



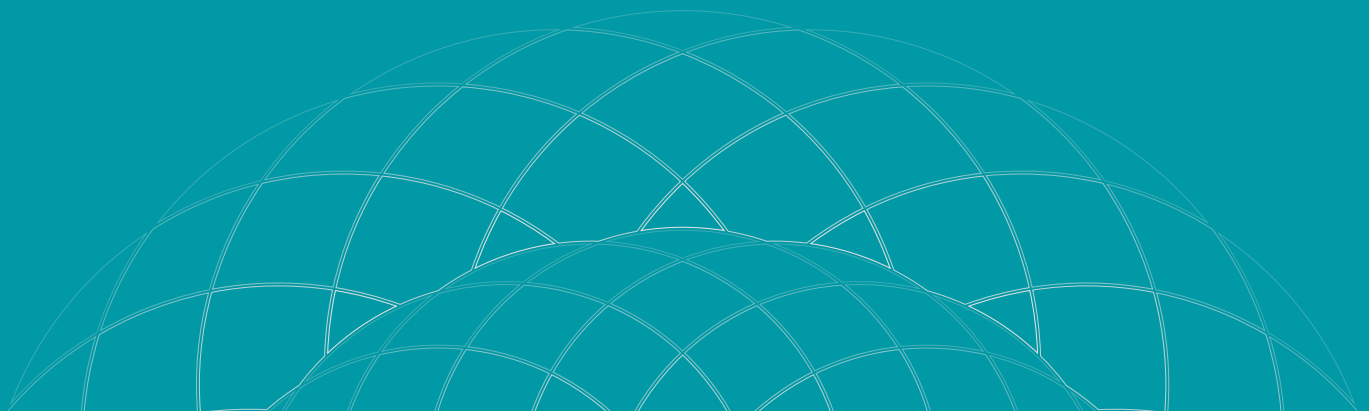
40th Anniversary

HRP

HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Annual Report
2023-2024



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Human Rights Program @ Harvard Law

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40th Anniversary of the Human Rights Program

Envisioning the Future of Human Rights

At the opening of the historic 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali declared that human rights “constitute[ed] the common language of humanity.” His speech encapsulated a moment in history which saw the flourishing of human rights and their incorporation in international, constitutional, and sub-national legal systems at a truly global scale. The Human Rights Program (HRP) at Harvard Law School (HLS) is celebrating its 40th anniversary by exploring and envisioning the future of the human rights movement, as well as by reflecting on its journey.

Founded by Professor Emeritus Henry J. Steiner '55 in 1984 as one of the world's first academic centers of human rights legal scholarship, HRP has been pushing the boundaries of human rights research, pedagogy, and practice for four remarkable decades. This year, we will celebrate HRP's journey that has inspired thousands of former and current law students, scholars and practitioners to critically engage with the global human rights project.

Gerald L. Neuman, HRP Director and the J. Sinclair Armstrong Professor of International, Foreign and Comparative Law at Harvard Law School, has directed HRP since 2012. “More than 75 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and 40 years after the founding of HRP, the enduring relevance of the promise of human rights law is obvious around the world,” said Neuman. “Our mission is to shine light on its achievements and challenges, and to uncover the ways it can be improved.”

Since the beginning, HRP has nurtured an environment of self-reflective thinking, and probing dialogues around our understanding of human rights and its evolving priorities and struggles. Over the decades, HRP led the way in the development of a human rights pedagogy at HLS including through curricular development, the founding of journals and other publications, as well as the establishment of a clinic and different internship and fellowship programs. It also oversaw a flourishing of collaborations between faculty, fellows, students, schools and other institutions across Harvard and at other universities. Joint initiatives also extended beyond universities to include many global, regional, and domestic human rights mechanisms, research centers and human rights organizations worldwide.

HRP's dedication to original and critical thought is evident in the broad array of activities that have marked our 40-year history. Through events like public panel discussions or private workshops, we have invigorated debates among the leading scholars and practitioners of today and tomorrow to advance a sharper understanding of human rights challenges. Our publications, ranging from working papers to conference proceedings to journal and book contributions, have helped build the fundament of modern human rights scholarship. Fellowship opportunities have jumpstarted the careers of hundreds of students dedicated to promoting human rights globally.

“On Human Rights...”

Eleanor Roosevelt: *[Human rights are] one of the foundation stones on which we would build in the world, an atmosphere in which peace can grow.*

Louis Henkin: *The idea [of human rights] suggests equality of human beings, not hierarchy among them.*

Kofi Annan: *[T]he universality of human rights ... gives them their strength. It endows them with the power to cross any border, climb any wall, defy any force.*



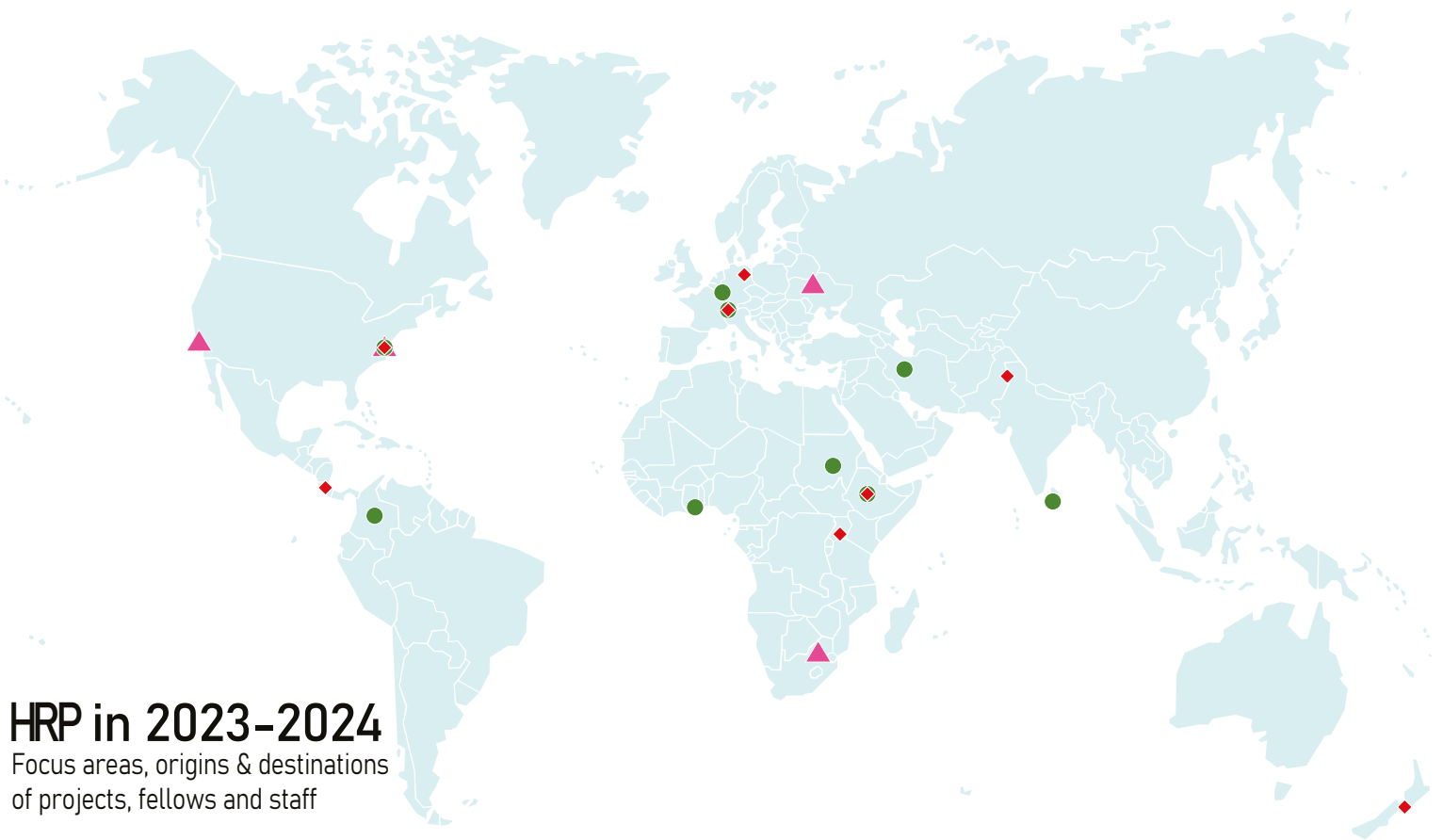
“HRP leverages the University’s unparalleled intellectual capital to advance human rights research touching on areas around the world,” explained HRP Associate Director Abadir M. Ibrahim. “By cultivating interdisciplinary collaboration across Harvard’s faculties and mobilizing its vast alumni network, the Program amplifies efforts to refine human rights discourse, strengthen human rights institutions, and provide academic input for the human rights agenda.”

