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Rule of Law and Human Rights: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Articles on Rule of Law and Human Rights: Strengthening Democratic Institutions: Introduction

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RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

CLAUDIA MARTIN & DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ-PINZÓN*

We are delighted to present this year's publication of the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, which includes two of the best essays in English and in Spanish recognized in the 2020 Human Rights Essay Award competition. It is satisfying to think that this competition allowed a number of participants an opportunity to expound their thoughts on so many important topics and on so many areas of the world. We hope these participants are able to use their articles as mechanisms 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, Sean O'Reilly from Hong Kong and Natalia Beltrán Orjuela from Colombia. 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 essay 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.

We want to thank Sherwet Witherington, Editor-in-Chief, and

* Co-Directors, Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

Damely Perez Wadskier, Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Book Editor, of the *American University International Law Review* (AUILR), for their dedication and hard work, which made this project a reality. Publishing in two languages is especially demanding and we would like to recognize the efforts put forth by the AUILR staff on 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.