



Recent News from the International Human Rights Clinic



Student Highlights from the Fall 2022 Term

Dear friends,

As the spring semester begins, we are reflecting back on a fall term that filled us with gratitude and optimism. For the first time in quite a while, we could be truly present on campus with our students. That togetherness reminded us of the joy and energy that comes from being part of our human rights community.

We resumed travel in earnest, both domestically and internationally. Clinical teams collaborated with clients and partners, launched major reports, and contributed to high-level events. Some highlights from the fall are below; much more information is available on our Clinic's [new website](#).

We look forward to engaging with our students and partners in the year ahead, doing the hard work necessary to create a more just and equitable world.

All the best,
Aminta, Anna, Bea, Bonnie, Kelsey, Salma, and Susan
The International Human Rights Clinic Team

Clinical Project Highlights

Lead Poisoning Report Launches in Kosovo

A clinical team [traveled to Kosovo](#) in November to launch a major report, [Toxic Injustice: Translating UN Responsibility Into Remedies for Lead-Poisoned Roma](#). Prepared in partnership with Opre Roma Kosovo, the report documents the UN's failure to implement a decision by its own human rights panel finding it responsible for remedies to Roma victims of lead poisoning at UN-run camps in Kosovo. The report

reveals significant accountability gaps that the UN must close to build the organization's legitimacy among vulnerable populations. The clinical team met with members of the affected community and government officials, [published an op-ed](#) in Prishtina Insight, and Clinical Instructor Beatrice Lindstrom was interviewed by media including [The New Humanitarian](#). The team later traveled to New York to raise the issue with UN member states and urge governments to support justice for survivors of lead poisoning. Learn more about the Clinic's work on accountability and remedies [here](#).



Toxic Injustice
Translating UN Responsibility Into Remedies
for Lead-Poisoned Roma
Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic
and Opres Roma Kosovo



Advocating for Torture-Free Trade

In partnership with Amnesty International and the Omega Research Foundation, the Clinic released [Essential Elements of a Torture-Free Trade Treaty](#) in September and co-convened a civil society summit in January in London, which produced the 2023 [Shoreditch Declaration for a Torture-Free Trade Treaty](#). Despite the categorical prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under international law, trade in law enforcement equipment used in violation of this

prohibition continues globally, and there is no international instrument regulating this trade. The joint publication outlines the essential elements that should inform the content of a global treaty to address this gap. Learn more about the Clinic's work on protecting fundamental freedoms [here](#).

A New Political Declaration to Protect Civilians

In culmination of the Clinic's decade of advocacy for a political declaration regulating the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, a clinical team [traveled to Dublin](#) in November for the signing ceremony, which saw 82 countries formally endorse the new instrument. To inform states' positions at



the ceremony, the Clinic and Human Rights Watch released [Safeguarding Civilians: A Humanitarian Interpretation of the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas](#). The briefing paper explains how the Declaration should be interpreted to maximize the goal of civilian protection, and interprets key commitments in the Declaration through a humanitarian lens. The Declaration represents a milestone for efforts to advance humanitarian disarmament and curb human suffering during armed conflict. Learn more about the Clinic's work on protecting civilians [here](#), including our recent report proposing [Alternative Processes for Negotiating a Killer Robots Treaty](#).

Reporting on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

A Clinic team worked closely with [Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association](#) to draft a report to the [UN Special Rapporteur](#) on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (OPT), in response to the Rapporteur's call for submissions for the upcoming thematic report to the Human Rights Council. The report focused on analyzing Israeli policies and practices of deprivation of liberty in the OPT, including the use of arbitrary detention to target Palestinian human rights defenders, students, journalists, and children. The report concluded that the systematic and discriminatory use of arbitrary detention, including administrative detention, against Palestinians in the occupied territories constitutes grave violations of Israel's international

Event Highlights

The Human Rights Movement & the UDHR at 75: A Conversation with Navi Pillay



The Clinic was thrilled to welcome to campus Navi Pillay, former judge at the ICTR, ICC, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, for a wide-ranging discussion, **The Human Rights Movement & the UDHR at 75: A Conversation with Navi Pillay**. In conversation with Clinical Professor Susan Farbstein, Judge Pillay addressed the ongoing significance of the UDHR and human rights frameworks, the evolution of the human rights movement and the biggest threats to human rights today, the challenge of being a path-breaking advocate, and how to cultivate resilience and hope while promoting and protecting human rights. A video of the event is available [here](#).

Disarmament and the Arms Trade: A Conversation with Amnesty International's Verity Coyle

In October, through its [Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative](#), the Clinic hosted Verity Coyle, a Senior Advisor at Amnesty International's International Secretariat, for a discussion on the different skills human rights advocates deploy in international disarmament campaigns.



Co-Sponsored Events

Pre-Launch of the UN General Assembly Report on Peace, Security, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: UN Independent Expert Victor Madrigal-Borloz | OCT 2022

A co sponsored event featuring the General Assembly report which Spring 2022 IHRC student research helped support. A video of the event is available [here](#).