Throughout its history, HRP has offered an intellectual home for countless leaders in the field. Be it as permanent staff, visiting fellows or professors, many individuals’ legacies have shaped our Program and the broader human rights community at Harvard and beyond. HRP’s enduring commitment to bridging academia and practice remains at the core of our mission as we celebrate this 40th year milestone.

Looking toward the future, HRP is unfaltering in its ambition to advance the global human rights project through impartial, innovative and rigorous research. In a world facing unprecedented crises, the importance of thoughtful reflection on protecting human rights cannot be overstated. On this 40th anniversary, we are proud of our history and anticipate furthering our role in fostering progress towards equal dignity and solidarity in the years to come.

HRP Around the World

HRP student fellows, faculty, staff and visiting fellows work on projects that cross a variety of geographic regions. The map below displays the extent of HRP's global reach in 2023-2024. In addition to the geographically-focused work shown below, HRP is involved in many areas of work that cross borders and have global and comparative implications.



HRP in 2023-2024

Focus areas, origins & destinations of projects, fellows and staff

- ▲ Postgraduate and student fellow destinations
- HRP project focus areas
- ◆ Country of origin of staff, research assistants and visiting fellows

Harvard Law School Climate Justice Series

On March 28 and 29, the Human Rights Program co-organized the “Harvard Law School Climate Justice Series” supported by the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability and in collaboration with, among others, the Harvard Human Rights Journal (HHRJ), the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, and the Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics at Harvard Law School. In order to capture the intricate dynamics of global climate change and its wide-ranging effects on human rights, the series of events delved into the topic at global, regional, and sometimes local scales. The series is part of HRP’s initiative, consisting of a number of events and publications, that foster a transnational normative dialogue on international climate law, human rights law, and overlapping legal fields.

A Global Perspective

The first part of the series consisted of an all-day symposium hosted by HHRJ on the topic of the environment and human rights. The first day began with a discussion of broader climate and environmental topics under negotiation at the international level in addition to addressing a diverse set of normative developments at the intersection of environmental law and climate migration, indigenous rights, as well as business and human rights. The symposium also surveyed the latest developments in climate litigation before regional and international courts, discussing current and future strategies for litigation and advocacy. The symposium was followed by a special issue of the HHRJ—both of which were supported by HRP.



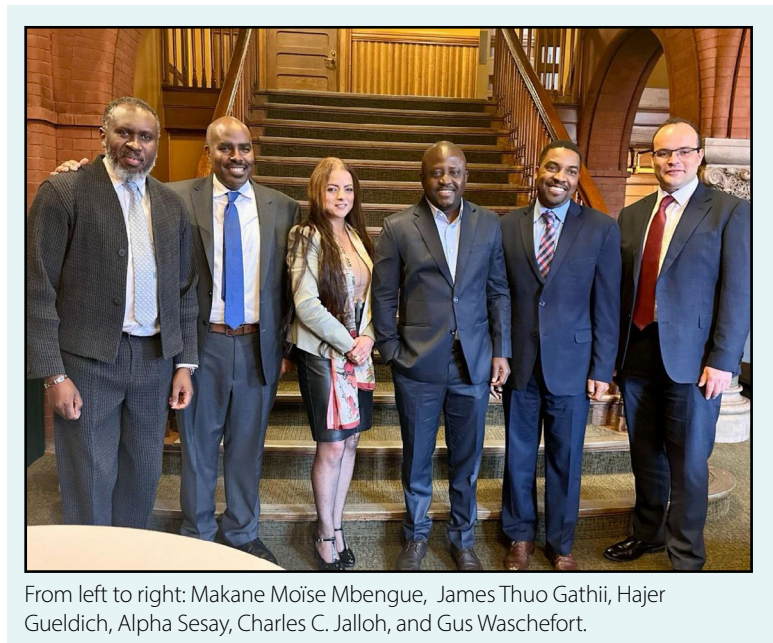
From left to right: Elena Athwal, Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Angela van der Berg and Lssan Estifanos.

Foregrounding African Perspectives on Climate Change Law

The second day of the series centered the HRP-organized symposium on “African Perspectives on

International Climate Change Law”. Bringing together some of Africa’s foremost thinkers on climate change law, the symposium questioned whether African states, and other African actors such as civil society actors and indigenous groups, will be able to participate in shaping international climate change law. This is despite the fact that Africa has contributed only to a very limited extent to the climate crisis, with just about 4% percent of global cumulative emissions, and stands out disproportionately as one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. Therefore, the goal of the symposium was to foreground and bring together viewpoints from the Continent which, due to power inequalities, are more likely to be overlooked in global norm-making processes.

“African States emerging from colonialism actively challenged the Eurocentric foundations of international law. Today, Africa is pioneering a unique approach to climate change law,” said Hajer Gueldich, Legal Counsel of the African Union, in her keynote speech opening the symposium. She highlighted the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and the Bamako Convention, which address the specific needs of African nations. According to her, crucial measures enabling Africa to



From left to right: Makane Moise Mbengue, James Thuo Gathii, Hajer Gueldich, Alpha Sesay, Charles C. Jalloh, and Gus Waschefort.

adjust to climate change are technology transfer and financial support from rich countries – measures which those same countries owe to Africa for their outsized environmental pollution. Next to Gueldich’s emphasis on the precautionary principle and due diligence, a key proposal of hers was the establishment of a Specialized International Court on the Environment which would be competent for ecocide.

With her keynote speech, the Counsel of the African Union set the tone for the remainder of the symposium. Moderated by HRP Director Gerald Neuman, the first panel brought together African heavyweights in international law: James Gathii, a Professor of Law at Loyola University Chicago School of Law who is viewed as one of the founders of the legal movement Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAAIL); Charles C. Jalloh, Member of the UN International Law Commission and Professor at Florida International University; and Alpha Sesay, Deputy Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone and a 2018-2019

Visiting Fellow at HRP. Countering the common notion that Africa was a passive observer on the global stage, Gathii recounted the many ways African states had contested and shaped emerging international law “even though it continues to subordinate them.” Jalloh seconded that point by highlighting the significant impact African states had in the successful negotiations for a treaty protecting the biodiversity of the world’s oceans.

The term “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR) denotes the idea that while all countries have responsibilities in responding to climate change, richer countries have greater responsibility than poorer countries due to their historically outsized impact on the global climate. As Makane Moïse Mbengue, Lead Counsel of the African Union for the climate change case at the International Court of Justice, explained in the second panel, the meaning of CBDR in the climate change regime diverged



from other international environmental law regimes in its emphasis of the historical responsibility of developed countries for greenhouse gas emissions. Co-panelist Saadia Bhatti, who supports Mbengue in advising the African Union on the climate proceedings at the International Court of Justice, stressed that the data limitations prevalent on the African continent undermined scientific evaluations of physical threats from climate change.

Further symposium panels discussed the intersection of adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and the relationship between climate change and human rights. In this context, Oluwatoyin Adejonwo stated that sustainable development pathways which balance economic growth with environmental stewardship were very important for African countries but depended on assistance from climate finance like loss and damage funds.

Many participants explored how African perspectives and institutions can shape the development of both regional and international climate as well as trade and human rights law. The panel on human rights, for

example, explored these possibilities under the notions of “African solutions to African problems” and “African solutions to global problems”. Several speakers pointed out the relative weakness of African states as a key obstacle in climate negotiations including in the attainment of adequate climate finance. A solution suggested by panelists was to look inwards and build up strength through continental unity. As Olanrewaju Fagbohun, Professor of Environmental Law at Lagos State University, stated: “It is time for Africa to boldly advocate for true continental integration, wielding collective strength to shape global discourse and ensure its own destiny.”

Lessons from Latin America

The second day of the symposium included a lunch panel titled “The Role of Courts in Advancing the Right to a Health Environment: Lessons From Latin America” as an interlude. Moderator Alicia Ely Yamin, Lecturer on Law at HLS and Senior Fellow at the Petrie-Flom Center, was joined by Alfredo Gutiérrez Ortiz Mena, Justice on the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, México; Antonio Herman Benjamin, Justice of the National High Court of Brazil; and Ricardo Lorenzetti, Judge of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina. Considering that Latin America has been at the forefront of the judicialization of a right to a healthy environment, the Justices discussed the evolution of this jurisprudence in their respective countries and examined challenges as well as successes. In the discussion, it became clear there is a very mixed record on the implementation of judgments strengthening rights to a healthy environment due to a complex political economy in a region wracked by economic inequality and the outsized power of extractive and other commercial interests.



From left to right: Justices Antonio Herman Benjamin, Alfredo Gutiérrez Ortiz Mena, Ricardo Lorenzetti, and panel moderator Alicia Ely Yamin on the panel about Latin American courts and environmental rights.

