

FACING GOVERNMENTS: THE RIGHTS OF MAN

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We are just individuals here, with no other grounds for speaking, or for speaking together, than a certain shared difficulty in enduring what is taking place.

Of course, we accept the obvious fact that there's not much that we can do about the reasons why some men and women would rather leave their country than live in it. The fact is beyond our reach.

Who appointed us, then? No one. And that is precisely what constitutes our right. It seems to me that we need to bear in mind three principles that, I believe, guide this initiative, like many others that have preceded it: the *Île-de-Lumière*, Cape Anamour, the Airplane for El Salvador, but also Terre des Hommes, Amnesty International.

1. There exists an international citizenship that has its rights and its duties, and that obliges one to rise up against every abuse of power, whoever its author, whoever its victims. After all, we are all of the governed and, to that extent, in solidarity.

2. Because they claim to be concerned with the welfare (*bonheur*) of societies, governments arrogate to themselves the right to pass off as profit or loss the human misfortune (*malheur*) that their decisions provoke or their negligence permits. It is a duty of this international citizenship to always bring the testimony of people's misfortunes (*malheurs*) to the eyes and ears of governments - misfortune for which it is not true that they are not responsible. People's misfortune must never be a silent remainder of politics. It grounds (*fonds*) an absolute right to stand up and speak to those who hold power.

3. We must reject the division of labor so often proposed to us: individuals can get indignant and talk; governments will reflect and act. It's true that good governments appreciate the holy indignation of the governed, provided it remains lyrical. I think we need to be aware that very often it is those who govern who talk, are capable only of talking, and want only to talk. Experience shows that one can and must refuse the theatrical role of pure and simple indignation that is proposed to us. Amnesty International, Terre des Hommes, and Médecins du Monde are initiatives that have created this new right - that of private individuals to effectively intervene in the sphere of international politics and strategy. The will of individuals has to inscribe itself in a reality over which governments have wanted to reserve as a monopoly for themselves - a monopoly which we uproot little by little and day by day.