



LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

www.liberal-international.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Message from Chairperson	03
LI HRC Overview	04

Priority areas of work

Freedom of Belief	07
LGBTI Rights	11
Women's Rights	12

Geneva Summit for Human Rights & Democracy

Summary of Event	15
------------------	----

LI HRC At United Nations

Statements	16
------------	----

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 70th Anniversary Campaign

Campaign Summary	19
------------------	----

Speeches & Expert Opinions

OP-ED: UDHR 1	21
Geneva Summit Keynote	23
OP-ED: UDHR 2	25
Prize for Freedom Keynote	27
OP-ED: UDHR 3	29

LI HRC Meetings

Expert Forum - Sofia	31
Committee Meeting - Berlin	32
Stasi Museum	33



“

A belief in fundamental human rights is intrinsic to all liberals. In a time when populism and far right extremism continues to be on the rise, it has never been more important for liberals to stand up for equality, liberty and the rule of law.

— Markus Löning

”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LI Prize For Freedom

Awarding ceremony 35

LI Human Rights Bulletin

Editions 37

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON



Markus Löning
LI HRC Chairperson

A belief in fundamental human rights is intrinsic to all liberals. In a time when populism and far right extremism continues to be on the rise, it has never been more important for liberals to stand up for equality, liberty and the rule of law.

In 2018, the Liberal International Human Rights Committee (LI HRC) spearheaded a successful campaign to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reaching one million people around the world. The commemorative campaign sought to educate, engage and promote our liberal values alongside the anniversary of the historical human rights document.

In Dakar and New York, LI HRC and the National Democratic Institute continued to challenge the stereotypical norms and gender inequality in the political sphere by organising events on ending violence against women in politics. In Ghana and the Netherlands, LI HRC promoted the principle of freedom of belief and debated the reconciling of religious and non-religious beliefs in multicultural societies.

As we prepare to welcome a new committee in 2019, I would like to thank my colleagues for their cooperation and dedication to promoting the equal and inalienable rights of every human being.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Markus Löning', followed by a checkmark.

LI HRC OVERVIEW

Throughout 2018, the Liberal International Human Rights Committee continued to work on the priority areas which were adopted at the 199th LI Executive Committee in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2017. These priority working areas include the promotion and advancement of Women's Rights, LGBTI rights, and Freedom of Belief.

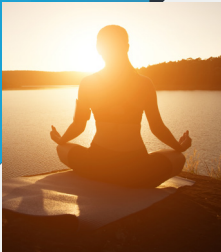
The LI Human Rights Committee consists of 24 members, 14 of which are women, and represent 18 countries from across 3 different continents. All members are committed to promoting fundamental freedoms around the world and have either parliamentarian or civil activist background.

Liberal International Human Rights Committee 2017-2018





PRIORITY AREAS OF WORK



FREEDOM OF BELIEF

Continuing to promote the principle of freedom of belief in 2018, LI Human Rights Committee organised events in both Ghana and the Netherlands to debate the reconciling of religious and non-religious beliefs in multicultural societies.



LGBTI RIGHTS

Providing support to pro-LGBTI movements around the world and promoting and advancing LGBTI Rights in general is a key objective for LI Human Rights Committee and its LGBTI Rights Working Group. In 2018, LI adopted a resolution on individual freedom and LGBTI rights, and continued to speak out against anti-LGBTI policies and laws.



WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In 2018, LI Human Rights Committee's work focused strongly on promoting female political participation and ending all forms of violence against women in politics. This was done by advancing relevant policies at the international level and organising a series of events and workshops in partnership with the National Democratic Institute on ending violence against women in politics on the fringes of the 62nd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and at the 62nd LI Congress.

FREEDOM OF BELIEF

Freedom of Religion and Belief: Liberal Strategies and Perspectives
Africa Liberal Network General Assembly, Accra, Ghana (4 March 2018)

What can liberal politicians do to promote tolerance between religious groups and non-believers? This was the question posed by LI Human Rights Committee (LI HRC) member, **Boris van der Ham**, to the politicians and delegates who participated in a debate hosted by the LI HRC and **Democrats 66** (D66, Netherlands – LI full-member) in Accra, Ghana in the margin of the **Africa Liberal Network's** (ALN – LI cooperating organisation) 14th General Assembly.

The debate, entitled Freedom of Religion and Belief: Liberal Strategies and Perspectives, saw participants from 15 countries exchange experiences and form policy strategies to advance religious (and non-religious) freedoms. Boris van der Ham, who moderated the discussions, opened up the debate by inquiring about liberal politicians' responsibility in promoting religious tolerance and respect for non-believers.

Amel Chaherli, a member of the national council of **Afek Tounis**, set out the situation concerning freedom of belief in Tunisia by explaining the influence that Muslim political parties have in the immediate region. Ms Chaherli emphasized the importance of engaging with such parties in order to promote moderate thinking.

Hatim Beggar (**Mouvement Populaire**, Morocco – LI full-member), endorsed Amel Chaherli's engagement proposition by explaining that the Quran respects freedom of religion and belief. Using the Moroccan context as an example he added: "The preamble of the Moroccan Constitution clearly refers to the different religious

backgrounds which exist in the country showcasing that the Moroccan people are tolerant and respectful towards other religions. In fact there has never been a religious conflict in Morocco and the country is known for training moderate Islam imams across the African continent."

Representing the wider African perspective, President of the **Africa Liberal Network** and LI HRC Member **Stevens Mokgalapa** MP (Democratic Alliance, South Africa – LI full-member) highlighted the role liberals can have in de-escalating tensions that can often exist between different religions across the continent.

"We need to drive the project of freedom of religion and belief so that it is enshrined in all of our constitutions. The issue is often seen as one of the major sources of conflict in Africa and therefore there is a need for evolution in society's thinking so that there is no tension between mainstream and indigenous religions on the continent", he said.