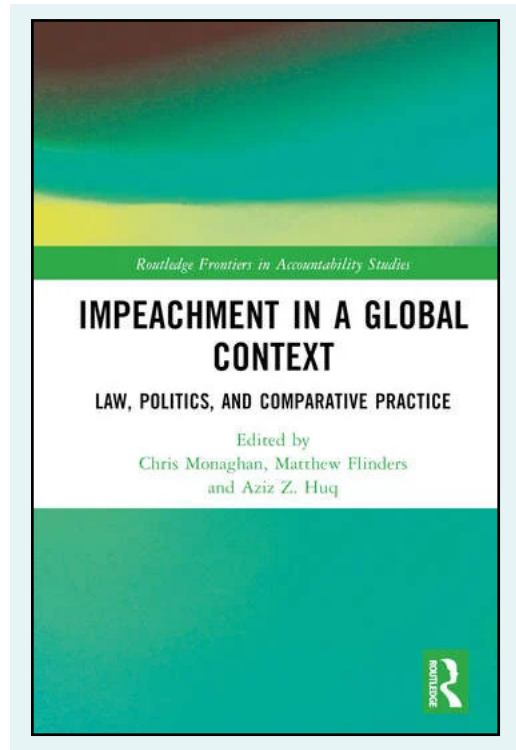
Impeachment and Human Rights

A Comparative Perspective

In popular perception in the United States, the term “impeachment” is inextricably linked to the recent unsuccessful effort to remove former President Donald Trump from office and, further in the past, the fruitless attempt to do the same to his predecessor Bill Clinton. But impeachment is not a phenomenon exclusive to the U.S. Around the world, many countries have instituted mechanisms which allow for the legislative removal of government officials for abuse of office.

With a chapter contribution from HRP Director Gerald Neuman, the edited volume “Impeachment in a Global Context: Law, Politics, and Comparative Practice” (Routledge, 2024) is a global comparative study which explores impeachment through different lenses. Edited by political scientists Chris Monaghan and Matthew Flinders, and University of Chicago law professor Aziz Z. Huq, the volume collects chapters illuminating the relationship between impeachment and human rights (authored by Neuman), democracy, and rule of law, and contains several country-focused case studies ranging from Korea to Iceland.

On February 8, 2024, HRP hosted a virtual launch of the book. Neuman moderated the event, with editors Huq and Monaghan and chapter contributor Imelda Deinla joining as panelists. In his introductory remarks, Neuman observed that impeachment could be either a “cure for human rights violations or a cause” of them. Furthermore, impeachment is usually conditional on “the finding that the accused official has committed constitutional violations or criminal acts”, which often constitute human rights violations, according to Neuman.



Drawing from his chapter in the volume, Monaghan discussed whether impeachment was still applicable to the present-day United Kingdom. He concluded that impeachment could indeed still play a role in

strengthening the UK's political system by bolstering democratic accountability through the House of Commons. In her comments, Deinla examined the removal of the first female Chief Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court in 2018. More broadly, she highlighted how the impeachment of judges had been used in developing democracies like the Philippines, both as a mechanism for accountability but also as a tool for authoritarian leaders to consolidate power. Finally, Huq presented quantitative data on impeachments around the world. He provided an overview of the differing constitutional mechanisms enabling impeachment, and critically engaged with the idea that impeachments tend to bring about improvements in governance.

Neuman's chapter contribution and HRP's book launch event stemmed from his scholarly research on the connection between human rights and impeachment. Another product of this research was Neuman's article "Impeachment, Disqualification and Human Rights", which appeared in the Columbia Human Rights Law Review in 2023. The article compares the European Court of Human Rights' jurisprudence on permanent exclusion from political office as a result of impeachment with the varied experience of the United States at the state and federal levels. Neuman finds that while both the European Court and the U.S. approaches offer valuable insights, the former's stance permitting only time-limited disqualification may hinder democracies' ability to protect themselves.



The Rights of People of African Descent

A New Declaration?

Hosted by HRP at Harvard Law School, the United Nations Permanent Forum for People of African Descent welcomed legal scholars, historians, researchers and human rights advocates to Cambridge, MA, for a global expert consultation on a UN Draft Declaration for the rights of people of African descent. Besides North American scholars, leading experts from South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and Asia took part in the meeting. A number of Harvard scholars also participated in the consultation.

June Soomer, Chairperson of the Permanent Forum, opened the consultation by saying “I welcome you with this big task, and welcome that you will be able to give us some direction for our conference and our Forum in Geneva in April.” Ambassador Soomer, who was also the first woman to serve as the Saint Lucian Ambassador to CARICOM, explained that she and the other members of the Permanent Forum would use the expert consultation to gather evidence and feedback on the Draft Declaration ahead of their report to the UN Human Rights Council.



Participants of the expert consultation by the UN Permanent Forum for People of African Descent at HLS on March 7-8, 2024.

Through their mandate, the members of the Permanent Forum are tasked with identifying and analyzing best practices for dealing with different socioeconomic and environmental challenges relevant to people of African descent. In her opening speech, Soomer underlined that the goal of the Permanent Forum was not to craft a generic Draft Declaration, but one which highlights the specific challenges of racism like the persistent effects of black women's historical experiences with enslavement and colonialism. To allow for a deeper engagement with details, the consultation's sessions dealt with the topics of systemic racism, reparatory justice, collective rights for people of African descent, extraterritorial rights, and artificial intelligence.

The country of Haiti figured prominently in a number of panels. "It's impossible for us to speak about reparatory justice without speaking about Haiti," said Permanent Forum member and member of the Law Faculty at the University of The Bahamas Gaynel Curry. "As we say at home, Haiti is the North Star when we speak about reparatory justice." According to Michael McEachrane, also member of the Permanent Forum and incoming Visiting Fellow at HRP, some Haitian activists prefer the term "restitution" to "reparations" because the first step towards justice would involve returning stolen resources and artifacts. Many participants emphasized that the recognition of historical harms, as well as of the lasting impacts of enslavement, colonialism, and apartheid, is a crucial first step in any conversation about reparatory justice.

It was noted that the Draft Declaration will seek to determine the scope of state accountability and how to effectively provide resources and value for persons of African descent. Several experts emphasized the importance of drafting an international and Pan-African human rights instrument and suggested that language be included within the Declaration itself to reflect those intentions. Besides the normative implications of the Draft Declaration, the discussions also covered its institutional and diplomatic aspects.

Pastor Murillo, who is a member of the Permanent Forum and works as an independent consultant on the rights of African descendants, spoke on the intellectual genealogy of the Draft Declaration and suggested a pathway towards a better future. "The [Draft] Declaration has its roots in the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, directed by Marcus Garvey, in 1920," Murillo said. "The initial project [of the Draft Declaration] goes beyond just racial discrimination; the Declaration does not pretend to be a new ICERD [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination]. Racism is just one dimension, but the human rights challenges of African descendants transcend that of racial discrimination." According to Murillo, the Draft Declaration, in addressing deeper and enduring structural challenges, should incorporate broader topics such as climate justice,

intergenerational trauma, or gender equality.

When discussing the range of remedies available for people of African descent and reparatory justice, Justin Hansford, law professor and executive director of the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center at Howard University School of Law, posed the question of what constitutes a “people” as a way to lay the groundwork for articulating a legal basis for reparatory justice that emphasizes reparations as a collective right for persons of African descent. In his comments, Hansford primarily relied on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in articulating that basis.

Insights from the expert consultation, as well as smaller community consultations held by Permanent Forum members on the sides of the consultation, helped inform Ambassador Soomer’s subsequent report presented at the Third Session of the Permanent Forum in Geneva, Switzerland, this past spring. Ambassador Soomer described the expert consultation as a great success and that the Permanent Forum must “take it as an opportunity to showcase” the work that brilliant scholars and activists have done on the historical and contemporary human rights challenges faced by people of African descent.



Permanent Forum member Pastor Murillo (right) speaking at the expert consultation. Abadir M. Ibrahim and Ambassador June Soomer are seated on the left.

A Bridge from People to Power

HRP Eleanor Roosevelt Senior Visiting Researcher Victor Madrigal-Borloz's six-year tenure as UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI), which ended on 31 October 2023, was an important intervention in advocacy for the rights of persons facing violence and discrimination based on SOGI. The guiding mission of his time as IE SOGI was to act as a bridge from people to power.

As United Nations Independent Expert, Madrigal-Borloz conducted vital research identifying and addressing the root causes of violence and discrimination based on SOGI; collected the experiences and expertise of key stakeholders on the ground through consultations and country visits; authored numerous joint statements with other UN Special Procedures; and assessed the implementation of existing international human rights instruments with regard to ways to overcome anti-queer hate and violence.

In total, during his tenure Madrigal-Borloz issued 12 thematic reports to the United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council; undertook eight fact-finding country visits; and held hundreds of meetings with state representatives, civil society, and LGBTQ+ persons to gather and amplify their voices



Victor Madrigal-Borloz speaking at the ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Seoul, South Korea, in 2019.

on the international human rights stage. Typically, thematic reports were based on initial research produced at the Human Rights Program and nurtured through expert meetings and consultations held at Harvard and at United Nations headquarters in Geneva and New York; on several occasions, the research team at the Human Rights Program contributed desk research in preparation of fact-finding country visits. Throughout Madrigal-Borloz's tenure, several dozen Harvard students were part of the research teams whose work was ultimately discussed by the international community and has become part of the doctrine of the United Nations human rights architecture. This work has already featured in over 110 academic publications and hundreds of non-academic publications, including newspapers such as the Guardian and the New York Times.



