

# Human Rights Brief

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Volume 18 | Issue 3

Article 14

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2011

## Center News/Faculty and Staff Updates

Human Rights Brief

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### Recommended Citation

Human Rights Brief. "Center News/Faculty and Staff Updates." Human Rights Brief 18, no. 3 (2011): 79-81.

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## CENTER NEWS AND FACULTY UPDATES

### CENTER NEWS

#### “SOFT LAUNCH” OF WWW.HRBRIEF.ORG GETS 5,000 HITS FROM 140 COUNTRIES

Although still in its “soft launch” phase, the new *Human Rights Brief* website, [www.hrbrief.org](http://www.hrbrief.org), has been widely embraced and viewed, receiving over 5,000 hits from 140 countries in April. The website provides updates from the regional systems, international and internationalized courts, and the UN system, as well as other updates and analysis. In addition, the website has provided near real-time coverage of all of the public hearings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, with over seventy hearings posted on the site. Some postings include interviews with petitioners, podcasts of the hearings, photos and more. Short op-ed style pieces from noted practitioners around the world will soon be added. To explore the new website, go to [www.hrbrief.org](http://www.hrbrief.org).

#### CENTER CONVENES UNIVERSITY-WIDE CONFERENCE ON THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS WITH KEY FIGURES FROM GOVERNMENT AND NGOS: APRIL 28-29, 2011

On April 28-29, 2011, American University, under the leadership of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, will be hosting an influential conference analyzing the first two years of the Obama Administration's policies and actions in the field of human rights. The two-day conference will have four major plenary sessions and twenty breakout panels with over fifty speakers from the Obama Administration, civil society, think tanks, and academia. US Under-Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs **Maria Otero** will open the conference. Other speakers will include President of the Open Society Foundations **Aryeh Neier**, American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director **Anthony Romero**, Human Rights First President and CEO **Elisa Massimino**, Managing Director of Government Relations for Amnesty International USA **Adotei Akwei**, and Human Rights Watch Washington Director **Tom Malinowski**, among other influential

figures. The Center is spearheading the cross-campus collaboration and working with a multi-disciplinary faculty committee to organize the conference. More than 200 people are expected to attend the conference at AU, and many more will patch in through live webcast. Conference panels will also be available to download after the event on the conference website and through the Center. More details are available at [www.obamaandhumanrights.org](http://www.obamaandhumanrights.org).

#### CENTER HOSTS CONFERENCE WITH HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND WINNERS OF STUDENT IHL WRITING COMPETITION

On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Center hosted a conference entitled *International Humanitarian Law: Emerging Issues in the Law of Armed Conflict*. The conference was the culmination of the first International Humanitarian Law Student Writing Competition, co-sponsored by the Center and the American Society of International Law's Lieber Society on the Law of Armed Conflict. The competition received nearly 50 submissions, including 16 from outside the United States. The winners of the competition, **Robert Clarke** of the University of Western Australia and **Elizabeth Holland** from Suffolk University Law School, presented their papers in discussion with an esteemed panel of IHL experts. **David Crane**, founding Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and current professor at Syracuse University College of Law, gave the keynote address entitled *Dead or Alive: Reflections on IHL in an Age of Extremes*. The conference concluded with an in-depth roundtable discussion on the emerging intersections of IHL and human rights among high-level experts in both fields. More than 60 people attended the conference, including participants from the U.S. Institute of Peace, the Department of Justice, the American Red Cross, the British Army, and the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. A webcast of the conference is available on the Center's website at [www.wclcenterforhr.org](http://www.wclcenterforhr.org). The conference papers, as well as a transcript

of the afternoon discussion on the emerging intersections of IHL, ICL, and human rights law, will be published soon.

#### Center Executive Director Hadar Harris Travels to Qatar to Discuss Gender and Human Rights in Legal Education

Center Executive Director **Hadar Harris** traveled to Doha, Qatar, at the invitation of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) to work with the Qatar University Law College in integrating gender and human rights into its curriculum. While in Doha, Ms. Harris also met with the Legal Accountability Staff at a local NGO, Education Above All, to discuss future collaborations in ending impunity around attacks on education worldwide. She also met with the newly appointed head of the United Nations Regional Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss future collaborations.

#### CENTER CO-HOSTS DISCUSSION ON WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN HAITI

In March, the Center and WCL's Women and the Law Program held an event titled *Women's Human Rights in Haiti: Our Bodies Are Still Trembling*. The discussion featured **Lisa Davis**, Human Rights Advocacy Director for MADRE, a New York-based women's rights NGO, and **Malya Villard-Apollon** of KOFATIV, a grassroots women's rights group in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Ms. Davis and Ms. Villard-Apollon discussed the findings of a recent joint report that reveals that violence against women in Haiti is on the rise, and made recommendations to curb this disturbing trend. WCL LLM student **Melanie Debrosse** served as moderator and translator for Ms. Villard-Apollon.

