



HARVARD
LAW SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC

Recent News from the International Human Rights Clinic



Credit: Martha Stewart

Dear friends,

This past fall challenged us in many ways, both here on campus and around the world. As a clinical team, we directed significant energy towards supporting our students and our partners as we navigated difficult moments together. We know that work will continue.

The semester was also marked by notable achievements in many longstanding areas of focus. We launched a major report on climate change and water inequality in India, settled a case against the former president of Bolivia for extrajudicial killings, hosted an influential expert meeting with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and saw states adopt our published recommendations to address the legacy of nuclear weapons. Five clinical teams traveled to New York for a civil society humanitarian disarmament forum that the clinic co-organized, a major UN nuclear weapons meeting, the launch of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture's report on the global trade in equipment used for torture, and advocacy meetings with states and Clinic partners. Back on campus, we hosted events that examined cultural destruction in Yemen's armed conflict, prosecution of

atrocities crimes in Ukraine, and one Syrian refugee's inspiring story of survival.

As the new year begins, we're thrilled to share that our team is growing with the addition of a new Clinical Teaching Fellow, Daniel Levine-Spound, as well as a Practitioner-in-Residence, Victor Madrigal-Borloz. We look forward to opportunities to come together this spring—hosting a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in February, and the annual International Human Rights Clinicians conference in April. We feel fortunate to draw so much strength and inspiration from our community, and wish the same for you in 2024.

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

Clinical Project Highlights

Clinic Report Highlights Growing Water Crisis for Delhi's Poor as Climate Changes

In September, the Clinic **launched a report** documenting how inaction in the face of climate change contributes to increased water inequality in Delhi, India. The report shows how poor residents of the mega city – and low-income women in particular – face mounting barriers to collecting and storing water for their families, even as India contends with increasing heat. The report, entitled ***When the Water Runs Dry: Human Rights, Climate Change & Deepening Water Inequality in Delhi, India***, was published to coincide with the UN Climate Ambition Summit. A **synopsis of the report** was released by Clinic partner **CESR** in November in conjunction with the 28th UN Climate Change Conference. Over the course of the four-year project, twenty-two Clinic students contributed to the research cited in the report, consulting 200 written sources, technical experts, and community representatives.



When the Water Runs Dry:
Human Rights, Climate Change & Deepening
Water Inequality in Delhi, India
Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic
Center for Economic and Social Rights

Settlement Reached in Historic Human Rights Case Against Former Bolivian President and Minister of Defense

In 2007, the Clinic and its partners filed a groundbreaking human rights suit in U.S. federal court against the former president of Bolivia and his minister of defense, seeking justice on behalf of Bolivian citizens whose families were killed by the military in



2003. Clinical students have been involved in all facets of the litigation, from case construction and motion practice, to discovery and depositions, to multiple appeals, as well as a landmark trial in 2018. In October 2023, twenty years after the massacre, [we settled the case](#) and secured accountability for our clients.

Clinic Partner Puts World's Seventh-Largest Supermarket Chain on Notice for Human Rights Abuse

In November, environmental non-profit [Bloom](#) sent a [notice of intent](#) to sue to Carrefour, a French-based supermarket chain with 14,000 stores in over 40 countries, for human rights abuses in its tuna supply chain. Since the Fall 2022 term, the Clinic has collaborated with Bloom to map human rights abuses in the tuna industry and determine how to utilize France's innovative [duty of vigilance law](#) to prevent such harms from continuing. Bloom alleges that Carrefour routinely purchases from suppliers who have committed abuses including slavery, human trafficking, and torture. Bloom also alleges that Carrefour has endangered the health of its consumers and engaged in unsustainable and destructive fishing practices. [Read more.](#)



Clinic Proposals Help Shape Nuclear Ban Treaty's Victim Assistance and Environmental Progress

Multiple Clinic teams saw their hard work pay off when states parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) adopted steps to advance victim assistance and environmental remediation that largely followed the Clinic's recommendations. In October, the Clinic [released](#) a [fact sheet](#) summarizing our earlier reports' proposals on reporting and a trust fund. We also released an [FAQ](#) that specifically argued for voluntary guidelines for reporting on victim assistance and environmental remediation; they would allow for monitoring, promote accountability, and facilitate international assistance. In November, a team of three students and their supervisor attended the TPNW's [Second Meeting of States Parties](#) at the UN in New York. At the meeting's conclusion, states parties endorsed the new reporting guidelines and agreed to discuss a proposed international trust fund before they reconvene in March 2025.



Clinic and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Explore Case Prioritization Strategies



The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (La Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos) plays a vital role in protecting human rights across the Americas and has identified timely access to justice as a key priority. During the fall semester, the Clinic partnered with the Commission to explore examples of how different regional and national courts have approached prioritizing urgent and significant cases. As part of this collaboration, the Commission and Clinic **hosted an expert meeting** at HLS in October at which the Clinic team presented its findings. In December, the team presented to the Commission itself. Before the year wrapped up, drawing on this work and a range of other activities, the Commission **adopted a resolution** establishing a policy on the prioritization of petitions and cases.



