The Human Rights Institute sits at the heart of human rights teaching, practice, and scholarship at Columbia Law School. Founded in 1998 by the late Professor Louis Henkin, the Institute draws on the Law School’s deep human rights tradition to support and influence human rights practice in the United States and throughout the world. Over time, the Institute and the Human Rights Clinic have become increasingly integrated, enabling us to multiply our impact on the field and engage students more fully in our work.

The Institute currently focuses its work in three main substantive areas: Counterterrorism and Human Rights; Human Rights in the United States; and Human Rights and the Global Economy. We have developed distinct approaches to work in each area, building bridges between scholarship and activism, developing capacity within the legal community, engaging governments, and modeling new strategies for progress.

The enclosed Report details our activities from September 2012–August 2013.

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Counterterrorism and Human Rights*

The Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute created the Counterterrorism and Human Rights Project to develop international law arguments and tools in response to U.S. counterterrorism practices that may negatively impact human rights in a variety of contexts, including lethal targeting with drones, domestic counterterrorism practices, and situations of armed conflict. Through this project, the Institute also supports strategic planning and network-building on national security and counterterrorism issues.

Drone Strikes and Civilian Harm

In the past year, the Human Rights Institute and Human Rights Clinic made significant contributions to national debate on U.S. drone strikes through reports, media, and government advocacy.

In fall 2012, led by Naureen Shah ’07, associate director of the Institute’s Counterterrorism and Human Rights Project and acting director of the Human Rights Clinic for the 2012–2013 term, the clinic released two reports on civilian harm and drone strikes. The Civilian Impact of Drones, co-published with the Washington D.C.–based organization Center for Civilians in Conflict, queried the impact of drone technology on civilian protection in conflict, and examined the controversial roles of the Central Intelligence Agency and military’s Joint Special Operations Command in conducting secret strikes. Retired Marine Gen. James E. Cartwright, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, quoted extensively from the report in his written testimony for a major U.S. Senate hearing on drone strikes, calling the report “thoughtful and useable.” He repeated the clinic’s recommendations, saying they “provided a menu of review actions that would serve to focus on what in our use, authorities and oversight protocols is working and what may require revision or new measures.”

The second report, Counting Drone Strike Deaths, found that popular estimates about “militant” and civilian deaths in drone strikes might be inaccurate, and that journalists quoting the estimates risked misinforming public debate. With its critique of media reporting practices, the report garnered the attention of several media outlets. The New York Times’ public editor wrote a Sunday column on the issue, highlighting the report and quoting Associate Director Naureen Shah extensively:

“Americans, according to polls, have a positive view of drones, but critics say that’s because the news media have not informed them well. The use of drones is deepening the resentment of the United States in volatile parts of the world and potentially undermining fragile democracies,” said Naureen Shah.

“It’s portrayed as picking off the bad guys from a plane,” she said. “But it’s actually surveilling entire communities, locating behavior that might be suspicious and striking groups of unknown individuals based on video data that may or may not be corroborated by eyeballing it on the ground.”


*Human Rights Institute Faculty Director Sarah Cleveland did not participate in any aspect of the Institute’s work directly related to her prior service in the U.S. government.
**Terrorism Investigations and American Muslim Communities**

With our partner, Human Rights Watch, the Institute is documenting human rights abuses arising from homegrown terrorism prosecutions in the United States. A team of four researchers, including Tarek Ismail ’11, Counterterrorism and Human Rights Fellow, and Naureen Shah, conducted in-depth research into 35 terrorism prosecutions spanning the years since 9/11.

Over a five-month period, they conducted interviews with defendants, community and family members, defense attorneys, and government officials across the United States, examining abuses ranging from the use of paid informants in investigations and prosecutions of Muslim charities, to detention conditions including solitary confinement. With the support of students in the Human Rights Clinic, the team analyzed the post-9/11 development of terrorism laws and regulations that have chilled political expression and religious association in some American Muslim communities. This work will be published in a comprehensive and ground-breaking joint report with Human Rights Watch in late 2013.

The Human Rights Institute also continued to foster networks among activists, lawyers, and advocates concerned about domestic counterterrorism practices. In August 2013, the Institute held a two-day conference of litigators and advocates of national human rights and civil rights organizations, local community groups from across the country, and area experts, to discuss strategy, policy, and messaging questions around expanded FBI surveillance powers.

**Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict**

The Human Rights Institute continued work this year on its Project on Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict, a joint project with the International Institute for Strategic Studies. The project is led by Institute Faculty Director Sarah H. Cleveland and Sir Daniel Bethlehem, Visiting Professor at Columbia Law School and the former legal adviser of the U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office, together with Rebecca Ingber, Human Rights Institute National Security Fellow. This two-year project is exploring avenues for raising legal standards in non-international armed conflicts by extending the more highly developed legal regime applicable to international armed conflicts to conflicts between states and non-state groups.

The goal of the Harmonization Project is to explore the feasibility of extending the entire Geneva Convention treaty regime to all armed conflicts, with states adhering to this regime through unilateral declarations as a baseline for all armed conflicts. If this approach is feasible, it would have the effect of clarifying the rules, raising the level of human protection, and reducing multilateral coordination problems in non-international armed conflicts, based upon rules that states are already comfortable administering in situations of armed conflict.

In conjunction with this project, the Human Rights Institute organized a steering committee of high-level current and former military personnel from the U.S., Canada, the Netherlands, and Australia, as well as leading academic experts on human rights and the law of war. The steering committee came together twice this year, in New York in November and again in Washington this spring, including a day-long meeting at the Pentagon. In April, project leaders organized a meeting with human rights civil society groups to consult with them on the project and identify shared concerns. The project will culminate in a report due out in late 2013.
Human Rights in the U.S.

Through its Human Rights in the United States Project, the Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute strengthens the capacity of domestic lawyers, policymakers, and advocates to incorporate a human rights framework into social justice advocacy efforts. We build networks, facilitate trainings, conduct educational outreach, and promote coordination among progressive public policy and advocacy groups. Through this project, the Institute also directly contributes to the development of legal theories and positive precedents based on international law through work on select litigation before U.S. courts, in international and regional fora, and through other advocacy projects.

Building the Field of Domestic Human Rights Lawyers

A centerpiece of the Institute’s Human Rights in the United States Project is our Bringing Human Rights Home (BHRH) Lawyers’ Network. This network has grown to include over 700 members—drawn from domestic social justice organizations, the U.S. programs of international human rights groups, and law school human rights programs—who are dedicated to using international law and human rights strategies as part of domestic advocacy efforts. This year’s biannual BHRH Network meetings brought members together to discuss common challenges, engage in strategic discussions, and develop joint strategies and projects on issues including U.N. advocacy, U.S. policy initiatives, U.S. matters before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and pending cases in U.S. courts. We also convened periodic meetings of the network’s working group on the Inter-American System and developed trainings of particular interest to members of the network’s working group on economic, social, and cultural rights. Through the former group, the Institute facilitated periodic communication and meetings among network members, the U.S. State Department, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

State and Local Implementation of Human Rights

The Institute continues to advocate for greater coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to promote and protect human rights within the United States. JoAnn Kamuf Ward, associate director of the Institute’s Human Rights in the United States Project and Executive Director Risa Kaufman, lead the Institute’s efforts to raise awareness of U.S. human rights obligations among state and local actors and strengthen their capacity to implement human rights locally.

As a focal point for these efforts, the Institute chairs the Human Rights at Home (HuRAH) Campaign’s State and Local Government Subcommittee, bringing state and local government actors together with advocates to develop strategies for integrating human rights into local policy. Through HuRAH, the Institute has developed a strong partnership with the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRRA), the nonprofit umbrella organization of state and local human rights and human relations agencies, and works in coordination with specific local jurisdictions, as well.

Innovative Strategies: Bringing Human Rights Home

The Human Rights Institute has built relationships with a broad array of state and local policymakers to identify and cultivate strategies for using human rights locally. In December of 2012, the Institute released Bringing Human Rights Home: How State and Local Governments Can Use Human Rights to Advance Local Policy. The report, a culmination of outreach and interviews with human rights advocates and local officials across the United States, highlights innovative human rights initiatives and offers concrete human rights strategies that jurisdictions can adopt and build upon to enhance local policy.
Over the past year, the Institute has developed new relationships with a broad array of state and local policymakers to identify and cultivate innovative strategies for using human rights locally. In December of 2012, we released *Bringing Human Rights Home: How State and Local Governments Can Use Human Rights to Advance Local Policy*, highlighting human rights initiatives from across the country and offering concrete human rights strategies that state and local officials can adopt and build upon to enhance local policy. As an outgrowth of this work, the Institute forged an important new relationship with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, resulting in that organization adopting a resolution endorsing human rights principles during its 2013 annual membership meeting.

