
PROLOGUE

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I am pleased to write this prologue for the special issue of the *American University International Law Review* featuring the winning papers from the 2012 Human Rights Essay Award, sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the Washington College of Law.

Since 2003, the Academy has presented the annual Human Rights Essay Award to support and recognize scholarly research concerning international human rights law. Year after year, lawyers from around the world with extensive experience and knowledge of international human rights law submit works of extraordinary rigor and insight. Selected from highly competitive pools of submission, awards are given for the best article in English and the best article in Spanish. Recipients of the award receive a full scholarship, including tuition, travel, and living expenses, to study at the annual Program of Advanced Studies in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

This year's submissions addressed the topic of "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples and International Human Rights Law." The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law received a tremendous number of submissions from authors representing countries all over the world. I commend all of the participating scholars for their caliber of research and commitment to studying these vital issues.

The 2012 Award for the best paper in English was presented to Oswaldo Rafael Ruiz-Chiriboga for his paper titled *Indigenous Corporal Punishment in Ecuador and the Prohibition of Torture and Ill Treatment*. Mr. Ruiz-Chiriboga is a Ph.D. candidate at Ghent University, where he also serves as a research fellow for the University's Human Rights Centre. Mr. Ruiz-Chiriboga previously

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served as a Young Excellent Scholars research intern at the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He also served as a Senior Staff Attorney for the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and for the Center for Justice and International Law in San Jose, Costa Rica.

The 2012 Award for the best paper in Spanish was presented to Maria Paz Avila Ordóñez for her paper titled *El Derecho Penal Indígena: Entre la Diversidad y los Derechos Humanos*. Ms. Ordóñez serves as a law clerk for Judge Nina Pacari of the Constitutional Court of Ecuador. Ms. Ordóñez has also served as a lecturer at the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar and at the Office of UN High Commissioner on Human Rights regarding rights of indigenous peoples.

Honorable mentions for papers in English were awarded to Maria Noel Leoni of Uruguay for her paper *Gender Equality and Indigenous Peoples' Right to Self-Determination and Culture* and to Jernej Letnar Čerňič of Slovenia for his paper *State Obligations Concerning Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Their Ancestral Lands: Lex Imperfecta?.* Honorable mentions for papers in Spanish were awarded to Pablo Compañá of Ecuador for his paper *Las Relaciones de Bilateralidad Entre Estados y Pueblos Indígenas* and Michael Cruz Rodríguez of Colombia for his paper *Pluralidad Jurídica e Impunidad: Las Dos Caras de la Justicia para las Mujeres Indígenas Desplazadas en Colombia*. The law school community congratulates all of these scholars for their exceptional articles and appreciates the contributions of all the participants in the Academy's 2012 Human Rights Essay Award Competition.

I would also like to thank my fellow members of the Honor Jury: Victor Abramovich, Gudmundur Alfredsson, Dupe Atoki, Cecilia Bailliet, Eva Biaudet, Leonardo Crippa, Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Beatriz Fernández, Lucie Lamarche, Margarete Macaulay, Claudia Martin, David Padilla, Patricio Pazmiño, Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón, Ezra Rosser, Pablo Saavedra, and Dinah Shelton.

The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law established the Human Rights Essay Award as part of its broader mission to help address the need for specialized legal training in the practice and theory of international human rights. The Academy, which evolved from the law school's core commitment to promoting

human rights and humanitarian law, has emerged as a premier forum for advanced training and analysis concerning the most salient topics in these critical legal fields. Participants acquire valuable knowledge and skills through the examination of issues shaping the world within a context that emphasizes the practical roles and contributions of human rights rules and mechanisms. Such engagement strengthens the professional community that can, in turn, help to better address the pressing needs of people around the world.

The Academy's Program of Advanced Studies in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law is held each summer in Washington, D.C., at the American University Washington College of Law. The Program's faculty includes the most distinguished scholars and practitioners of human rights and humanitarian law. Courses address a diverse range of key topics including, *inter alia*, impunity and justice, implementation of human rights in domestic law, women and international human rights law, regional approaches to human rights law (Africa, America, and Asia), the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and the United Nations human rights system.

Additionally, numerous activities further enrich the participants' experience in the Program, including panels and discussions on key topics and site visits to important institutions such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Organization of American States.

The Academy's activities are an important component of the law school's numerous initiatives reflecting its longstanding commitment to strengthening the rule of law and human rights around the world. Other elements include extensive course offerings and externship opportunities, a variety of student-run publications, and law school programs including, *inter alia*, the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, War Crimes Research Office, United Nations Committee against Torture Project, Clinical Programs, Office of Public Interest, Summer Law Program in the Hague, Impact Litigation Project, and the annual trilingual Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition.

All of these initiatives reaffirm our community's commitment to helping protect and promote human dignity through the rule of law. The law school will continue to foster and support this core value in future generations of lawyers and to collaborate with institutions,

programs, and countries around the world. In this spirit, I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the *American University International Law Review* for its dedication and contributions to publishing vital international law scholarship, including this special issue each year, that sets forth papers in both English and Spanish concerning key topics in international human rights law.