

# HUMAN RIGHTS

## Research Committee 26

### IPSA International Political Science Association

#### Message from the Chair



Newsletter no. 19  
April 2025

Dear Friends,

The sands of time are running out. I just realised it has been another six months since the last RC26 IPSA newsletter. So, it is time for another message from the RC26 chair. How wonderful it would be if we could announce that there has been significant progress in the protection of human rights worldwide over the past six months. Unfortunately, the human rights situation has not improved; quite the contrary. I think the Human Rights Index (HRI) published as part of the Global Change Data Lab project, a non-profit organisation based in the UK, is worth mentioning. For some time now, it has been published annually by the research group Our World in Data (<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/human-rights-index-vdem?time=latest>). The HRI reflects the degree to which people are free from government torture, political killings, forced labour, have property rights and enjoy freedom of movement, religion, expression and association on a scale from

#### What's inside?

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from 0 (no freedom) to 1 (complete freedom). The HRI shows that in 2024, most countries in the world were in the range of 0 to 0.5. People are still dying and suffering in Ukraine and Gaza, but also in many other places around the world. US President Donald Trump promised peace to these regions, and we see some efforts to achieve it. However, he has failed to fulfil his pre-election promises that the war in Ukraine would end within 24 hours of taking office. On the other hand, we are watching his new ideas and initiatives with great concern. As I write these words, Donald Trump has just declared 'Liberation Day' for his country. We will see where this Declaration and the tariff war will lead the world in the coming months. However, there will be more topics for human rights activists to discuss during this time. And yet, the catalogue of human rights does not end with the right to life and the prohibition of torture. The situation of migrants and refugees in many parts of the planet is still a massive challenge for human rights. Moreover, it is a very popular topic among populists of various stripes and nationalities. In addition, there is a growing problem with the effects of climate change and its impact on specific populations, the protection of LGBTQ+ persons, and the increasing role of technology, especially artificial intelligence and its potential, which is increasingly being used for both the good and the harm of humanity.

Over the past six months, we have discussed many of these issues at events organised or co-organised by RC26.

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Finally, I would like to thank all members of the RC26 board and the entire RC26 family, IPSA. Thanks to your commitment and support, we have created a fascinating forum for debate and the fight for human rights within the RC26 IPSA.

Many thanks, and see you in Seoul.

Jedrzej Skrzypczak

Chair

IPSA RC26 on human rights

## **SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, WILL HOST THE 2025 IPSA WORLD CONGRESS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE!**

As a scientific association with over 4,000 members worldwide, we are pleased to organize the 28th IPSA World Congress in Seoul for the second time since 1997. The vibrant city of Seoul, with a population of close to 10 million, is the economic, cultural, and political capital of South Korea.

The Congress will be organized in collaboration with the Korean Political Science Association (KPSA) and held at the Coex Convention & Exhibition Center, 12-16 July 2025. The KPSA has already secured full support from the government of South Korea, the city of Seoul, and universities and organizations within the South Korean political science community. We expect a strong turnout from the political science communities of Asia and Oceania.

The Congress program will be prepared by Program Co-Chairs Prof. Irasema Coronado and Prof. Azul A. Aguiar Aguilar under the theme Resisting Autocratization in Polarized Societies.

Stay tuned for more exciting news about the 2025 IPSA World Congress in Seoul!

More information: <https://wc2025.ipsa.org/wc/home>

## **IPSA WORLD CONGRESS IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, 12-15 JULY 2025.**

The 28th IPSA World Congress of Political Science will occur from 12-16 July 2025 [in Seoul, South Korea. The theme of the Congress will be ‘Autocratisation in Polarised Societies’. At the time of writing, many panels have been submitted to RC26.