#### ACTIVISTS ADDRESS ROLE OF NGOS IN PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

In April, the Center hosted a discussion on the NGO Pro Búsqueda, a human rights organization in El Salvador, whose work has focused on seeking justice for children who disappeared during the civil war more than two decades ago. Pro Búsqueda

Director **Ester Alvarenga** spoke about the struggle in pursuing government accountability for the hundreds of children who were taken, and sometimes killed, by the military during the conflict. Because the government has not taken steps to seek justice for the victims and their families, organizations like Pro Búsqueda have launched investigations and searches, and have fought to end impunity for these human rights violations. Ms. Alvarenga was joined by **Carlos Mauricio**, executive director of the Stop Impunity Project.

### FACULTY UPDATES

**Claudio Grossman** is the Dean of American University Washington College of Law (WCL) and a Co-Director of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. He is also the Raymond Geraldson Scholar for International and Humanitarian Law.

In April 2011, Dean Grossman participated as a panelist on *Assessing US Engagement in Human Rights Bodies* as part of American University's conference on the *Obama Administration and Human Rights*. He also participated as a member of the Planning Committee in the Planning Sessions for the International Association of Law Schools' *Conference on Teaching, Legal Education & Strategic Planning* in Buenos Aires, Argentina. During this IALS Conference, the Dean participated as commentator for the *Plenary Session — Pedagogy*, and in the meeting of the IALS Board of Governors. In addition, he provided opening remarks at the law school's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Intellectual Property and Gender Conference on *Mapping the Connections: Gender and Traditional Cultural Expressions*. Dean Grossman participated in WCL's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Sylvania Woods Conference on African Americans and the Law, which focused this year on *The African American Lawyer in Today's Economy and Beyond*, and presented the North Star Award in recognition of significant contributions to the law school and the community at large. Also in April, Dean Grossman opened a law school event celebrating the important work of the *Human Rights Brief*.

In March 2011, Dean Grossman was elected member and ex-officio of the American Law Institute, and awarded the decoration of *Orden de la Justicia* by the government of Colombia in recognition of

his career. He was also selected to become a member of the Board of Advisors for the publication *Derecho Y Humanidades: Revista De Los Estudiantes De La Facultad De Derecho Del La Universidad De Chile*. Also in March, Dean Grossman co-organized and participated in the conference, *Enhancing Visits to Places of Detention: Promoting Collaboration*, by moderating the panel on *Promoting Safeguards Through Detention Visits*. He also co-organized and participated in a private, international peer-to-peer meeting with stakeholders in connection with the conference. Both the conference and meeting were co-organized with the Association for the Prevention of Torture. That same month, Dean Grossman moderated and participated in a panel in conjunction with the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Grotius Lecture, cosponsored by WCL and the American Society of International Law, on *Harmony and Dissonance in International Law* by Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen. Dean Grossman also opened the conference on *International Humanitarian Law: Emerging Issues in the Law of Armed Conflict*, cosponsored by the American Society of International Law. Additionally, he served as a judge for the White & Case Championship Round of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition in Washington, D.C.

**Hadar Harris** is the executive director of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. In March, Ms. Harris traveled to Qatar on the invitation of the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) to assist the faculty of Qatar University in integrating gender and human rights into their curriculum and to help set up the first "Women and the Law" course. While in Qatar, Ms. Harris also met with Qatari NGO, Education Above All, to discuss future collaboration on the issue of ending impunity around attacks on education worldwide. She also met with the head of the UN Regional Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition, in March, Ms. Harris co-led a two-day workshop with Margaret Huang, executive director of the Rights Working Group, for representatives of over 30 national and local organizations to empower grassroots activists around the United States to use the international human rights framework in their domestic work. She also moderated the roundtable discussion of experts on paper presentations by the winners of the Center's first Student

International Humanitarian Law Writing Competition (which was co-sponsored by the American Society of International Law's Lieber Society). Ms. Harris participated in the first Human Rights Summit of the American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights.

**Juan E. Méndez** is Visiting Professor of Law at WCL, and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. His three-year term started on November 1, 2010. In April, Prof. Méndez, in his capacity as the Rapporteur, was denied access to conduct an unmonitored visit of a suspect held in relation to the Wikileaks investigation, which was reported widely by The Associated Press. Prof. Méndez was also profiled in an AP story in March regarding his probe into torture allegations by Gadhafi forces in Libya. Prof. Méndez continues to teach courses in international law and international human rights at WCL.

**Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón** is Professorial Lecturer in Residence and Co-Director of the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. In February, Prof. Rodríguez-Pinzón was invited to judge the Final Panel of the Colombian National Round of the Phillip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition of the Students Association (ILSA) in Bogotá, Colombia. Other members of the Final Panel were Eduardo Valencia Ospina, Member of the U.N. International Law Commission (ILC) and former Registrar of the International Court of Justice, and Nicola Bonucci, Director of the Directorate for Legal Affairs, General Secretariat of the OECD. While there, Prof. Rodríguez-Pinzón also delivered a lecture titled *The Inter-American Human Rights System* at Universidad de La Sabana. In March, Prof. Rodríguez-Pinzón delivered a presentation on *The Supervisory Work of the Inter-American Human Rights System* at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, as part of a Washington College of Law faculty exchange program. He further served as an *ad hoc* judge in Salvador for *Chiriboga v. Ecuador* at the 90<sup>th</sup> period session of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights in San Jose, Costa Rica. While there, Prof. Rodríguez-Pinzón delivered a lecture titled *Characteristics and Scope of the Supervisory Role of the Commission and the Court* as part of the Specialized Course



for Public Officials of the Inter-American Institute on Human Rights (IIHR).

