

Human Rights & Diversity Observance Calendar

The table below highlights international and Canadian Human Rights related observances recognized throughout the year.

Date	Observance	Description
January	3 rd Monday of January Martin Luther King's Birthday	Celebrated widely in Canada and the US. Acknowledgement of the global significance and impact of Dr. King's work as a civil rights leader.
	January 27 International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust	Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.
February	Month of February Black History Month	Every year, Canadians are invited to participate in Black History Month festivities and events that honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present.
March	March 8 International Women's Day	On International Women's Day, Canadians participate in a worldwide celebration of women, peace and human rights.
	March 20 International Francophonie Day	Half a billion Francophones around the world celebrate International Day of Francophonie on March 20 th . This event began in 1998 as a way for the then 49 members of La Francophonie to celebrate their common bond, the French language, as well as their diversity.

	<p>March 21</p> <p>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</p>	<p>The day aims to remind people of racial discrimination's negative consequences. It also encourages people to remember their obligation and determination to combat racial discrimination.</p>
	<p>March 22</p> <p>World Water Day</p>	<p>International World Water Day is held annually on March 22nd, as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.</p>
	<p>March 25</p> <p>International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade</p>	<p>The International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade serves as an opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system, and to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.</p>
	<p>Last Saturday of March</p> <p>Earth Hour</p>	<p>Earth Hour is a global WWF (formerly known as World Wildlife Fund) climate change initiative. It is an event that aims to create awareness of people taking responsibility towards a sustainable future by turning the lights off. Earth Hour is not to be confused with Earth Day.</p>
<p>April</p>	<p>April 2</p> <p>World Autism Awareness Day</p>	<p>The United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared April 2nd, as World Autism Awareness Day to highlight the need to help improve the lives of children and adults who are affected by Autism.</p>
	<p>April 7</p> <p>International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda</p>	<p>The United Nations General Assembly has designated 7 April as an annual Day to commemorate the genocide's victims and reflect upon the lessons of Rwanda, including the international community's failure to do more to halt the violence.</p>

	<p>April 17</p> <p>Equality Day</p>	<p>April 17th, marks the anniversary of the equality provisions (s.15) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms coming into force as is celebrated as Equality Day each year. 15 (1) “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability”.</p>
<p>May</p>	<p>Month of May</p> <p>Asian & South Asian Heritage Month</p>	<p>May is Asian & South Asian Heritage Month. All Canadians acknowledge the long and rich history of Asian & South Asian Canadians and their contributions to Canada. It also provides an opportunity for Canadians across the country to reflect on and celebrate the contributions of Canadians of Asian & South Asian heritage to the growth and prosperity of Canada.</p>
	<p>May 15</p> <p>International Day of Families</p>	<p>The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families.</p>
	<p>May 21</p> <p>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</p>	<p>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is annually held on May 21 to help people learn about the importance of cultural diversity and harmony.</p>
	<p>Four days before the Victoria Day long weekend</p> <p>Aboriginal Awareness Week</p>	<p>Aboriginal Awareness Week (AAW), first introduced in 1992, is held on the four days that follow the Victoria Day long weekend. It was designed to increase awareness of Aboriginal peoples within the Canadian mosaic and the public service. It has evolved into a week to honour the many Aboriginal cultures in Canada, including the Métis, the Inuit and First Nations.</p>
<p>June</p>	<p>June 5</p> <p>World Environment Day</p>	<p>World Environment Day (WED) is the biggest and most widely celebrated global day for positive environmental action and is held on June 5th, every year. WED celebrations began in 1972 and have grown to become the one of the main vehicles through which the UN stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages political attention and action.</p>

