



17TH EDITION

LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BULLETIN



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   Liberal International



FEATURES

Human Rights and the COVID-19 Crisis • LI HRC goes online to host webinars • The Liberal Principles of Digitalisation and Human Rights • Read the 2019 annual report • Statements



Astrid Thors
Chairperson of LI Human Rights Committee

Dear liberal friends,

In the spring, when all eyes were on COVID-19, the LI Human Rights Committee warned against using the virus as an excuse to curtail freedoms and civic rights. It is now time to make an assessment.

Unfortunately, we continue to see that undemocratic forces have continued on their path, like in the Philippines, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Hong Kong, and Russia - just to mention a few countries where LI member parties are under pressure.

On the other hand, there is increasing recognition that countries with open, accountable, and democratic governments have been able to contain the spread of the virus more efficiently. Democracies are regaining confidence.

We also now witness the biggest pro-democratic demonstrations in Belarus for decades, and the dictator Lukashenka's mismanagement of the coronavirus has added to the fury of the people and the forces calling for change. I call on all of you to follow and support the people of Belarus using the hashtag #Belarus2020 - all forms of support are now necessary to achieve a transition of power.

But as you see from this bulletin many other issues have merited our attention. I was very happy that the webinar with LI Vice President and MEP Abir Al-Sahlani and Hon. Lloyd Axworthy was held on the eve of the World Refugee Day. The latest news from Greece that the country has deliberately forced refugees onto not seaworthy vessels and out to sea, is appalling.

LI can not accept such behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Astrid Thors

LI HRC Annual Report

LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL

**HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



The Liberal International Human Rights Committee 2019 Annual Report is now available online

Liberal International undertook a range of projects in the human rights field in 2019, from developing the Women in Political Parties Index to submitting statements and organising events at the fringes of the UN to gathering activists and policy-makers to discuss the implications of digitalisation for human rights work across the world.

Read the report to find out more about the activities undertaken by the committee during 2019!

See and download the 2019 annual report

LI HRC GOES ONLINE TO HOST WEBINARS

EUROPE'S LAST DICTATOR WOBBLES: WHAT NEXT FOR BELARUS?



ASTRID THORS

LI Human Rights Committee
Chairperson



OLGA KARATCH

Director of Belarus civil
society organisation: Nash Dom



#StandWithBelarus

Europe's last dictator wobbles: What next for Belarus?

With mass protests across the country on a scale that has never been seen before, calling for free and fair elections and the resignation of Alexander Lukashenko, the dictator who has held power in the country for 26 years, Belarus is in the process of making history.

Yesterday, Liberal International brought together **Olga Karatch**, founder and director of Belarusian civil rights organisation *Nash Dom*, and **Astrid Thors**, LI Vice President and Chair of the LI Human Rights Committee to discuss the situation in Belarus in a fireside chat.

What are the human rights impacts of what is currently happening in Belarus? What does this mean for the country and for the region? What can the international liberal community do to help?

Read about the event

Watch the livestream



“Sorry, you’re on mute” – LI HRC webinar stresses defending rights as key to dealing with pandemics

Summarising the hour-long discussion on freedom of expression, moderator Karen Melchior (Denmark), MEP from Radikale Venstre (LI full member), identified the red thread running through all the comments of the evening: “Dealing with future challenges, both in terms of digital technology and COVID19, it’s not a question of ‘giving up’ our rights to deal with these challenges effectively, but ‘defending’ our rights as part of an effective approach to deal with pandemics or new technology.”

COVID19 has changed our perceptions of female leadership, joint LI, ALDE, ALN, CALD and IFLRY webinar concludes

In the light of the ongoing COVID19-crisis, Liberal International, in cooperation with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE Party), the Africa Liberal Network (ALN), the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), and the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) brought together liberal women from across the world, to exchange views and share experiences of how to thrive as a female politician today.

[Read about the event](#)

[Watch the livestream](#)



LI webinar explored challenges ahead for World Refugee Day

As the coronavirus has spread across the world, it has

LI calls liberal family to sign petition calling for justice for victims of state-backed killings in Cambodia

As the coronavirus has spread across the world, it has left few people unaffected. While no country has gone untouched by its implications for health and economics, these effects have disproportionately affected those individuals and groups who were already most vulnerable before the pandemic broke out.

With repressions continuously increasing and the situation rapidly deteriorating in the past months, and the coronavirus crisis being used as an excuse to ramp up oppression against opposition representatives and other dissenters, Liberal International encourages the liberal family to sign this petition calling for justice for victims of state-backed killings in Cambodia.

