



# BOLETIM SOBRE DIREITOS HUMANOS



<https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu>

[www.cddmoz.org](http://www.cddmoz.org)

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 | Year V, NO. 295 | Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga | English

## Asserting and Affirming the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as Beacons of Hope – Emeritus Professor Mohamed Salih’s Masterclass



### Introduction

In a session filled with urgency and deep concern, Emeritus Professor Mohamed Salih, Emeritus Chairperson of the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD), reflected on the escalating global human rights crisis. Drawing on his decades of experience in human rights and democratic governance, Prof. Salih warned of a significant

rise in human rights violations, particularly those concerning civil and political rights, often referred to as first-generation rights. He emphasized the critical need to reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which continue to serve as beacons of hope for humanity.



Addressing CDD’s young human rights activists during the 90-minute session, Prof. Salih identified four interlinked forces threatening the global protection of human dignity: extremism, exclusivism, selectivism, and populism. He explained that these forces are symptoms of deeper socio-political and economic crises, fueling human rights abuses and posing significant challenges to the international order. Prof. Salih argued that, in these turbulent times, it is more critical than ever to “assert and affirm” the UN Charter and UDHR as a powerful testament to our enduring belief in human rights.

### **Extremism**

Prof. Salih began his analysis by addressing the global rise of extremism, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, which saw an upsurge in violence and the growth of radical movements. He noted that extremist groups, including neo-Nazis, neo-fascists, and far-right organizations, are often driven by a toxic combination of extreme nationalism and religious fundamentalism. He highlighted parallels between the global economic instability that followed the Great Depression of 1929 and more recent economic crises, both of which have contributed to the rise of scapegoating—especially of refugees and immigrants.

“Extremism feeds on fear and division,” Prof. Salih warned, emphasizing that these ideologies not only threaten peace and stability but also erode the fundamental human rights protections established to safeguard human dignity. He called for global cooperation to tackle the root causes of extremism, such as poverty, inequality, and disenfranchisement, urging that human rights be central to these efforts.

### **Exclusivism**

Prof. Salih then turned to exclusivism, which he defined as the practice of political movements or governments prioritizing the interests of certain groups while systematically marginalizing others. This exclusion, he noted, is a direct violation of the core principles of equality and non-discrimination that underpin international human rights. Quoting from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Prof. Salih reminded the audience that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

He warned that exclusivism threatens not only social cohesion but also the democratic institutions meant to protect human rights. “When societies are divided by political, so-



cial, or economic lines, the first to suffer are the marginalized,” Prof. Salih observed. To counter this, he emphasized the urgent need to reaffirm inclusivity and equality as fundamental tenets of democratic governance.

### **Selectivism**

In discussing selectivism, Prof. Salih pointed to the inconsistency with which human rights principles are applied across different regions and countries. He highlighted how strategic alliances often allow certain nations to overlook egregious human rights violations. Using the Arab world as an example, Prof. Salih explained that despite widespread human rights abuses in many countries, these violations are frequently ignored by powerful nations

such as the United States due to political and economic interests.

Prof. Salih warned that this selective enforcement of human rights undermines the credibility of the international human rights system. “Human rights must be universal,” he argued. He referenced the International Bill of Human Rights, which includes the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), noting that these documents were designed to ensure that human rights are upheld without favoritism. Prof. Salih cautioned that allowing selectivism to persist sets a dangerous precedent for the global pursuit of justice.

## Populism

Lastly, Prof. Salih addressed the rise of populism, drawing parallels between modern populist movements and the ideologies that fueled Nazism in Germany. He explained how populist leaders exploit societal fears and anxieties, promoting exclusionary policies that marginalize vulnerable populations, particularly immigrants and minorities.

“Populism thrives on division,” Prof. Salih remarked, warning that populist leaders often advocate for nationalist, protectionist policies that challenge the universality of human rights. He called attention to how these ideologies threaten the protections enshrined in the UDHR, which affirms that human rights are inherent to all people, regardless of race, nationality, or ethnicity. Prof. Salih concluded by urging greater accountability for populist movements, stressing the need to protect the most vulnerable members of society.

## The Importance of Upholding Human Rights Frameworks

Throughout his lecture, Prof. Salih underscored the critical importance of international human rights frameworks, particularly the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These foundational documents, established in the wake of World War II, were intended to prevent the horrors of genocide, war crimes, and widespread discrimination from ever occurring again. The UDHR, in particular, laid the foundation for modern human rights law, affirming the rights to life, liberty, and security, as well as freedom from torture, slavery, and discrimination.

Prof. Salih emphasized that the ICCPR and ICESCR legally bind governments to uphold these rights. However, he acknowledged that significant challenges remain in ensuring their consistent application across the globe, particularly in regions where selectivism and populism dominate political discourse. He called on the international community to redouble its efforts in enforcing human rights, without regard for political, economic, or cultural considerations.



## Takeaways

Prof. Salih concluded with three critical takeaways for the audience:

**Be aware:** Understand the global challenges posed by extremism, exclusivism, selectivism, and populism, and recognize how they undermine human rights.

**Be vigilant:** Stay observant of human rights violations, whether they occur domestically or internationally. Awareness is the first step toward meaningful action.

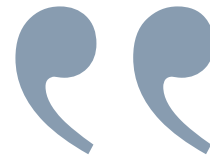
**Assert human rights:** Uphold human rights as a guiding principle and a source of hope. Strive to advance the human rights agenda and ensure that it remains a universal standard for all, regardless of nationality, race, or creed.

## Conclusion

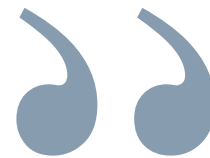
Emeritus Professor Mohamed Salih's masterclass served as a powerful and timely reminder of the ongoing global threats to human rights. Through his analysis of extremism, exclusivism, selectivism, and populism, he illuminated the deep socio-political and economic crises that fuel violations of human dignity. Prof. Salih's urgent call to "assert and affirm" the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as guiding beacons serves as a call to action for all who believe in the universality of human rights.

As the world grapples with increasing polarization, rising authoritarianism, and the erosion of democratic institutions, it is more crucial than ever to remain vigilant and proactive in defending human rights. Prof. Salih emphasized that the responsibility lies with all of us—not just governments or institutions, but civil society, activists, and global citizens. By being aware, vigilant, and assertive in our pursuit of justice and equality, we can uphold the values enshrined in the UDHR and contribute to a more just and humane world.

This masterclass served not only as a critique of the current state of human rights but also as a reaffirmation of hope—hope that through collective action, accountability, and commitment to the principles of human dignity, we can overcome the forces that threaten to undermine our shared humanity.



**This masterclass served not only as a critique of the current state of human rights but also as a reaffirmation of hope—hope that through collective action, accountability, and commitment to the principles of human dignity, we can overcome the forces that threaten to undermine our shared humanity.**





*Construindo uma sociedade democrática que promove, protege e respeita os Direitos Humanos.*

*Building a democratic society that promotes, protects, respect human rights & transform people's lives.*

#### EDITORIAL INFORMATION

**Property:** CDD – Centro para Democracia e Direitos Humanos  
**Director:** Prof. Adriano Nuvunga  
**Editor:** André Mulungo  
**Program Assistants:** Artur Malate; Yara Carina Lamúgio; Stella Bié  
**Author:** CDD  
**Layout:** CDD

**Address:**  
Rua de Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.  
Telephone: +258 21 085 797

 CDD\_moz  
**E-mail:** info@cddmoz.org  
**Website:** <http://www.cddmoz.org>

#### FINANCING PARTNERS