	June 21	On June 21 st , all Canadians are invited to participate in the many National Aboriginal Day events that will be taking place from coast to coast to coast. National Aboriginal Day is an opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal people and their contributions to Canada.
	National Aboriginal Day	
	June 24	Saint Jean Baptiste Day, held annually on June 24 th , is the feast day of St. John the Baptist. It is a day of celebration in Quebec and other areas of French Canada. Saint Jean Baptiste Day is also known as "la Saint-Jean", "St John the Baptist Day", "Fête nationale du Québec" and "Quebec's National Holiday"
	Saint Jean Baptiste Day	
	June 27th	Canadian Multiculturalism Day is a celebration of Canada's diversity and appreciation of other cultures and how they contribute to Canadian society.
	Multiculturalism Day	
August	August 9	On December 23, 1994, the United Nations General Assembly decided that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People shall be observed on August 9 th , every year during the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The date marks the day of the first meeting, in 1982, of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations solving problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health.
	International Day of the World's Indigenous People	
September	September 8	The United Nations' (UN) International Literacy Day annually falls on September 8 th , to raise people's awareness of and concern for literacy issues in the world.
	International Literacy Day	
	September 16	The United Nations General Assembly, in a resolution adopted designated June 16 as International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa to commemorate the Soweto massacre in South Africa. The day was celebrated annually until the end of apartheid.
	International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa	
	September 21	The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Peace is celebrated on September 21 each year to recognize the efforts of those who have worked hard to end conflict and promote peace. The International Day of Peace is also a day of ceasefire – personal or political.
	International Day of Peace	

October	Month of October	October is Women's History Month in Canada, an opportunity for Canadians to educate themselves about women's and girls' valuable contributions to our country's history – and to the quality of our lives.
	Women's History Month	
	October 1	The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Older Persons is celebrated annually on October 1 st , to recognize the contributions of older persons and to examine issues that affect their lives.
	International Day for the Elderly	
	October 2	The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Non-Violence is a global observance that promotes non-violence through education and public awareness. It is annually held on October 2 to coincide with renowned Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi's birthday
	International Day of Non-Violence	
	October 4	The Native Women's Association of Canada has designated Oct 4 as the national day of remembrance to acknowledge over 582 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.
Sisters in Spirit		
October 16	World Food Day is annually held on October 16 to commemorate the founding of the United Nations' (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The program is aimed at leaders of political and non-political organizations at all levels and at increasing press attention on topical issues around food supply.	
World Food Day		
October 17	The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed on October 17 th , each year since 1993. It promotes people's awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution worldwide, particularly in developing countries.	
International Day for the Eradication of Poverty		
November	November 11	Remembrance Day commemorates the sacrifices of people in all armed conflicts.
	Remembrance Day	
	November 20	The Transday of Remembrance was established to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28 th , 1998 kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999.
Transday of Remembrance		

	<p>November 25</p> <p>International Day to End Violence against Women</p>	<p>The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is an occasion for governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to raise public awareness of violence against women. It has been observed on November 25th, each year since 2000.</p>
<p>December</p>	<p>December 1</p> <p>World AIDS Day</p>	<p>World AIDS Day is held on December 1st, each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day and the first one was held in 1988.</p>
	<p>December 2</p> <p>International Day for the Abolition of Slavery</p>	<p>The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is annually observed on December 2nd, to remind people that modern slavery works against human rights. This holiday is not to be confused with the UN's International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.</p>
	<p>December 3</p> <p>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>United Nations' (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities is annually held on December 3rd, to focus on issues that affect persons with disabilities worldwide.</p>
	<p>December 6</p> <p>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women</p>	<p>December 6th, is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day marks the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. They died because they were women.</p>
	<p>December 10</p> <p>Human Rights Day</p>	<p>The United Nations' (UN) Human Rights Day is annually observed December 10th, to mark the anniversary of the presentation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</p>
	<p>December 20</p> <p>International Human Solidarity Day</p>	<p>The United Nations' (UN) International Human Solidarity Day is annually held on December 20 to celebrate unity in diversity. It also aims to remind people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty.</p>

Sources: This table was developed by the Centre for Human Rights, York University, with the use of the following sources:

http://www.un.org/events/calendar/search_type.asp?TypeID=3

http://www.tdsb.on.ca/_site/ViewItem.asp?pageid=19019

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/black/index.asp>

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ee/awsa-eng.asp>

<http://www.timeanddate.com>

<http://www.worldaidsday.org/about-world-aids-day.php>