### **Artificial intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Judiciary**

*Chair:* Prof. Oscar Pérez de la Fuente

*Discussant:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

### **Artificial Intelligence Systems and Threats to Human Rights**

*Chair:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

*Discussant:* Prof. Oscar Pérez de la Fuente

### **Beyond Borders: The Global Struggle for Indigenous Human Rights**

Ms Anju Gupta

*Discussant:* Ms Anju Gupta

### **Beyond the Margins: Indigenous Perspectives and Voices in Contemporary Political Discourse**

*Chair:* Dr Lianboi Vaiphei

*Discussant:* Dr Lianboi Vaiphei

### **Cultural and Identity Rights in Polarised Societies: Insights from Bharatiya Gyan Parampara**

*Chair:* Prof. (Dr) Mamta Chandrashekhar

*Discussant:* Prof. (Dr) Mamta Chandrashekhar

## **Dynamics of Inclusion/Exclusion in the Americas**

*Chair:* Dr Philippe Stoesslé

*Discussant:* Dr Philippe Stoesslé

## **Human Rights and Resisting Autocratisation in Polarised Societies**

*Chair:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

*Discussant:* Prof. Wojciech Nowiak

## **Human Rights in Critical Times**

*Chair:* Mr Victor Manuel Quisca Yucra

## **Human Rights in Digital Space. Resisting Autocratisation in Polarised Societies**

*Chair:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

*Discussant:* Dr Archana Gupta

## **Human Rights in Political Science**

*Chair:* Ms Hasna Nasser

## **Human Rights in the Polarised Societies**

*Chair:* Dr Meenakshi Bansal

*Discussant:* Dr Meenakshi Bansal

## **Navigating the Crossroads: Agenda 2030 and Technological Disruption in a Polarised World**

*Chair:* Prof. Cássius Guimarães Chai

*Discussant:* Prof. Carla Teixeira

## **North Korean Problems and International Cooperation**

*Chair:* Prof. Ihn-hwi Park

*Discussant:* Mr Young Hwan KO

## **Position and role of human rights in political systems**

*Chair:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

*Discussant:* Prof. Bartosz Hordecki

## **The contemporary concepts and challenges in the protection of human rights**

*Chair:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

## **The Resurgence of Coups in South Asia: A Challenge to Democracy and Stability**

*Chair:* Dr Sumant Kumar

*Discussant:* Dr Arvind Shukla

## **Women's Rights, Sexual and Gender Minorities in polarised societies.**

*Chair:* Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak

**2025 SEOUL IPSA WORLD CONGRESS PLENARY SPEAKERS**

**Ban Ki-moon**

Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens  
Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, South Korea

Plenary : Liberal Democracy, Multilateralism and Global Citizenship

Date: Sunday, 13 July 2024

**Donatella della Porta**

Scuola Normale Superiore  
Professor of political science, Italy

Plenary: The Contentious Politics of Academic Freedom: Social Movements and Repression

Date: Monday, 14 July 2024

**Neera Chandhoke**

Centre for Equity Studies  
Honorary Distinguished Fellow, India

Plenary: Resisting Legal Autocracy in South Asia

Date: Wednesday, 16 July 2024

President's Plenary Speakers

**Pablo Oñate**

University of Valencia  
IPSA President, Spain

Plenary: Populism, Polarization and the Consequences on Democracy

Date: Tuesday, 15 July 2024



# THE HIJACKING OF HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE: POLITICAL MANIPULATION AND LOSS OF IMPACT

José Daniel Rodríguez Arrieta

Professor and Researcher at the School of Political Science, University of Costa Rica

Human rights PhD candidate in Carlos III University of Madrid

Human rights, born from the 1948 Universal Declaration as a beacon of justice and universal dignity, are now hijacked by political and social forces that turn them into a tool, abandoning their historical vocation. This phenomenon is not merely a historical accident but a process in which human rights discourse has been shaped and manipulated to serve ideological and geopolitical interests.

We understand discourse as a set of linguistic and symbolic practices that not only reflect reality but also construct it. Discourses are not neutral; they are vehicles of power that shape how societies understand and defend fundamental values such as justice, freedom, and equality. The discourse on human rights, therefore, does not merely respond to an ideal or the need to protect people—it has also become a battlefield where meanings are negotiated and different forms of power are deployed.

In this context, the appropriation of human rights discourse by political actors has led to a distortion that weakens its transformative power. A clear example is the culture war that has defined the relationship between the ultra-conservative right and progressive movements, particularly concerning the so-called “woke culture.” Donald Trump, in his attempt to delegitimize struggles for racial and gender equity, has turned the debate into a dichotomy between the defense of “individual rights” and what he calls “progressive authoritarianism.” This discourse, filled with terms like “freedom of speech” and “reverse discrimination,” empties historical struggles for the rights of the most vulnerable of their substantive content.

At the same time, authoritarian governments like Viktor Orbán's in Hungary have adopted human rights language to justify regressive and ultranationalist policies. Orbán has presented his anti-LGBTQ+ laws as a "protection of traditional family values," appealing to the right of nations to preserve their own principles. In Russia, Vladimir Putin invokes the defense of "traditional values" to justify political repression and the criminalization of dissent, cloaking his authoritarianism in the guise of human rights while actually stripping them of their emancipatory content.