*Participants During the October 23rd Expert Meeting.
Credit: La Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos*

Clinic Presents at UN Forum, Calls for Business Action on Environmental Racism

In November, a Clinic team traveled to the 12th UN Forum on Business and Human Rights to share Clinic research into climate change and economic inequality. At a session entitled **Root Causes of Environmental Racism: Leveraging the UNGPs as a Tool for Transformative Change**, instructor Aminta Ossom presented

learnings from Clinic research, which helps explain how racialized groups are especially harmed by climate change and environmental degradation. She also discussed how businesses could address the harms identified, in compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights (UNGPs). In addition to the panel session, the Clinic team held meetings with UN Special Rapporteurs and fellow civil society attendees at the Forum.

Event Highlights

Prosecution of Atrocity Crimes in Ukraine: Avenues for Accountability



More than 18 months after Russia invaded Ukraine, a panel of experts who have been documenting alleged war crimes in Ukraine came to campus to discuss their work. Roman Avramenko, Dmytro Koval, and Svitlana Valkoand from the Ukrainian NGO **Truth Hounds** explained how they hope to achieve justice and accountability for victims, including through domestic prosecutions, international trials, and other means; the challenges of working in the context of an ongoing conflict; and what it means to adopt a victim-centered approach to human rights investigations. The **event** was moderated by Professor Susan Farbstein.

Report Launch: “When the Water Runs Dry: Human Rights, Climate Change & Deepening Water Inequality in Delhi, India”

Co-Sponsored Events

Cultural Destruction in Armed Conflict: The Attack on Yemen’s Heritage & Why It Matters | September 2023

*This event examined the destruction of cultural heritage in armed conflict with a focus on the recent harm done to archaeological, historic, and religious sites in Yemen. It also discussed legal protections and ground level responses. Speakers were Robert Bevan, author of the new book *Monumental Lies: Culture Wars and the Truth about the Past*, and Eman Homaid, executive director of the INSAF Freedoms & Development. The conversation was moderated by Bonnie Docherty. Co sponsored by ACCPI and Program on Law & Society in the Muslim World. **Full details here.***

Affirmative Action after SFFA: Is the



As governments and organizations gathered for a UN climate summit, the Clinic launched a report on September 20, 2023 that documented how climate change exacerbated water inequality in Delhi, India. The report shows how low-income and marginalized communities bear an unequal burden from climate impacts, violating their economic and social rights. At the on-campus launch, Clinical Instructor Aminta Ossom presented the findings, followed by expert discussants Dr. Lehka Chakraborty and Ms. Alina Saba, who reacted to the conclusions and offered recommendations to improve the situation. The event highlighted affected populations often excluded from high-level policy discussions on climate action. Full details, including panelist bios, can be [found here](#).

The International Industry of Law Enforcement Equipment Used for Torture

On October 19, the Clinic was [pleased to welcome](#) Rebecca Shaw from the [Omega Research Foundation](#) for a brown bag lunch on the international industry of law enforcement equipment used for torture or other ill-treatment.

Book Talk: From War to Freedom in a Wheelchair: A Syrian Refugee's Memoir of Survival

U.S. in Violation of International Human Rights Law? | September 2023

A co sponsored event with the Human Rights Program, the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race & Justice and the François Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University. A recording of the event can be found [here](#).

Getting Coverage: Media Skills for Human Rights Advocates | October 2023

A co sponsored training with HLS Advocates on how to effectively engage with media to bring awareness to human rights issues. Training led by HLS Clinical Instructor, Bea Lindstrom, and Adjunct Professor of Law at NYU, Paras Shah.



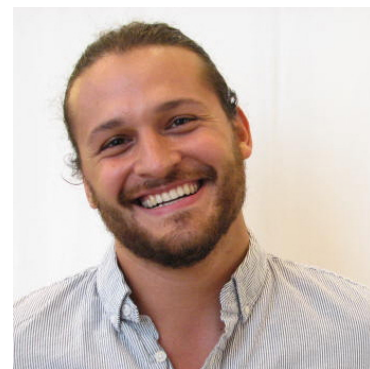
In 2014, 16-year-old Nujeen Mustafa fled the war in Syria, traveling 3,500 miles in a wheelchair because she was born with cerebral palsy. She has since worked to advance the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the rights of refugees and persons with disabilities.

In this talk about her book, *The Girl from Aleppo: Nujeen's Escape from War to Freedom*, Mustafa described her experiences as a conflict survivor, a refugee, and a global advocate and discussed her motivations behind writing this memoir of both hardship and hope. Moderated by Bonnie Docherty with co-sponsors ACCPI and PLSMW. A reflection on the event, which includes a video of Mustafa reading from her book, is available [here](#).