The session also served to introduce the work of LI Human Rights Committee to the ALN membership, not least the recently published LI Booklet on Freedom of Belief, seeking to incorporate relevant feedback.



Individual vs. Collective Identity Groningen and Utrecht, The Netherlands (9-11 April 2018)

Addressing large audiences in Groningen and Utrecht in the Netherlands, Liberal International Human Rights Committee and D66, held debates on reconciling religious and non-religious beliefs in multicultural societies in what marked a second series of events on the topic.

Under the theme Individual vs. Collective Identity, the event attempted to investigate the tension between the exclusivity of religions and their collective dimension on the one hand and the power of the individual to dictate his/her own right to religious and non-religious beliefs on the other. Special attention was given to diverse (multi-faith) societies where pressure often comes from within the community rather than the state.

LI HRC Member and Former D66 Member of Parliament, **Boris Van der Ham**, moderated the discussions by posing questions on what liberal political parties can do to change social behavior towards Freedom of Belief. "We need to defend the right of every individual to express his/her own religion and identity. As liberals we should always put the secular law and state first as this protects religion and does not diminish it."

The keynote speech was delivered by **Hatim Beggar** of **Mouvement Populaire** (LI full-member – Morocco) who discussed the changing perspective towards Islam around the world and in Morocco in particular. "The Moroccan Constitution acknowledges religious diversity by stipulating institutional power with the King who is the commander of believers and non-believers alike. It is precisely because of this model that Morocco is seen as a leading exporter of moderate Islam around the world having developed an international Imam training programme" he said. Referring to the growing misconception that Islam breeds radicalism he emphasized that radical Islamists are as Muslim as the KKK is Christian and pressed on the fact that radicalism is in fact wahhabism which is often used to control power and wealth.

Other experts alongside Van der Ham and Beggar included **Annelou van Egmond**, member of the D66 National Board and ALDE Party Vice-President, **Alper Alasag** of the Islam Kennis Center and **Meryem Kaaboun**, a student in Public Policy and Administration of Moroccan descent.

In line with the recently adopted LI resolution by the 199th Executive Committee in Johannesburg calling "on the Liberal International Human Rights Committee to make the study and promotion of Freedom of Religion and Belief one the key strands of its work in 2018", the event served to promote Liberal International's work by building on the conclusions of the LI Booklet on Freedom of Belief.



LGBTI RIGHTS

2018 EuroPride
Stockholm, Sweden (27 July – 5 August)

Chair of LI's LGBTI Rights Working Group **Frank van Dalen** attended the 2018 EuroPride in Sweden together with LI President of Honour and **ALDE Party** President **Hans van Baalen** MEP. In a video interview conducted on the fringes of the event, van Dalen spoke about the progress of advancing transgender rights in Europe.

How can liberals help advance decriminalization of LGBTI rights in countries which currently outlaw homosexuality? Why should liberals support Pride and the global Pride movement? These are just some of the questions that he posed to **Barbro Westerholm**, Member of Parliament from **Liberalerna**, and LI President of Honour Hans van Baalen.

Van Baalen endorsed the new LGBTI Liberals of Europe Network which was founded on the fringes of EuroPride at a gala dinner event hosted by the **Swedish International Liberal Center** (SILC, LI cooperating organisation). The LGBTI Liberals of Europe is a European organisation formed of liberal LGBTI networks from across Europe. It was established by **HBT Liberalerna** (Sweden), **Certi Diritti** (Italy), **Gaylib** (France) and **LiSL** (Germany).



WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Closed Consultation Meeting with UN Special Rapporteur
on Ending Violence against Women
New York, NY, USA (8 March 2018)

Liberal International Human Rights Committee Member **Marina Schuster** represented LI in a closed expert hearing meeting with H.E. **Dubravka Šimonović**, UN Special Rapporteur on Ending Violence against Women, in New York. Ms Schuster (FDP, LI full-member) highlighted efforts of liberals in government and opposition to support women in politics and end all forms of discrimination and abuse against politically active women.

The meeting served to provide direct input into the Rapporteur's first thematic report on the issue of ending violence against women in politics which was subsequently presented before the UN General Assembly in New York in September.



62nd Session of the United Nations Commission
on the Status of Women
New York, NY, USA (16 March 2018)

As part of Liberal International's on-going efforts to support the National Democratic Institute (NDI) #NotTheCost campaign on ending violence against women in politics, LI hosted a side event together with International Network of Liberal Women and NDI on the fringes of the 62nd Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women. Under the theme Pushing Back: Strategies for Combatting Violence against Women in Politics, the event showcased best practice solutions that have been developed to tackle the issue.

LI President **Dr. Juli Minoves** represented LI and took active participation in the debates solidifying once again the commitment of LI and its Human Rights Committee to the campaign and its respective cause.

Addressing more than 100 delegates, **Dr. Minoves** insisted that the abuse women in politics suffer is not only physical or sexual but also psychological. "Something that happens with violence against women in politics is that there is very little self-acknowledgement that this is happening in society and that it, therefore, goes much beyond physical violence", he said.

Other participants included **Denise Robinson**, Member of Parliament from the **Democratic Alliance** and UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women **H.E. Dubravka Šimonović**.



Win with Women Workshop, 62nd LI Congress Dakar, Senegal (28 November 2018)

On the fringes of the 62nd LI Congress, LI Human Rights Committee and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) led a workshop focusing on identifying opportunities and barriers women face in political parties in line with NDI's Win with Women: Building Inclusive 21st Century Parties toolkit.

