

## **Call for a World Wide Reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 6 September 2017**

We find ourselves living in a time where the fundamental underpinnings of democracy are being challenged and disrespected *ad absurdum*, as demonstrated by the current president of the United States towards a hitherto functioning judicial system. Even the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees, and individual countries' membership of the European Union are being called into question by certain Western statesmen and women and candidates for political leadership. Even the most unequivocal facts, such as climate change, are declared »fake news«, and, in turn, actual fake news reports are infiltrating and influencing accepted mainstream news media.

Nationalistic currents and right- and left-wing populist parties are gaining ground internationally, their leaders already occupying important positions of power in certain countries. Russia is being shaped by the dismantling of civil society caused by its current president and his administration, the criminalization of dissidents, oppositionists, gays and lesbians, its annexation of Crimea and war against Ukraine, and war crimes in Syria. Due to China's economic success, international commercial relations and continuing operation as a police state, its ruling powers can continue to blithely eliminate anyone who opposes them. The state of peace we Europeans have grown accustomed to since the end of the Second World War can no longer be taken for granted.

This is why the international literature festival berlin is calling upon all cultural and political institutions, schools, universities, media and individuals interested in joining us to give a Worldwide Reading and to subsequently discuss the 30 articles that make up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations Assembly on 10 December 1948. This event aims to reignite the spirit of the Declaration and to remind people of »a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping [...] this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive to promote the teaching and education, respect for these rights and these freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international character, the universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and between those territories under their jurisdiction.« (Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948).

The full text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is available in over 500 languages on the United Nations website:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/SearchByLang.aspx>

If you are interested in participating in the Worldwide Reading on 6 September 2017, please send an email to [worldwidereading@literaturfestival.com](mailto:worldwidereading@literaturfestival.com). The berlin literary festival will be posting more information about this event on the festival's website ([www.literaturfestival.com](http://www.literaturfestival.com)), and on social media.