Complementing direct engagement at the local level, the Human Rights Institute also advocates for federal resources and support for state and local human rights implementation. The Institute engages officials from the U.S. State Department, the Department of Justice, and federal agencies to explore ways to improve government coordination around human rights, and to emphasize the need for federal guidance and leadership to overcome barriers to human rights monitoring and compliance at the state and local level.

Building on its strong record of engagement with U.N. mechanisms, the Institute is actively participating in the review of U.S. compliance with the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to promote greater federal, state, and local accountability. In March, members of the Institute joined a delegation of U.S. civil society groups at the United Nations to brief members of the U.N. Human Rights Committee on the need for greater national coordination around human rights. Our advocacy, based on a report the Institute submitted to the committee in advance, offered specific recommendations to ensure human rights are promoted and protected at the local level. The committee’s list of issues—a set of questions the U.S. must address during the formal review in October 2013—includes several questions regarding federal, state, and local coordination, reflecting concerns raised by the Human Rights Institute. In response to these questions, the Institute and the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies submitted a shadow report to the U.N. Human Rights Committee in August. The report details the multiple barriers that state and local officials face in their efforts to advance human rights and offers recommendations for federal reform.

Promoting Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

The Human Rights Institute develops resource materials to promote and expand protections for economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights, and to build the capacity of lawyers, including legal aid attorneys, to incorporate international human rights strategies into their work. Led by Executive Director Risa Kaufman, this year, the Institute developed new resources for U.S. lawyers seeking to engage human rights in their economic justice work. The Institute presented strategies for incorporating human rights into ESC-related advocacy efforts at the 2012 annual National Lawyers’ Guild Convention in Pasadena, California. Our annual CLE/symposium was a full-day event focused on the right to housing. Related to the event, we are working with symposium participants to develop scholarly articles on the right to housing, for publication in the Columbia Law School *Human Rights Law Review* in 2014. And, working with American University Washington College...
of Law’s Program on Humanitarian Law and Human Rights’ Local Human Rights Lawyering Project, as well as the Northeastern University School of Law Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy (PHRGE) and the New York Legal Aid Society, in July 2012, we held an all-day training for New York legal services and legal aid lawyers, designed to introduce them to the human rights framework and develop arguments and strategies for integrating human rights norms and strategies into their daily practice.

In addition, over the past year, the Human Rights Institute deepened its relationship with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, through collaboration on a project related to the participation of people living in poverty. In October 2012, the Institute convened an experts’ meeting examining the importance and challenges of ensuring participation of people living in poverty in decisions that impact their lives, and, through the Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic, contributed research to the Special Rapporteur’s thematic report on the topic to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Access to Justice

Millions of people who are poor or low income in the United States lack legal representation when facing a crisis such as eviction, foreclosure, loss of subsistence benefits, or domestic violence. Building off of our previous work with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on her 2012 thematic report focused on access to justice and human rights, this year Executive Director Risa Kaufman led the Institute’s advocacy to address the need for legal representation in the United States, particularly in civil cases where basic needs are at stake. To leverage the attention brought to access to justice issues by the Special Rapporteur’s report, and to develop models for U.S. advocates seeking to engage with U.N. experts, the Institute contributed research and drafting for a complaint filed by the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau and a coalition of 27 other legal and social service organizations to the Special Rapporteur. The complaint detailed the United States’ failure to protect the denial and limitation of access to migrant agricultural workers by legal advocates, healthcare providers, and other community service providers.