Pointing to practical solutions, LI members exchanged best practices and lessons learnt from among their own political party structures when it comes to encouraging more women to run for office and allowing for meaningful inclusion of women among their party ranks. Some of the identified solutions included:

- Developing mentorship programmes for women and clear guidelines on tackling sexual harassment
- Providing institutional support
- Defying cultural norms
- Identifying champions for change
- Introducing clear obligations in regards to inclusivity and diversity in the party Constitution
- Ensuring an anonymous whistle-blower function for reporting of incidents.

The event was moderated by the NDI Deputy Director for Gender, Women and Democracy **Caroline Hubbard** and Head of LI Human Rights Programme **Tamara Dancheva** and featured contributions from LI President **Dr. Juli Minoves**, LI Vice-President **Abir Al-Sahlani**, Africa Liberal Network Vice-President **Rosemary Machua**, former ALDE Party President **Sir Graham Watson** and others.



LI HRC AT UNITED NATIONS

The Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy
Geneva, Switzerland (18-20 February 2018)

For the fifth consecutive year in a row, LI co-hosted the annual Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy which is the largest gathering of human rights heroes in Europe.

On the eve of the United Nations Human Rights Council's main annual session, the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy assembles each year hundreds of courageous dissidents and human rights victims, activists, diplomats, journalists and student leaders to shine a spotlight on urgent human rights situations that require global attention.

LI President of Honour **Hans Van Baalen** MEP delivered the keynote opening remarks to the Summit. Alongside the human rights heroes, the LI President of Honour declared that human rights are core to the liberal ideology: "Hollow phrases on human rights are shameful: we need action and we as liberal politicians can help and we can make a difference... we have to make a change and this summit is one of the few options to make this change", Hans van Baalen said.

Head of LI Human Rights Programme **Tamara Dancheva** presented LGBTI Rights Activist **Kasha Jacqueline** from Uganda.

The Summit also served to highlight the cases of imprisoned liberal leaders from around the world by presenting their circumstances in the form of posters which were subsequently spread throughout the venue.



LI HRC AT UNITED NATIONS

Advocacy towards the United Nations (UN) is one of the most prominent aspects of LI Human Rights Committee's work.

In 2018, LI Human Rights Committee submitted two written statements to the United Nations Human Rights Council on severe cases of human rights violations calling for urgent action.



Call to End Modern Slavery around the World UN doc. A/HRC/37/NGO/163

In a written statement to the 37th United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Session, Liberal International called on governments and companies to take responsibility and address the deteriorating situation with forced labour and sexual exploitation around the world.

Concerned about the recently discovered migrant slave actions in Libya, LI called on the African Union to make the resolution of the crisis in Libya a priority and assist with the current investigation of the Libyan authorities into the illegal migrant slave auctions in the country.

The statement also recalled LI's written statement to the 26th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, which called on "migration-destination countries to further enable migration for reasons other than asylum-seeking in order to foster an inclusive economic globalisation and secure individual opportunities for everyone".

In the conclusion of the statement, LI and its Human Rights Committee committed to continue to work with the Africa Liberal Network in addressing the escalating crisis with forcibly enslaved African migrants and refugees in Libya.



Credit_U.S. Mission Geneva Photo_Eric Bridiers

Call to End the Violence and Human Rights
Abuses in Nicaragua
UN doc. A/HRC/38/NGO/70

LI HRC brought the deteriorating human rights situation in Nicaragua before the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council at its 38th Session.

In its appeal, Liberal International called on the government of Nicaragua to immediately cease all police and paramilitary aggression and fulfil its international responsibilities in the area of human rights, particularly that of preserving the life and physical integrity of its citizens.

The written statement also called on the United Nations Security Council to freeze the financial assets of President Ortega and his close circle, and on the Organisation of American States to publicly condemn the violence committed by the President.



UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

70TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

At a time when populism and far right extremism have taken a central stage in traditionally liberal societies, the Liberal International Human Rights Committee (LI HRC) and **Radikale Venstre** (Denmark, LI full-member) teamed up to defend and reclaim one of our most intrinsically liberal values: the respect for basic human rights.

LI's campaign to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gained impressive outreach. The campaign reached over 1 million people, with a series of videos, information graphics and op-ed articles that were published in leading media news outlets in Chile and the Philippines. The campaign also provided LI with a means to engage new parliamentarians from LI member parties including Denmark and Canada.

Under the theme 70 Years on: What next for the UDHR?, the campaign culminated with a global human rights conference hosted by Radikale Venstre's Leader **Morten Østergaard** at the Danish Parliament on 7 December 2018.

The event brought together Members of Parliament and colleagues from liberal parties from around the globe, prominent human rights defenders, and members of the Danish public, for a celebration and a lively debate on the future of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The panellists of the main event, **Zhanna Nemtsova** and Morten Østergaard, discussed the current human rights challenges and what liberals can do to address them. Paying tribute to her late father, Boris Nemtsov – the former deputy prime minister of Russia – Ms. Nemtsova spoke of the challenges facing the country and human rights concerns around the world today.

The event was moderated by international journalist, **Trish Lynch**, news anchor for the International Observatory on Human Rights Web TV.

The conference, which was organised with the generous support of the **ALDE Party** (LI full-member) and in partnership with the International Observatory of Human Rights, included a welcoming reception and a breakfast briefing, enabling delegates to freely exchange views on the threats to human rights across Europe. Danish students were invited to an afternoon workshop session to discuss the current human rights issues in Denmark, as well as the country's place in the international human rights arena.

LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL & RADIKALE VENSTRE
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
CAMPAIGN



radikale B



70 YEARS ON:
WHAT NEXT FOR THE UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS?
#StandUp4HumanRights



Radikale Venstre
STIFTUNG

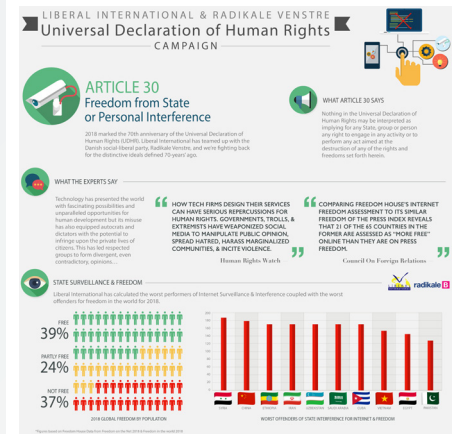
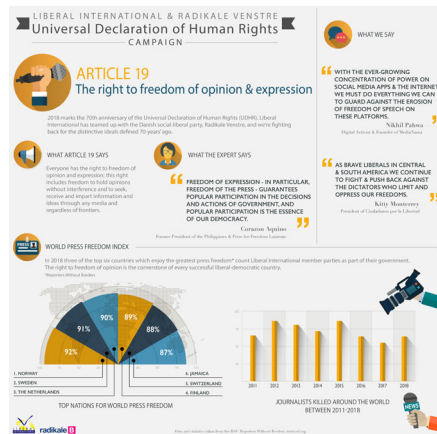
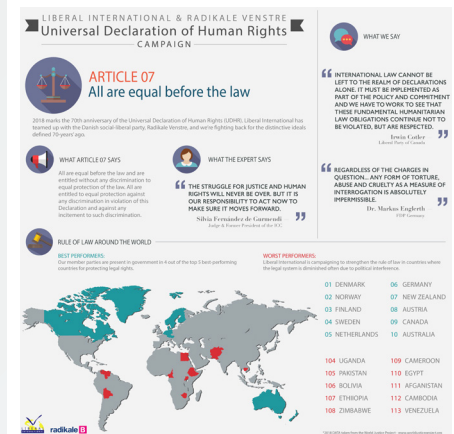
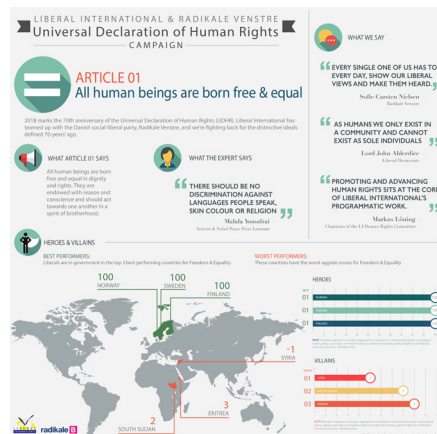
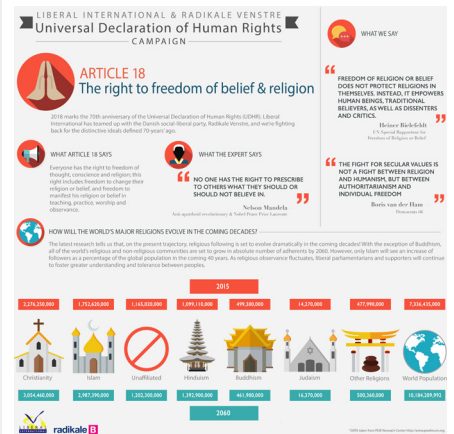
FÜR DIE FREIHEIT



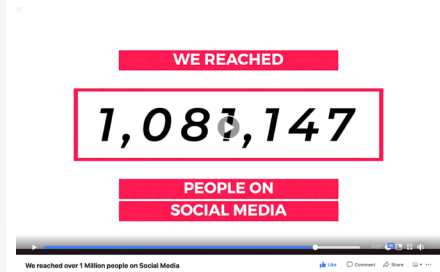
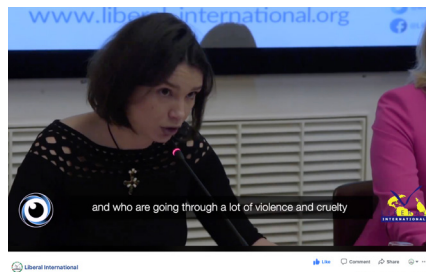
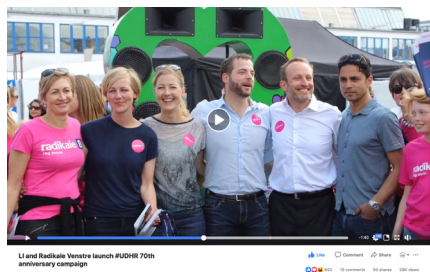
INTERNATIONAL
OBSERVATORY
HUMAN RIGHTS



INFOGRAPHICS



VIDEOS



UDHR EVENT

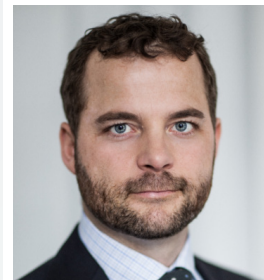


SPEECHES & EXPERT OPINIONS

A BEACON IN DARK TIMES: The UDHR turns 70 but why do we still need it?



Senator Leila M. de Lima,
Camp Crame, The Philippines



Morten Østergaard MP,
Radikale Venstre, Denmark

A blueprint adopted by world leaders to set humanity on a trajectory towards increased security and greater freedoms; this year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Rapid decolonisation across continents, development of democratic institutions, and a faster rate of growth and human progress than has ever been recorded followed in the decades after the UDHR's adoption. So why should the UDHR matter to people in the Philippines, Denmark or any other part of the world today?

We, the authors, are parliamentarians half a world apart - separated by sprawling continents, vast oceans, ethnic nuances, and unique traditions. But we are united by our values: the rule of law, human rights, and individual responsibility among others. The scale of our physical separation or differing cultural backgrounds in no way prevents us from spotting injustice in the world, coming together, and fighting to correct it. Right now, we believe, this fight has not been so important for 70 years.

