



From the Desk *of the* Commanding Officer

The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy

Newsletter 12

December 10th 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2025

"Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials"



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(BMMA)

GLOBAL IMPERATIVE: THE UNIVERSAL FOUNDATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

Today, on December 10, 2025, as we mark the 77th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), we stand at the intersection of history and hope, remembering the promise made on this date in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed this landmark document as "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" (United Nations, 1948). The UDHR emerged from the ashes of World War II, born of humanity's determination to ensure that the atrocities witnessed would never be repeated, establishing for the first time in history a comprehensive articulation of rights inherent to every human being regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status

(Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2025a). This declaration transcends borders, cultures, and time, representing humanity's highest aspiration: that every person should live with dignity, freedom, and equality.



The 2025 theme, "Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials," emphasizes that human rights are not abstract legal principles relegated to courtrooms and international forums but the everyday essentials we rely upon to live meaningful lives (United Nations, 2025a). In this period of turbulence and unpredictability, where many feel growing insecurity, disaffection, and alienation, this theme serves to reaffirm that human rights remain a winning proposition for humanity, bridging the gap between principles and daily experiences by showing how rights shape our lives in ways we may not always notice (United Nations, 2025a). From the right to education that enables our children to pursue their dreams, to the right to work that provides families with dignity and security, to the right to health that ensures



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treatment when illness strikes, these rights form the foundation of our collective flourishing.

This holistic framework recognizes that rights are indivisible and interdependent, one cannot fully enjoy political freedoms without economic security, nor can economic development be sustainable without respect for civil liberties and social justice. As we observe this anniversary, The Bahamas reaffirms commitment to these universal principles while recognizing the ongoing work required to transform ideals into lived reality for every Bahamian.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP: PRIME MINISTER DAVIS'S HUMAN RIGHTS LEGACY

A Human Rights Lawyer Leading the Nation

Prime Minister Philip Edward Davis, K.C., brings to his office a distinguished career as a human rights lawyer of both local and international acclaim, with an impressive record in the Court of Appeals and numerous appearances before the U.K. Privy Council that have earned him recognition beyond our borders (Concordia, 2025). Before entering politics, he built a reputation defending fundamental rights and challenging injustice, experiences that shaped his understanding that true leadership requires protecting the dignity and rights of every citizen, particularly the most vulnerable. This background informs every aspect of his governance, from criminal justice reform to social policy, economic development to climate advocacy, recognizing

that human rights are not peripheral concerns but the central purpose of government.

Prime Minister Davis's appointment as Queen's Counsel in 2015 recognized not only his highly successful legal practice but also his contribution to legal education throughout the Caribbean region (BondLink, 2025). As a former member of the CARICOM Council of Legal Education and twice Vice President of the Bar Council before becoming President of the Bahamas Bar Association in 1995, he has dedicated his career to strengthening the institutions and professionals that protect rights and deliver justice (Concordia, 2025). This commitment continues in his leadership, as evidenced by his administration's comprehensive approach to reforming the justice system, strengthening social protections, and ensuring that government serves as guardian of rights rather than obstacle to their realization.

Transforming Criminal Justice: Balancing Rights and Public Safety

The Davis administration has undertaken unprecedented criminal justice reforms that demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the delicate balance between protecting individual rights and ensuring public safety. The Bail (Amendment) Act 2024 represents decisive action to address legitimate public concern about violent crime while maintaining constitutional principles of presumption of innocence and due process (Office of the Prime Minister [OPM], 2024a). Prime Minister Davis articulated the principle clearly: "The Bahamian people have the right to be safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods,

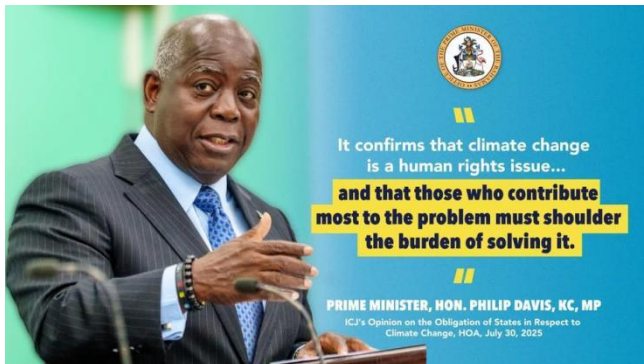


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and those who violate the conditions placed upon them in the name of justice must be held accountable" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2024a).