The Human Rights Institute is also raising the issue of access to justice with the U.N. Human Rights Committee as part of the U.S. review under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. Through the Human Rights Clinic, we developed a report on access to counsel in civil cases, detailing the civil justice gap in the United States and recommending federal reforms to ensure that people who are low-income and poor have meaningful access to legal representation in cases where basic human needs are at stake, including in immigration proceedings. We successfully lobbied the U.N. Human Rights Committee to include the issue of access to counsel in civil cases in the list of issues presented to the United States in advance of the review. And, in August 2013, we submitted our report to the committee on behalf of the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, the National Center for Access to Justice at Cardozo Law School, Northeastern University School of Law Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy, and other groups.
In addition to direct advocacy, the Institute develops trainings, scholarship, expert meetings, and networking opportunities to strengthen U.S. advocates’ engagement with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The Inter-American Human Rights System

The Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute seeks to bolster the efficacy and impact of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) through strategic litigation and advocacy for improved U.S. engagement with the IACHR and the Inter-American System more broadly. This work is led by JoAnn Kamuf Ward, associate director, Human Rights in the U.S. Project.

The Human Rights Institute continues to serve as co-counsel in IACHR cases related to domestic violence and juvenile life without parole, seeking to vindicate individual human rights violations and promote systemic change to prevent future violations.

To facilitate awareness and coordinate U.S. advocates using the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Institute coordinates an Inter-American Working Group within the BHRH Lawyers’ Network. The working group provides a forum to discuss notable developments and opportunities for collaboration to strengthen the IACHR.

To amplify the positive results obtained from the commission, the Institute develops advocacy resources and facilitates expert workshops and trainings.

In November 2012, the working group held its fourth annual meeting with the State Department and the IACHR. These meetings offer opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogues on the importance of U.S. participation in the Inter-American System and ways to strengthen U.S. implementation of commission recommendations.

As part of its larger efforts to integrate advocacy at the United Nations and the IACHR, the Human Rights Institute worked with the ACLU to develop a joint statement to the 57th session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, highlighting the need for national governments to take effective measures at the national, state, and local levels to integrate human rights standards into governmental responses to domestic violence in the United States.

And, to further advance regional jurisprudence on juvenile sentencing, the Institute, through the Human Rights Clinic, submitted an amicus brief to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in a case involving the use of sentencias perpetuas for juveniles in Argentina. The brief calls for the elimination of all forms of life sentences for juveniles based on the American Declaration, the American Convention, and international and comparative human rights standards.

JoAnn Kamuf Ward, Associate Director of the Institute’s Human Rights in the U.S. Project
Human Rights in the Global Economy

The Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School works on a range of issues arising out of developments in the global economy. The projects extend from the labor rights of producers in global supply chains to the impacts of large-scale land acquisitions and the development of tools in the struggle to combat the “resource curse.” The underlying issues include violations of traditional civil and political rights as well as efforts to implement economic and social rights, particularly the rights to food, housing, and livelihood. Much of the Institute’s specific work goes beyond traditional human rights advocacy to focus on the intersection of development, markets, and human rights.

The Extractive Sector

Over the past decade, the Human Rights Institute has developed a significant niche in research and advocacy aimed at ending the “resource curse.” Some of the work focuses on the direct human rights impacts of mining and land-based petroleum development. But most focuses on the billions of dollars invested and generated by the sector in the developing world, with a view toward bolstering democratic engagement and ensuring the accountability of governments and investors.

There are two main avenues of work: one thematic and one focused on a single country, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). With support from the Revenue Watch Institute, the Institute has engaged in multi-country studies of mining deals and their enforcement around the world.

The Institute also continues to collaborate with The Carter Center on a long-term project focused on industrial mining in the DRC. Through the Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic, seven generations of students have traveled to the DRC to support the work, including Elisabeth (Lies) Caesens ’09 LL.M., who now runs The Carter Center project based in the mining capital of Lubumbashi. Barbara Bijelic ’12 worked on the project as a clinic student and then spent 2012–2013 in Lubumbashi with The Carter Center as a Columbia Law School Leebron Fellow. With support from the Human Rights Clinic, they are completing a comprehensive analysis of the extraordinary ups and downs in the sector since the DRC’s democratic elections in 2006.

Tea Plantations

The tea sector is the largest organized sector in India, employing about three million workers on plantations that date from colonial rule and, in many ways, have changed little since. This is particularly true of conditions for workers and their families, whose impoverishment and isolation have remained unchanged despite strong domestic law, international norms, and recently evolving private standards.

