

Message from the Chair



I am delighted to introduce you to this first edition of 'Right On!' - The newsletter of the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee.

Human Rights should be seen as a proud part of Cayman's heritage. From the formation of Cayman's own elected assembly in 1831 to the grant to women of the right to vote in 1959, we as a society have often striven to protect our people's fundamental rights.

The current Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee (HRC) was formed in December of 2005, marking yet another step forward for Human Rights in these islands. Since its inception, the HRC has achieved a great deal in a short space of time, not least providing a viable and credible vehicle for the sustained protection and promotion of Human Rights in Cayman.

The HRC has set an impressive precedent for the Cayman Islands in bringing several disputes to successful resolution so far. It has also reached out to Human Rights Committees overseas to build productive relationships. The HRC's promotion of World Refugee Day in June marked the first step in a campaign to raise awareness locally of important events in the Human Rights calendar, and plans for a wider public awareness campaign are well underway.

Your support for Human Rights is vital to Cayman, not just to protect our people, but also to demonstrate to the international community that the Cayman Islands is a progressive society built on sound ethics, and a place you will want to live in, do business in, visit and invest in.

If you want to be 'right on', read on!

Hon. Alden McLaughlin
Chairman of the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee

HRC Supports World Refugee Day

The HRC was proud to support World Refugee Day on 20th June in the Cayman Islands.

Using promotional materials supplied from the UN High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) the HRC brought attention to an issue which affects countries all over the globe, not least the Cayman Islands.

Promotional activity included a leaflet (inset), a

radio broadcast of the message by UNHCR goodwill ambassador and Hollywood superstar, Angelina Jolie, and a media release. You can find it all online at www.humanrights.gov.ky.

The HRC will continue its use of important dates in the Human Rights calendar for similar promotions to raise awareness of Human Rights issues in the Cayman Islands.



Right Online

www.humanrights.gov.ky

Upgrades to our website coming soon | [News](#) | [Information](#) | [Reports](#) | [Links](#) | [Access](#) | [Get involved](#)

Establishing a Human Rights Committee for the Cayman Islands

The Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee (HRC) is now firmly established as the national body responsible for the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights.

The membership of the HRC is drawn from both the public and the private sectors and represents a broad cross-section of Caymanian society. These individuals have now come together to work in partnership for the advancement of human rights for all.

The Terms of Reference for the HRC have been formulated in line with international standards for such bodies and ratified by Cabinet. These Terms of Reference empower the HRC to enhance public awareness of human rights; to serve as the focal point for the direction of any public human rights concerns; and where necessary, to make reports and prepare recommendations for the improved protection of human rights.

The HRC has dealt with numerous cases in its short history. One issue, in particular received a considerable amount of press coverage. This complex case, involving the various issues raised by Cuban refugee, Dr. Luarca, illustrates just how vigorously the HRC is already working to resolve complaints.

Vaughan Carter, the Deputy Chairman of the HRC who holds a masters degree in International Human Rights law, expressed his gratitude to all of the public officials who have responded to enquiries made by the HRC in relation to all of its cases. He commented, "The HRC aspires to work in a spirit of cooperation, with all arms of the government, to resolve any human rights



concerns in a prompt and friendly manner. This approach, the HRC believes, will best enhance the standard of human rights in the Cayman Islands."

On top of its educational and investigatory work, the HRC has also, in the short period since its appointment at the end of 2005, made contact with similar bodies in other jurisdictions; liaised with United Nations agencies; met with representatives of the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office and sought internationally to source funding for its educational initiatives. The HRC is a vibrant and energetic body, which is seeking to make a positive contribution in the Cayman Islands.

If you would like to contact the HRC, please address written correspondence to PO Box 30664 SMB or alternatively, emails can be sent to humanrights@gov.ky.

Historic Human Rights events in the Cayman Islands

2001 - 'Human Rights Today' Symposium

Between September 11th and 14th, 2001, the Cayman Islands rose to the challenge of tackling new frontiers for human rights by hosting the 'Human Rights Today' symposium.

Some 150 leaders and influencers from all over the Caribbean took advantage of this opportunity to join 200 delegates to collectively reflect on legislative, legal, policy and practical issues impacting human rights.

The assembly called upon governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, professional associations and all other sectors of civil society to concentrate their efforts in promoting a universal culture of human rights through education, training and public information.

Human rights education was defined as a life-long process by which people at all levels of development and in all strata learn to respect the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies.

In hosting this symposium, the Cayman Islands Government sought to advance the UN's effort in the region, spotlighting the importance of human rights in preserving freedom, peace and justice for all.

At the conclusion of the symposium, the assembled regional representatives passed a range of resolutions that they took with them for implementation in their home territories. You can read it online at www.humanrights.gov.ky.