The amendments establish that breaching bail conditions constitutes a distinct offense punishable upon conviction by up to five years imprisonment, ensuring that accountability comes through proper legal process rather than arbitrary punishment (Office of the Prime Minister, 2024a). This approach respects both the rights of the accused and the rights of communities to live free from fear, recognizing that human rights include not only protection from state overreach but also protection by the state from criminal violence. The legislation requires that anyone arrested while on bail must be brought before a magistrate within 48 hours or sooner if possible, demonstrating commitment to swift justice and preventing prolonged detention without judicial oversight (Office of the Prime Minister, 2024a).

The Anti-Gang Bill 2024 provides law enforcement with powerful new tools to combat organized criminal violence while carefully defining prohibited conduct to prevent overreach

and protect legitimate association (OPM, 2024b). Prime Minister Davis emphasized that this legislation forms part of a holistic five-pillar approach: prevention through community programs and opportunity creation; policing through modern strategies like the "Clear, Hold, and Build" approach; prosecution through faster trials and adequate resources; punishment through appropriate penalties; and rehabilitation through education, mental health treatment, and reintegration support (OPM, 2024b). This comprehensive framework recognizes that sustainable public safety requires addressing root causes of criminality while providing pathways for those willing to turn away from violence.

Building Infrastructure for Justice and Human Dignity

On July 11, 2025, Prime Minister Davis broke ground on the New Judicial Complex and High-Medium Security Correctional Facility, a project representing bold declaration of government commitment to justice, security, and human dignity for all Bahamians (Government of The Bahamas, 2025a). The Prime Minister articulated the profound meaning of this investment: "For decades, we have acknowledged the urgent need to modernize and reform our justice and correctional systems. Through today's groundbreaking, we are building capacity for justice, safety, and fair outcomes for our people" (Government of The Bahamas, 2025a). The new judicial complex will provide modern courtrooms, enhanced technology, and environments conducive to due process, serving as a symbol of



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transparency and accessible justice that upholds every citizen's constitutional rights (Government of The Bahamas, 2025a).

The correctional facility design reflects recognition that how a nation treats those in custody reveals fundamental values about human dignity and second chances. Prime Minister Davis stated: "The correctional facility must be punitive, yes, but also a place where lives are redirected, skills are learned, and hope is restored" (Government of The Bahamas, 2025a). The facility will include spaces for education, vocational training, mental health support, and spiritual development, embodying the principle that investment in people strengthens society even when those individuals have made serious mistakes. This approach aligns with international human rights standards recognizing that rehabilitation is both a right of prisoners and a societal interest, as the vast majority of incarcerated individuals will eventually return to communities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2023).

In December 2024, the government opened the Family Court Complex on New Providence, recognizing that families, in their many forms, deserve a justice system responsive to their unique needs (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025a). Prime Minister Davis emphasized that consideration, clarity, and closure are what families navigating disputes, custody arrangements, and other complex circumstances deserve, leading to establishment of specialized courts providing efficient, sensitive resolution of family matters. This investment recognizes that

access to justice is a fundamental human right and that specialized institutions are necessary to protect the rights of children, parents, and extended family members in legal proceedings affecting their lives.

Advancing Regional Judicial Excellence and Human Rights Protection

On June 18, 2025, Prime Minister Davis addressed the Conference of Chief Justices and Heads of the Judiciaries of the Caribbean, articulating a vision for "Judiciaries in Transition" that embraces technological innovation while ensuring no one is left behind (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025a). He emphasized that transition is imperative as artificial intelligence and emerging technologies reshape justice delivery, demographic shifts and climate change alter society, and citizens demand 21st-century service. The Prime Minister highlighted The Bahamas' criminal justice reforms, including amendments to the Bail Act permitting the Chief Justice to standardize bail conditions, new criminal case management rules providing for pre-trial evidentiary hearings and defense statements, and legislation establishing an Independent Commission for Investigation to ensure police accountability (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025a).

