



Edu-HRight

Faculty of Education NWU

Human Rights Commemoration 21 March 2025

20 March 2025

Members of Edu-HRight research Unit, as well as distinguished guests reflected on the significance of human rights, in the spirit of remembrance, vigilance, and action. The commemoration not only focussed on acknowledging the past but also aimed to reaffirm their commitment to a just, dignified, and inclusive future, in South Africa. In addition, International Happiness Day, which is recognised by the United Nations General Assembly, provided the research entity an opportunity to celebrate both Human Rights Day and International happiness day together, as advocates for justice.

To unlock the complex nature of the intellectual human rights project of our time, Prof Johan Botha structured his interest into four integrated sections to address:

- Why Human Rights Matter?
- Why Commemoration Is Important?
- The Significance of Rights for Education and the Youth
- A Call to Action

The participants and presenters also acknowledged the global crises and conflict. As we commemorated the Human Rights Day, and coincidentally the International Happiness Day, Edu-HRight, acknowledged and spare a thought to people subjected to human rights violations of atrocious proportions in conflict areas globally. We extend a special acknowledgement to the people of the eastern Congo, Western Sahara, Sudan, Mozambique, Ukraine, Haiti and Palestine. "It is a practical oxymoron to experience happiness while in a conflict" (Kgwete, 2025) or are exposed to violations of human rights.

After this opening speech by prof Johan Botha (Director: Education and Human Rights in Diversity research Unit), we had the privilege of accommodating a panel of experts: Theme: *Evolving human rights through education and research: Honouring our heritage, empowering our present, and pioneering our future*

Speakers	Title
Mr Neeshan Balton <i>Executive Director, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation</i>	<i>Human rights and wrongs in post-apartheid South Africa</i>
Dr Searchmore Batidzirai <i>Former PhD Candidate, Edu-HRight Research Unit, Faculty of Education, NWU</i>	<i>Education, democracy and human rights: My personal experience and reflections from my PhD thesis</i>
Ms Shirley Mlombo	<i>The role of public universities in the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights</i>

<i>Provincial Manager, South African Human Rights Commission, North-West</i>	
Prof. Klaus Beiter <i>Professor, School of Law, Faculty of Law, NWU</i>	<i>Educational technology and its effects on the right to education and academic freedom: When education is "assetised"</i>

This was a very academically rich and stimulating event which we hope will spark further collaboration of the Unit with these distinguished guests. This is the beginning of many more interdisciplinary complex human rights discussions and collaborations to come.