January 2020: Madrigal-Borloz visiting an LGBTQ shelter in Brazil.

Madrigal-Borloz also penned 147 communications to 56 UN Member States regarding individual cases of violence and discrimination based on SOGI and, more recently, he participated in the "LGBTQ+ Rights Under Attack" three-part series in collaboration with the Harvard Divinity School in the 2023 fall term and taught the 2024 spring reading group "Regional Human Rights Law: The Inter-American Perspective". In the 2024 spring, he also supervised a project with the International Human Rights Clinic at the Law School.

To capitalize and build upon this work, Mr. Madrigal-Borloz's visiting fellowship at HRP will be extended for two additional years. Over that period, he will oversee a series of events and conferences that capture substantive, procedural, and institutional developments in preventing violence and discrimination based on SOGI. The thematic focuses will largely coincide with the areas covered in his IE SOGI reports, for example on colonialism or the right to health, with key additions on data collection, intersectionality, and indigenous sexuality, among others.

Lastly, Madrigal-Borloz's extensive travels during his tenure allowed him to meet inspiring individuals and hear their accounts of unwavering resilience in the face of injustice and discrimination. Drawing from these encounters, he is passionate about producing print and audiovisual material featuring compelling stories that are representative of the SOGI experience and give visibility to the struggles of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender-diverse persons.

Human Rights on Both Sides of the Ocean

In June 2024, the HLS Human Rights Entrepreneurs Clinic and HRP hosted a workshop co-organized with the University of Ghana School of Law (UGSoL) exploring human rights in the United States for a group of graduate students, faculty, and staff from UGSoL. Over the course of five days, the workshop participants engaged in interactive lectures, field experiences, and critical discussions to gain a deeper understanding of how international human rights law and advocacy strategies have played out domestically in the US.

The workshop began with an orientation providing historical context on the development of human rights in the US. Instructor Emily Ray, who is a Clinical Fellow at the Human Rights Entrepreneurs Clinic, discussed with the workshop participants how concepts of individual civil rights diverged from collective human rights and the country's complex relationship with international law. Participants learned about the integration—or lack thereof—of international human rights treaties and legal mechanisms into the US system. They also examined the colonialist contradiction between the US role in standard-setting abroad and accountability for violations at home.



Students of the University of Ghana Law School engaging in class discussions during the workshop.

In subsequent days, the workshop participants analyzed key statutes and cases that have advanced human rights litigation in US courts. Experts like HLS Professor Tyler Giannini, former HRP Co-Director and Clinical Director of the Human Rights Entrepreneurs Clinic, outlined the history and limitations of laws like the Alien Tort Statute and Torture Victim Protection Act. The group explored creative lawyering approaches to bring human rights claims through alternative criminal, civil, and administrative frameworks. Focused sessions also allowed deep dives into priority issues like immigration – taught by HLS Professor and Director of the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program Sabrineh Ardalan –, racial justice – led by Justin Hansford, Professor at Howard University and Director of the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center –, and women’s rights – headed by Margaret Drew, Associate Professor at UMass School of Law. Throughout, facilitators encouraged the participants to compare approaches



Margaret Drew engaging with Ghanaian students on the history and present of women’s rights in the United States.

across jurisdictions.

Experiential learning opportunities gave the participants a first-hand look at human rights work in practice. They visited the offices of City Life/Vida Urbana, Greater Boston’s leading grassroots organization for housing justice. A walking tour along Boston’s Black Heritage Trail provided the visitors from Ghana and HLS attendees with historical insights on the anti-slavery and civil rights movements in the US, connecting them to key themes from the workshop’s human rights frameworks. A curated visit to the

Harvard Art Museums allowed participants to closely review certain pieces in the Museum's collection and engage in a discussion of how art can be a tool to advance human rights, including themes such as agency, the power of media, and the role of storytelling in the law.

In their final reflections, workshop participants gained new insights by comparing experiences across jurisdictions and discussing critical perspectives on human rights work. Brainstorming future applications, they identified omissions in US accountability and discussed strategies to strengthen domestic and global human rights. Facilitated by Ray and HRP Associate Director Abadir M. Ibrahim, the workshop concluded with participants identifying things that surprised them within the US human rights landscape, the insights they gained from US human rights work in connection with rights struggles in Ghana, and a discussion of contemporaneous human rights struggles in Ghana.

The workshop followed in the footsteps of HLS Professor Lucie White's longstanding cooperation with the UGSoL. Collaborations like this one between Harvard Law School and the UGSoL are invaluable in expanding participants' cultural and professional horizons on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Community Engagement

In addition to its participation in community initiatives such as the HLS Week of Service, in the 2023-24 academic year HRP hosted a student from the Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, Jennat Jounaidi, for a six-month internship through the School-to-Work program with the Harvard Union of Technical and Clerical Workers. During her time at HRP, Jennat underwent extensive training in PDF accessibility methodologies and standards from Harvard's Digital Accessibility Services. She applied this training by manually tagging and converting digital documents like conference proceedings and working papers available on HRP's website to accessible formats for people with disabilities using screen readers and other assistive technologies.

This effort helped HRP evaluate and strengthen its own practices of inclusive design, set best practices for future use, and train its staff on Harvard University Digital Accessibility Standards. It also provided valuable experience for Jennat, deepening her understanding of how digital barriers can adversely impact marginalized communities and how access to education, employment and services can be improved through proactive accessibility measures. Speaking about her time at HRP, Jennat said: "It became evident through my incredible and enriching experience at HRP that digital accessibility is not merely a technical concern, but a human rights imperative."

Powers of Sovereignty Powers of Paradox

Since its inception in 16th-century Western political discourse, “sovereignty” has remained an elusive concept, often surrounding or at the heart of the most potent political and legal controversies. As the tides of political change shifted, sovereignty has been attributed to, or claimed for, many, including God, monarchs—a notion captured by Louis XIV’s famous line *L’État, c’est moi* (“I am the state”), “We the people”, or countries and sub- or supra-national entities including states, colonial territories and indigenous groups.

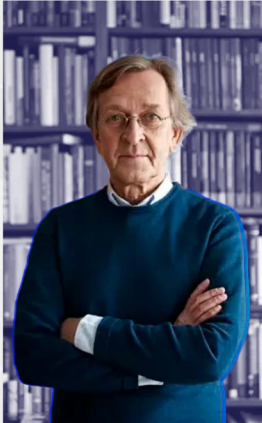
It remains a potent topic today too, oftentimes used on opposite sides of contemporary debates. One may, for example, ask if international trade agreements, such as USMCA (or NAFTA) are powerful expressions of the exercise of sovereignty, or its abridgement? Maybe both at the same time? How and why are different sides of political debates deploying it? What are its implications to legitimacy, authority, and power both domestically and internationally?

It is these difficult questions that Professor Martti Koskenniemi, a leading theorist and practitioner of international law, took on in a talk moderated by HRP Director Gerald L. Neuman. He addressed the variable content that “sovereignty” has received in legal and political history as it has been invoked in order to defend or attack particular arrangements of power. Treating sovereignty as a polemical concept, he pressed the audience to look at the struggles taking place behind contemporary, and historical, political, as well as legal debates on the subject.

Koskenniemi noted that the special power of “sovereignty”, as such, depends on the way it invokes the registers of both description and prescription. As a descriptive notion, it can be used to characterize both the power of a political entity living in complete isolation from others (“sovereignty” as autarky) as well as of an



NOVEMBER 6
12:30 PM ET
WCC 2012 | ZOOM

**Powers of
Sovereignty—
Powers of
Paradox**



Martti Koskenniemi

Lunch will be served. In-person access for HUID holders only.



**Moderated by
Gerald L. Neuman**
Director of HRP and J. Sinclair Armstrong Professor of International, Foreign, and Comparative Law at Harvard Law School

entity completely tied in a web of social relations (“sovereignty” as integration). As a prescriptive notion, it may be made to appear as a summary of all the rights, powers and privileges that a particular status entails (sovereignty as “law”), or as a source from which all legal rights, powers and privileges emanate but which stands itself outside them (sovereignty as “political”, or “sociological” notion).

“

Martti Koskenniemi: *‘Sovereignty’ was surely born out of a desire to understand and explain power, but also to claim, legitimize and challenge power, a tool of analysis and polemics simultaneously.*

”

The talk elucidated how “sovereignty” has been invoked in different contexts as a “limit” concept, one that defends a particular arrangement of power but also transgresses the limits of the technical discourse within which it is invoked, pointing to some other, apparently more “fundamental” discourse that the technical world is expected to accept as given. Offering examples of how the concept has operated in the international legal world, the talk turned to its uses in the historical, sociological and ideological registers.

