Prologue

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We are pleased to write this prologue for the special issue of the *American University International Law Review* featuring the winning papers and honorable mentions from the 2023 Human Rights Essay Award, sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of American University Washington College of Law, in its 20th anniversary.

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 "Equality and Human Rights: Confronting Racial Discrimination." After tumultuous years in the United States and worldwide characterized by police brutality and an overwhelmed environment of systemic racism, the Academy decided that it was time to foster a meaningful discussion over racial discrimination, racial justice, affirmative actions, and equal protection of the law. Our objective was to discover and redefine better approaches to disarticulate structural discrimination.

The result was that the Academy on Human Rights and

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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. Their submissions unveiled multiple scenarios in different regions of the world where racism, while adopting many forms, was deeply rooted in societies with alarming common patterns of discrimination and, thus, significant harm to the respect, promotion, and protection of human rights.

In 2023, there were two awards for Best Paper. The 2023 Award for the Best Paper in English was presented to Louise Grégoire of France for her paper titled "*Law Enforcement use of Facial Recognition–A Comparative Approach Between the United States and Europe to Tackle the Racial Bias of Facial Recognition Against People of Color*." Ms. Grégoire is a French attorney. She is currently an LL.M. candidate at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. She holds a Master's degree in American Business Law, from the Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, and a Master's degree in European Law, from the Université de Tours.

The 2023 Award for the Best Paper in Spanish was presented to Roxana Rosas Fregoso of Mexico for her paper titled "*El repudio y la aversión a lo étnico, confrontando a la discriminación racial en México*." Ms. Rosas Fregoso is a Mexican attorney, Ph.D. in Law from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and a Researcher at the Institute of Legal Research of UNAM. She is a specialist in Constitutional Justice, Interpretation, and Application of the Constitution, from the Universidad Castilla-La Mancha and has a Master's Degree in Legal Sciences, with a focus on Constitutional Law.

Honorable mentions for papers in English were awarded to Martin Yat Cheung Kwan from China for his paper titled, "*Regional Discrimination as a Quasi-Form of Racial Discrimination: Comparing the Protection Under Anglo-American, International and Chinese Law*" and to Katrina Isabela F. Blanco of Philippines for her paper titled "*From Alienation to Rootedness: Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines Through Education*."

Honorable mentions for papers in Spanish were awarded to Dewi Carolina Zamora Mendoza of Perú for her paper titled "*La Relación entre la Discriminación Racial y los Derechos Humanos en el Sistema*

Interamericano de Derechos Humanos: Estándares Establecidos Vinculados al Principio de Igualdad y No Discriminación" and Julián Ariel Madrid Moreno of Argentina for his paper titled "*La Interculturalidad como Estrategia para Contribuir a la Igualdad y No Discriminación de los Pueblos Originarios en el Derecho a la Educación Superior: el Caso de Argentina.*"[1]

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 2023 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: Margarette May Macaulay, Elvira Dominguez Redondo, Carmen A. Mestizo-Castillo, Anton Burkov, Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón, Laura Clérico, Julio José Rojas-Báez, Roberto Rojas Davila, Joaquín A. Mejía R., Clara Burbano-Herrera, and Claudia Martin.

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 is part of the LL.M. in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law held each summer in Washington, D.C., at American University Washington College of Law. The Program's faculty includes the most distinguished scholars and practitioners of

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1 Editor's Note: Honorable Mention Madrid Moreno of the 2023 Essay Competition will be published in Volume 40 of the *American University International Law Review*.

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, 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.