For one of us, marking a 59th birthday today, defending our shared liberal-democratic values has resulted in 550 days of politically-motivated incarceration.

In 1948, the world's political leaders possessed an unambiguous motivation, a purpose, and a clear sense of direction - at the heart of which sat

democratic ideals like justice. Today, many world leaders are questioning, indeed even turning their backs on, international cooperation simply wishing to avoid the first hint of trouble.

No group in our societies - young, old, poor, educated, one race or another - is exempt from the challenges we face in one form or another. The values enshrined in the UDHR are in desperate need of resuscitation. If freedom-loving, democracy-cherishing peoples fail to come together, to act, to speak out soon, then we will quickly discover that events take over and that we will have started acting too late. Populist-nationalists have our democracies in their sights and they have already fired an opening salvo.

Like the proverbial 'frog in a pot' we are sleepwalking backwards towards darker times. The spectre of creeping authoritarianism draped in a cloak of populist rhetoric has led to the act of defending of human rights itself as being portrayed as the problem, rather than the crucial part of the solution.

Today, it is not enough to oppress and abuse so blatantly. Now, it has to be done in a slow, sneaking manner. First they strip you of your dignity and vilify you; then they falsify charges against you; finally, the point is held in stark relief: the cost of dissent evident for all to see. We must be concerned with the future as much as we are with the past.



In 2015, as the Philippines' Secretary of Justice under President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, and Morten as Denmark's Minister of the Economy and Interior, my country was winning plaudits for its social and economic advancement. Three short years later and most indicators show President Duterte's Philippines is in serious trouble, the so-called 'war on drugs' has seen tens-of-thousands extra-judicially killed, and politicians incarcerated without credible evidence. We cannot sit by while Russian meddling delivers repressive governments in certain European countries; as the politics of division is permitted to pervade the United States; or when human rights that protect workers, voters, and the vulnerable in parts of Asia are throttled to further enrich the powerful.

Inaction is a choice not a defence: one of the fathers of British liberalism, John Stuart Mill, summarised this forcefully when he wrote "let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more... than that good men should look on and do nothing."

At its core the UDHR is a device, a functional mechanism, to bring world leaders together and agree on a basic set of principles relating to the treatment of people. If a president here or a prime minister there begins to stray from these commitments then it is our joint responsibility – from senior politicians to grass-roots campaigners – to stand up, to object, and to work together to ensure that everyone honours his or her commitments.

Published as part of Liberal International's campaign to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Image: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EleanorRooseveltHumanRights.png>

KEYNOTE REMARKS
2018 Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy
Hans van Baalen MEP, LI President of Honour

It is a pleasure and an honour to address one of the largest gatherings of human rights dissidents in Europe in my capacity as President of Honour for Liberal International and President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party.

Liberal International has been a staunch supporter of the Summit for the past 4 years as promotion and defence of human rights lies at the core of the liberal ideology. Amongst us here today we have a number of brave human rights defenders who have withstood the test of their convictions and determinations surviving the worst of human rights violations. Asli Erdogan, Bill Browder, Pastor Evan Mawarire, Antonio Ledezma, Julienne Lusenge, Maziar Bahari, Vladimir Kara-Murza and Yang Jianli, all deserve our standing ovation for risking their lives in the name of defending basic rights and human dignity.

As a political federation of over 100 political parties in over 80 countries and the only political international with a specifically designated Human Rights Committee, Liberal International is sadly way too familiar with the many dangers that come with promoting and defending basic democratic values. I recall my time as President of the organisation when on a visit to Nicaragua I was threatened and chased out of the country for declaring open support to the liberal opposition and calling for the restoration of the democratic order in the country.

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year allow me to remind you of the words of the first Chair in the 1940s of the then UN Commission on Human Rights Eleanor Roosevelt: "Where after all do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: The neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination.

Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world." This is why we are here today. We need a global concerted call for action to end all forms of human rights abuse and the only way to do so is if each one of us stands up and speaks out against injustices and blatant human rights violations in our communities.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of fighting back at a time when liberal values such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights are under attack from authoritarian and far right tendencies all around the world. We have seen the recent decline in all parts of the world not least in mature democracies proving that at no time can we take these values for granted.

As a liberal and a politician I stand with solidarity with all of my colleagues who much like the esteemed delegates here have faced or continue to face prosecution because of their belief in the fairness and justice of the democratic system.

Tomorrow as the Geneva Summit opens its doors to the public, you will all see the posters of Kem Sokha, Senator Leila de Lima, Anwar Ibrahim and Ilham Tohti: opposition politicians and human rights defenders whose only "crime" has been to exercise their basic right to freedom of expression and assembly. Sadly all of them remain in jail but rest assured that none of them have been silenced. LI will continue to work tirelessly for their release and speak on their behalf and I am convinced that with your support we will soon set them free.

This past year has marked another huge milestone: the 70th anniversary of Liberal International which much like the United Nations was established to advance freedom, liberty and equality for all. Allow me to provide you with a quote from our recently adopted Liberal Manifesto which marked this significant moment and more importantly solidified our commitment to promote equal rights for all, and defend human rights worldwide. "It is the task of democratic states to ensure that freedom for all can be enjoyed in safe conditions and that those who

violate human rights and encroach on freedom are properly challenged and effectively dealt with. Where a state violates these human rights, liberal democracies must stand ready to offer refuge to those fleeing such violations, as enshrined in the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. “

So as I stand here today I give you this exact same pledge: that the global liberal family will continue to fight for all of those who remain unfairly behind bars because it is our duty to speak up when no one else does; to act when no one else is willing to act and to defy injustices when everyone else is turning a blind eye.



