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Prologue

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PROLOGUE

ACADEMY ADVISORY BOARD CO-CHAIRS:

CLAUDIO GROSSMAN* & ROBERT K. GOLDMAN**

We are pleased to write this prologue for the special issue of the *American University International Law Review* featuring the winning papers from the 2020 Human Rights Essay Award, sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of American University 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 a highly competitive pool of submissions, awards and honorable mentions are granted to the best articles. Recipients of the award receive a full scholarship, including tuition, travel, and living expenses, to study at the annual Program of Advanced Studies on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

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

In 2020, there were two awards for Best Paper. The 2020 Award for the Best Paper in English was presented to Sean O'Reilly of Hong Kong for his paper titled "*Hong Kong's Tortuous Democratization:*

* Dean Emeritus and Raymond Geraldson Scholar for International and Humanitarian Law, American University Washington College of Law.

** Professor of Law and Louis C. James Scholar, American University Washington College of Law.

How Far Can Human Rights Law Take Us?” Mr. O’Reilly received his LL.B. (Hons) from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and holds an LL.M. (Distinction) in Public International Law from the London School of Economics. He is currently a BCL candidate at the University of Oxford, following which he will return to Hong Kong to commence practice as a barrister.

The 2020 Award for the Best Paper in Spanish was presented to Natalia Beltrán Orjuela of Colombia for her paper titled “Protesta social antidemocrática? Hacia nuevas formas de participación ciudadana a través del internet en el marco de las recientes movilizaciones en Colombia.” Ms. Beltrán Orjuela obtained her law degree with honors from La Universidad Militar Nueva Granada in Bogota, Colombia. She is currently studying Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law at La Universidad Externado de Colombia and has experience researching International Human Rights Law with an emphasis on women’s rights.

Honorable Mentions for papers in English were awarded to Gemmo Fernandez of Australia for his paper titled, “*Rise of Illiberal Democracy, weakening of the Rule of Law and Implementation of Human Rights in the Philippines,*” and to Nasia Hadjigeorgiou of Cyprus for her paper titled “*Conflict Resolution in Post-Violence Societies: Some Guidance for the Judiciary.*”

Honorable mentions for papers in Spanish were awarded to Nilton Blandino López of Nicaragua for his paper titled “La fiebre de la reelección en Latinoamérica: Desmoronamiento del Estado de Derecho y sus consecuencias para los Derechos Humanos,” and to Michael Juan Ramón Quevedo Vega of Bolivia for his paper titled “¿El estado de derecho en peligro? El juez constitucional contra la constitución y a favor de la reelección presidencial indefinida: caso Bolivia.”

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 2020 Human Rights Essay Award Competition.

We would also like to thank the members of the Honor Jury who joined AUWCL Faculty in evaluating the submissions: Carlos Ayala, María Clara Galvis, Claudia Paz y Paz, Joel Hernández, Felipe Gómez, Diego Rodríguez-Pinzon, Leo Zwaak, Marie Laure Basilien-

Gainche, Larry Garber, Doug Cassel, Claudia Martin, and Michael Camilleri.

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 in turn, can help to better address the pressing needs of people around the world.

The Academy's Program of Advanced Studies on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law which is part of the LL.M. in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law is held in Washington, D.C., at 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 systems of human rights law (Africa and Europe), 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, the Kovler Project

Against Torture, Clinical Programs, Office of Public Interest, Summer Law Program in the Hague, Impact Litigation Project, the annual trilingual Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition and the LL.M. in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

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, we 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, which sets forth papers in both English and Spanish concerning key topics in international human rights law.