

STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC) ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS



Today, 1st October 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) joins the global community in commemorating the International Day of Older Persons under the theme: 'Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: Our Well-being, Our Rights.'

The theme emphasises the active role of older persons as contributors to society and highlights the importance of empowering them to pursue their aspirations, safeguard their well-being and fully enjoy their human rights.

The Day serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions that older persons continue to make to our families, communities, and nation, as well as the responsibility we all share to ensure that their dignity, well-being, and rights are fully protected and promoted.

Older persons are not just custodians of wisdom, culture and tradition, but also active participants in shaping our societies. In The Gambia, many continue to play vital roles in agriculture, education, peacebuilding, community leadership and nurturing intergenerational bonds. Their life experiences and guidance remain critical to building a just, inclusive and resilient society.

However, older persons continue to face serious challenges such as neglect, abuse and barriers to accessing healthcare, social protection, and other essential services. Older women, in particular, face discrimination, exploitation, denial of inheritance and other forms of gender-based violence in the communities. The Commission reiterates that ageism is a form of discrimination which violates human rights and underscores that age should never be a basis for exclusion, marginalization or denial of rights. Every older person is entitled to live with dignity, independence and equal opportunity.

On the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons, the NHRC calls on the Government, policymakers, communities and families to:

1. Develop policies and programmes that guarantee the social, economic, and health rights of older persons.
2. Strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to prevent and protect older persons against abuse, neglect, violence and discrimination.
3. Promote active ageing and create spaces for older persons to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes at local and national levels.
4. Popularise the AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa and domesticate it as well.
5. Develop a National Policy on Older Persons

The Commission reaffirms its commitment to advocating for the rights of older persons and ensuring that they are actively and effectively included in national and Local Government development processes, initiatives and mechanisms. Protecting and empowering older persons is not only a human rights obligation, but also a pathway towards building a society anchored in justice, equality and respect for all.

As we commemorate this Day, let us collectively work to create a society where older persons feel valued, dignified and included, and can truly say: "Our well-being, our rights are respected and protected."

Happy International Day of Older Persons.



Emmanuel Daniel Joof
Chairperson, NHRC