Since 2010, the Institute has focused on one stark example of the gap between norms and practice, the vast holdings of Tata Global Beverages, based in Assam and West
Human rights initiatives 2012–2013

Bengal. Tata is one of the two largest companies in the tea sector, worldwide. Initial research and collaboration with local activists suggested widespread problems related to labor and living conditions. But Tata’s plantations have a larger significance in terms of human rights in the global economy. The company has taken advantage of marketing and economic opportunities that obligate it to go beyond domestic law. In a transaction that is still ongoing, Tata teamed up with the World Bank’s private investment division (the IFC) to spin the plantations off into a separate company. In doing so, Tata committed itself—and the new company—to the IFC Performance Standards as well as the private certification requirements of Social Accountability International and the Ethical Tea Partnership. In this regard, the company provides a case study in the effort to enforce the complex overlap of public and private standards of social responsibility in the global economy.

Following wide consultation with unions and NGOs, students from the Human Rights Clinic traveled to the region and to Washington, D.C., with Professor Peter Rosenblum, former director of the Human Rights Clinic and faculty co-director of the Institute, and Ashwini Sukthankar, an expert on transnational labor issues and adviser to the project. The Institute has focused its attention on research and advocacy. Research teams documented living conditions and interviewed workers, management, and others. Directly and in collaboration with local NGOs, the Institute is pursuing complaints through the IFC’s ombudsman mechanism and will publish a case study on the Tata plantations and the World Bank’s role in a forthcoming report.
Additional Global Initiatives

As new opportunities arise to cultivate the advancement of human rights globally, the Human Rights Institute and its faculty are frequently called upon to provide expert advice and leadership.

Burma and Rule of Law

Faculty Director Sarah H. Cleveland has helped to lead Columbia Law School’s efforts to assist with strengthening legal education and the rule of law in Burma. In February, Cleveland traveled to Burma to participate in seminars on constitutional reform and the rule of law, and engage in outreach to members of the Myanmar Parliament, the Yangon University Law Department, civil society groups, and the U.S. Embassy.

While in Burma, at the request of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and chairwoman of the National League for Democracy Aung San Suu Kyi, Cleveland presented a half-day seminar on Burma’s Constitution and ways the legislature can help strengthen democracy as the country embarks on liberalization after decades of repressive military rule. During the seminar, she discussed with 50 members of Parliament how the government can strengthen the rule of law through legislation, interpretation, a commitment to international law, and ultimately, through constitutional reform. She also participated in a seminar in peace building and federalism with representatives of the Myanmar Government and Kachin rebel forces at the Myanmar Peace Center, and another seminar on rule of law and the 2008 Burmese Constitution for graduate students.

Cleveland’s seminar for members of the Burmese Parliament came about as a result of Suu Kyi’s visit to Columbia University last October, where she called upon U.S. universities to help support her party’s efforts to strengthen human rights and the rule of law in Burma. Cleveland’s visit to the country was part of Columbia’s multi-disciplinary response to Suu Kyi’s request. The Human Rights Institute is engaged in ongoing outreach to Columbia University faculty and departments, the U.S. government, Open Society Foundations, and numerous academics and NGOs in the U.S., the U.K., and elsewhere that are engaged in rule of law support in Burma.

New Issues for a New Parliament

“Burma’s 2008 constitution embeds the military in the government, giving it 25 percent of the seats in Parliament,” says Cleveland. “It was not intended to be a transformative constitution. And yet, the constitution created a national parliament, including representation for the first time for ethnic minorities. It articulates individual rights, the principle of an independent judiciary, and establishes a nascent system of federalism. These are building blocks of the basic elements of the rule of law. If protected and allowed to flourish, they could evolve into a true democracy.”

“Some of the members who participated in the seminar had first been elected to the Parliament in 1990, and then were detained for 19 years,” she says. “They were re-elected again and finally seated in 2010. It was very moving.”
Venice Commission

In April 2013, Faculty Director **Sarah H. Cleveland** was re-appointed to a four-year term as the U.S. member on the Venice Commission. The U.S. was an observer member on the commission prior to April, when it joined as a full member. The Venice Commission, officially the European Commission for Democracy through Law, is the Council of Europe’s expert advisory body on constitutional and human rights matters. The commission provides assistance to emerging democracies through help drafting constitutions, providing technical assistance, submitting expert opinions to courts at their request, and engaging in election monitoring, among other activities. It is particularly active in providing expert assistance on rights compliance to countries in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Arab Spring states.