Koskenniemi ended the talk with a note on the performative significance of “sovereignty”, that is to say, how its stabilization signals the stabilization of a specific pattern of powers, rights and privileges. He invited the audience to imagine sovereignty as a “platform of struggle”, a vocabulary of struggle that “receives a different meaning and becomes hotter or colder” depending on different contexts, places or actors, but which, nonetheless, “gets its most significant meaning in moments of struggle.”

HRP Fellowships

HRP offers an array of fellowships for students interested in human rights work. Senior scholars and practitioners are invited to HRP as visiting fellows during the academic year and engage in research.

Summer 2024 Fellowships

Zoe Olbrys JD'26 is interning with the California Department of Justice in Los Angeles, working with the Civil Rights Enforcement Section to promote and protect federal and state civil and constitutional rights.

Elizabeth (Liz) Poulos JD'25 is working with Global Labor Justice, supporting their labor rights advocacy, international litigation, and multi-union multinational organizing campaigns of garment workers, agricultural workers, and service workers.

Winter 2024 Fellowships

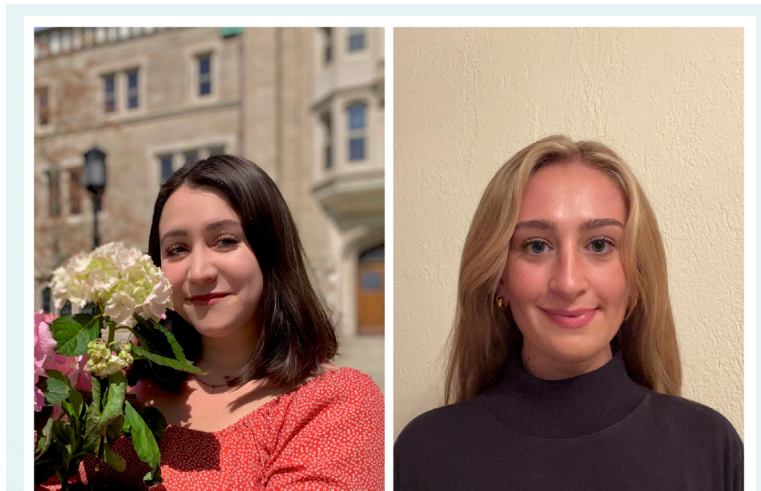
Vanessa Agudelo JD'24 interned with the Legal Resources Centre in Cape Town, South Africa, and supported the centre's mission of using the law to dismantle structural barriers to human rights, particularly in education.

John Rider JD'25 conducted independent research in eastern Uganda, collecting testimony from the Benet Mosopisyek community for a paper assessing the salience of a possible legal case for their repatriation to their ancestral lands.

Post-Graduate Fellowships

2023-24 Henigson Fellow Rebecca Gore LLM '23 has worked with two organizations during her Fellowship: At the Clooney Foundation for Justice's new initiative on Waging Justice for Women, she focused on data-driven strategic litigation and advocacy to reform discriminatory laws against women and promote accountability for gender-based violence in Southern Africa. During the second half of her Fellowship, she has been supporting the work of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

2023-2024 Satter Fellow Aizhan Tilenbaeva LLM '22 is placed at Global Rights Compliance in Ukraine, concentrating her efforts on promoting justice and accountability as part of the project "Support for Mobile Justice Teams."



The 2024 HRP summer fellows, from left to right: Elizabeth Poulos JD'25 and Zoe Olbrys JD'26.

Advancing Gender Equality at Home and Globally

Gender inequality is a widespread challenge deeply affecting women, girls, families, and entire societies in every corner of the world. Whether in relatively wealthy countries or economically disadvantaged ones, global discrimination against women and girls in all their diversity continues to be one of the biggest human rights issues of our era. At the same time, gender- and sex-based discrimination manifests itself in different ways depending on the context, and in all cases, nuanced responses are required to effectively advance gender equality.



As HRP's 2023-24 Henigson Fellow, Rebecca Gore LLM'23 worked with two organizations to tackle discrimination against women both in her home region of Southern Africa and from a global perspective. Based in South Africa, Gore spent the first half of her fellowship with the Waging Justice for Women (WJW) initiative of the Clooney Foundation for Justice (CFJ), while she has been working with the United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women and girls for the second half of the fellowship.

The WJW initiative is CFJ's newest project and aims to fight injustice against women through strategic litigation to reform discriminatory laws and increase accountability for gender-based violence. In this vein, Gore conducted research on the procedures, hurdles, and opportunities

for public interest litigation in South Africa and Malawi.

One of WJW's programmatic pillars is the fight against child marriage. Gore was part of a team that organized and facilitated events where prominent women's rights advocates Amal Clooney, Michelle Obama, Graça Machel, and Melinda French Gates raised awareness about child marriage. Another highlight of her time at WJW was the feminist lawyering training sessions.

The second phase of her fellowship has been a whirlwind of activity with the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls. The Working Group's mandate is to intensify efforts to eliminate

all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Under the supervision of the Working Group Chair Dorothy Estrada-Tanck, Gore has provided research and support for the development of official UN guidance documents and thematic reports on topics ranging from conscientious objection in the context of abortion to the gendered dimensions of the care and support system. She has also been involved in preparing an amicus curiae application in a class action case supported by the Working Group to protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women.

“

I deeply appreciate the Fellowship, which has given me a unique first-hand perspective of how international human rights organizations and UN Special Procedures operate to vindicate the rights of women and girls worldwide.

”

Another highlight for Gore was attending the 40th session of the Working Group at the UN headquarters in New York in May. She got to experience the Working Group in action as it engaged with members of the UN, as well as numerous UN bodies, civil society organizations and academics. In October, the Working Group is scheduled to have its Regional Convening in South Africa, which she is helping to prepare.

“I deeply appreciate the Fellowship, which has given me a unique first-hand perspective of how international human rights organizations and UN Special Procedures operate to vindicate the rights of women and girls worldwide,” said Gore. “It has provided me with valuable strategic insights as an aspirant Advocate/Barrister in South Africa.”



In the Footsteps of Neelan Tiruchelvam

Justice Through Law

In July 2022, images from Sri Lanka captivated the world's attention when thousands of protestors occupied the presidential palace to call for new leadership and an end to the economic crisis. It was not the first time the country was undergoing deep turmoil in recent history: From the 1980s to the late 2000s, Sri Lanka suffered through a civil war that left indelible scars in society.

During the last years of the war, Thyagi Ruwanpathirana, the incoming recipient of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Fellowship administered jointly by Harvard Law School's Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World and the Human Rights Program, was a law student at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, thousands of miles away from her home country.

Spurred by the widespread injustices and violence wrought by war, from 2007 to 2010 Ruwanpathirana used her summer holidays to return to Sri Lanka and volunteer with human rights organizations that were documenting violations of human rights and humanitarian law. As part of her work, she visited internal displacement camps and accessed prisons where journalists were imprisoned using trumped up terror charges. She says she was moved by the experience of working with local organizations who were defending human rights. "From there," says Ruwanpathirana, "I suppose it was only natural that I went on to pursue human rights as a career."



In her current position as one of Amnesty International's South Asia Regional Researchers, Ruwanpathirana dedicates most of her time to working on Sri Lanka. This involves investigating, monitoring, documenting and publishing reports on human rights violations in order to provide expert input on such issues for positive change on the ground. Ruwanpathirana's human rights work ranges from transitional justice-related issues such as enforced disappearances, reparations for conflict related sexual violence, memorialization and counter-terror legislation, to freedom of expression and association.

“When there’s violence and injustice around the world, we’re reminded that there are grounding principles that are codified into laws and practices that are meant to serve as limits to human suffering,” says Ruwanpathirana in response to the question of why she became a human rights lawyer. “I was always keen to explore what those frameworks looked like, and how that theory is applied and practiced in real life.”

Ruwanpathirana is acutely aware of the significance of being the inaugural holder of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Memorial Fellowship. Harvard Law School alumni helped establish the Fellowship in honor of the late Neelan Tiruchelvam LL.M. ’70 S.J.D. ’86, a Sri Lankan human rights activist, legal scholar and politician who was assassinated in 1999. For her, Tiruchelvam embodied non-violence, constitutionalism, and the wielding of law to resolve and prevent conflict.



When there’s violence and injustice around the world, we’re reminded that there are grounding principles that are codified into laws and practices that are meant to serve as limits to human suffering.



“Tiruchelvam’s contribution to the Sri Lankan society lives on in many ways – be it through the institutions he built or the Trust that promotes his human rights work and ideology,” explains Ruwanpathirana. “His voice, like many Tamil legal scholars’ and politicians’ before and after him, is a moderate one that is missed around the topic of meaningful power devolution as a permanent solution to the ethnic question, which has plagued Sri Lanka for the better part of its post-independence history.”

Fifteen years after the end of the war, Sri Lanka is about to embark on a new truth-seeking initiative with the purported aim of supporting reconciliation, with major hurdles to overcome: deep mistrust between affected communities and the state, as well as lack of genuine political will to address past and lingering human rights concerns of the victimized groups. Ruwanpathirana will use her Fellowship to research meaningful pathways to address the existing trust deficit.