These reforms align with the Needham's Point Declaration adopted by Caribbean leaders at Bridgetown in October 2023, demonstrating regional commitment to strengthening justice systems and protecting human rights through coordinated action (Office of the Prime Minister,



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2025a). Prime Minister Davis's emphasis on balancing efficiency with equity reflects understanding that innovation must serve justice rather than merely processing cases faster. As he stated: "Innovation, education, and access go hand in hand. That is how justice systems transition justly" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025a). This principle ensures that digitization of courts, virtual hearings, and electronic filing enhance rather than undermine access to justice, particularly for elderly citizens and vulnerable populations who may lack technological literacy or resources.

Economic and Social Rights: Building Dignity Through Opportunity

The Davis administration's human rights commitment extends beyond civil and political rights to encompass economic and social rights essential for human dignity. The 2025/2026 budget includes a 24% increase in minimum wage, representing one of the most significant interventions in workers' economic rights in Bahamian history (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025b). This increase recognizes that the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring an existence worthy of human dignity, as articulated in Article 23 of the UDHR, requires ongoing action to address rising living costs and ensure no Bahamian working full-time lives in poverty (United Nations, 1948).

The budget allocates \$50 million to small business development, recognizing that economic opportunity and entrepreneurship are essential for realizing the right to work and the free choice of

employment (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025b). Food security investments of \$1.5 million to the Ministry of Agriculture for technology, training, and capacity building reflect commitment to the right to adequate standard of living, including adequate food (United Nations, 1948). The cutting of import duties on dozens of food items and expansion of price controls demonstrate government responsibility to ensure economic rights are progressively realized, not merely aspirational (Office of the Prime Minister, 2025b).

Healthcare reform through the 2025 Health Bills Compendium establishes that access to medical care is a right rather than privilege, with the National Health Insurance Bill 2025 ensuring consistent, quality primary care through the Standard Health Benefit regardless of insurer (Government of The Bahamas, 2025b). This universal approach recognizes Article 25 of the UDHR declaring that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including medical care (United Nations, 1948). The legislation moves The Bahamas from reactive to proactive healthcare, establishing measurable targets for preventive care and community wellness programs that protect and promote health as a fundamental right.

REGIONAL SOLIDARITY: CARIBBEAN HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERSHIP

The Opening of OHCHR Caribbean Regional Office in Nassau



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In October 2024, The Bahamas achieved a historic milestone with the establishment of the CARICOM Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nassau, signaling the beginning of a new chapter in promoting human rights across the Caribbean Community (ZNS Bahamas, 2025). Regional Representative Ms. Michelle Brathwaite stated: "Our opening represents a significant step forward in advancing human rights across CARICOM. These initial months have been an opportunity to build relationships, listen to priorities of key stakeholders including government, civil society, academia and other actors, and begin to collaboratively chart a path toward meaningful, rights-based progress" (ZNS Bahamas, 2025).

The establishment of this regional office in Nassau reflects recognition of The Bahamas' leadership in human rights promotion and its strategic position to serve the wider Caribbean. The office focuses on consolidating partnerships and advancing initiatives that promote equality, climate resilience, and democratic governance while ensuring human rights remain at the core of sustainable development across the region (Dominica News Online, 2024). For The Bahamas, hosting this office provides enhanced technical assistance in implementing international human rights standards, strengthens capacity for human rights education and awareness, facilitates regional cooperation on shared challenges, and elevates our nation's profile as a human rights champion within CARICOM and globally.

Ms. Brathwaite conducted strategic visits to Guyana, Barbados, and Jamaica, formally introducing the newly established office to government officials, regional institutions, and civil society leaders, with discussions highlighting opportunities for collaboration on human rights priorities and laying foundation for partnerships that will integrate human rights into development planning (ZNS Bahamas, 2025). This regional approach recognizes that Caribbean nations face common challenges, including climate vulnerability, economic inequality, and social exclusion, requiring coordinated responses grounded in human rights principles. The office will support member states in fulfilling obligations under international human rights treaties, addressing gaps in legal frameworks, and strengthening institutions responsible for protecting rights.