This hijacking of human rights discourse presents a legitimacy crisis both nationally and internationally. When human rights are instrumentalized as a means to achieve specific political ends, they lose their ability to inspire profound and universal social reforms. The rhetoric of human rights, instead of being a force for justice, becomes a tool of power, selectively used depending on geopolitical or ideological contexts.

To restore the transformative power of human rights, it is essential to detach them from partisan and political agendas. This requires a reassessment of their universal character and a commitment to accountability that ensures their consistent application in all contexts. A critical and profound reflection is necessary—not only to dismantle current manipulations but also to reinvent a vision of human rights as a principle of global and universal justice.

Only in this way can human rights regain their credibility and once again serve as an authentic tool for social and political justice.

Digital version: <https://humanrights.webphilosophia.com/archivos/289>

## **RC26 IPSA MID-TERM CONFERENCE: “THE EVOLUTION OF THE POSITION AND ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN POLITICAL SYSTEMS”, ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAN (AMU), SŁUBICE CAMPUS, POLAND**

The event took place on 28 November 2024 in a hybrid mode. The evolution of the position of human rights and their role in political systems is a broad and complex theme that includes changes in the legal framework, social values and the impact of international relations. Today, the role of human rights in political systems is characterised by both progress and setbacks. Despite significant advances in recognising and protecting these rights worldwide, many challenges remain, including authoritarianism, armed conflicts and social inequality. The evolving nature of these rights requires the legal and political framework to be constantly adapted to meet new challenges. The evolution of human rights in political systems reflects the journey from the privileges of the few to the inalienable rights of all individuals, influenced by historical events, philosophical ideas and social movements. This evolution continues today as societies and their political systems try to cope with the complex and changing landscape of human rights in the 21st century. Calls to rethink these rights have been heard for some time. However, at the turn of the 21st century, trends such as globalisation and the digital technological revolution have led to the realisation that a new axiological basis for this concept is needed.

The RC26 seminar was part of a more significant event, the Conference “Citizens participation in political decision-making. Political activity and political passivity”, 28-29 November 2024, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, and Collegium Polonicum, Słubice, Poland.

The following papers were presented in Panel 1, entitled “The position of human rights in global and regional political systems”, chaired by Prof. Oscar Pérez de la Fuente (Carlos III University of Madrid, Vice-chair of RC26 IPSA Board):

1. Dr Michael Kilburn (Endicott College, Beverly, MA, USA) - “Anarchy, State, and Utopia: the D/Evolution of the Position and Role of Human Rights in Political Systems”,
2. Prof. Peter Smuk (Széchenyi István University, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Hungary) - “Integrity of Democratic Process – New Narratives on Sovereignty Protection?”,
3. Prof.

Semahagn Abebe (Endicott College, Beverly, MA, USA) - “Double Standards in International Responses to Human Rights Violations: A Case Study of Ethiopia”; Prof. Cássius Guimaraes Chai (Universidade Federal do Maranhão/PPGDIR/Law//PPGAERO/Aerospace Engineering and Faculdade de Direito de Vitória (PPGD/Law), Brazil, Member of RC26 IPSA Board) - took on the role of discussant in this panel.

The second panel, entitled “The next generations of human rights - attempts at diagnosis and prediction”, was chaired by Prof. Anju Gupta (Head of Department of Political Science, JECRC University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, Member of RC26 IPSA board). The speakers were: 1. Dr Marco Marsili (Research Institute for International Studies, Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy) - “Safeguarding the Future: Developing the Next Generation of Human Rights for Digital and Cognitive Domains”, 2. Prof. Ravisankar R. S. (Department of Political Science, NSS College, Pandalam, affiliated to the University of Kerala, India) - “The Next Generation Human Rights in India: A Troubleshooting Approach”, 3. Katarzyna Sypień (Project Assistant, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland) - “Climate Change and the Right to Exist: Examining Collective Rights and Territorial Sovereignty in Vulnerable Asian States”. I had the pleasure and honour of acting as a discussant on this panel.

