

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Statement on Nelson Mandela International Day
July 17, 2012

On behalf of the people of the United States, we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Nelson Mandela on the occasion of his 94th birthday and the fourth annual Nelson Mandela International Day. Mandela's extraordinary life and steadfast commitment to the principles of democracy and reconciliation continues to be a beacon for people of all backgrounds who strive for dignity, justice, and freedom.

Nelson Mandela's personal story is one of unbreakable will, unwavering integrity, and abiding humility. On a personal note, our family has been inspired by Madiba's example and has deeply appreciated the time we have spent with him and his wisdom, grace and generosity of spirit. By any measure, Nelson Mandela has changed the arc of history, transforming his country, continent, and the world.

In 2009, the United States joined 192 United Nations member states in the creation of Nelson Mandela International Day. On this important occasion, we honor Madiba's commitment to service and the betterment of our communities. There is no more fitting tribute to a man who has demonstrated to the world the extraordinary power of nonviolence, of tolerance, and of unwavering service to our fellow men and women.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

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