In October, Cleveland traveled to Venice as the U.S. expert, to help advise members of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia on their efforts to draft a new constitution in the wake of the 2011 revolution. She returned to Venice in December to advise the commission about recent constitutional developments in the United States, and attended the commission’s plenary sessions in March and June. Going forward, Cleveland will participate in the ongoing work of the commission in evaluating the compatibility of national laws and legal reforms with fundamental rights.

“It’s a very delicate process,” Cleveland said of the commission’s work. “There is a great deal of knowledge and experience that can be drawn upon in the drafting of constitutions. Part of the reason for the Venice Commission’s success is its international composition and independence—59 countries are full members, and all of the experts serve in their personal capacity.”

Sarah Cleveland (center) at a meeting of the Venice Commission
Leadership Events

In its mission to support and influence human rights practice in the United States and throughout the world, Columbia Law School’s Human Rights Institute sponsors events that promote innovative scholarship and activism, strategic planning, network building, and the continued education of human rights practitioners.

Symposia and Continuing Legal Education Trainings

BRINGING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS HOME: THE HUMAN RIGHT TO HOUSING IN THE U.S.

April 26, 2013, New York: The Institute’s 2013 BHRH Lawyers’ Network annual Human Rights in the United States Symposium and Continuing Legal Education (CLE) brought together approximately 150 attorneys, advocates, and federal, state, and local government officials representing over 80 organizations from 15 states for a national symposium “Bringing Economic and Social Rights Home: The Right to Adequate Housing in the U.S.” The event was co-sponsored by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP), the Northeastern University School of Law Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy (PHRGE), and the Columbia Law School Human Rights Law Review. The symposium explored strategies for advancing economic and social rights advocacy in the U.S., with a particular focus on the right to housing. The participants, co-sponsors, and speakers examined legal developments pertaining to the right to housing and related rights, both internationally and in the U.S., and, drawing on international human rights, explored promising approaches to establishing the right to housing in U.S. courts and through other advocacy efforts. The event was generously hosted by Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP.

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN THE U.S.: A TRAINING FOR LEGAL AID ATTORNEYS IN NEW YORK CITY

July 12, 2013, New York: In partnership with the Local Human Rights Lawyering Project at American University Washington College of Law, Northeastern University School of Law Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy, and the New York Legal Aid Society, the Human Rights Institute hosted a day-long training for New York City–based legal services attorneys on strategies for integrating human rights standards and approaches into local advocacy.

“The Institute draws people together from diverse fields to tackle cutting-edge human rights problems and to develop creative solutions, whether the issue is applying international human rights norms in the U.S., ensuring human rights compliance in the war on terror, strengthening the Inter-American System of human rights, or promoting economic justice around the world.”

Reena Shah, Director, Human Rights Project, Maryland Legal Aid Bureau
The Harmonization Project Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for the Institute’s Harmonization Project is comprised of a distinctive group of leading experts in international humanitarian law from inside and outside of government, including Major General Blaise Cathcart, Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Armed Forces; Brigadier General Richard C. Gross, U.S. Army, Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Françoise Hampson, Professor of Law, University of Essex; Col. (rtd) Dr. Bruce Oswald CSC, Associate Professor at Melbourne Law School; Sir Adam Roberts, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at Oxford University; Professor Michael Schmitt, Stockton Chair of International Law, U.S. Naval War College; Elizabeth Wilmshurst, Associate Fellow in International Law, Chatham House; and Marten Zwanenburg, Senior Legal Advisor in the Netherlands Ministry of Defense, among others. Additional experts, including in international human rights law, are also lending their expertise to the project.

Conferences and Workshops

EXPERTS’ CONVENING ON PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY

November 11, 2013, New York: In collaboration with U.N. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, the Institute convened a small group of experts from civil society, U.N. agencies, and academia working in the field of participatory governance and community organizing. The roundtable was an opportunity for participants to provide input about the challenges and opportunities of designing and implementing participatory processes involving people living in poverty to aid the Special Rapporteur in defining the structure and content of her report to the U.N. Human Rights Council as well as to inform research priorities for the collaborative research project.

PROJECT ON HARMONIZING STANDARDS OF ARMED CONFLICT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

November 29–30, 2013, New York: The Human Rights Institute hosted the second meeting of the steering committee of the Project on Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict. Committee members met for two days at Columbia Law School to discuss key elements of the project.

