

Editorial Note

The Nordic Journal of Human Rights is very pleased to publish three articles in this final issue of the 2011 volume that examine various pertinent issues of contemporary human rights challenges and development. Two of the studies address human rights developments in Asia: one is a comparative study of right to access to information in China and Vietnam, and the other addresses a possible rolling back of human rights principles in the constitutional development in Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. In 'Media Systems, Access to Information and Human Rights in China and Vietnam', Robert W Vaagan explores how two of the few remaining countries in the world under communist party rule address the challenges of a rapidly changing and expanding media sector. Faced with pressure of market economic liberalisation for free information flows, and new forms of receiving and imparting information, will the state relinquish control over the media sector? While Vaagan concludes partly in the negative, he sees important scope for weakening party control, not least to the increasing penetration of internet in society.

A persistent issue in Western European societies is the principled foundation and practical policies for handling immigration and immigrants. Faced with new minority populations, how can principles held in high regard by 'old' democracies survive? How do Western democracies ensure that their new citizens are not subject to discrimination because of their culture, race or religion? And, are there limits for diversity, from a human rights position? If, for example, religious communities (or sects) are allowed to establish 'free schools', which requirements are put on these schools' value base, functioning and statutes in a democratic society, respectful of human rights? In his article on different conceptions of anti-discrimination policies, taking Denmark as his example, Tore Vincents Olsen addresses this important terrain of contemporary human rights discourse and makes assessments of Danish policies, which he finds to be at the interface of assimilationist and minimal multicultural practices. The analytical framework for diagnosing the particular approaches to anti-discrimination which Olsen puts forward can be useful in examining various national contexts. His hope is that, as an analytical tool, the framework will hopefully enable more detailed debates about the nature of anti-discrimination policies in comparative politics, policy studies, and legal scholarship.

In the third contribution to this issue, Azin Tadjdini addresses constitutional protection of human rights principles in ongoing constitutional developments in three states with predominantly Muslim populations in 'Constitutionalisation of

Islam in Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran: a Step Back for the Position of Human Rights?' Constitutional changes in these countries demonstrate a trend towards Islamisation of the basic law of the land at the expense of the secular principle that constitutions should not favor anyone on the basis of religious belief. This is indeed a question of great import for countries experiencing the new Arabic Awakening, and raises fundamental question about the foundational principles of post-conflict states in the Muslim world. While these changes are rife with internal contradictions between 'conservatives' and 'moderates', Tadjdini predicts that the prospects for democracy and human rights principles are weakened.

The Editors

Errata: Last line of Jørgen Aall, 'Waiver of Human Rights: Waiver of Procedural Rights According to ECHR Article 6' (2011) 29(2-3) NJHR 251 should read 'part 10.4.5 of the second article'.