Panel 3 was entitled “The role of human rights in national political systems. A cross-continental perspective”, Chair: Prof. Alex Sander Xavier Pires (The Law Department of the Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, Portugal, Chair-elect of RC26 IPSA). The following papers were presented in this panel: 1. Prof. Iwona Wrońska (Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland) - “Canadian Immigration Policies and the Protection of Human Rights”, 2. Dorina Anna Toth (Széchenyi István University, Győr, Hungary) - “The Bumpy Roads of the Fight against the Exploitation of Women: A Historical Examination of the Regulation of Prostitution in Hungary”, 3. Dr Tomasz Litwin (Ignatianum University in Cracow, Poland) - “The Polish Dispute over Abortion from the Human Rights Perspective”, 4. Dr Tomasz Wicha (the Department of Theory and Methodology of Political Science and Administration, the Institute of Political Science and Administration, Fa-

Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland) - “The issue of the protection of human rights on the political market in Poland in the context of the migration crisis on the border with Belarus (since 2021) and the Russian–Ukrainian war (since 2022)”, 5. Aleksandra Oczkowicz (PhD student, Jagielloonian University in Cracow, Poland) - “The Role of Independent Trade Unions in Belarus as Social Activists Post-2020 Protests”. The discussant was Furqan Ahmed (South Asia Research Institute for Minorities SARIM, Karachi, Pakistan, Secretary of RC26 Board).

The last panel “Human rights in concepts of de-globalisation and re-globalisation”, was chaired by Prof. Cássius Guimaraes Chai (Universidade Federal do Maranhão/PPGDIR/Law//PPGAERO/Aerospace Engineering and Faculdade de Direito de Vitória (PPGD/Law), Brazil, Member of RC26 IPSA Board).

The following speakers gave presentations in this panel: 1. Oscar Pérez de la Fuente (Carlos III University of Madrid) - “Re-globalisation as an Emerging Paradigm for Human Rights”, 2. Prof. Alex Sander Xavier Pires (The Law Department of the Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, Portugal) - “Human Rights in the Concept of Sustainable Development”, 3. Furqan Ahmed (South Asia Research Institute for Minorities SARIM, Karachi, Pakistan) - “Human Rights in the Era of Deglobalisation: Tensions Between National Sovereignty and International Norms”, 4. Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland - “Deglobalisation trends and the protection of human rights in contemporary political systems”. Discussant: Dr Radwan Ziadeh (Arab Center – Washington D.C., USA, Member of RC26 IPSA board).

## **RC26 JOINS IPSA WORK-IN-PROGRESS SESSIONS (WIPS), 4-6 DECEMBER 2024**

IPSA has proposed a new project, IPSA-WiPS (Work-in-Progress Sessions), intending to establish a new type of Conference in years other than the World Congress, which would allow for an in-depth and systematic discussion of each paper (work in progress) in a global online panel format (each focusing on a narrow and specific topic). This year, the WiPS took place on three consecutive days on 4, 5 and 6 December 2024, at the same time for all participants (four hours each day, simultaneously, regardless of time zones). As expected by IPSA, a strong commitment from all participants was necessary, who should actively engage in all sessions, discuss other participants' papers and present their own. As explained, the papers were works in progress, so the input of the panel discussants, chair(s), and other presenters involved provided feedback to improve the articles before they were finalised and submitted for publication. As intended, WiPS offered an excellent opportunity to meet colleagues from the same field and create research networks, special issues, books and proposals for future research projects. In practice, the RC26 session took place on one day. It included several captivating presentations, namely Michael Kilburn's "Anarchy, State, and Utopia: the D/Evolution of the Position and Role of Human Rights in Political Systems", Benedict E. DeDominicis' "Diplomacy and National Self-Determination: The Rules-Based International Order vs. Irredentism", Ayse Ezgi Gurcan's "Justice Across Borders: Challenges to the Rights of Refugees R2P and Syria".

## IF YOU'RE A LIBERTARIAN, WHY DON'T YOU SUPPORT REPARATIONS?

Juan Pablo Carbajal-Camberos

PhD candidate Carlos III University of Madrid

In recent years, the “libertarian rhetoric” has gained ground in several Latin American countries through political, business, and religious channels. However, I believe there is a widespread misinterpretation of libertarian principles within the political sphere, leading to glaring inconsistencies and significant intellectual deficiencies.

One of the most notorious examples is the case of Javier Milei in Argentina, a —self-proclaimed— libertarian who fervently advocates for the destruction of the state. He has gone so far as to declare himself “the one who destroys the state from within” (sic), while promoting the privatization of public goods and the free market as a reductionist solution to all social problems. But if those who define themselves as libertarians believe that the market is the only legitimate arbiter of social relations, why do they unconditionally discard compensations when the original appropriations are clearly unequal?

