



**Embassy of the United States of America  
Algiers, Algeria**

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**STATEMENT BY JOAN POLASCHIK, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA**

**International Human Rights Day  
December 10, 2014**

Sixty-six years ago, the international community adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and committed to building a world where all people are “born free and equal in dignity and rights” and are entitled to liberty, equality, and justice under the law.

As the U.S. Embassy celebrates International Human Rights Day, we pay tribute to those who work every day throughout the world to build a culture of respect for human rights. Here in Algeria, we want to especially acknowledge the work of the activists who persevered in their commitment, throughout the dark decade and often at great personal risk, to stand up for these universal values. During that difficult time, so many activists in Algerian society were vital to preserving hope and dignity for their fellow citizens — journalists who continued to report important stories under dangerous conditions; professors and students who sought to continue scholastic pursuits against the demands of militias; women who protested openly in the streets against extremist repression; and of course, countless humanitarian workers and civil society leaders, all of whom worked under the very real threat that they could pay for their commitment with their lives. Their indomitable spirit is what we celebrate today.

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