TOGETHER WE WILL BREAK THE CYCLE OF MIGRANT ANXIETY ACROSS EUROPE



Dr. Stephanie Krisper MP,
NEOS, Austria



Ilhan Kyuchyuk MEP,
MRF, Bulgaria

The combination of populism and nationalism is not a novel tactic in the European political scene. Neither are right-wing parties as part of governments who use this devilish combination. The rise of right-wing political parties should hardly come as a surprise.

In 1980's Europe there was visible distrust of governmental institutions which led to societal fragmentation and electoral volatility. This gave birth to the so called radical right wing political parties across our continent – groupings that are not outright neo-fascist and neo-Nazi. In recent years environmental destruction, population growth, and violence – causing respective migration – have caused public unease.

Through the utility of populism and demagoguery, emotional sentiments that appeal to the anxiety of the so-called average person have been triggered by right-wing parties. Due to the atypical large-scale movement of migrants and refugees in 2015, right-wing populists managed to misuse the humanitarian crisis and exploit anxieties to appeal to xenophobia and oppose the integration of minorities and refugees, further validating the “enemy” stereotype in the eyes of their target audience. These parties, which can be found in many EU member states, including, the Austrian FPÖ, the so-called “United Patriots” in Bulgaria, the Dutch Freedom Party, and the Italian Lega Nord, claim to speak for the people by endorsing ethnocentric and chauvinist ideologies – and thereby constructing politics of anxiety – a continuous vicious circle.

What is new is that the right-wing parties are not the only ones abusing this strategy for their political success. The dangerous combination of nationalist populism is, today, also fruitfully

misused by some center-parties at the cost of human rights. Those parties include Fidesz in Hungary, the CSU in Germany and the Austrian People's Party. It is these emboldened alliances between center- and right-wing parties within the European Union that question the fundamental human rights; commitments to which European Union member states subscribed when signing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Where do they start? They abuse anxieties to endorse policies that restrict access to a fair asylum procedure. For example, the farcical ideas of the Austrian minister of Interior, Herbert Kickl, who, at the height Austrian Presidency of the European Union Council extolled a vision a Europe where no asylum claim can be made. Farcically, Mr Kickl floated the idea to resolve asylum cases upon on boats in the Mediterranean carrying refugees before they landed on European territory. These ‘solutions’ are just an aperitif of what is to come on a menu of political misjudgement composed by nationalist-populists.

The UDHR, drafted and agreed upon in 1948, was conceived specifically in response to the marginalization, abuse, and systematic extermination of various peoples throughout both the First and the Second World Wars. During the first half of the 20th century, the number of refugees, deportees and expellees from Europe is estimated up to have been up to 60 million – around 1 in 10 European citizens. Article 14 of the UDHR, whose text is reiterated in Article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, explicates the rights of asylum seekers, stating clearly that “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”[1].



Unfortunately, we are confronted with the fact that the strength of voters for nationalistic centre parties and right-wing parties shows that factions of the European public are becoming desensitized to xenophobia and violations of human rights. In particular, the rights of strangers fleeing unimaginable horrors for whose destiny many Europeans do not want to be responsible.

It is necessary to acknowledge these emotions: European citizens are anxious about asylum seekers with different cultural and religious backgrounds. It is understandable that the apprehension of human rights for people from faraway lands and distant religious backgrounds decreases with the magnitude of obscurity.

As we, the authors, see it the challenge for us is to refute misinformation about asylum seekers through the press and social media. Supporting and sharing accurate information about the harm that extreme right-wing policies pose to human rights; engaging in discussion with, and not flippantly dismissing, citizens in favour of nationalistic policies helps challenge and break down the growing culture of fear and xenophobia across Europe. One increasingly clear example of how information can help steer cultural opinions is Brexit. Right-wing populist-nationalism spurred British citizens to vote against their interests in the case of Brexit but the spread of accurate information and harsh realities has started to shift public opinion from support of Brexit towards an exit from Brexit[2].

As to policies, we need to stand united with our fellow citizens, propose constructive solutions, and promote clear rules that recognise and respect human rights. Such a system will restore confidence in our institutions – at all levels. On a local level, we need look no further than the city of Mechelen, where integration has been embraced and a positive course of action has led to a blossoming community. On the European Union level, the idea of a common overarching European asylum system has been consistently discussed and proposed in European Union institutions. With a constructive approach, we can create a fair and fast paced asylum system that protects refugees and facilitates the return economic migrants to their countries of origin.

In this 70th anniversary year for the UDHR, we are again living in a time when basic rights need defending – an irreplaceable opportunity for us, liberal-minded Europeans, to stand in union. As politicians from different sides of Europe, we are proof that greater collaboration between centrist parties can lead to innovative and clearer choices for our electorates, all underpinned by a commitment to human rights.

Published as part of Liberal International's campaign to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[1] http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/udhr_article_14.html

[2] <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/31/peoples-vote-seeks-to-sway-eu-newspapers-with-blind-brexit-poll>

2018 LI PRIZE FOR FREEDOM:
SENATOR LEILA DE LIMA
Manila, Philippines
LI President Dr. Juli Minoves

Liberal International is delighted to be here, in the Philippines, to present our foremost human rights award, the Prize for Freedom, to Liberal Party senator, Leila De Lima.

The Prize for Freedom has been awarded annually since 1985. As of today, the Prize will have been awarded to two courageous Filipino women, whom we are privileged to call liberals and who fought, indeed in the case of Senator De Lima continue to fight, unwaveringly for justice and liberty.