Africa-CARICOM Summit: Transcontinental Partnership for Reparatory Justice

From September 7-9, 2025, The Bahamas participated in the Second Africa-CARICOM Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme "Transcontinental Partnership in Pursuit of



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Reparatory Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations" (African Union, 2025a). This historic gathering brought together African nations, Caribbean states, and the global African diaspora to strengthen unity, deepen integration, and jointly pursue reparations for the lasting impacts of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism (African Union, 2025a). The summit builds on the first meeting held in 2021 and the African Union's decision to designate 2025 as the Year of "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations" (African Union, 2025b).

CARICOM Secretary-General Dr. Carla Barnett described the summit as "a homecoming for the Caribbean, reconnecting people separated by ocean, colonialism, and economic systems, but united through shared heritage" (African Union, 2025a). She emphasized that the summit strengthens partnerships in health, trade, transportation, and investment, with initiatives like the Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean (HeDPAC) and the Afreximbank partnership advancing collaboration. Dr. Barnett highlighted that the summit focuses on reparations, with CARICOM's Reparations Commission leading the justice movement, acknowledging the injustices of colonialism and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (African Union, 2025a).

For The Bahamas, this summit represents continuation of a long struggle for justice and recognition of historical wrongs that continue to shape contemporary inequality. The call for reparations is fundamentally a human rights issue,

addressing the lasting impacts of crimes against humanity and seeking to redress systemic disadvantages created through centuries of exploitation. Human Rights Watch has emphasized that governments attending such summits should work closely with civil society and affected communities to develop human rights-based approaches to reparations, recognizing this as an international obligation rather than discretionary charity (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

CARICOM's "Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice" adopted in 2014 provides a comprehensive framework addressing multiple dimensions of ongoing harm from colonialism and enslavement, including full formal apology, repatriation and resettlement support, indigenous peoples' development programs, cultural institutions establishment, public health crisis alleviation, illiteracy eradication, African knowledge program development, psychological rehabilitation, technology transfer, and debt cancellation (Caribbean Reparations Commission, 2014). This multifaceted approach recognizes that reparatory justice requires addressing economic, social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of historical injury, not merely financial compensation.

Caribbean Leadership on Climate Justice as a Human Rights Issue

Prime Minister Davis has emerged as an internationally recognized champion and advocate for climate justice, particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) facing existential



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threats from climate change (Concordia, 2025). His leadership recognizes that climate change is fundamentally a human rights issue, threatening the rights to life, health, food, water, housing, and self-determination of vulnerable populations who contributed least to the problem (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021) (OHCHR, 2021). The Bahamas' advocacy emphasizes that developed nations bear responsibility not only for reducing emissions but also for providing climate financing to enable adaptation and address loss and damage in countries like ours facing devastating impacts.

The Bridgetown Initiative, championed by Caribbean leaders including Prime Minister Davis, calls for fundamental reform of international financial architecture to address the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS and ensure access to concessional financing for climate adaptation (CARICOM, 2025). This initiative recognizes that current systems, designed in a different era, fail to account for climate vulnerability as a factor in debt sustainability and development finance, effectively punishing small states for geographic and climatic circumstances beyond their control. The multidimensional vulnerability index advocated by CARICOM represents an effort to move beyond GDP-per-capita measurements that misrepresent the actual development challenges and financing needs of island nations (CARICOM, 2025).

Prime Minister Davis consistently emphasizes that climate action cannot be delayed and that commitments to climate financing must be honored urgently (Office of the Prime Minister,

2025b). This advocacy positions climate justice within the broader framework of human rights, recognizing that failure to address climate change undermines the entire architecture of rights protection. As low-lying island nations face potential submersion, the rights of entire populations, including the right to nationality, property, culture, and self-determination, face unprecedented threat, requiring global recognition that climate justice is a prerequisite for human rights protection in the 21st century.

RBDF: DEFENDING RIGHTS, PROTECTING PEOPLE

Constitutional Mandate: Sovereignty and Human Security

The Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) operates under The Defence Act with a mandate to defend The Bahamas, protect territorial integrity, patrol waters, provide assistance in times of disaster, maintain order in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, and carry out such duties as determined by the National Security Council (Royal Bahamas Defence Force [RBDF], 2024a). This mandate reflects understanding that national defense encompasses not only protection from external threats but also ensuring human security, the safety, dignity, and well-being of every Bahamian. The RBDF's Core Values, Fair play, Accountability, Integrity, Transparency, Honesty, Fortitude, Unity, Leadership, and Loyalty, embody principles directly aligned with human rights, emphasizing just treatment, responsibility to those served,



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acting in the best interest of all, and protecting constitutional principles (RBDF, 2024a).