**Susana SáCouto** is the Director of the War Crimes Research Office (WCRO) and Professorial Lecturer-in-Residence at WCL. In early March, Prof. SáCouto delivered a presentation on *Victim Participation at the International Criminal Court and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia* at the 2d Biennial War Crimes Conference hosted by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at the School of Advanced Studies at the University of London. The Conference was entitled *Justice — Whose Justice? Punishment, Mediation or Reconciliation?* Later that month, she served as a panelist for a talk entitled *The International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda*, hosted by the Peace & Conflict Resolution Program of the AU Washington Semester Program. In late March, she served as an expert for the roundtable discussion on the relationship between international humanitarian law and human rights law at the conference entitled *International Humanitarian Law: Emerging Issues in the Law of Armed Conflict*, organized by the Center at WCL. In addition, Prof. SáCouto's article on *Victim Participation at the International Criminal Court and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia: A Feminist Project?* was accepted for publication in the Michigan Journal of Gender and the Law.

**Herman Schwartz** is Professor of Law at WCL and Co-Director of the Center. Professor Schwartz continues to work with the U.S./Israel Civil Liberties Law Program. In March, Professor Schwartz was featured in a story published in Politico and reprinted in the *Montreal Gazette* entitled *Egypt after Mubarak*, where he commented on the forms of government chosen by the world's democracies. In April, Professor Schwartz will introduce Aryeh Neier, President of the Open Society Foundations, at a plenary session of the *Human Rights and Obama Administration* conference at American University. His

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academic focus remains on issues of civil rights and civil liberties as they have played out in courts across the globe, especially in the young democracies of Eastern Europe. He has served as an adviser to numerous Central and Eastern European nations on constitutional and human rights reform. Professor Schwartz is a member of the Board of the Open Society Institute Justice Initiative. He is currently working on a book on how American political institutions are responding to the challenges currently facing the United States.

**Rick Wilson** is Professor of Law and founding Director of the International Human Rights Law Clinic at WCL, as well as co-director of the Center. In March, Professor Wilson participated in an expert's roundtable discussion as part of the Center's conference entitled *International Humanitarian Law: Emerging Issues in the Law of Armed Conflict*, where a group of esteemed speakers discussed the cutting-edge intersections among IHL, human rights, and international criminal law. On April 5, he and other legal academics from the Washington, DC area spoke at the Johns Hopkins SAIS program to a visiting delegation of professors and students from Egyptian law faculties on the prospects of clinical legal education and other experiential learning methods there.

**David Baluarte** is the Practitioner-in-Residence for the International Human Rights Law Clinic at Washington College of Law. A founding member of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights of Peace Brigades International, Prof. Baluarte has also been working on human rights implementation in the field by helping human rights defenders in Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico in their efforts to implement the orders of the Inter-American Court. In April, Prof. Baluarte gave a presentation in Santiago de Chile at a conference organized by Fundacion Pro Bono and the Cyrus Vance Center. The presentation was on the role of law schools in supporting the burgeoning regional pro-network as a

means to strengthening access to justice in the Americas.

**Claudia Martin** is a professorial lecturer in residence at Washington College of Law and is the Co-Director of the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. Professor Martin was appointed by the University of Amsterdam as a member of a steering committee to draft a book on international law in domestic courts, which will be published by Oxford University Press in 2012. On February 17, 2011, Professor Martin introduced the panel *Fighting for Women's Lives: Reproductive Rights in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru*, sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Catholics for Choice, the Women and the Law Program, and AU law students for Reproductive Justice. On February 18, 2011, Professor Martin participated in a WCL exchange with the faculty of the University of Ottawa, Canada. Also in February, she served as a member of the jury that selected the winners of the 2010 Human Rights Award for the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. On March 18, she made concluding comments for the panel *Strengthening International and Regional Frameworks to Protect the Human Rights of Older Persons*, an event sponsored by the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Furthermore, Professor Martin, with Professor Diego Rodriguez-Pinzon and Legal Researcher Vladislav Michalik, joined the Gender, Human Rights, and Culture Branch of UNFPA compiled examples of legal and institutional frameworks to protect and realize the right to health of older persons. These examples were submitted to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health. In addition, Professor Martin continues to serve as a Contributing Editor to *Oxford Reports on International Human Rights Law* and a Member of the Editorial Board, *Oxford Reports on International Law in Domestic Courts*, published by Oxford University Press.