President Corazon Aquino was the third-ever recipient of the LI Prize in 1987, as this beautiful country emerged from the yoke of a terrible dictatorship. 21 years' later, representatives of the global liberal family are in the Philippines to honour another human rights hero, although circumstances on this occasion do not give us cause to celebrate as we did in 1987. Instead, representatives of our global political family are here today to join hands with millions of Filipinos as we shine a light into what has become a shady political atmosphere and a subject of global consternation.

So seriously do we perceive the incarceration of Senator Leila de Lima, who has now been unjustly detained for 520 days, that we have come to the Philippines to present this award. For the first time in almost one decade, the Prize for Freedom is being awarded outside of Europe – in doing so, we are here to honour the sacrifice of this remarkable prisoner of conscience.

Senator De Lima's struggle, her sacrifice, is not solely a Filipino matter, nor is it even an Asian matter. Leila's cause transcends petty political rivalries and regional nuances; she personifies humanity's shared aspiration for universal human rights and it is apposite that we are awarding Leila the Prize for Freedom in this 70th anniversary-year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With the UDHR in mind, I recall Eleanor Roosevelt's unambiguous interpretation of human rights: "Basic human rights are simple and easily understood", she wrote, "freedom of speech and a free press; the right of [wo]men to be secure

in their homes... and free from unreasonable search and seizure and from arbitrary arrest and punishment. ...We must not be deluded by the efforts of the forces of reaction to..confuse the struggle... We must not allow any nation to so change that they [human rights] are made synonymous with suppression and dictatorship."

It is precisely because of the global significance that Leila's case represents that in the days leading up to this award over 60 liberal politicians and human rights defenders from 6 regions of the world – Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America – felt moved to sign a statement calling for the immediate release of the senator.

After 23 years of awarding this Prize for Freedom, our position is straightforward: If you are a human rights defender you are a liberal and liberals refuse to be indifferent. We believe in rule of law, not rule by law and we refuse to be complicit in President Duterte's callous assault on the human rights of mostly-poor people across the Philippines archipelago. So we are here to remind the 16th President of the Philippines of three things:

- Human rights are for all or they are for nothing.
- The world is watching.
- Leila De Lima's unjust detention will not be forgotten.

Friends, I would like to pay tribute to Leila De Lima. Of course, we deeply regret that the senator is not able to be here with us in person, amongst friends and colleagues from around the world, to accept this award.

I would like to recognise Leila's family, her colleagues, and her party who have all found within themselves the strength to persevere when many others may have been found wanting. I will end my speech with a quote from the father of the Philippines, Andrés Bonifacio. When the enemies of freedom were at the gates, he wrote: "We must be united in will... This is the time for the light of truth to surface."



A FIGHT FOR DIGNITY: Human rights and medically assisted dying



Anthony Housefather MP,
Liberal Party of Canada



Vlado Mirosevic Verdugo MP,
Liberal Party of Chile

Forged in 1948 as a tool of global consensus to crack the twinned kernels of domination and discrimination, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – 70 years' old in December this year – is a milestone in our shared pursuit of basic liberties and development. From The Philippines to Zanzibar, the human rights dialogue has flourished for seven decades, sweeping across continents and encouraging communities to challenge traditional beliefs.

Liberals can be proud of the demand for the values we espouse, rooted in part in Eleanor Roosevelt's great charter. The right to rights, both individual and collective, remains vociferous and persuasive.

For the authors, Liberal parliamentarians in Canada and Chile, we are engaged, at different stages, in one of the most emotive debates in the human rights lexicon: medically assisted dying. Autonomy is gaining ground in the doctor-patient relationship as control over important medical choices concerning end of life care increasingly rests with the patient.

As more countries embark on delicate debates surrounding medically assisted dying, they have a duty to consider their national rights' charters but also the liberal values set out in the UDHR, as growing numbers of people consider whether it is principled for governments to forbid competent adults from dying with dignity, even in well-defined circumstances. Our answer is that it is not.

Ten years after the UDHR was adopted, chair of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Eleanor Roosevelt, asked: "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they

cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person... where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination."

Yet the truth is that the decriminalization of medically assisted dying does not find its justification exclusively in the value of freedom; it is also deeply rooted in the very human need to protect a loved one from suffering. Medically assisted dying is equally concerned with compassion.

This is why, as the authors of this article, we urge countries to modernize their legislation to craft a space for autonomy and human rights to exist in harmony, in the context of medically assisted dying. To cultivate the debate we propose the following basic criteria, which are consistent with the law adopted in Canada and the bill successfully presented to the Chilean parliament. In order to be eligible for legal medical assistance in dying a patient must:

1. Be at least 18 years old and mentally competent.
2. Make a request for medically assisted dying voluntarily and free of any external pressure or influence.
3. Be suffering from a serious irreversible terminal illness, disease or disability in which the patient is at a point where his or her natural death is reasonably foreseeable and is experiencing unbearable suffering that cannot be alleviated under conditions that are acceptable to him or her.
4. Declare, in front of two medical professionals on separate occasions, at least a certain period apart, that he or she wants medical assistance to end his or her life.



Under these very precise conditions, we believe that a society which respects individual freedom must recognize medically-assisted dying as a fundamental right.

Those who seek to use the power of the state to restrict the freedoms of this select group of citizens seek to impose their moral beliefs on individuals living under conditions in which they have likely never lived. These are not values we share. We strongly agree that no medical professional or other individual should ever be compelled to participate in medically assisted dying and that no individual should be encouraged or coerced to avail him or herself of it. But to prevent those individuals who meet all the criteria we set out above from making a choice to end their life through the power of criminal law goes too far in a society that values human rights and autonomy. Medically assisted dying is being implemented in Canada and Colombia and it must not be relegated by politicians elsewhere to the league of 'too tough to talk about'. We hope that those states which have not yet moved in this direction will do so carefully but promptly.