The Force's motto, "Guard Our Heritage," encompasses not only territorial sovereignty but also protection of the Bahamian way of life, including democratic values, rule of law, and human rights that define our national identity (RBDF, 2024a). Defence Force personnel assume multiple roles requiring nuanced understanding of rights and responsibilities: as naval and infantry personnel, they must use force only when necessary and proportionate; as peace officers, they must respect due process and individual dignity; as customs and immigration officers, they must balance security with humane treatment; as emergency rescue personnel, they must prioritize saving lives regardless of nationality or circumstance (RBDF, 2024a).

Humanitarian Missions: Dignity in Disaster

The RBDF's commitment to human rights manifests most visibly during humanitarian missions when Bahamians face the most vulnerable moments of their lives. During Hurricane Dorian's catastrophic impact on Abaco and Grand Bahama in September 2019, Defence Force personnel conducted heroic search and rescue operations, medical evacuations, and relief distribution under dangerous conditions, demonstrating that military service includes caring for citizens when they need it most. The Force's Disaster Relief Containerized Equipment, functioning as a Mobile Base Camp, represents sophisticated capability to rapidly deploy comprehensive humanitarian assistance to

isolated communities, ensuring that even our most remote islands receive support during crises (RBDF, 2024b).

Defence Force Aircraft and vessels provide lifelines to Family Islands during emergencies, transporting medical personnel, supplies, and evacuees while maintaining communications and coordination with multiple agencies. This capability proved essential during Hurricane Joaquin's devastation of the southern Bahamas, when RBDF Marines deployed to Acklins, Long Island, San Salvador, Crooked Island, and Rum Cay, working alongside health professionals to provide emergency care, assess damage, distribute relief supplies, and restore basic services (RBDF, 2024b). These operations recognize that disaster response is a human rights imperative, protecting the rights to life, health, and security during events that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations.

The Force's humanitarian ethos extends beyond crisis response to ongoing community service. The Commando Squadron regularly engages with vulnerable populations, including assistance at the Bahamas Children Emergency Hostel where Marines assembled and painted benches, maintained grounds, and mentored young men through the Ministry of Education's Success Ultimately Reassures Everyone (S.U.R.E.) Programme (RBDF, 2021). These activities demonstrate understanding that military strength includes compassion and that defending the nation requires investing in citizens' dignity and potential.



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International Peacekeeping: Exporting Human Rights Protection

The RBDF's participation in international peacekeeping missions demonstrates commitment to human rights beyond our borders, recognizing that Bahamian security is connected to regional stability and global justice. Peacekeeping missions in Haiti and El Salvador have seen Defence Force personnel working alongside international partners to protect civilian populations, support democratic governance, and promote rule of law in countries facing severe instability (RBDF, 2024a). These deployments provide valuable experience in complex human rights environments while contributing to international efforts to end suffering and build sustainable peace.

In 2025, the deployment of 150 Defence Force officers to Haiti under the Multinational Security Support Mission represents significant contribution to addressing humanitarian crisis and protecting vulnerable populations from gang violence (The Nassau Guardian, 2025). Operating under non-combatant rules of engagement, RBDF personnel focus on humanitarian support, maritime security, and protection of civilians, recognizing that peacekeeping requires not only military capability but also deep respect for human dignity and rights. These missions demonstrate understanding that true security encompasses human security and that military strength must be balanced with humanitarian compassion.

Through participation in CARICOM's Regional Security Task Force, the RBDF contributes to

collective regional capacity to respond to disasters, address transnational threats, and support member states facing security challenges (RBDF, 2024a). This cooperation recognizes that Caribbean nations face common vulnerabilities requiring coordinated responses that respect sovereignty while providing mutual support. The regional approach enables smaller nations like The Bahamas to contribute meaningfully to international peace and security while benefiting from collective capabilities exceeding what any single country could maintain independently.