Crisis in Sri Lanka: Human Rights in Peril | OCT 2022

The Clinic co sponsored PLSMW's event on the unfolding crisis in Sri Lanka. Read the Human Rights Program's recap of the event [here](#).

Women and Girls in Poverty and Inequality | NOV 2022

A co sponsored event on the thematic focus of the upcoming United Nations Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls (WGDAGW) report. A video of the event is available [here](#).

Concentration and Crises: Exploring the Deep Roots of Vulnerability in the Global Industrial Food Systems | NOV 2022

A co sponsored event with [CHLPI](#) featuring Dr. Clapp, Vice Chair of the Steering Committee of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the UN Committee on World Food Security.

Clinician Spotlight: Q&A with Aminta Ossom, J.D. '09



Aminta Ossom is a Clinical Instructor and Lecturer on Law. Immediately prior to joining the Clinic in 2019, she served as a human rights officer at the United Nations, where she supported the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and the Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council. During summer 2022, she took a professional development leave, returning to the UN as it launched the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. Aminta supported the Permanent Forum as it prepared for its first session, which was held in Geneva in early December. [Read more.](#)

Lawyer, Advocate, Therapist, Travel Agent: Maryum Jordan's International Career and Local Impact



In the almost ten years since she graduated from Harvard Law School, human rights lawyer Maryum Jordan, A.B. '10, J.D. '14, has become a legal chameleon. From the lush banks of the Peruvian Amazon to the rugged shoreline of Alaska, Jordan has developed legal strategies to sue a massive mining company, documented human rights violations and provided evidence to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and fought anti-Black policies in the U.S. immigration system. Jordan has learned to shift between roles and wear many different hats in her domestic and international work. [Read more.](#)

Clinic Alums Gather in London

Over the J-term, Clinic Associate Director Anna Crowe hosted an IHRC alumni gathering while in London. If you're a Clinic alum living outside of Cambridge and would be interested in meeting up, [let us know where you're based](#) and we will let you know when we are in town / hosting gatherings!



Over 80 Countries Committed to Curb Use of Explosive Weapons, Now Comes the Hard Part

Bonnie Docherty in *Just Security* | November 2022

The [political declaration](#), which 82 countries signed at a ceremony in Dublin Castle on Nov. 18, goes beyond calling for better compliance with existing international humanitarian law by committing the endorsing countries to take additional measures to prevent and remediate the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

[Read more.](#)



UN Still Denies Justice to Lead Poisoning Victims in Kosovo

Anna Bower JD '23, Beatrice Lindstrom, Scarlett Park JD '24 and Jake Soria JD '24 in *Prishtina Insight* | November 2022

It is high time the UN accepted responsibility for the lead poisoning of Roma camp residents back in 1999 and compensated them, say a group of Harvard researchers and Roma activists who have been tracking the case. [Read more.](#)



The UN is Mulling Another Mission to Haiti. Haitians are Skeptical

Interview with Beatrice Lindstrom, *The Washington Post* | November 2022

In a country where virtually all the news lately has been bad, Lucmane Tabuto found the announcement that cholera had resurfaced particularly worrisome. The 65-year-old former carpenter thought back to his own experience with the waterborne disease more than a decade ago. U.N. peacekeepers, deployed to this Caribbean nation after the 2010 earthquake that killed around 220,000 people, improperly disposed of sewage waste and contaminated a river, setting off an outbreak that killed 10,000 people and sickened more than 820,000. [Read more.](#)



World Trade in Torture Tools Flourishes Under Lack of Scrutiny

Comment by Anna Crowe, *Nikkei Asia* | August 2022

The United Nations is considering implementing controls on the world's flourishing -- and underscrutinized -- trade in torture tools, but likely faces a backlash from China, which opposed the establishment of a U.N. group to study the issue. [Read more.](#)



A recent New York Times [investigation](#) has sparked renewed conversation about how we reckon with the often-overlooked role of foreign intervention in Haiti's founding history, especially the independence debt that France extracted from Haiti in 1823 to compensate for its loss of "property" – including enslaved people. [Read more.](#)

