



# The Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

## PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

**Human Rights Institute at Northeastern University School of Law  
Affirms Importance of Local Action to Protect and Advance Human Rights**

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On December 8 & 9, 2016, over 150 academics, advocates and activists for urban social justice gathered for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual [PHRGE Human Rights Institute](#) entitled, “**Global Justice Goes Local: The Emergence of Human Rights Cities.**” [Northeastern University School of Law](#)’s Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy organized the event in collaboration with the [National Human Rights City Network](#), a project of the [US Human Rights Network](#) (USHRN).

Local human rights and social justice advocates from cities including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, [Eugene, OR](#), [Jackson, MS](#), New York, [Pittsburgh](#), Toronto, [Washington, DC](#) and Worcester, MA, contributed to this year’s conference. Students and academics from Boston University, [Columbia University](#), [Harvard University](#), Jackson State University, the University of Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Dartmouth and Lowell, Northeastern University, the University of Pittsburgh, [Santa Clara University](#) and Simmons College also participated in the discussions.

Institute participants concluded that the current political transition in the United States presents a number of serious threats to the human rights of a large part of the U.S. population, as well as many millions of people living outside this country. The next period promises particular dangers for groups singled out for attacks in the political discourse of the recent election. The space for engagement with the U.S. federal government on the fulfillment of its human rights obligations promises to shrink significantly under the incoming administration. In that context, active human rights engagement at the state and, especially, the local level will become more important to our ongoing efforts to advance and protect human rights. Organizing models such as [Human Rights Cities](#), [Cities for CEDAW](#), [Sanctuary Cities](#) and many others will, therefore, become increasingly relevant.

In this spirit, the 11<sup>th</sup> PHRGE Human Rights Institute concluded with an affirmation of the [recommendations to local activists](#) made by the National Human Rights City Network on the occasion of [International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2016](#):

**Become a Sanctuary City:** Encourage your local officials to make your community an [official Sanctuary City](#). If your city already has this designation, encourage public officials to re-affirm their commitment to protecting immigrants and actively resisting discrimination while upholding all human rights, as [Eugene, OR](#) and [Washington, DC](#) recently did.

**Recommit to being a Human Rights City:** If you live in a Human Rights City, ask your local officials to reaffirm their commitments to implementing human rights in local government (see this proposed [Resolution language from Washington, DC](#) and [Eugene Oregon's Inclusive Community Resolution](#)). If your community is not a designated Human Rights City yet, you can work to make it one - see the [National Human Rights City Network](#) page for resources.

**Study & share USHRN's 2016 report card:** The US Human Rights Network will issue its annual [Advancing Human Rights Report Card](#) on Human Rights Day. The report card will highlight key issues that show the intersections across our movements & struggles. Locally, groups might highlight the Report Card during Human Rights Day events and via social media. Groups may also use it as a basis for discussion and strategizing.

**Promote a culture of human rights:** Help defend and promote a culture of human rights at this urgent time, check out some [resources for youth and adult education](#) from the Human Rights Educators USA network.

**Evaluate your city's human rights record:** Work with local activists to evaluate your community's human rights record. Be creative in finding ways to make this record visible to both public officials and the larger community. For instance, DC youth produced this "[State of Human Rights in a Human Rights City](#)" media project. While in New York City, City Council officials have been given a "[Human Rights Report Card](#)."

**Speak out against gender-based violence:** UN Women has called for [16 days of activism against gender-based violence](#), between November 25th—International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and International Human Rights Day (December 10). Download the [Action Kit](#) or [join the Twitter Teachin](#) #GBVTeachin #16Days

**Connect with people across the world:** Human Rights Day is celebrated around the world! On this Human Rights Day the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has a campaign calling for everyone to: [Stand up for Someone's Rights Today](#). This is a great way to get involved and to activate people of all ages. Use the UN hashtags: #standup4humanrights #humanrightsdays

**Learn about what is happening internationally** to defend human rights and prevent the Trump administration from violating or rescinding global human rights principles. [UN officials have indicated that](#), "if the U.N. doesn't call out its most powerful member for straying from universally accepted human rights norms, the rest of the world will be emboldened to ditch them." The US Human Rights Network helps link human rights defenders in the US with international monitoring procedures, and we'll keep you informed about opportunities for action.