

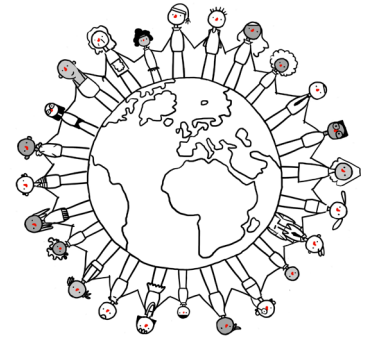
# GLOBAL HUMANISM

## HUMANISTS CAN BE FOUND ALL AROUND THE WORLD.

Humanists International has member organisations in over 60 countries. Humanists in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas celebrate the rich and diverse history of humanist ideas to be found across the globe.

The lives and ambitions of humanists can be very different depending on where they live. Some work for humanitarian causes, challenging injustice. Many campaign for secularism and human rights such as freedom of religion or belief. For some, the absence of these freedoms means that their beliefs place their liberty and lives in danger. Others face less immediate dangers but still carry the challenge of being an overlooked or underrepresented minority.

A common thread shared by many humanists is the emphasis they place on identifying ourselves first and foremost as human beings, rather than by our gender, nationality, race, or sexuality. Humanists believe we should focus on what we share rather than on what divides us and work to ensure everyone is treated equally.



Below are six humanists from around the world. You can read about some of the challenges they face, the work they do, and what motivates them.

### GULALAI ISMAIL, PAKISTAN

When she was 16, Gulalai started the Aware Girls network. She aimed to improve girls' access to education, to provide a platform for young women to learn about their human rights, and to get women engaged in politics. Her human rights work has led to her being arrested repeatedly. In 2019, with her security under threat, she was forced to flee Pakistan and now lives in New York. In 2014 she received the International Humanist of the Year Award.

“Being a humanist in Pakistan means putting your life at risk every day because you have certain beliefs which are different from mainstream society... Because of the work I do, young women are becoming more empowered. They are taking charge of their own lives and they're changing their own communities. When I leave the world, I want to leave it in a better shape. I don't want the generations that come after me to face the same challenges that my generation has faced.”



### LEO IGWE, NIGERIA

Leo is the founder of the Nigerian Humanist Movement. He has spent much of his life campaigning against the abuse caused by witchcraft accusations and harmful superstitious practices. He believes humanism can provide a way to support human development across Africa. In 2017 he received the Distinguished Services to Humanism Award from Humanists International.

“What being a humanist means to me is taking a stand with humanity, taking a stand inspired by human rights and human values. Being a humanist means campaigning for the betterment of humanity, for human emancipation... Humanism is a way of thinking and living that emphasizes the agency of human beings. Humanism stresses the fact that we, human beings, are capable of changing the world.”



## UTTAM NIRLA, NEPAL

In Nepal there exists a cultural practice called 'untouchability'. This is a legacy of the caste system, which divided people up into different classes. Traditionally those at the top received many privileges while those at the bottom, the 'untouchables', suffered prejudice and exploitation (including slavery). Uttam and others from the Society for Humanism Nepal work with those labelled 'untouchables' to support their freedom, dignity, and independence.

“ [This] was not about trying to convert those people or make them humanist. We were trying to assure the basic

universal human rights for those people... Being a humanist, for me, means becoming a human being rather than dividing my identity into different sects in the name of religion, nationality, or culture. ”



## DARA FOI'ELLE, LEBANON

Dara works for a Syrian charity based in Beirut that works for justice for women who have suffered in war and helps ensure they have a voice in the peace process.

“ Both Syria and Lebanon are countries that have deeply rooted sectarianism in society, and for me it has become important to remove myself from this narrative of one sect or religion against the other. I support freedom of belief... My goal in all areas of life is justice... For me humanism is about putting all those differences aside. ”



## KATO MUKASA, UGANDA

Kato is the Chair of the Uganda Humanists Association. Campaigning for a free, secular, and more tolerant society, his work has included the fight to end female genital mutilation, the acceptance of LGBT people, and for the removal of discriminatory laws.

“ Being a humanist in Uganda is quite a challenge... There are dangers involved because a humanist is going to promote values that sometimes are contrary to the common beliefs... Being a humanist to me means being a person that doesn't look at humans in terms of their religions, in terms of their tribes, in terms of their races.

A person looks at people because they are human beings like you... it's being a person concerned with human rights, a person concerned with the entire humanity. ”



## EVA QUIÑONES, PUERTO RICO

Eva is the President of the Secular Humanists of Puerto Rico. She works to defend the separation of church and state and to guarantee the right to freedom of religion or belief, both of which are under threat in her country today.

“ Humanism, compassion, rationalism, and science are the proven best ways for nation building to make a decent future for everybody... The good thing about humanism is that it has this little flavour of compassion that has to colour and move every action, every opinion that we have, and every fight that we fight on behalf of truth, of equality, of decency, and justice. ”

