Freedom of expression and the protection of the human rights of parliamentarians
Some questions about the relationship between parliaments, parliamentarians and freedom of expression
Are there situations in which parliaments and their members need to be protected from the Executive and Judiciary?

Yes

No
Should MPs be allowed to say anything they want?

Yes

No
Should MPs tolerate a wider degree of criticism than ordinary citizens?

Yes

No
Can parliaments do much to protect the right to freedom of expression in society?

Yes
No
Should MPs be free to vote against the party line?

Yes

No
Protection of the human rights of parliamentarians
Help us to help MPs under threat
Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Scope and objective:
Defend the human rights of members of national Parliaments

What does the Committee aim to achieve concretely?
A “satisfactory settlement” that:
(a) Prevents possible violations;
(b) Puts an end to ongoing violations; and/or
(c) Promotes State action to offer effective redress for violations.
Overview of the Committee Action

1. Search for solutions through dialogue during the whole procedure
2. The Committee never gives up until a solution is found
3. Call for international parliamentary Solidarity
Violations of the human rights of MPs – 2018
Cases examined by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

564 MPs in 43 countries

Most common violations
1. Undue suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate
2. Lack of fair trial and other unfair proceedings
3. Violation of freedom of expression
4. Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence

450 114

Opposition 426
Majority 126
Independent/Others 12

The IPU’s Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians is a unique source of protection and redress for MPs killed, attacked, intimidated or jailed for their political views or differences. If MPs cannot do their job safely or without fear, they cannot ensure parliament does its job of protecting the human rights and political freedoms of society as a whole. Without respect for fundamental human rights such as freedom of thought and expression, the right to life, liberty, equality and the right to take part in government—there can be no democracy.

The IPU works with parliaments to ensure they deliver on their human rights responsibilities.