The philosopher Robert Nozick, one of the most prominent theoretical figures of contemporary libertarianism or conservative liberalism—and frequently paraphrased by Milei—formulated a robust and profound conception of justice based on self-ownership, merit, and voluntary contract. Yet even Nozick—much to the surprise of many libertarians—admits that there are historical circumstances (such as slavery, colonialism, or dispossession) that result in unjust appropriations and would require compensation. In other words, Nozick himself admits that a libertarian society cannot be built without first addressing these injustices through substantive reparations.

This point is essential in deconstructing the false ‘libertarian narrative’ often boosted

by economic aristocracies. A true libertarian could not endorse a society that privileges freedom without guaranteeing equal conditions for exercising that freedom in competition—could they? If they genuinely valued liberty as a fundamental and guiding principle of society, wouldn't they seek mechanisms to enable more citizens to achieve higher levels of freedom?

Far from the ideals of the theoretical founders of libertarianism, contemporary libertarian proposals are more akin to a dystopia—like the one illustrated in the film *In Time*, where the rich live forever and the poor struggle to survive a single day—than the kind of libertarian societies imagined, for instance, by Robert Nozick.

There is, therefore, a fundamental contradiction in today's self-proclaimed libertarians. They often invoke the names of great libertarian thinkers while ignoring their warnings (or perhaps they didn't finish reading them). They reject progressive taxation, affirmative action, market regulation, and any attempt at wealth redistribution as threats to some "natural" order. But if they accept that historical injustices exist, how can they advocate for a "free" market that begins from radically unequal starting points?

Many libertarians present their ideology as a pure defense of liberty. But what they often defend is the freedom of the most powerful—the freedom to maintain privilege, not to level the playing field. This view justifies and reproduces structural inequalities under the camouflage of merit. In practical terms, if you were a serious libertarian, you would intuitively accept some egalitarian premises.

True freedom—the kind that allows people to live without fear, without hunger, and with real opportunities—cannot emerge in highly unequal societies or flourish atop historical injustices. To be a serious libertarian, start by demanding equal amounts of liberty and fair chances to access it. Otherwise, what you are defending is not freedom but modern barbarism.

Digital version: <https://humanrights.webphilosophia.com/archivos/294>



## **HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, THE CONFERENCE ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO PEACE. TO COMMEMORATE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, 10 DECEMBER 2024**

The year 2024 marks forty years since the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace (A/RES/39/11, 11 November 1984) and the preparation for the International Year of Peace and Trust, 2025 (A/RES/78/266) - both resolutions being directly linked to the development of human rights in an environment of awareness for peace against violence.

Considering the current moment of global political instability with repercussions in all areas of the social and intellectual domain, it is proposed that the “Conference on the Right of Peoples to Peace” be held, allowing for a broad debate on issues related to the theme, such as the culture of peace, sense of peace in the restricted system, human rights, democracy and governance, documentation and methods, education, etc. It was a joint project by the Autonomous University of Lisbon, Portugal, RC26 on Human Rights from IPSA; Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan; University Carlos III of Madrid; and South Asia Research Institute for Minorities. The Conference was opened by Prof. dr Alex Sander Pires (Autonomous University of Lisbon). Then, the speeches were delivered by Dr Patrice Vahard (Director of BCNUDH BUREAU) - “CONJOINT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L’HOMME UBUNTU in its relation to peace and its values”; Prof. dr Jędrzej Skrzypczak (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan) - “The right of people to peace in the pre-war period: 40th anniversary of UN Declaration”, Prof. dr Oscar Pérez de la Fuente, (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and Vice-chair of RC26 on Human Rights IPSA) - “Peace, war, law and Politics”, Prof. dr Jos. Antonio Fraas Montoya (Universidad de Salamanca, Spain) - “Documentation in Human Rights”, Prof. Anju Gupta (JECRC University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, and Member of RC26 IPSA Board) - “Women’s rights and gender equality in South Asia”, Prof. dr Alexandre Miguel Mestre (Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, Portugal) - “Olympic truce and the peace of peoples”, Furqan Ahmed South Asia Research Institute for Mi-

norities and Secretary of RC26 IPSA Board) - “Religious Nationalism as a Threat to the Right to Peace in Digital Spaces: defending minorities on social media”, Prof dr Deepak Mewada (JECRC University) - “Human Rights Day: Reflecting on progress and challenges”, Prof. dr Lier Pires Ferreira (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) - “Peace in times of hegemonic rupture”, Prof. Carlos Imbrosio Filho (Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa) - “From right to peace to R2P: bridging aspirations and obligations in preventing atrocities and nuclear catastrophes”.