Profiles & Spotlights

Meet our new Clinical Teaching Fellow & Practitioner-in-Residence

We're thrilled to share two exciting new additions to our clinical team. Daniel Levine-Spound, JD '19, joins our team as a Clinical Teaching Fellow. Previously the United Nations Peacekeeping Researcher at the Center for Civilians in Conflict, based in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Daniel has also worked a Research Fellow at the Law School's Program on International Law and Armed Conflict and at the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in Tunis. [Read more about Daniel here.](#)



Victor Madrigal-Borloz joins our team this spring as a Practitioner-in-Residence, working with students on

projects related to sexual orientation and gender identity. From 2018-2023, Victor served as the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. [Read more about Victor here.](#)



Clinic Alums Gather in Geneva

We have begun to organize gatherings during Clinic trips to connect current students with alumni working around world. For the second such gathering, seven Clinic alumni and two current students connected in Geneva during the UN Business & Human Rights Forum.

Pictured: Ha Ryong Jung, Jillian Rafferty, Ellie Abramov, Salomé Van Bunnem, Aminta Ossom, Taryn Shanes, Jasmine Shin, Emily Ray, Praggya Surana, and Kelsey Jost-Creegan. 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!



Professor Susan Farbstein Explains the Importance of International Human Rights Law

Susan Farbstein interviewed by the *Harvard Undergraduate Law Review* | December 2023

As part of the Law Review's interview series, Farbstein discusses her path to and role as the Director of Clinic, a recent clinical project related to enforced disappearances in Mexico, transitional justice and the right to education in South Africa, and lessons she has learned over her career. Read the interview [here](#).



"Hot Labor Summer" and the State of International Labor Rights

Aminta Ossom interviewing for Justice Matters podcast | November 2023

For the Carr Center's Justice Matters podcast, Ossom interviews the Director of the Rule of Law Program at the Solidarity Center, Jeff Vogt.

[Listen here.](#)



Making a Movement: The History and Future of Human Rights

Susan Farbstein in Carr Center for Human Rights for Policy publication | November 2023

As part of the Carr Center's ongoing celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Farbstein reflects on justice and accountability in this collection of essays. [Read more.](#)



Will a New Foreign Security Force for Haiti Embrace Accountability?

Bea Lindstrom, *Just Security* | October 2023

Lindstrom argues that the UN must implement robust accountability measures as it deploys a new security force to Haiti, given past UN missions' troubled human rights records there. She contends oversight mechanisms must be victim-centered and able to award remedies for any abuses linked to the new mission. [Read more.](#)



Settlement Reached in Historic Human Rights Lawsuit

Susan Farbstein | October 2023

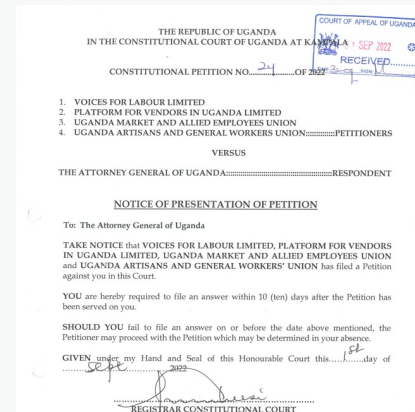
Twenty years after massacre of indigenous Bolivians, the International Human Rights Clinic and its partners settle case that secured accountability for killings. In this Q&A with Susan Farbstein, she reflects on this groundbreaking human rights lawsuit and its legacy. [Read more.](#)



Clinic Contributes to Amicus Curiae Applications before the Ugandan Constitutional Court

Aminta Ossom | September 2023

In September, eight international human rights and labor law experts, including Clinical Instructor Aminta Ossom and Clinic partner [WIEGO](#), applied to appear before the Constitutional Court of Uganda in two cases concerning informally employed workers in the country. [Read more.](#)



Access to water by low-income residents of Delhi in peril without government action, says Harvard report

Aminta Ossom in *Harvard Law Today* | September 2023

In an interview with Harvard Law Today, Clinic alumni and instructor Aminta Ossom answer why water is such a critical — and threatened — resource in Delhi, how the problem impacts women, and how governments should respond. [Read more.](#)



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Clinic Advances Project Work in New York

Highlights from New York

During the Fall 2023 semester, five International Human Rights Clinic teams traveled to New York for project work and advocacy. They hosted events, met with UN member states, launched reports, and strategized with partner organizations.

[Click here to see snapshots from their travels.](#)

ACCPI Releases Updated Brochure on Humanitarian Disarmament at October Forum in New York

The Clinic's Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative (ACCPI) **published an updated brochure** on Humanitarian Disarmament, a people-centered approach to governing weapons that seeks to prevent and remediate arms-inflicted human suffering and environmental harm through the establishment and implementation of norms. The brochure, available in **four languages**, describes the purpose, process, and players of humanitarian disarmament, and then introduces its major issues, many of which the Clinic works on. We released the brochure at the annual civil society Humanitarian Disarmament Forum in New York, which the Clinic co-organized in October 2023.



□ UDHR 75 Update!

We're now opening the **"UDHR @ 75" poster competition** to non-Harvard participants!

Join us in celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights! All information can be found at the link above, including an

updated submission link.

Please submit your artwork no later than February 1, 2024. We will announce winners and host a gallery exhibition and reception, including displays of the contest finalists' posters, in the early Spring. Finalists will be notified in advance if they are receiving a prize.



All human beings are born
free and equal
in dignity and rights

Article One. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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