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World : Times are so bad, we need to create a 'Human Rights League'

Times are so bad, we need to create a 'Human Rights League'

By Nacho Sánchez Amor And Meglena Kuneva

Euobserver (12.10.2022) – <https://bit.ly/3g95V6s> – Every person has inherent, inalienable, and indivisible rights. This premise is the fundamental achievement of humankind. Yet, over the past years, we have witnessed an increase in violations of human rights and democratic values across the world.

Executions, tortures, arbitrary arrests and detentions, clampdown on civil society and political opponents, excessive violence by public authorities, censorship and threats to independent media, and disinformation – to name some of the most obvious examples.

With a string of crises, from the financial meltdown and the Covid-19 pandemic to Russia's war against Ukraine, we have seen a rise of illiberal and authoritarian forces undermining the basis of our modern civilisation – universal human rights.

The undemocratic regimes resort to a narrative of relativism by claiming that human rights are “a weapon of cultural hegemony”.

They are creating an ideological and political discord over the universality of human rights. They hide behind a perverted logic of the “veil of ignorance”, defending a concept of democracy based not on values, but on a shallow ideology according to which universal human rights are a product of hegemonic eurocentrism or Western neo-colonialism.

One does not have to try hard to find an example of this kind of narrative.

The Covid-19 pandemic [proved a perfect alibi](#) for these regimes to impose their autocratic agendas. By [spreading disinformation](#) and disregarding the international rules-based order, they targeted disappointed and disillusioned people let down by self-complacent democracies.

This dangerous trend unequivocally calls for a truly global alliance to defend universal human rights.

It requires a genuine Human Rights League.

Countries and international organisations across the world have never joined forces in a proper human rights alliance.

In 1993, the [Global Alliance of National Human Rights](#)

[Institutions](#) was established, composed mainly of national human rights institutions interacting with the United Nations.

The [Alliance of Civilisations](#), created in 2007, focused on international action against extremism.

US president, Joe Biden, hosted the [Summit for Democracy](#) in December last year.

All these initiatives are most valuable, but none of them is a genuine global human rights alliance, which the world desperately needs.

Liberal and mature democracies and international organisations, joined in the Human Rights League, have to wake up from complacency, stand firm against illiberal and autocratic regimes and reaffirm our shared commitment to universal human rights as a global model of society.

We need to go beyond sterile strategic dialogues. We need to move from resolutions and statements to a more assertive and decisive action.

The first opportunity to discuss all this, and to kick off the League, will be the event organised this Thursday (13 October) in the European Parliament. Human rights allies will gather to exchange views on how to make this idea a reality.

In this endeavour, the parliament has a crucial role to play, being the most vocal and devoted EU institution in defending democratic values, a true moral force, as well as a beacon for human rights activists all around the world.

With a noble and ambitious idea of the Human Rights League in mind, it is also crucial to analyse our Union's human rights toolbox, including political and strategic tools, legal and enforcement instruments, as well as diplomatic means.

It is necessary to further develop a comprehensive, united, and coherent European human rights vision and action.

A thorough reflection on this will allow us to better use our instruments in promoting and protecting human rights as an integral element of the EU's foreign policy. There will never be a stronger EU in the world without a powerful human rights policy.

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