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Center News/Faculty and Staff Updates

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CENTER NEWS/FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATES

CENTER NEWS

OPENING THE FLOODGATES ON A FINITE RESOURCE: THE IMPLICATIONS OF A HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER

The United Nations recently declared the years 2005 to 2015 the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life." In honor of this new decade of water, the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, together with the Sustainable Development Law & Policy (SDLP) Publication, presented a conference exploring the debate surrounding a human right to water. The first session explored whether there is a human right to water. Speakers included Salman Salman, Lead Counsel of the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development and International Law Group of the World Bank Legal Vice Presidency; Karin Krchnak, Director, International Water Policy at The Nature Conservancy; and Steven Tullberg, an attorney advocating for international indigenous rights. The second panel discussed water conflicts and their implications for a human right to water. Panelists included Reid Chambers, Partner at Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Enderson, and Perry, LLP; Marcos Orellana, Senior Attorney, Center for International Environmental Law; and Professor Frederick Lorenz, Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle. The keynote speaker, Former U.S. Ambassador John McDonald, focused his remarks on the new International Decade for Action.

OUTSOURCING TORTURE: THE LEGALITY OF EXTRAORDINARY RENDITIONS

In March, the Center organized a panel on extraordinary rendition. The United States has recently acknowledged its use of extraordinary rendition, a practice in which the U.S. government sends terrorism sus-

pects to third countries for interrogation. Victims of rendition are often held in harsh conditions and subjected to torture and abuse during interrogations. Panelists included Morton Sklar, Executive Director of the World Organization for Human Rights USA; Elisa Massimino, Director of the Washington, D.C. Office of Human Rights First; and Dr. Katie Donnelly, Office of U.S. Representative Edward Markey. Mr. Sklar focused on the case of Ahmed Abu Ali, an American student who was detained in Saudi Arabia and subjected to torture before being returned to the United States. Mr. Sklar's organization, with the assistance of two law students from WCL, Sheku Sheikholeslami and Sapna Lalmalani, represented Mr. Abu Ali during his detention. Ms. Massimino and Ms. Donnelly focused



Center Executive Director Hadar Harris (at podium) with panelists Karin Krchnak, The Nature Conservancy; Salman Salman, Lead Counsel, the World Bank; and Indigenous Rights Lawyer Steven Tullerg (left to right).

on the legal framework for rendition and torture as well as pending legislation, which seeks to restrict this practice.

ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS' EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT ON IMMIGRATION

In an effort to help students cultivate new perspectives on human rights at home, the Center, together with the WCL student organization Action for Human Rights, co-sponsored an Experiential Learning Project (ELP) on Immigration. Experiential

Learning Projects seek to take students out of the classroom and enable them to visit and meet with stakeholders from all sides of an issue. The projects are student-led and organized in collaboration with the Center. The Immigration ELP focused on current immigration reform and sought to introduce students to different perspectives on the legislative, social, and economic issues of immigration in the post-9/11 United States. As part of the project, WCL students visited CASA of Maryland, where they learned about immigrants in the workforce and the challenges they face, and the Federation for American Immigration Reform. The students also participated in a Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition detention center visit, in which they performed intakes for immigrant detainees.

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK: THE ENVIRONMENT OF IMPUNITY FOR THE FEMICIDES IN CIUDAD JUAREZ AND CIUDAD CHIHUAHUA

A group of twelve WCL students traveled over Spring Break to Ciudad Juarez and Ciudad Chihuahua on a seven-day delegation with the Mexico Solidarity Network to explore the ongoing murders and disappearances of women in the region. The delegation focused on various forms of grassroots advocacy, the gov-

ernmental response, and the economic context that perpetuates violence against women. The WCL group sought to identify specific ways in which they might use their legal training and international pressure to aid families seeking redress in these two cities.

For many participants, the defining moment of the trip was visiting David Mesa, a Chihuahua resident who was imprisoned based on his confession (extracted under torture) to murdering his cousin, Neyra Cervantes. This case highlights many of the pressing legal problems in

Chihuahua, Mexico. The WCL student group agreed to write a letter on his behalf to send to the President of the Supreme Court of Mexico. They are also exploring other options for activism, including working through WCL's International Human Rights Law Clinic.