For her, the Fellowship is a valuable opportunity for mid-career human rights professionals to take time out of work to engage in academic research and scholarship, which is difficult to juggle with full-time employment in human rights research and activism. Ruwanpathirana states, “The Neelan Tiruchelvam Fellowship will provide me unparalleled access to intellectual resources and the time and space to reflect on and develop ideas around ways forward for truth, justice and accountability in Sri Lanka.”

A Feminist View

Human Rights and Climate Change

Switzerland is known for its humanitarian tradition, its historic stance of neutrality, and its pristine alpine landscapes. But Switzerland, like any other country, has its share of societal injustices as well. For Angela Hefti, the 2024-2025 Visiting Researcher at HRP, it was the plight of asylum seekers in her sleepy village of rural Hasliberg which ignited her interest in human rights.

“Ever since I started studying law, I wanted to dedicate my career to the protection of human rights,” said Hefti. During her legal studies in Fribourg and Lucerne, she volunteered with NGOs like the Spanish Refugee Commission and interned at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). It was at the ICTR that Hefti realized that international criminal law often fails to effectively address gender-based violence. Similarly, LLM studies at Yale Law School and her work as a Visiting Professional at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights exposed her to the challenges in dealing with gender-based violence through human rights law. Motivated to solve these issues, she wrote her doctoral dissertation on femicide as a human rights violation.



Like many justice-oriented lawyers of her generation, climate change is a major issue for Hefti. Through previous experience engaging with the European Court of Human Rights, she became involved in the KlimaSeniorinnen case, the first ever climate case decided by the Court. “Working on this case drew my attention to the fact that climate change disproportionately affected certain groups, such as the plaintiffs who were elderly women,” explained Hefti.

At HRP, Hefti aims to combine her passions and apply a feminist lens to the intersection of climate change and human rights. Specifically, finding innovative ways to overcome challenges in climate litigation through a feminist perspective is at the focus of her current research. Several recent favorable

judicial rulings, including in the cases *KlimaSeniorinnen* in Europe and *Held v. Montana*, show that climate litigation is a promising strategy to pursue.

"I hope that my academic work can influence both academic discourse and practical legal approaches to address the climate crisis," said Hefti. Current projects of hers include an article co-written with HRP Director Abadir M. Ibrahim about climate change and human rights from an African perspective and a collaboration around an intersectional health-centric approach to climate litigation with Aminta Ossom from the HLS International Human Rights Clinic.



While climate change rightfully receives much of society's attention, international human rights are crucial to respond to a global issue like climate change.



Even prior to her time as Visiting Researcher at HRP, Hefti was no stranger to academic centers of human rights scholarship. From 2015 to 2017, she was the Associate Director of the Lucerne Academy for Human Rights Implementation. Similar to the Lucerne Academy, the strength of HRP is to bring together cutting-edge scholars to jumpstart new inquiries about human rights. "The vibrant academic community at HRP and the wider Law School has provided me with exceptional opportunities to receive advice and input from some of the world's leading human rights experts, including the HRP Director, Prof. Gerald Neuman, and Prof. Tyler Giannini, Director of the Human Rights Entrepreneurs Clinic," said Hefti. In a next step, she hopes to leverage her time at HRP as a steppingstone in her academic career to become a law professor teaching human rights and climate change.

"For many young people, the time in college is crucial in shaping their understanding of the most pressing challenges of today; I hope that courses on climate change will soon be seen as integral to any college and legal education," stated Hefti. "While climate change rightfully receives much of society's attention, international human rights are crucial to respond to a global issue like climate change. We need to view them as indispensable to solve the climate crisis."



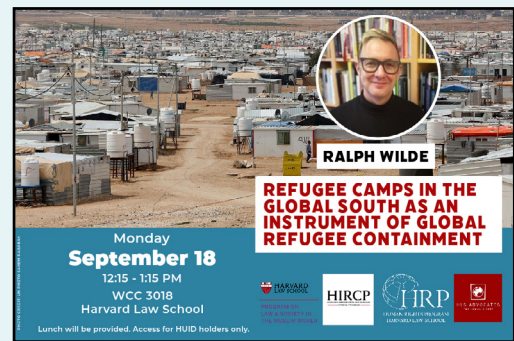
HRP Events

HRP organized and co-sponsored a number of events in 2023-2024. Our partners have included Harvard research programs and student organizations, the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and research programs at other leading universities. Below is a selection of HRP events from the year.



On September 5, HRP, the Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World, and the Human Rights Entrepreneurs Clinic hosted Bonita Meyersfeld, Associate Professor at Wits Law School, to present her paper "Shifting the Sands: When Do Corporations have Positive Duties to Fulfill Socio-Economic Rights?"

Professor Ralph Wilde of UCL and UCLA presented on his argument that approaches calling for host state integration of long-term camp refugees ignore the connection between containment in camps, global containment, and how international law enables the latter at a HLS discussion in September 2023.



Moderated by Vanessa Tsehaye and featuring panelists Fisseha Tekle, Abadir Ibrahim, and Rita Kahsay, a panel co-organized by Amnesty International and HRP explored the devastating impacts and causes of the persistent cycle of impunity in Ethiopia for grave human rights violations and possible solutions.

Moderator Adrienne Fricke was joined by Sudanese experts including Nasredeen Abdulbari, Yousra Elbagir, Kholood Khair, and Mutasim Ali on September 26 for a discussion on current conflict developments in Sudan challenging democratic transformation and human rights since the 2019 revolution and 2021 coup.



HRP Events

Affirmative Action after SFFA
Is the US in Violation of International Human Rights Law?
September 28
12:30 pm ET
WCC 2004 / Zoom
Lunch will be served to in-person attendees (HUID holders only).

Panelists: Gerald L. Neuman, E. Tendayi Achiume, Justin Hansford, Gay McDougall, Guy-Uriel Charles

Logos: HRP, Houston Institute, FXB Center, Harvard Law School, International Human Rights Clinic

On September 28 at HLS, a panel including Guy-Uriel Charles, Gay McDougall, E. Tendayi Achiume, and Justin Hansford and moderator Gerald Neuman analyzed whether the US Supreme Court’s SFFA decision invalidating affirmative action violates international human rights law and its practical implications.

Presenter Afsaneh Rigot and moderator Kendra Albert conversed about Rigot’s Design from the Margins methodology for centering marginalized users in the technology design process and her related advocacy and research with queer communities in the MENA region.

AFSANEH RIGOT
DESIGN FROM THE MARGINS:
JUSTICE INFORMED TECH AND MENA LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

Tuesday October 3
12:15 - 1:15 PM
WCC 3016
Harvard Law School

Logos: Harvard Law School, Program on Law & Society in the Muslim World, Cyberlaw Clinic, HRP

The Resurgence of Child Labor and the Rights of the Child in the United States

Panelists: Gerald Neuman (Moderator), Benjamin Dawit Mezmur, Terri Gerstein, Benjamin Smith

October 17
12:15pm ET
Zoom

Logos: HRP, HUCTW, Center for Labor & a Just Economy, Health Advocacy & Policy Lab

On October 17, Terri Gerstein, Benjamin Smith, Benyam Dawit Mezmur, and moderator Gerald Neuman discussed the disturbing rise in US child labor violations, state efforts to weaken protections, the need for strong legal frameworks based on international standards, and implications for human rights.

At an HRP coffee talk, Judge Parra Vera presented on Colombia’s Special Jurisdiction for Peace with moderator Alicia Ely Yamin, providing context on its six years of functioning, public hearings’ role in restorative justice for conflict victims, and specific cases of “false positives” handled.

OCTOBER 24, 10:00 AM ET
WCC 3016
A Conversation with Judge Oscar Parra Vera
Colombia’s Special Jurisdiction for Peace: Advances and Challenges in Transitional Justice

Refreshments will be served. Access for HUID holders only.

Moderated by Alicia Ely Yamin

Logos: HRP, La Marzaca, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies

HRP Events

OCTOBER 27, 12:15 PM ET
ROOM 202, 23 EVERETT ST

DOE V. CISCO

DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS LITIGATION AND CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY IN U.S. COURTS

Lunch will be served. Access for HUID holders only.




The Human Rights Entrepreneurs Clinic and HRP hosted Paul Hoffman, the litigator in Doe v. Cisco, for a lunch discussion about the recent 9th Circuit decision allowing claims against Cisco for its role in China's Golden Shield system to proceed under the ATS, and its implications for future human rights litigation.

On November 11, distinguished international law scholar Martti Koskenniemi, Professor Emeritus at the University of Helsinki and Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School, examined the variable concept of "sovereignty" and its uses to both defend and attack arrangements of power throughout legal and political history.

NOVEMBER 6, 12:30 PM ET
WCC 2012 | ZOOM

Powers of Sovereignty— Powers of Paradox

Martti Koskenniemi

Lunch will be served. Access for HUID holders only.



