prevail.

Ban Ki-moon