## **BEYOND EUROPE - RC26 PANEL “AI AND HUMAN RIGHTS”, 12-13 DECEMBER 2024.**

“Beyond Europe: Artificial Intelligence” was an international conference organised by the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism and the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, on 12-13 December 2024 on the challenges and opportunities associated with the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) in technology, politics, health and communication. However, the emergence of artificial intelligence systems raises concerns about threats to protecting human rights. The panel organised by RC26 IPSA as part of this event focused on diagnosing these threats and developing strategies, international regulatory frameworks and ethical standards for such systems to counter these dangers.

Panel 1: Chair: Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak (AMU, RC26 IPSA chair).

Francisco Bariffi, PhD (University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain) - “AI and Human Rights in Global Governance: Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups in the Age of Emerging Technologies”, Francesco Cirillo (Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy) - “AI and Cognitive Manipulation: Are European Legislators Chasing Shadows?”, Dr Marco Marsili (Research Institute for International Studies, Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy) - “Navigating the Fu-

ture: Human Rights Implications of Artificial Intelligence”, Dr Dorottya Biczi (Széchenyi István University Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences, Department of Constitutional Law and Political Science, Hungary) - “The potential impact of artificial intelligence on fundamental rights”. Discussants: Furqan Ahmed (South Asia Research Institute for Minorities SARIM, Karachi, Pakistan, Secretary of RC26 Board), Prof. Ewa Szewczyk (University of Zielona Góra, Poland).

Panel 2: Chair: Prof. Cássius Guimaraes Chai (Federal University of Maranhão, Brazil, Member of RC26 IPSA Board). Prof. Jędrzej Skrzypczak (AMU) - “Challenges for freedom of expression and pluralism of opinion in the EU arising from the development of artificial intelligence”, Hokstok, Kinga Nagyné (PhD student, Széchenyi István University’s Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences, Hungary, Judge, Administrative Division of the Győr Regional Court) - “The impact of the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace on the right to safe work”, Prof. Ravisankar R. S. (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, NSS College, Pandalam, affiliated to the University of Kerala, India) - “Artificial Intelligence (AI), Surveillance State and the Human Rights Jeopardy”. Discussant: Prof. Oscar Pérez de la Fuente (Carlos III University of Madrid, Vice-chair of RC26 IPSA).

## FROM RANCHO IZAGUIRRE, REFLECTIONS TO COME

Miguel Ramírez

Master student in Carlos III University of Madrid

University of Guadalajara

The place where I was born and the house where I grew up and lived the most memorable moments of my life is located just 60 kilometers away from Teuchitlán, a municipality in the State of Jalisco, México. Teuchitlán has been on the spotlight among activist and the national and international press in the last few weeks.

In Teuchitlán is located Rancho Izaguirre, a property that, in recent days, was secured by Mexican State authorities. This was because it is undeniably the physical space where, without any doubt, actions occurred that have irreversibly destroyed thousands of lives. All the evidence indicates that this place has served as a center of operations where a criminal group trains and disappears people according to their convenience.

The crescendo of the 'Rancho Izaguirre narrative' was undeniably triggered by the March 5th dissemination of a harrowing video attributed to the Colectivo de guerreros buscadores de Jalisco/Jalisco Searching Warriors Collective (Franco, Darwin, 2024). documenting their on-site inspection. For an international readership perhaps unfamiliar with this phenomenon, it is crucial to contextualize these collectives as a poignant manifestation of Mexico's civil society response to the endemic crisis of desaparecidos, disappeared persons crisis. Their emergence underscores the perceived inadequacy and precariousness of the Mexican State's official response to this profound human rights crisis (Franco, Darwin, 2025a).