[Read about the event](#)

[Read about the event](#)

[Watch the livestream](#)

[Watch the livestream](#)

LI POLICY LAB TAKES FIRST STEPS TO ESTABLISH LIBERAL PRINCIPLES OF DIGITALISATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The banner features a blue background with a binary code pattern. On the left, there is a graphic of a pink flask with bubbles. The main text reads: "LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EUROPEAN LIBERAL FORUM Policy lab: Safeguarding human rights in the digital age". On the right, a Facebook Live widget shows the date "1 JULY 2020 15:00 (BST)". Below the title, three speaker portraits are shown with their names and titles: Glacier Kwong (Political activist from Hong Kong & founder of the NGO Keyboard Freedom), Diego Naranjo (Head of Policy for EDRI & lawyer specialised in human rights), and Karen Melchior (Radikale Venstre Member of European Parliament and webinar session moderator). Logos for Liberal International, elf, and the event hashtags #LIPolicyLab and #ELFevent are at the bottom right.

Safeguarding human rights in the digital age

How can liberals work to ensure transparency and accountability in the use and collection of personal data? How can regulatory systems be built robustly enough to withstand both ignorant and malevolent governments? Can individual rights online be secured at a global level?

These were some of the questions addressed on Wednesday 1 July, when **Liberal International** in cooperation with the **European Liberal Forum** gathered policy-makers and experts from across the world to discuss some of the most pressing issues for the coming years. This policy lab was the first in a series organised by the LI Human Rights Committee under its priority area of Digitalisation & Human Rights.

This discussion, moderated by MEP **Karen Melchior** (Radikale Venstre, Denmark), Hong Kong privacy activist **Glacier Kwong** and European Digital Rights (EDRI) Head of Policy **Diego Naranjo**, reflected on what digitalisation means for human rights and how liberals should respond.

[Read more about the event](#)

[Watch the live stream](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS



“New normal” must not sacrifice democracy and human rights

As the spread of the coronavirus shows few signs of slowing down and people increasingly settle into what is becoming known as the “new normal”, it is important to remain vigilant against the measures remaining in place or even being reinstated to control the virus spread. Governments need to continuously ensure that these measures remain proportional for fighting the virus, while also respecting the human rights of their citizens.

[Read the article](#)

The free press is essential to managing pandemics and societies

The onset of the COVID19 crisis, and more recently the massive protests against discriminatory police violence in the United States, have caused a worrying escalation of a trend which was already underway. Authorities across the world have stepped up their attacks on journalists and the free press, undermining the very foundations of well-functioning societies.

[Read the article](#)

STATEMENTS



In a statement to the 44th session of the **UN Human Rights Council**, Liberal International has called on the international community to take action to ensure that any measures taken to combat the virus do not unduly violate human rights, or cause permanent damage to crucial elements of functioning societies such as free media and a functioning political opposition.

[Read the statement](#)



In this statement to the **United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**, Liberal International calls for accountability in the long case of incommunicado detention for Philippine **Senator Leila de Lima**. Such conditions are illegal by both international and Philippine law, and are particularly damaging for a working political representative.

Read the statement



Continuing our long tradition of engaging with the **UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**, Liberal International has submitted information about two instances of violation of women's rights to the attention of the CSW Communications Procedure. The submissions were made after consultation with the LI Human Rights Committee and the LI membership.

Read the statement

UPDATE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

In reaction to the coronavirus outbreak, Liberal International has postponed or moved our human rights-related events to more suitable dates and platforms.

We continue our important work across all digital platforms, specifically refining our focus to resist the extensive COVID-19 dis-information and fake news campaigns being run against liberal democracies and the liberal world order more broadly. Liberal International is frequently providing the liberal family with original content, on our website and through our newsletter. We are also frequently updating our social media with human rights related insights.

Do follow us on social media for the latest updates, and share with us what is happening in your countries.

Sign up for our newsletter

Follow us on social media:



UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
Until further notice	Liberal International Office working remotely
9 September	Liberal International UN75 dialogue
18 September	HRC Virtual Administrative Meeting
19 October	Liberal International Gender Equality Report launch - presenting the result of the inaugural Women in Political Parties Index
20 October	Liberal International Virtual Congress
End of October (tbc)	Second Liberal International Digitalisation and Human Rights Policy Lab

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