

18.01.2016 - □ As the United States observes its annual Martin Luther King Day, we take a look at the special relationship the United Nations shared with the iconic American civil rights leader. □



Dr. Martin Luther King, accompanied by his wife, is greeted by Mr. Ralph J. Bunche, diplomat and advisor to the UN, on a visit to the United Nations Headquarters in 1964. At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. He was the second African American to receive the honor, after Mr. Bunche, who received the prize in 1950.

“As the United Nations strives to tackle the problems raging throughout our world and to realize the principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we carry in our hearts Dr. King’s unending courage and his unbending conviction.” – Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, 2008

Last year the bond between the UN and the Dr. King’s legacy was evident in special screenings of the movie *Selma* that took place on both sides of the Atlantic. In March 2015, UNRIC hosted an exclusive screening of the film in partnership with the [US mission to the EU](#) and in April the film was attended by top

[UN officials in New York](#)

as part of the

[UN Remember Slavery programme](#)

, which mobilizes educators to teach about the causes and consequences of the transatlantic slave trade communicating the dangers of racism and prejudice.

The documentary film, which was Oscar nominated for best Motion Picture, chronicles Dr. King’s campaign to secure equal voting rights in the face of violent opposition. The epic march

from Selma to Montgomery culminated in President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most significant victories of the civil rights movement.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon meets film director Ava DuVernay at the advance screening of 'Selma: One Dream Can Change the World.'

The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2015-2024 as the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#) citing the need to strengthen cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of all rights by people of African descent, and their full participation in all aspects of society.

“Selma reminds us of the issues and challenges that people of African descent have faced in the recent past and continue to face long after slavery has officially ended,” said Maher Nasser, the Acting head of DPI.

“Films can serve as powerful educational tools to teach the young generations about the dangers of racism and prejudice,” added Mr. Nasser.

This Thursday UNRIC's CINÉ-ONU outreach film initiative will continue in its mission of engaging and informing Europeans about the work of the UN with a screening of

[Intersexion](#)

to highlight the

[Free and Equal Campaign](#)

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UNRICs Related Links

- [International Decade for People of African Descent](#)
- [UN Free and Equal Campaign](#)
- [CINÉ-ONU](#)

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