RENE CASSIN MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Washington College of Law students Sarah Grimmer, Charisa Tak, and Lynne Montgomery left for Strasbourg, France, at the end of March to compete in the Rene Cassin Human Rights Moot Court Competition. The students worked all year long to prepare for this moot court competition, conducted entirely in French. The team's coach was International Legal Studies Program alumnus Henri Manga-Bell. WCL is one of only two law schools from the United States to compete in this prestigious competition.

MUNCHING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS COFFEE HOUR

The Center concluded its monthly "Munching on Human Rights" Speaker Series with a presentation by Professor Brenda Smith entitled, "Using International Law in Domestic Human Rights Advocacy." Previous sessions this semester featured Professor Robert Goldman, who spoke about humanitarian law, and Professor Claudia Martín, who presented an overview of the regional human rights systems. "Munching on Human Rights" is a program designed to educate and engage students about basic issues in international human rights and humanitarian law. The Center also continued to support and participate in weekly Action for Human Rights coffee hours, which provide opportunities for students, faculty, and staff interested in human rights issues to meet, make announcements, and share fair trade coffee and bagels before class.

NEW PROGRAM COORDINATOR AT THE CENTER: INTRODUCING ANCA PUSCA

The Center is pleased to welcome Anca Pusca as its new Program Coordinator.

Ms. Pusca's previous work includes consulting positions with the Open Society Institute and the International Research and Exchanges Board. She is currently finishing her doctoral dissertation at the American University School of International Service.

THE CENTER'S NEW 2005 STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

The Center has selected its new seven-member Student Advisory Board (SAB) for 2005. The new members of the SAB are Lauren Bartlett, Tim Curry, Christian De Vos, Rebecca Geller, Theresa Harris Goodman, Craig Hickien, and Olivia Mutambo. This is the first year that an LLM student is represented on the Board. The



2005 Rene Cassin Team (Sarah Grimmer, Charisa Tak, and Lynne Montgomery) in Strasbourg

SAB is a group of highly qualified, creative students committed to human rights advocacy. SAB members volunteer their time with the Center to participate in the planning and implementation of Center programming, learn tangible skills for effective advocacy and activism, and attend special events and receptions.

FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATES

Robert Goldman, Professor of Law at WCL and Co-Director of the Center, was quoted on March 12, 2005, in the Spanish daily newspaper *El País* and an English edition included in the *International Herald Tribune* in a story entitled "Experts engage with the public in an Antocha station summit." Professor Goldman was also quoted by the *Agence France-Press* in a report on a statement released by 15 UN human rights experts, including Professor Goldman, calling for

urgent action to end serious abuses in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Claudio Grossman, Dean of WCL and Co-Director of the Center, was quoted in a number of Spanish newspapers regarding the Argentinean President's declaration in his State of the Union address that he would abide by the recommendations of Dean Grossman's final report on the Argentine Israelite Mutual Aid Association (AMIA) trial, regarding the bombing of a Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires. He was also interviewed by *America's Magazine*, the official publication of the OAS, regarding his final report on the trial. On March 2, 2005, Dean Grossman addressed a group of Mexican Human Rights Commission workers on the future of the Inter-American Human Rights System as part of a Special Course for State Representatives about the Utilization of the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights. The course was organized by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. Dean Grossman also spoke on the protection of the Inter-American Human Rights System, made two presentations about the challenges of globalization at the *Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina*, and was the keynote speaker in a conference on International Disability Rights at the Library of Congress.

Hadar Harris, Executive Director of the Center, made two trips to Botswana at the request of the United Nations Development Programme to advise the Government of Botswana's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Treaty Implementation on the drafting of its upcoming report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. During her two visits to the country, she worked directly with the Drafting Committee (made up of senior representatives from the Office of the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Attorney General's Chambers), held two workshops with government and NGO stakeholders, and facilitated an information-gathering process to provide input for the drafting of the final report. In addition to her work in Botswana, Ms. Harris recently published an article

for the American Society for International Law's Insight on Comparative Assessment Tools for Women's Human Rights. Finally, Ms. Harris performed in a joint student-faculty production of the *Vagina Monologues*, sponsored by WCL's Women's Law Association.

