



Irish Council for
Civil Liberties

Monitoring human rights during the pandemic
25 April-1 May

Covid19-related advocacy work

Letter sent to Garda Commissioner re: policing policy & practices during the pandemic

ICCL sent a [letter](#) to the Garda Commissioner raising numerous issues, and requesting specific information and clarification. We highlighted the participation of armed gardaí at checkpoints as wholly inappropriate. Further information was requested on the following:

- Stop-and-search operations
- Deployment of the Public Order Unit
- The use of pepper spray
- Interpretation of “essential travel” and “reasonable excuse”
- Request for ID or travel papers
- Treatment of protest/strike
- Opposing bail in pandemic-related cases
- Acting on drone footage

Use of spit hoods criticised

ICCL criticised the use of spit hoods by Gardaí on the basis that they can lead to serious injuries and may constitute degrading treatment. A [letter](#) had already been sent to the Garda Commissioner on 30 March by ICCL voicing opposition to their use.

Concerns raised regarding imminent tracking app in open letter

ICCL, together with civil societies, scientists, and academics, raised concerns about the HSE's pending COVID-19 Tracker Ireland app in a [letter](#) to the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health.

ICCL called on the HSE to publish details of the app immediately, specifically the app's draft specification and user requirements, the app's Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), and its source code - to allow for independent scrutiny of what is proposed.

[Raising this issue in a parliamentary question](#) to Minister of Health Simon Harris in the Dáil, Louise O'Reilly T.D. referred to ICCL's call for the publication of a data protection impact

assessment in advance of the app's launch, and requested that ICCL and other organisations with expertise in the area be allowed to have input.

Events

Executive Director, Liam Herrick, participated in a [Webinar](#) entitled "All Island Conversations: Covid-19 and Human Rights: Emergency Powers" with Professor Fionnuala Ní Aoláin (United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism) hosted by QUB's Human Rights Centre.

Executive Director, Liam Herrick, delivered a talk on "Rights and liberties in a more authoritarian world" in the online event, "Covid19, A Just Recovery 'Think-In'", organised by Uplift.

Publications

Executive Director, Liam Herrick, published a [blog](#) entitled "Covid Suspension of Civil Liberties – How worried should we be?" as part of KOD Lyons Human Rights Solicitors blog series.

Other Media Engagement & Coverage

Social Justice Matters Podcast

Senior Policy Officer, Doireann Ansbro, and Director, Information Rights, Elizabeth Farries, took part in a [podcast discussion](#) with Social Justice Ireland on our ongoing work on the emergency legislation, regulations and related data protection concerns.

Radio

Senior Policy Officer, Doireann Ansbro, discussed the ICCL's monitoring and advocacy work on the emergency measures, and the use of extraordinary powers on CRCfm, a **radio station** based in Co. Mayo.

Reference to ICCL's work in the media

- Opposition to [armed gardaí](#) at checkpoints
- Call for a [Human Rights Impact Assessment](#) before 5 May
- Call for [protest](#) to be facilitated during the pandemic
- Right to [privacy](#) at checkpoints