Youth Development: Building Rights-Respecting Citizens

The RBDF Rangers program, operating in fifty schools across The Bahamas with over 1,200 students, serves as a powerful human rights education initiative, developing young leaders endowed with character, discipline, and sense of national duty (RBDF, 2024a). Through this 23-year program serving as a certifying branch of the Governor General Youth Award Programme, young Bahamians learn principles of service, leadership, and citizenship that form the foundation for rights-respecting societies. Rangers engage in community service, disaster preparedness training, and leadership development, learning that strength includes responsibility to protect and support others.

The National Youth Guard program represents innovative approach to youth development, with five successful cohorts completing training and over 160 cadets gaining job-ready skills in disaster preparedness and community service



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(Government of The Bahamas, 2025b). Over 85% of graduates have secured meaningful employment, demonstrating that investment in youth development produces tangible returns for individuals and society (Government of The Bahamas, 2025b). These young people form a capable cadre of national first-responders prepared to provide assistance during emergencies while embodying principles of service, discipline, and respect for human dignity. Their training emphasizes that true security requires not only defense against threats but also building resilient, inclusive communities where every person can thrive.

BMMA: EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPIONS

As the Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy (BMMA) progresses toward full operational status, our institutional architecture reflects profound commitment to human rights education across all disciplines, preparing graduates who understand that leadership requires protecting dignity, that security encompasses human rights, and that development must be rights-based and inclusive.

School of Military Science and Strategy: Ethics, Law, and Human Rights in Armed Forces

This school will integrate human rights principles throughout military education, recognizing that professional armed forces must be grounded in

respect for law, ethics, and human dignity. Courses in international humanitarian law will ensure officers understand legal and moral obligations during conflict, including protection of civilians, prohibition of torture, and humane treatment of prisoners. Leadership development programs will emphasize that command responsibility includes preventing human rights violations by subordinates and ensuring accountability when violations occur. Intelligence training will address ethical collection and use of information, protecting privacy rights while enabling effective security operations.

The curriculum will examine historical cases where military forces either protected or violated human rights, drawing lessons about institutional culture, command structures, and ethical decision-making under pressure. Students will study the role of armed forces in democratic societies, understanding civil-military relations, civilian control of military, and military's obligation to refuse unlawful orders. Courses in disaster preparedness and humanitarian assistance will prepare graduates to lead complex operations requiring coordination with civilian agencies, international partners, and local communities while maintaining respect for affected populations' dignity and rights.

The school will address contemporary challenges including counter-terrorism operations that respect due process, cyber operations that protect privacy and freedom of expression, and use of emerging technologies including artificial intelligence and autonomous systems in ways consistent with human rights obligations.



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Graduates will understand that military effectiveness requires public trust, which depends on consistent respect for rights and transparent accountability when violations occur.

**School of Maritime and Coastal Studies:
Rights and Responsibilities at Sea**

Maritime operations present unique human rights challenges, from treatment of migrants intercepted at sea to protection of fishing communities' livelihoods to environmental conservation affecting coastal populations. This school will prepare maritime professionals who understand that sovereignty protection includes ensuring vessels transiting Bahamian waters respect labor rights of crew members, that immigration enforcement must balance border security with non-refoulement obligations preventing return of refugees to persecution, and that marine resource management must consider rights and traditional practices of fishing communities.

Courses in maritime law will cover the law of the sea, including freedom of navigation, territorial waters, and exclusive economic zones, examining how these frameworks balance state sovereignty with individual rights. Students will study search and rescue obligations, understanding duty to render assistance to persons in distress at sea regardless of nationality or legal status. Training in marine conservation will address tension between environmental protection and livelihood rights of communities dependent on marine resources, developing approaches that achieve sustainability while respecting human rights.

The school will examine piracy, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling, preparing graduates to address these challenges while respecting victims' rights and ensuring perpetrators face justice through proper legal processes. Graduates will understand that maritime security ultimately serves human security, protecting not only borders and resources but also ensuring seas remain spaces where rights are respected and human dignity protected.

**School of Arts, Humanities, and Social
Sciences: Foundations of Human Rights
Understanding**

This school will serve as the intellectual heart of human rights education at BMMA, providing deep understanding of historical, philosophical, cultural, and social foundations of rights. Courses in political philosophy will examine origins and evolution of human rights concepts, from ancient traditions of justice to Enlightenment theories of natural rights to contemporary debates about universalism and cultural relativism. Students will study major human rights documents including the Magna Carta, the American Declaration of Independence, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, understanding how rights concepts have developed and spread globally.