Diane Orentlicher, Professor of Law at WCL and Co-Director of the Center, was a keynote speaker at a conference at Cardozo Law School on "The Nuremberg Trials: A Reappraisal and Their Legacy" on March 28, 2005. On March 31, she participated in a panel discussion on the International Criminal Court following an address by its President, Philippe Kirsch, at the headquarters of the Organization for American States. In February, the United Nations published the updated Set of Principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity and its accompanying report, prepared by Professor Orentlicher in her capacity as Independent Expert (UN Doc. E/CN.4/2005/102 and Addendum). On March 17, 2005, *Agence France-Press* reported on a statement released by 15 UN human rights experts, including Professor Orentlicher, calling for urgent action to end serious abuses in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón, Professorial Lecturer in Residence and Co-Director of the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, presented a lecture entitled "Colombia 2005: A Historical and Political Overview in a Human Rights Perspective" at an *Avocats Sans Frontières Québec* (ASFQ) training seminar on February 26, 2005, in Montreal, Canada. On November 30, 2004, Professor Rodríguez-Pinzón participated in a panel discussion, "Incorporating Human Rights Values in Educational Institutions in Countries of the Middle East," sponsored by the John Hopkins University. *CNN in Spanish* interviewed Professor Rodríguez-Pinzón on March 28, 2005, regarding the U.S. Supreme Court hearings in the case of *Medellin v. Dretke*, which concerns the decision of the International Court of Justice in *Avena et al.* and the current developments in the United States on the implementation of specific obligations of the Vienna

Convention on Consular Relations. *CNN in Spanish* also interviewed him on October 6, 2004, regarding the U.S. Supreme Court and the importance of new nominees in the current presidential elections, focusing on the possibility of the appointment of the first Hispanic justice, and on October 20, 2004, regarding the importance and potential impact of litigation and judicial action in the 2004 U.S. elections. Professor Rodríguez-Pinzón is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Revista Iberoamericana de Derechos Humanos* (Ibero-American Human Rights Law Journal), a member of the Advisory Committee for the Kenan Institute's Human Rights and Trade Partnership project of the Kenan-Flagler Business School of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professor Rodríguez-Pinzón also contributes as a Correspondent for the Americas to the British publication *Butterworths Human Rights Cases*, a multi-volume series that reports on recent human rights cases around the world, and to the prestigious international law journal *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* by reporting periodically on the Inter-American Human Rights System.

Susana SáCouto, Director of the War Crimes Research Office and adjunct professor at WCL, delivered a presentation on "Pattern Evidence of Sexual Violence as Evidence of Genocidal Intent" at a panel convened by the Women's Law Association on "Rape as a Tool of War" on April 11, 2004. She was also invited to participate and deliver a presentation on the Serious Crimes Process in East Timor at the "International Symposium on UN Peacekeeping Operations in Post-Conflict Timor-Lest: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned" that convened in Dili on April 27-29.

Herman Schwartz, Professor of Law at WCL and Co-Director of the Center, spoke on constitutional developments and constitution building in post-Communist Eastern Europe and elsewhere to a group of Chinese law professors. He also moderated a panel on Reporters Privilege for the InterAmerican Press Association on April 19. Finally, Professor Schwartz has continued to research and write on filibusters.

Rick Wilson, Professor of Law at WCL and Co-Director of the Center, spoke at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law on March 31, 2005, on a panel entitled "Domestic and International Developments Relating to the Death Penalty." Also in March, Professor Wilson was a trainer in "The Clinical Method of Legal Education in International Human Rights" at Iberoamericana University, Mexico City, Mexico, and in February he was a participant in the Open Society Justice Initiative and Public Interest Law Initiative's "Second Regional Conference on Access to Justice" in Budapest, Hungary. Professor Wilson spoke at the Hull University Faculty of Law, Hull, England, in February 2005 on "The Guantánamo Detainees: Law as It Is and Law as It Should Be"; in January 2005 to the American Society of International Law on "Developments in the Trials of Argentine Military Officers in the Spanish Courts"; and was a consultant and speaker with WCL's delegation to the Bilgi University Law Faculty in Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2004. Professor Wilson was a guest on WAMU's the *Kojo Nnamdi Show* on March 7, 2005, where he discussed the Supreme Court's decision holding that the execution of juveniles is unconstitutional, and he was interviewed by *Efe* about President Bush's request for a review of all the cases involving Mexican citizens on death row in Texas on March 8, 2005.

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