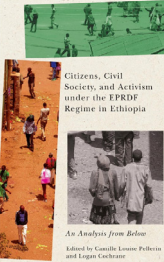
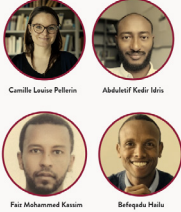

Moderated by **Gerald L. Neuman**, Director of HRP and J. Sinclair Armstrong Professor of International, Foreign, and Comparative Law at Harvard Law School.

Join the Human Rights Program for a book launch of:

Citizens, Civil Society, and Activism under the EPRDF Regime in Ethiopia

Edited by Camille Louise Pellerin and Logan Cochrane

11.16.23
 12:30 pm ET | 8:30 pm Addis
 Zoom

Cosponsored by Harvard Law School and Program on Law & Society in the Muslim World.

HRP hosted a book launch and panel discussion on "Citizens, Civil Society, and Activism under the EPRDF Regime in Ethiopia" featuring book editor Camille Pellerin, Abduletif Kadir Idris, Befeqadu Hailu, and Faiz Mohammed Kassim, moderated by Abadir M. Ibrahim.

Victor Madrigal-Borloz presented his recent report and discussed global dynamics related to assaults on LGBTQI+ rights and freedom of religion with Susie Hayward at Harvard Law School, moderated by Diane Moore on November 16.

LGBTQ+ Rights Under Attack: The Weaponization of Free Speech and Religious Freedom | Special Series

Protecting Against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: A Global Perspective

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16
 5:30-7:00 PM
 CSWR Common Room (HDS Campus)

Victor Madrigal-Borloz will present on the "Report of the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity," which he released in June 2023. In conversation with Susie Hayward, he will share his perspective on the global dynamics and trends related to the assault on LGBTQI+ Rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief, and how they are feeding in and out of what's taking place in the United States. Dinner will be provided.

VICTOR MADRIGAL-BORLOZ, Lecturer on Law and the Boston Review's Senior Visiting Researcher at the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program.

SUSIE HAYWARD, Associate Director for the Religious Liberty and the Professions Initiative and former senior advisor for Religion and Inclusive Societies at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Moderated by Diane L. Moore, Associate Dean of Religion and Public Life.



HRP Events

02.08.24
04:00 pm EST
Zoom

Book launch event:
Impeachment in a Global Context: Law, Politics, and Comparative Practice
Edited by Chris Monaghan, Matthew Flinders and Aziz Z. Huq

Cosponsored by
ACLS
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNERS SOCIETY

In February 2024, HRP hosted the book launch of “Impeachment in a Global Context: Law, Politics, and Comparative Practice” featuring panelists Chris Monaghan, Imelda Deinla, and Aziz Z. Huq discussing impeachment processes around the world, moderated by Gerald L. Neuman.

Moderated by Omar Abdel-Ghaffar, on February 14 Nader Andrawos expounded on his analysis of the emergence of the Egyptian human rights lawyering movement and the use of strategic litigation as a tool of human rights advocacy in Egypt.

Strategic Litigation in Egypt: Lawyers as Human Rights Advocates

Nader Andrawos
Residential Fellow
Institute for Global Law and Policy
Harvard Law School

Omar Abdel-Ghaffar
(moderator)
HLS JD'25
History PhD candidate

Wednesday, February 14
12:15-1:15 pm, WCC 3007

EVENT: Canada Program Seminar

Hate and Harm: Rethinking Dignity, Dissent & Equality in Canadian Law

DATE: Tuesday, February 27, 2024
TIME: 12 pm to 1:30 pm
LOCATION: CGIS Knafel, K262, Bowie Vernon Room, 1737 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

SPEAKER
Pearl Eliadis
Associate Professor,
Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University

CHAIR
Antonia Maioni
William Lyon Mackenzie King
Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies, Canada Program, Weatherhead Center

Pearl Eliadis of McGill University discussed the impacts of the Supreme Court of Canada’s 2021 Ward v Quebec decision on dissent rights, equality, and dignity at an event chaired by Antonia Maioni and cosponsored by HRP.

Afroz Maghzi Najafabadi joined moderator Salma Waheedi for a discussion on the role of Iranian women’s rights lawyers in fighting for gender justice through the courts under authoritarianism and discrimination.

Litigating for Justice: Women's Rights Lawyering in Iran

Afroz Maghzi
Visiting Fellow,
Harvard Law School

Salma Waheedi (moderator)
Executive Director, PLSMW
Harvard Law School

Wednesday, February 28
12:15-1:15 pm, WCC 3007

HRP Events

The United Nations and the Question of Palestine
 Rules by Law and the Structure of International Legal Subalternity
 Ardi Imseis

The United Nations and the Question of Palestine
Ardi Imseis
 Assistant Professor of Law,
 Queen's University

Zeina Jallad (moderator)
 Resident Fellow, Institute
 for Global Law and Policy,
 Harvard Law School

Tuesday, March 5, 12:15-1:15 pm, WCC 1019

Moderated by Zeina Jallad, Ardi Imseis introduced his new book about Palestine at the UN which critically assesses tensions between the organization's position and international law based on the author's experience as a UN official in Palestine for over a decade.

HRP hosted a discussion on the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent featuring a panel with Justin Hansford, Pastor Elías Murillo Martínez, Michael McEachrane, and June Soomer exploring historical legacies, contemporary challenges, and innovative solutions surrounding the rights of individuals of African descent worldwide.

The UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent: A Spotlight

March 6, 12:15pm ET
 Pound Hall - 102 / Zoom

Lunch will be served.

Justin Hansford, June Soomer, Epsy Campbell Barr, Michael McEachrane, Pastor Elías Murillo Martínez

What Road Lies Ahead?
Accountability, Justice, and Human Rights Advocacy in Iran

Janan Iranbomy, Payam Akhavan, Afroz Maghzi
 (moderator)

March 27 12:15 pm | WCC 1023 | HLS Campus

On March 27, Payam Akhavan, Afroz Maghzi, and moderator Janan Iranbomy explored the role of law and legal advocacy for justice, accountability, and human rights in Iran in the context of the 2022 uprising and ongoing rights violations, drawing on decades of advocacy experience on Iran and global justice issues.

Cosponsored by HRP, on March 28 the Human Rights Journal organized their annual symposium about the Environment and Human Rights featuring panels on international climate negotiations, business and human rights, climate litigation, climate migration, and indigenous rights and the environment.

HARVARD HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNAL

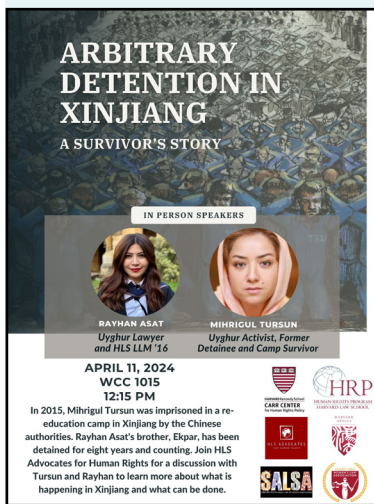
Symposium on the Environment and Human Rights

HRP Events



An international symposium organized by HRP on March 29th explored African perspectives on international climate change law through panels on African state participation in shaping international law, common but differentiated responsibilities, adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and human rights and climate change.

With the support of HRP, the Roma Program at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights organized a conference exploring state violence against racialized groups by examining its origins and manifestations across the world, and the concept of “ungrievable lives” with a keynote by Cornel West.



On April 11, HRP cosponsored a discussion with Mihrigul Tursun, who was imprisoned in a Xinjiang re-education camp, and Rayhan Asat, whose brother has been detained for 8 years, to learn more about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and what can be done.

Cosponsored by HRP, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies organized a panel series on “Predatory Extractivism: Brazil’s Largest Mining Catastrophes In A Global Context” scrutinizing the 2015 Samarco and 2019 Vale dam collapses in Minas Gerais, their ongoing impacts, and fight for justice and safety.



HRP Events

From Ownership to Partnership: Rethinking the Theory of Marriage in Islamic Law

Havva Guney-Ruebenacker
Lecturer on Law, Harvard Law School

Salma Waheedi (moderator)
Executive Director, Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World, Harvard Law School

Wednesday, April 17
12:15-1:15 pm, WCC 3007

In a presentation on April 17, attendees had a chance to hear Havva Guney-Ruebenacker discuss her work critiquing traditional Islamic theories of unequal marriage, proposing a new egalitarian theory, and offering reforms to achieve women's equality in divorce and post-divorce rights under Islamic law.