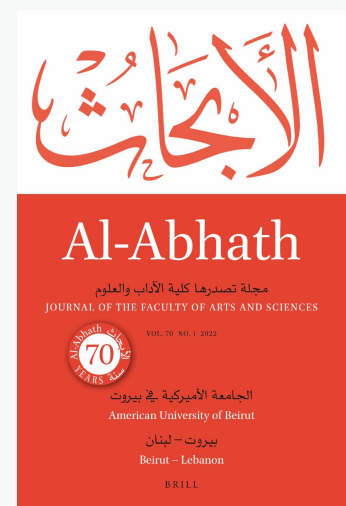


Scholarship

On the Promise of Constitutionalism in the Arab Gulf

Salma Waheedi, *Al-Abhath* | December 2022

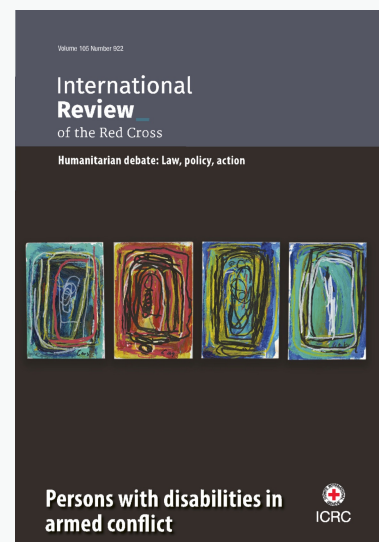
This piece explores constitutional review in Arab Gulf States, as part of a volume analyzing the promise of constitutionalism in the Arab Gulf. It examines the constitutional frameworks of the two Gulf states of Kuwait and Bahrain and the main features of their judicial review models, with a focus on the legal and institutional designs elements that enable or limit the independent exercise of judicial oversight by these constitutional courts. [Read more.](#)



The Evolution and Impact of Victim Assistance

Bonnie Docherty, *International Review of the Red Cross* | December 2022

Co-authored with Alicia Sanders-Zakre, this article examines the evolution of the concept of victim assistance and the impact of its implementation. It analyzes the contributions of three treaties—the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions—in shaping the development of victim assistance standards and practices. It also identifies lessons from these treaties for implementing and interpreting the victim assistance obligations under the Treaty under the Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons. The article concludes that the three treaties have collectively established assisting victims as a feature of disarmament law, helped persons with disabilities realize their rights, and laid the groundwork for adapting victim assistance to new challenges. [Read more.](#)

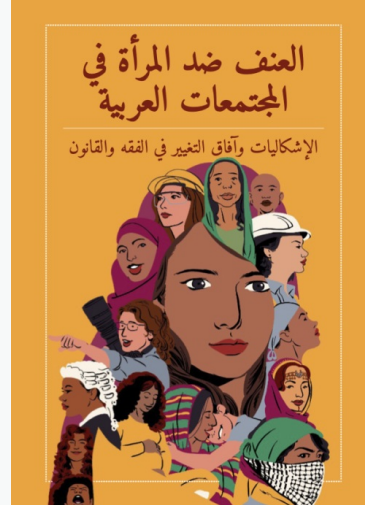


Attempts at Reform: Criminalization of Violence Against Women in the Laws of Arab Countries

Salma Waheedi | December 2022

This article examines laws that address violence against women in Arab countries and offers a critical evaluation of the different legal models and approaches adopted across the region, as well as an analysis of recent attempts at legal and procedural reform. The article is published as part of [Musawah's](#) latest Arabic-language volume entitled *Violence Against Women in Arab Societies: Challenges and Horizons for Change in Islamic*

Jurisprudence and Law, which includes contributions and analysis by activists and scholars from across the Arab region. [Read more.](#)



Toward an Antiracist Clinical Community, Pedagogy, & Practice

Aminta Ossom | September 2022

Co-authored by six Harvard clinicians and one Harvard clinical student, this working paper interrogates how the status quo of a clinic's structure, practices, and teaching methods might contribute to racial inequities in the learning environment and legal field. Taking examples from within the Harvard clinical community, as well as from a review of literature on teaching and legal practice, it proposes self-examination as one tool that law school clinics might use in seeking to embody antiracist values. [Read more.](#)

Litigating Women's Rights in Arab Gulf Monarchical Systems

Salma Waheedi, Arab Quarterly | June 2022

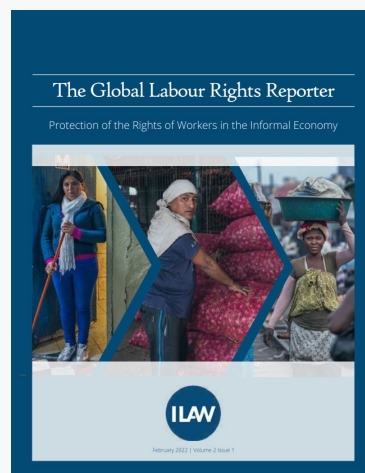
Waheedi analyzes the institutional structures and jurisprudence of the two constitutional courts in order to better understand the conditions under which they operate and the divergence that may explain differences in outcomes. [Read more.](#)



Setting the Standard for Waste Pickers' Rights: The Impact of Constitutional Court Cases in Colombia

Aminta Ossom, The Global Labour Rights Reporter | February 2022

This essay reflects on litigation brought by waste pickers in Colombia using human rights claims. The cases highlight how human rights standards and litigation can be employed to combat threats to livelihood. They also demonstrate some limits to strategic litigation as an advocacy tool, including in settling policy questions about how to fulfill the rights of informally employed workers. [Read more.](#)



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