History courses will examine struggles for rights including abolitionism, suffrage, civil rights, decolonization, and anti-apartheid movements, drawing lessons about how determined citizens



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have expanded rights protections despite powerful opposition. Students will study both Bahamian and Caribbean history of rights struggles, from our own path to independence to regional movements for social justice. Sociology courses will analyze how social structures create and perpetuate inequality, examining intersections of race, gender, class, and other identities in shaping access to rights and opportunities.

Psychology programs will address trauma's impact on individuals and communities, preparing practitioners to support victims of human rights violations while promoting healing and resilience. Cultural studies will examine how different societies understand and implement human rights, addressing tensions between universal standards and local traditions while seeking approaches that respect cultural diversity within framework of core human dignity principles. Communication programs will train professionals to document human rights violations, tell stories of survivors with dignity and accuracy, and advocate effectively for rights protection through media, public relations, and digital platforms.

The school will emphasize participatory research methodologies involving affected communities in identifying problems and developing solutions, ensuring that human rights work serves rather than speaks for those whose rights are violated. Students will learn that effective human rights protection requires not only legal and institutional mechanisms but also cultural change, public education, and social movements that shift attitudes and behaviors at community level.

**School of Business and Information
Technology: Digital Rights and Economic
Justice**

The digital age presents unprecedented human rights opportunities and challenges, from enhanced communication enabling activism to surveillance technologies threatening privacy to artificial intelligence systems that may perpetuate or amplify discrimination. This school will prepare professionals who understand that technology companies and digital platforms have human rights responsibilities, that cybersecurity must balance security with privacy and freedom of expression, and that economic development must be inclusive and respect labor rights.

Courses in digital rights will examine privacy protection in an era of big data, freedom of expression online including content moderation challenges, and digital inclusion ensuring marginalized populations can access and benefit from technology. Students will study emerging issues including algorithmic bias, facial recognition, and artificial intelligence, understanding how these technologies can undermine rights if deployed without appropriate safeguards. Cybersecurity programs will address ethical hacking, whistleblowing, and tension between national security and individual privacy.

Business ethics courses will examine corporate responsibility for human rights, including supply chain labor standards, environmental impacts on communities, and corruption's role in undermining rights and development. Students will study international frameworks including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human



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Rights, understanding expectations for corporate due diligence and remedy when businesses cause or contribute to human rights harms.

**School of Health and Human Performance:
Health as a Human Right**

This school will prepare health professionals grounded in understanding that health is a human right, not a privilege, requiring systems ensuring everyone can access quality care without financial hardship. Courses in health equity will examine how social determinants including poverty, discrimination, education, and environmental conditions shape health outcomes, addressing structural inequalities that create disparities between populations. Students will study right-to-health framework articulated in international law, understanding government obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill health rights through regulation, service provision, and addressing determinants.

The school will address contemporary challenges including pandemic response that balances public health with individual liberties, reproductive rights, end-of-life care, and genetic technologies raising profound ethical questions. Courses in health policy will examine how to design systems that achieve universal health coverage while controlling costs and maintaining quality. Students will study healthcare financing mechanisms including national insurance schemes, analyzing how to ensure sustainability while protecting vulnerable populations from catastrophic health expenditures.

Graduates will understand that health professionals serve not only individual patients but also community health, advocating for policies and systems that protect and promote population health while respecting autonomy and dignity. They will be prepared to work in resource-constrained environments, making difficult allocation decisions while maintaining ethical principles and rights-based approaches.

**School of Engineering and Applied Sciences:
Technology for Human Rights**

Engineers and applied scientists play crucial roles in protecting and promoting human rights through technologies that improve living conditions, enhance communication, provide clean water and sanitation, and enable sustainable development. This school will prepare graduates who understand that technological choices have human rights implications, that innovation should serve human needs rather than merely generate profit, and that participation of affected communities in design and implementation ensures technologies actually improve lives.