A lunch panel organized by HRP explored the landmark European Court of Human Rights climate case that established government inaction can violate rights, featuring experts Aminta Ossom, Angela Hefti, and Tyler Giannini, moderated by Jessie Hsia LLM '24

CASE UPDATE

Climate Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

April 18
12:15 pm ET
Hauser Hall
Jackson 105

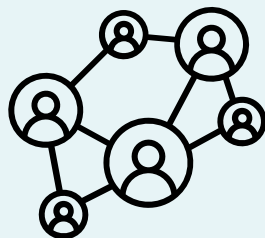
Jessie Hsia, Aminta Ossom, Angela Hefti, Tyler Giannini

HRP on the Web - 2023/2024



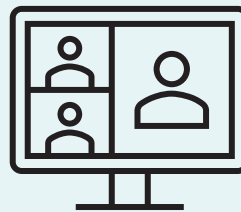
39,000

new website users



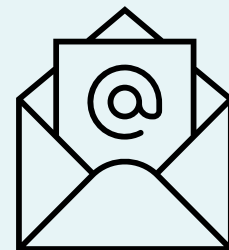
37,000

social media followers



5,500

online event audience



3,500

email subscribers

Speaking and Other Engagements

Angela Hefti

Presentation "Preventing Climate Risks under Human Rights Law: An Ecofeminist Approach"
at VSRE Spring Colloquium Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA, February 8, 2024

Panel respondent to Samrawit Damtew, "Critical Analysis of International Accountability Mechanisms for Climate Change induced Child Rights Violations in Africa"
at Doctoral Colloquium, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, May 16, 2024

Abadir M. Ibrahim

Expert panel member on "An Assessment of the Cessation of Hostilities in light of ICHREE Findings"
at conference "Ethiopia: One Year after the Pretoria Agreement" hosted by Amnesty International, Open Society Foundations and Refugees International, October 31, 2023

Interview on elite disagreement and national narratives in Ethiopia
on Deutsche Welle, December 30, 2023

Interview for article "Hushed Hopes, Growing Doubts"
in the Reporter Magazine, January 3, 2024

Interview for article "In-depth: Experts highlight outstanding issues as Ethiopia takes a step towards transitional justice"
in Addis Standard, February 23, 2024

Expert panel member on "Facets of State Violence across the Globe"
at "12th Annual Roma Conference: Confronting State Violence across the Globe", April 5, 2024

Expert panel member
at expert roundtable "Journalism and the Politics of Narrating African Suffering: An Expert Roundtable", April 25, 2024

Opening speaker
at the Commemoration of the 30th Kwibuka anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide at Harvard Law School, April 16, 2024

Interview for article "How much will transitional justice transform Ethiopia?"
in BBC Amharic, May 6, 2024

Interview for article "What are the impacts of the Prime Minister's speech rights activists say is 'concerning?'"
in BBC Amharic, July 6, 2024

Victor Madrigal-Borloz

Presentation

at Harvard Divinity School, Massachusetts, USA, November 16, 2023

Kennedy Lecture

at Trent University Law School, Ontario, Canada, February 7, 2024

Lecture

at Occidental College, Pasadena, California, March 25, 2024

Presentation

at the Conference "The Violence of Gender Essentialism: How Law Determines the Health of Gender-Diverse People," Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA, April 24, 2024

Keynote address

at the University of The Philippine, Manila, the Philippines, April 16, 2024

Keynote address

at the Social Forum of the Asian Development Bank, Manila, the Philippines, April 17, 2024

Presentation

at the Turkish Human Rights Foundation Conference on Human Rights Defenders, Istanbul, April 20, 2024

Gerald L. Neuman

Moderation of talk "The Place of Protest and the European Convention on Human Rights" by Kirsty Hughes

at Harvard Law School, Cambridge, October 20, 2023

Interview in article "Immigration roars back in headlines. Time finally come for reforms?"

in Harvard Gazette, February 1, 2024

Moderation of panel "Climate Migration: Displacement in the Age of Climate Change"

at Harvard Human Rights Journal Symposium on the Environment and Human Rights on March 28, 2024

Adviser and discussant, "Fourth Restatement of the Foreign Relations Law of the United States"

by American Law Institute, Chicago, April 19, 2024

Interview in article "Reexamining the Insular Cases. Again."
in Harvard Law Bulletin, May 3, 2024

Panelist on discussion "Immigration: Current Controversies"
by Harvard Law School Association of Massachusetts, June 12, 2024

Coursework by HRP Members

Professor Neuman was on leave in the 2023 fall term and taught advanced classes on immigration law and human rights treaty bodies at HLS in the 2024 spring term. As in the previous years, HRP Senior Visiting Researcher Madrigal-Borloz taught a course on regional human rights law.

HRP Courses and Reading Groups, 2023-2024

Regional Human Rights Law: The Inter-American Perspective

(Victor Madrigal-Borloz, Spring 2024 Reading Group)

Human Rights in the UN Treaty Bodies

(Gerald Neuman, Spring 2024 Course)

Immigration Law

(Gerald Neuman, Spring 2024 Course)

HRP Publications

Journal Articles & Book Chapters

Angela Hefti, "Intersectional Victims as Agents of Change in International Human Rights-Based Climate Litigation", *Transnational Environmental Law* (2024).

Angela Hefti, Hannah van Kolschooten, and Aminta Ossom, "A Health-Centric Intersectional Approach to Climate Litigation at the European Court of Human Rights", *Harvard Human Rights Journal* (2024).

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Angela Hefti, "Intersectionality and Standing in Climate-Related Human Rights Cases", *Harvard Human Rights Reflections* (Apr. 22, 2024).

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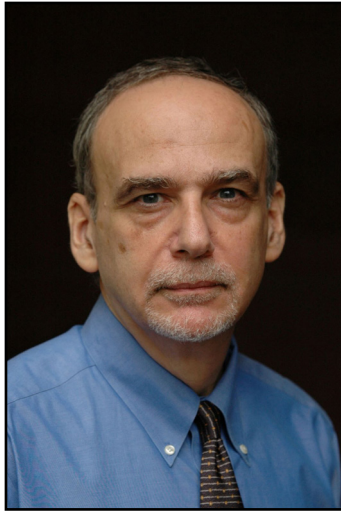
Fresh perspectives on human rights: *Harvard Human Rights Reflections*

Since HRP's launch of *Harvard Human Rights Reflections* in 2023, thousands of readers have accessed the site to read fresh perspectives on human rights issues. The most recent contributions include *Prospects and Obstacles of Strategic Human Rights Litigation Globally: A Spotlight on Egypt* (by Ariq Hatibie, March 2024) and *Intersectionality and Standing in Climate-Related Human Rights Cases* (by Angela Hefti, April 2024).

In his *Reflections* text, Hatibie discusses the presentation by Nader Andrawos, Egyptian legal historian and Residential Fellow at the HLS Institute for Global Law and Policy, about human rights litigation in Egyptian courts. Hefti, who is a Visiting Researcher at HRP, analyzes the ramifications of the landmark case *Verein KlimaSeniorinnen and Others v. Switzerland*, in which the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Switzerland had violated human rights through its climate inaction.



Faculty and Staff 2023-2024



Gerald L. Neuman

**Director, Human Rights Program, and J. Sinclair Armstrong
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Neuman teaches human rights, constitutional law, and immigration and nationality law. His current research focuses on international human rights law, immigration law, and rights of foreign nationals. He is the editor of "Human Rights in a Time of Populism" (Cambridge University Press, 2020), and co-author of the casebook "Human Rights" (with Louis Henkin et al., Foundation Press, 2009). Prior to joining HLS in 2006, he served on the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania Law School (1984-1992) and Columbia Law School (1992-2006). From 2011 to 2014, he was a member of the UN Human Rights Committee.



Abadir M. Ibrahim, J.S.D.

Associate Director, Human Rights Program

Ibrahim plays a substantive and managerial role in innovating and implementing academic activities, including the speaker series, conferences, and HRP's various fellowships. He is the co-editor of "Righting Human Rights through Legal Reform: Ethiopia's Contemporary Experience" (Addis Ababa Univ., 2020) and of "Between Failure and Redemption: The Future of the Ethiopian Social Contract" (Northwestern Univ., 2022). Before joining the HRP, he was the Head of the Secretariat for the Legal and Justice Affairs Advisory Council where he was engaged in pro-democracy and pro-rights justice sector reform work in Ethiopia. His current research analyzes the evolution of human rights as impacted by Africa's (post)colonial, religious and traditional heritages under the rubric of African approaches to human rights.



Kai Mueller

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Prior to joining the Human Rights Program, Mueller worked, studied and lived in Rwanda, Morocco and Germany. His experience includes working as Political and Economic Advisor at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and English Education Volunteer with the U.S. Peace Corps in Rwanda. He also has experience working for Oxfam, Ecologic Institute, the Environmental Policy Research Institute of the Free University in Berlin, the Headquarters of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington D.C. He currently is an ALM candidate in sustainability at the Harvard Extension School.

Research Assistants 2023-2024

Harvard Law School students hired by HRP as research assistants to HRP Eleanor Roosevelt Senior Visiting Researcher and UN Independent Expert for SOGI Victor Madrigal-Borloz have been instrumental in supporting his UN mandate by conducting research and compiling reports for the UN General Assembly or Human Rights Council.



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Notes

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