Twitter Thread by Dan Sohege



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@stand_for_all

Thread: 2021 is gearing up to be a difficult year for human rights. It's all a question of seeing how individual comments and policies create a pattern, but that in turn risks you sounding like a conspiracy theorist, so let's break it down. 1/

From @pritipatel and @BorisJohnson's comments about "lefty do-gooders" and "activist lawyers" there has been a gradual narrative built up that human rights are some kind of left wing stalking horse. Yet in practical terms they should be apolitical. They apply to all of us. 2/

This is an excellent article by Director of @RunnymedeTrust, Halima Begum about the language the government is using to create division. I fear that it could lead some to think that she is saying the voters being targeted are white supremacists though. 3/
https://t.co/a13PFuzGka

Let's be totally clear here, the "culture war" being gamed by the government is a myth, but it is a myth which resonates with people who feel disconnected from society. A year of isolation, fear and economic concerns has likely increased that disconnect. 4/

Public attitudes fluctuate, and I am not denying that there is still a massive problem of racism within society, but attitudes towards immigration for example are, on the whole, softening. Problem is those against it tend to be more vocal. 5/
https://t.co/JuBxLiRCsI

There is a reason why we use the phrase "dog-whistle terminology". It's true meaning can only be heard by those receptive to it, for others it may seem reasonable. Take @trussliz's recent comments regarding inequality. 6/
https://t.co/POAgV5hN5o

If you're in a socially deprived area hearing we need to focus on geographic inequality sounds reasonable. You probably aren't interested in how race and gender are the two core global drivers of inequality when you struggle to put food on the table. 7/
https://t.co/hhq8KXsOwb

This is how the government works with this though. They make it sound "reasonable". They make human rights sound like something to be afraid of. That rather than protecting you they limit your options and chances. 8/

Look at all the stories about asylum seekers this year. There's a few reasons why channel crossings have increased. Arguably the main being other routes have been closed due to the pandemic. Yet we have seen a decline in overall asylum applications. 9/
https://t.co/3T0XW3htwB.

Listening to @ukhomeoffice though you would be forgiven for thinking there had been a vast increase in the number of asylum seekers coming to the UK. Why else would the government set up prison camps for them if not to protect the public after all? 10/
https://t.co/EwLyOlKcOI

"Othering" is an age old technique for politicians to try and shift blame away from themselves and appeal to voters. This year it has proven particularly useful for a government which has overseen such a massive failure of leadership with Covid-19. 11/
https://t.co/ZSTWmQm35v

The problem with "othering" is that it automatically erodes human rights. It creates a sense that some people are "more deserving" than others, while some are actually to blame for our individual issues. It ignores that human rights are there for everyone. 12/

Look at the argument for reducing Foreign Aid. It was framed as "why spend money abroad when it could be spent here". Reasonable argument I guess, but the savings made from cutting it were wiped out by an increase in spending on the armed forces. 13/
https://t.co/ezpPbiTQGg.

Instead, it actually risks harming the UK economy and creating lasting negative impacts on global safety and security, which in turn present greater long term costs, particularly during a global health emergency. We all suffer for this. 14/
https://t.co/Oaa3jvDWlD

Then you have domestic legislation specifically aimed at reducing compliance with international law. Why should a "sovereign state" be bound by international law? Well, it ensures others are as well. Laws are only as strong as the will to follow and impose them. 15/

The overseas operations bill for example has been condemned for providing a possible way for British forces to avoid prosecution and punishment for war crimes. Aside from the obvious implications of violating the human rights of those in conflicts... 16/
https://t.co/A45sRxTnc6

It poses other risks for the rights of those back in the UK. Firstly, it undermines potential trust in the armed forces which makes cooperation those they are ostensibly tasked to protect harder. Secondly though it opens the door for other countries to do the same. 17/

Only yesterday it was revealed @FCDOGovUK was prepared to deny protection to British citizens arrested overseas. It isn't a long line to draw between UK setting a precedent to break international law and human rights and others following suit. 18/

https://t.co/pJszdXFFza

Then we have the whole issue with "judicial review". Again it has been framed as "lefties undermining the government". What it is in fact is judges holding the government to account and ensuring that it can't violate the law. 19/ https://t.co/bkvGFGvqFj

Many of the rights we all value, no matter our politics, are based on principle the government cannot deny us of them. Judicial review maintains that. Whether you agree with individual judgements or not, you have to question who will protect your rights in future without it. 20/

This is just a small snapshot of how the government is gearing up for a wider attack on human rights and playing voters by trying to make out it is a left or right issue. It isn't. Losing them for one loses them for all. 21/

There are racists and white supremacists, bigots of every stoke, who would dearly love to see human rights limited for some while their own are protected. They tend to be in the minority though. If human rights are eroded further in 2021 then it will hurt all of all. 22/