

# International Women's Day



International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.

International Women's Day can be traced back to 1908 when thousands of women who were garment workers went on strike in New York City and marched through the city to protest against their working conditions.

But the first milestone was much earlier - in 1848. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott congregated a few hundred people at the first women's rights convention in New York. Together they demanded civil, social, political and religious rights for women in a Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions. A movement was born.

## 1910

The Women's Day was established, international in character, to honour the movement for women's rights and to build support for achieving universal suffrage for women. In addition to the right to vote and to hold public office, they demanded women's rights to work, to vocational training and an end to discrimination on the job.



## 1913

International Women's Day also became a mechanism for protesting World War I. As part of the peace movement, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February. Elsewhere in Europe, on or around 8 March of the following year, women held rallies either to protest the war or to express solidarity with other activists.

## 1915

Tired of war  
As the First World War rages, a huge gathering of women is held in The Netherlands on 15 April. Participants include over 1,300 women from over 12 countries.

## 1917

Against the backdrop of the war, women in Russia again chose to protest and strike for "Bread and Peace" on the last Sunday in February (which fell on 8 March on the Gregorian calendar).

The protests grew to daily mass strikes of workers from all sectors demanding bread, better rights and the end to autocracy. Four days later, the Czar abdicated and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote. This was probably the most consequential of any International Women's Day demonstrations of any time.

In 1927 there was a march in the Chinese city of Guangzhou of 25,000 women and male supporters. 1949 international women day was made an official holiday with women in China given a half-day off.

1965 International Women's Day was declared a non-working day in the USSR.

The day remained predominantly a communist holiday until about 1967 when it was taken up by second-wave feminists.



The day re-emerged as a day of activism, and is sometimes known as the "**Women's International Day of Struggle**". In the 1970s and 1980s, women's groups were joined by leftists and labor organizations in calling for equal pay, equal economic opportunity, equal legal rights, reproductive rights, subsidized child care, and the prevention of violence against women.