Courses in sustainable development will examine how to meet present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their needs, understanding that environmental degradation ultimately threatens rights to health, food, water, and adequate standard of living. Students will study renewable energy systems that reduce dependence on fossil fuels while ensuring energy access for all, particularly off-grid communities lacking connection to central power. Water and sanitation engineering will address how to



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provide clean water and adequate sanitation, fundamental to health and dignity, in resource-constrained environments including small islands.

Coastal engineering programs will address adaptation to sea-level rise and increased storm intensity, protecting communities from climate impacts while respecting cultural heritage and community identity. Students will study how to design infrastructure that is accessible to persons with disabilities, understanding that universal design benefits everyone. Communications technology courses will examine how to expand internet access to remote and underserved communities, recognizing that digital inclusion is increasingly essential for exercising rights including freedom of expression, assembly, education, and economic participation.

The school will emphasize participatory design methodologies involving communities in identifying problems and developing solutions, ensuring technologies address actual needs and respect local knowledge. Students will study technology assessment frameworks examining not only technical feasibility and economic viability but also social, ethical, and human rights implications. Graduates will be prepared to lead sustainable development initiatives that improve living standards while protecting rights and preserving environmental integrity for future generations.

**HUMAN RIGHTS, OUR EVERYDAY
ESSENTIALS**

As we observe the 77th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we recognize that the promise made in 1948 remains unfulfilled for millions globally and for too many Bahamians who face discrimination, poverty, violence, or denial of dignity. Yet we also recognize extraordinary progress over these decades: the abolition of legal racial discrimination; the recognition of women's equal rights; the extension of protections to children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups; and the development of robust international and regional systems for monitoring and enforcing rights (OHCHR, 2025b). This progress resulted not from inevitability but from determined action by courageous individuals and movements that refused to accept injustice as permanent.

The 2025 theme "Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials" reminds us that human rights are not special occasion concerns but everyday essentials requiring constant attention and action. As Prime Minister Davis has demonstrated through comprehensive justice reform, social investment, and international advocacy, protecting and promoting human rights requires political will, adequate resources, and sustained commitment across all government functions. As the RBDF demonstrates through humanitarian missions, community service, and youth development, security includes protecting human dignity and supporting citizens in their most vulnerable moments. As BMMA will demonstrate through human rights education across all disciplines, preparing future leaders requires grounding them



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in understanding that all legitimate authority ultimately serves human dignity and rights.

For each of us, regardless of rank or role, human rights present both privileges and responsibilities. We enjoy rights including freedom of expression, assembly, and religion; equality before the law; and protection from arbitrary arrest and torture. We also bear responsibility to respect others' rights, to speak against violations we witness, and to build institutions and communities where rights are protected for all. As Defence Force personnel, we carry special responsibility as agents of state power, understanding that how we exercise authority, whether defending borders, maintaining order, or providing humanitarian assistance, must always respect human dignity and rights.

Eleanor Roosevelt asked where human rights begin and answered: "In small places, close to home" (Roosevelt, 1958). For us, these small places include how we treat subordinates and superiors; how we interact with civilians during operations; how we respond when witnessing discrimination or abuse; and how we participate in family, community, and national life. Each interaction provides opportunity to either honor or undermine human dignity. Each day presents choices that collectively shape whether we build rights-respecting society or permit violations to continue.

As we mark this anniversary, let us commit to making every day Human Rights Day through our actions, choices, and leadership. Let us remember that human rights are not foreign concepts imposed from outside but universal principles

recognizing our common humanity. Let us work toward a Bahamas where every person, regardless of background, beliefs, or circumstances, can live with dignity, freedom, equality, and security. Let us strengthen institutions that protect rights while holding accountable those who violate them. And let us teach our children that their worth is inherent, that their rights are inalienable, and that their future depends on how well we protect these principles today.

The ocean that surrounds our islands has taught us that we are all connected, that no island stands entirely alone, and that survival requires mutual support and collective responsibility. These lessons apply equally to human rights, reminding us that violations anywhere threaten justice everywhere and that protecting rights requires solidarity across borders, generations, and differences. On this International Day of Human Rights, let us reaffirm our commitment to the promise made 77 years ago, that every person everywhere has equal and inalienable rights forming the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

Sincerely,

Dr. Origin Deleveaux, Jr., DD MSc, JP,
Commander

President, Bahamas Military and Maritime
Academy (BMMA)



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