

Standing Strong And Firm for Personal Freedoms



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No matter which region of the world we look at, personal freedoms are under assault, be it by the government or by fellow citizens. As such, the government may repress the opposition, journalists, and civil society activists with unlawful imprisonment, torture, and disappearances, while fellow citizens may engage in acts of terrorism that physically injure us.

The rights to life and safety from physical aggression have long been recognized as fundamental to liberty, with the worst violation of our rights—by the government or fellow citizens—being when we are deprived of our life.

The life of a Slovakian investigative journalist Ján Kuciak was taken as he and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová were slain at their house in Veľká Mača, Slovakia in February 2018. This deeply chilling incident sent shockwaves not only across Slovakia, but also across the region. An attack on a journalist cannot be looked at in isolation, as it has ramifications for the entire society for two reasons.

First, an assault on a journalist is an attack on freedom of expression. Attacking one journalist for shedding light on the corrupt dealings of the political elite and their connections to those living on the other side of the law, means an attack on all members of the press and the others who speak truth to power.

Second, an assault on a journalist is an attack on the institutions of a free society that uplifts and protects the journalists for their instrumental role in preserving democracy, where the people keep government in check.

Thus, to preserve a free society, we need to stand strong to protect our freedom of expression, as well as all other personal freedoms.

This issue of the *4Liberty Review* presents a collection of articles focusing on the threats to personal freedoms in our region. Take, for instance, a János Kárpáti article on three *Stop Soros* bills currently being considered in the Hungarian parliament. If the bills were to become laws, the freedom of expression and freedom of association of the representatives of civil organizations, who are being critical of the government, would be visibly diminished.

Marek Tatała's article on the topic of the rule of law in Poland argues that Poles have, in recent years, rightfully went out on the streets to defend the rule of law against the attacks of the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party. The article reveals that the problem of the justice system in Poland is its efficiency and not independence, as many believe.

In Bill Wirtz's article we find out that paternalistic lifestyle regulations do not merely infringe on the personal freedoms, their applications rarely show improvement to public health. As such, public policy makers would be best advised to engage in evidence-based policy-making and, most importantly, to defend the right of a consumer to make their own choices when it comes to her/his life.

We keep standing strong and firm against threats and violations to personal freedoms. ●

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