These collectives of searchers, essentially grassroots search parties, represent an organized societal endeavor to locate fragmented and concealed human remains across diverse terrains. Confronting sophisticated and disturbing modus operandi of bodily disposal and evidentiary obfuscation, their reason is to provide solace and closure to families grappling with the agonizing ambiguity of disappearance. Operating under duress, these brave individuals often face criminalization from state actors and threats, intimidation, and violence from the very criminal elements seeking to perpetuate their impunity and conceal their barbarity. Undeterred, they venture into the abyss, meticulously documenting the unfathomable horror and savagery that unfolds with impunity across the nation daily. It is pertinent to underscore here that a significant number of these courageous searchers have themselves fallen victim to assassination at the hands of organized criminal groups, as meticulously documented by the NGO *¿A dónde van los desaparecidos? /Where do the disappeared go?* (Nuño, Analy y Ayala Martínez, Aranzazú, 2025). This grim reality illuminates yet another dark and tragic dimension of this ongoing crisis, an inhumane entrenchment of impunity and the perpetuation of individual, familial, and collective suffering engendered by these disappearances, a chilling attitude that should rightfully terrify and concern us all. The aforementioned video, capturing the Collective's entry into the property, offers stark and brutal testimony. The documented scenes are nothing short of an indictment, reflecting the squalor and terror of a nation seemingly adrift in a crisis that elicits insufficient societal introspection, compounded by a tepid and inadequate institutional response. The visual inventory – hundreds of discarded garments and footwear strewn across the Rancho, personal items of individuals who once possessed their liberty and their lives – paints a visceral portrait of loss. The contentious issue of alleged clandestine crematories, purportedly utilized by organized crime to obliterate bodies and conceal homicides, has ignited a national debate, giving rise to the terrifying speculation of extermination camps run by criminal organizations (Ginés, Isabel, 2025).

However, the Rancho Izaguirre saga is but another episode within a broader societal and institutional crisis of overwhelming magnitude. In the analytical framework proposed by Mexican researcher Rosana Reguillo, this constitutes yet another grim ‘postcard of horror,’ a stark tableau illuminating the brutal reality of a State seemingly subjugated by the violence and dynamics of the *necromáquina*, a lethal apparatus of human annihilation operating with near-total impunity across the national landscape (Reguillo, Rossana, 2025), relentlessly extinguishing the lives and liberties of individuals and families.

The disappeared persons crisis—brutally exposed at Rancho Izaguirre—undoubtedly represents the most harrowing manifestation of this *necromáquina*. The staggering statistics of disappeared persons in Mexico underscore the inescapable responsibility of the Mexican State. According to official government data, as of April 18, 2025, the number of individuals not located stands at a staggering 127,280 (The National Search Commission for Persons/Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda, 2025). Pervasive impunity severely hinders the ability to definitively attribute culpability for these disappearances. An overwhelming majority of cases never reach judicialization. In its latest report on disappearances in Mexico, the United Nations Committee Against Forced Disappearance concluded that a mere 2% to 6% of cases have been brought before the courts, with only 36 convictions nationwide (United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances, 2022). In 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted the paltry figure of just 40 convictions for this crime, urging Mexico to rectify this trajectory of profound impunity (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2023) While these figures are subject to updates and minor numerical variations, the near-absolute impunity surrounding this crime remains as an undisputed reality.

This context compels the conclusion that a robust and reliable information source for definitively establishing legal culpability for disappearances remains elusive. Nevertheless, it is a widely acknowledged fact that a significant proportion of disappearances have been perpetrated by crime organizations, often with the complicity or omission of state agents, as detailed within the aforementioned UN report.

Recently, on April, 2025, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances concluded that disappearances in Mexico occur in a systematic and widespread manner, a reality that led the Committee to activate for the first time the Article 34 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons against Enforced Disappearance (Nucamendi, Marcos, 2025). Thus, the repercussions and possibilities surrounding this mechanism warrant a discussion for another time.

The necessary reflection, therefore, transcends the purely legal realm, yet crucially requires its foundation. In Mexico, the impunity surrounding the disappeared crisis is not merely a statistic; it represents a profound absence, a vital and social void. A disappeared human is absent from their life, from a specific place and environment where they are awaited, and thus perpetually missing. However, this absence extends to the collective consciousness. Impunity signifies the absence of an history, a narrative that must be reclaimed by our public institutions if we are to function as a community committed to justice and truth, and if our institutions are to respond to this fundamental yearning. Addressing this crisis requires dismantling impunity and contemplating how to transcend this devastating reality by learning from it, and mostly, honoring the memory of the hundreds of thousands of victims. Rancho Izaquirre stands as another harrowing tableau, which, while instilling fear and revulsion, must serve as a catalyst for a profound and urgently needed collective reflection on the excessive violence that plagues Mexico

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