



The theme of Human Rights Month is '*The Year of Charlotte Maxeke: Promoting Human Rights in the Age of COVID-19*'. This year 2021, is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Charlotte Maxeke, the human rights campaigner and liberation struggle heroine.

In South Africa, Human Rights Day 21 March, is historically linked to the events of Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. This is the day when apartheid police fired on a peaceful crowd that had gathered in protest against the South African Pass laws, where 69 people died and 180 were wounded. "It became an iconic date in our country's history that today we commemorate as Human Rights Day as a reminder of our rights and the cost paid for our treasured human rights". In 1960 ordinary people rose in unison. Then on the 25th anniversary of that day, police fired on a crowd of people attending the funeral of an apartheid activist" <https://www.gov.za/speeches/human-rights-day-2021-19-oct-2020-1025>.

These two "painful events from or past" serve as a reminder of all who "paid the ultimate price for us to live in a society governed by human rights and dignity for all" <https://www.gov.za/speeches/human-rights-day-2021-19-oct-2020-1025>.

Sadly, all of this time later and with the Bill of Rights in the SA Constitution, there are many of our countrymen and women who still experience infringements of their human rights and dignity.

These painful memories shape our past and still shape society today. The UKSU Executive, affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom and asks all UKSU members to stop for a minute on Human Rights Day to remember the past and all who fought and continue to fight for those ideals, as well as remembering those who lost their lives for these values.

Regards

UKSU Executive