

Dear colleagues,

We are delighted to announce the release of Issue 23(1) of *The Journal of Human Rights*. Issue 23(1) of JHR employs a mixed-methods approach, featuring qualitative research through interviews and archival study, as well as articles derived from statistical data analysis and modeling.

JHR 23(1), while spanning various regions, places an emphasis on countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Sammy Badran and Brian Turnbull use Tunisia and Algeria as case studies to shed light on how governments have leveraged existing authoritarian legal frameworks during the COVID-19 pandemic. They reveal that during crises, aspiring authoritarian regimes find greater leeway in restricting freedoms through general legal mechanisms while maintaining public approval. Marc Schade-Poulsen takes it back to 1970s authoritarian Tunisia in his exploration of human rights activism. Despite the prevalent use of human rights concepts during this period, Schade-Poulsen argues that the core concerns of the driving groups were more deeply rooted in other justice principles and ideologies of the time. For more articles on human rights in Tunisia, see [Whose justice? Youth, reconciliation, and the state in post-Ben Ali Tunisia](#) in JHR 20(3) and [On conceptions of time in human rights studies: The afterlife, Islam, and reparative justice in post-uprising Tunisia](#) in JHR 22(4).

Looking at Brazil, Cristina Buarque de Hollanda, Danielle Costa da Silva, Pablo Saturnino Braga, and Carlos R. S. Milani use Jair Bolsonaro's presidency as a case study to question the assumption that institutionalizing human rights norms ensures their advancement. They propose that the international human rights framework is inherently politicized, arguing that human rights bodies may actually be manipulated to serve antihuman-rights policies and propaganda.

Issue 23(1) also examines a range of institutional issues and contemporary challenges. Suzie Mulesky, Wayne Sandholtz, and Kelebogile Zvobgo challenge the conventional belief that states uniformly weigh the costs and benefits of human rights treaty ratification. Bree Bang-Jensen analyzes how the International Labour Organization maintains legitimacy as evolving interpretations of human rights prompt the end of older norms. Lastly, Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick looks to the future, proposing that humanity currently stands at a pivotal turning point. He argues that major historical shifts, including geopolitical changes, climate and energy-related developments, and advances in science and technology, have the potential to usher in a new second era of human rights. Related articles from past issues of JHR include [Civil society and transitional justice: possibilities, patterns and prospects](#) (JHR 3(3)) and [Legitimizing Human Rights: Beyond Mythical Foundations and Into Everyday Resonances](#) (JHR 11(4)).

We encourage you to delve into this issue and share it within your professional networks to continue fostering meaningful conversations on human rights.