

PREFACE

The Institute of Legal Research of Mexico's National University, the International Association of Constitutional Law (IACL) and the Ibero-American Institute of Constitutional Law, agreed in March 2020 to work together in order to produce a testimony of how states of different parts of the world have responded to the COVID-19 crisis, from the constitutional point of view. The result of this common effort is this book: "COVID-19 and Constitutional Law".

The coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19) has affected many aspects of our lives, in many ways, all over the world. Public authorities in most countries have been taking a series of measures which they have deemed necessary to prevent or control the spread of the disease. Most of those measures correspond, not to the "normal" day-to-day management of public affairs, but to a situation of "emergency". In this way, the mobility of people has been severely restricted; in some instances, public force has been used to implement these and other restrictions; schools have had to suspend classes; some public health services seem to have reached such a critical point and overload that they did not have the capacity to treat and protect everybody; businesses have been ordered to suspend their activities until further notice; elections have been postponed; institutions for disaster management have been put at work; unemployment, food and water insecurity have raised. Moreover, the normal relationships and interactions between branches of government and between the different levels of government in federal and decentralized states have been altered. These and many other phenomena that are happening around the world in the middle of the pandemic crisis have constitutional implications.

The purpose of this book is to trace a very broad map of the different constitutional issues that are being debated in different parts of the world in the context of the pandemic. In view of this, scholars of 26 countries were invited to submit a short commentary on which constitutional issues are of concern in their part of the world, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The contributors to this book were required, not to submit an extensive and deep piece of research, but to produce a concise text explaining, very sche-

matically, the most important constitutional issues and debates concerning their country's response to the problems derived from the pandemic. This "mapping" will hopefully be the basis for conducting deeper analysis in future research projects in the field of comparative constitutional law, in connection with crisis derived from pandemics.

Following the guidelines of the International Association of Constitutional Law, contributors to this collective work were asked to write their texts in English or in French. However, since the book was edited and published in Mexico, and to allow a broader participation, contributions in Spanish were also welcomed.

The Editorial Board in charge of reviewing all the texts was formed by Helle Krunke (First Vice President of the IACL) Iris Nguyen Duy (Deputy Secretary General of the IACL) and by José Ma. Serna (member of the Executive Committee of the same association). Since the first steps of this project, the support and guidance of Adrienne Stone (President of the IACL), of Pedro Salazar (Director of the Institute of Legal Research of Mexico's National University) and of Diego Valadés (President of the Ibero-American Institute of Constitutional Law), was essential and invaluable. We thank them for this, in the same way as we thank all the scholars that responded positively and enthusiastically to our invitation to participate in this global academic project.

José Ma. SERNA DE LA GARZA
Coordinator