

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



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President of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union highlights report of the IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at Parliamentary Subcommittee

OTTAWA – 2 February 2021 – The Honourable David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., President of the [Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\)](#), appeared before the [Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development](#) (the sub-committee) to discuss the [Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians](#) of the [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#). He was joined by the Right Honourable David Carter, until very recently a member of the New Zealand Parliament, a former Speaker, and a former active member of the IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

Mr. McGuinty highlighted the most recent report of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians released in November 2020, which addresses alleged violations of the human rights of 160 members of national parliaments from 13 countries, including Venezuela, Belarus, Uganda, the Philippines and Egypt. The list of alleged human rights violations documented in the report includes murder, torture and other acts of violence, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention, abduction, lack of due process and fair trial proceedings, and violations of freedom of opinion and expression.

Mr. Carter pointed out that the mandate of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians serves to shed light on abuses against parliamentarians and, in some instances such as Fiji and Maldives, can lead to support for capacity-building within various public institutions.

Members of the sub-committee were interested to hear more about the gendered aspects of the Committee's work, its engagement with other international organizations and parliamentary groups, and opportunities for young parliamentarians to have a greater impact in the IPU.

In his remarks, Mr. McGuinty stated, “The information contained in the reports of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians serves no purpose if awareness of them remains limited to those who participate in the IPU. Their value is magnified when they are broadly promoted and more clearly integrated into the work of national parliaments.”

According to the IPU, the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians confirms an overall upward trend in violations of parliamentarians’ human rights, particularly those of opposition members.

Points of note:

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the world organization of parliaments. Headquartered in Geneva, its membership includes 179 national parliaments or groups representing national parliaments. Established in 1889, it is the oldest organization of this type.
- The Parliament of Canada joined the IPU in 1912; the modern-day Canadian Group of the IPU was constituted in 1960.
- The IPU’s Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was established in 1975. It is the only international mechanism that seeks to protect and defend legislators experiencing human rights violations.

-30-

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