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# **THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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We are delighted to present this year's publication of the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, which includes the three best essays in English and in Spanish submitted for the 2012 Human Rights Essay Award. It is satisfying to think that this competition allowed a record-setting number of participants an opportunity to materialize their thoughts on so many important topics and areas of the world. We hope these participants are able to use their articles as a mechanism for change.

The quality of the essays was outstanding, making the final decision difficult. We would like to recognize everyone who participated in the competition and mainly the two winners, Oswaldo Rafael Ruiz-Chiriboga and Maria Paz Avila Ordóñez from Ecuador. In addition, a final decision would not be possible without the exceptional work from the members of the Honor Jury, who read and evaluated the articles.

The goal of this publication and of the competition is to provide an academic venue for scholarly legal writing by human rights experts and activists. By publishing their work, we seek to contribute quality legal writings on particular topics of relevance to the development of this dynamic area of the law. The book also reflects the diversity of cultures and languages that characterizes our interconnected world. By publishing articles in English and Spanish, we enhance and broaden the voices that shape international human rights and humanitarian law in the future.

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We want to thank Cindy Gierhart, Editor-in-Chief, and Clarissa Pintado, Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Book Editor, of the *American University International Law Review*, for their dedication and hard work, which make this project a reality. Publishing in two languages is especially demanding, and we would like to recognize *AU International Law Review*'s effort in this project. It is imperative to acknowledge the vision of its editors to foresee that the future of the international community rests on our ability to enrich our views with other people's ideas and cultures.

Finally, we want to thank the staff of the *American University International Law Review* and volunteers who diligently worked throughout this endeavor.