Published as part of Liberal International's campaign to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Image: shutterstock_706056520

LI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

LI HRC Expert Forum, ALDE Party Council Meeting
Sofia, Bulgaria (27 April 2018)

LI Human Rights Committee co-hosted an Expert Summit on the future of human rights in Europe on the fringes of the ALDE Party Council meeting in Sofia.

The basis for the discussions was a draft paper produced by the Committee which was subsequently used to provide direct input into the ALDE Manifesto on key human rights issues such as LGBTI Rights, Women's Rights, Freedom of Speech, Minority and Refugee Rights and Business and Human Rights.

The summit was moderated by LI HRC Chair **Markus Löning**. Other experts included LI HRC Member and Member of Parliament **Stephanie Krisper** (NEOS, Austria) as well as representatives from the Bulgarian media.



LI HRC Meeting on the fringes of LI's 200th Executive
Committee meeting
Berlin, Germany (22 June 2018)

Liberal International Human Rights Committee members debated the future of business and human rights at a side-event held on the fringes of LI's 200th Executive Committee meeting. The speakers of the event discussed how companies and the state in which they operate should share their respective responsibilities to ensure compliance with ethical and responsible business principles, and whether there is a need for an all-encompassing international legislation on business and human rights.

LI HRC Member and Member of the Taiwanese Parliament **Dr. Ching-Yi Lin** gave a presentation on how human rights are connected to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by providing a Taiwanese specific perspective on the matter.

The other speakers included **Volker Weber**, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sustainable Investment Forum, and **Deniz Utlu**, researcher on business and human rights from the German Institute of Human Rights. The discussions were moderated by LI HRC Chairman and Former German Federal Commissioner for Human Rights **Markus Löning**.

LI HRC Deputy Chairwoman and LI VP **Astrid Thors** lead the Q/A session with the audience on how citizens and consumers can influence the debate on business and human rights.

LI HRC Study visit to Stasi Archives Office



Stasi Museum & Archives
Berlin, Germany (22 June 2018)



On the fringes of LI's 200th Executive Committee meeting, LI Human Rights Committee also made a study visit to the Federal Commission for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic. Meeting with Federal Commissioner, **Roland Jahn**, who is responsible for overseeing the Stasi Archives, LI HRC looked at the various tools utilized by authoritarian regimes, and discussed how to make democracy more resilient to encroaching populism and so-called 'hard-liners.'

The meeting was attended by 19 members on LI Human Rights Committee from across three different continents who posed various questions pertaining to the faith of the officers who served at the Federal Commission at the time and the rehabilitation practices being facilitated between victims and perpetrators.



2018 LI PRIZE FOR FREEDOM: Senator Leila de Lima

Awarding Ceremony
Manila, Philippines (28 July 2018)

The global liberal family unanimously voted to award Philippine **Senator Leila De Lima** the 2018 LI Prize for Freedom. A vocal critic of President Rodrigo Duterte's so-called 'war on drugs' and a prisoner of conscience, Senator Leila de Lima was one of the first to be targeted by the hard-line Duterte government for her outspoken criticism of the president's targeted campaign of violence, which has left thousands of mostly poor Filipinos dead.

Imprisoned since February 2017, Liberal International recognised her sacrifice with our highest human rights award, which is awarded every year to "a well-known personality of liberal conviction who has made outstanding efforts for the defence of freedom and human rights."

Liberal International was one of the first international organisations to campaign for Senator De Lima's release and has taken the case to the United Nations Human Rights Council and rallied parliamentarians across Europe.

The awarding ceremony in Manila, the Philippines saw Leila De Lima's brother, **Vicente**, receive the Prize on her behalf from LI President Dr. Juli Minoves. "Senator De Lima's struggle, her sacrifice, is not solely a Filipino matter, nor is it even an Asian matter. Leila's cause transcends petty political rivalries and regional nuances; she personifies humanity's shared aspiration for universal human rights and this is why we are awarding Leila the Prize for Freedom in this 70th anniversary-year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", said the LI president.

In the days leading up to this award, nearly 60 liberal politicians and human rights defenders from 6 regions of the world – Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America – were moved to sign a statement calling for the immediate release of the senator.





LI HUMAN RIGHTS BULLETIN

Over the course of 2017, the LI Human Rights Committee published two editions of LI Human Rights Bulletin, reflecting the Committee's work under its priority areas and the launch of LI's UDHR Campaign.

11th Edition

How can liberals fight populist tendencies that seek to restrict civil liberties such as freedom of belief? This was the question that the 11th edition of LI Human Rights Bulletin posed to its readers.

The online publication featured expert opinions from LI Human Rights Committee member **Dr. Stephanie Krisper** MP, and President of the Chilean Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs **Vlado Mirosevic** MP, on the liberal efforts to ensure freedom of belief in their respective countries.

The edition also included a video interview conducted by LI Human Rights Committee Member **Boris van der Ham** with politicians from the length of the African continent concerning the political, social and legal restrictions on Freedom of Belief.

12th Edition

The 12th edition of LI Human Rights Bulletin focused on the launch of LI's Universal Declaration of Human Rights 70th Anniversary Campaign.

Liberal International and the Danish social liberal party, **Radikale Venstre**, teamed up to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The campaign engaged liberals from around the world to highlight the successes of, and threats still faced by human rights defenders.

The edition also included a video interview on the topic of transgender rights, conducted by Chair of LI's LGBTI Rights working group **Frank van Dalen**.

Published By:
Liberal International

With the support of:
ALDE Group
European Parliament,
Rue Wiertz Brussels,
Belgium
aldegroup@europarl.europa.eu

Edited by: Liberal International

Layout & Design by: Jason Frazer

All rights reserved

With thanks to our supporters...



1 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2HD
United Kingdom

hrc@liberal-international.org

www.liberal-international.org