TARGETED KILLINGS: EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

March 14–15, 2013, New York: The Institute held a closed meeting of human rights litigators, advocates, and scholars to focus on strategies for targeted killings advocacy in the second Obama administration. Following on extensive research and outreach to a coalition of human rights organizations and academic institutions, the meeting served as a space to discuss points of consensus, plan future advocacy, and learn more about developments in the field.

HARMONIZATION PROJECT AND HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES CONSULTATION

April 2, 2013, New York: The Institute organized a half-day meeting with human rights experts to discuss the Project on Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict. Project leaders met with advocates to discuss the project, receive input, and explore areas of shared concern.

Members of the Harmonization Project’s Steering Committee, with others, at the Pentagon.
HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERING AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL
April 22, 2013, Washington, D.C.: This day-long conference, co-sponsored by the American University Washington College of Law Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law and the Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy at Northeastern University School of Law, brought legal aid attorneys and juvenile public defenders together to share strategies and experiences with using human rights law in local and state advocacy.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF THE KIOBEL V. ROYAL DUTCH PETROLEUM DECISION
April 23, 2013 (online briefing): This event, co-sponsored with the American University Washington College of Law’s Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law and Program on International and Comparative Environmental Law, examined the human rights implications of Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum and how it may impact future human rights cases.

PROJECT ON HARMONIZING STANDARDS IN ARMED CONFLICT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
May 15–17, 2013, Washington, D.C.: At the steering committee meeting, organized by the Human Rights Institute and hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, committee members welcomed the legal counsel to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff as a new member, discussed updates on the project, and reviewed the draft report.

TEACHING BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOP
May 30–31, 2013, New York: The Institute hosted the third annual Teaching Business and Human Rights Workshop, bringing together more than 35 U.S. and foreign faculty to discuss the emerging field of teaching business and human rights. The Institute co-sponsored the event with Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights.

COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE: STRATEGIZING FOR SOLUTIONS
August 15–16, 2013, New York: This two-day conference of litigators and advocates focused on expanded FBI surveillance of Muslim communities. The meeting brought together individuals from national human rights and civil rights organizations, local community groups from across the country, and area experts, to discuss strategy, policy, and messaging questions around expanded FBI surveillance powers.

BRINGING HUMAN RIGHTS HOME LAWYERS’ NETWORK
Our bi-annual Bringing Human Rights Home (BHRH) Lawyers’ Network meetings brought together network members to discuss common challenges, advocacy strategies, U.S. policy initiatives, developments in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and pending cases in U.S. courts. In conjunction with our fall meeting, on October 25, 2012, the Institute hosted a public discussion entitled Catalysts for Change: How the U.N.’s Independent Experts Promote Human Rights. Theodore Piccone, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, joined Jamil Dakwar, director of the Human Rights Program at the American Civil Liberties Union, to discuss the role of U.N. Special Procedures in promoting human rights internationally and within the United States. Prior to the spring network meeting on June 4, 2013, the Institute welcomed Kyle Courtney of Harvard Law School to lead a resource training and update on international and foreign legal research.

The Institute convenes twice yearly meetings of our Bringing Human Rights Home Lawyers’ Network.
Speaker Series

The Human Rights Institute is the focal point for human rights education, scholarship, and practice at Columbia Law School. During the academic year, the Institute runs a dynamic speakers’ program and works closely with Columbia Law School student groups on other programming activities. This wide variety of programming brings our students together with an array of distinguished human rights scholars, activists, diplomats, and government officials from around the world. A sampling follows:

**THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA**
October 8, 2012: Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Deputy Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States on Syria

**ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CLAIMS TRIBUNAL: THE CASE OF SHEIKH JARRAH**
October 9, 2012: Michael Mansfield QC (Palestinian side); Michael Sfard (Israeli side); Sami Ershied (Israeli side); and John Dugard, Chair, Israeli-Palestinian Claims Tribunal

**PROSECUTING ATROCITY CRIMES AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT: IS THE ICC SUCCEEDING?**
October 11, 2012: Alex Whiting, Coordinator, International Criminal Court Prosecutions

**WIKILEAKS AND BEYOND: THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL MEDIA ON NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND POLITICS**
October 15, 2012: P.J. Crowley, former Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Spokesman, Department of State; Fellow, Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication, The George Washington University
PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED IN DOMESTIC TRIALS FOR ATROCITY CRIMES

October 23, 2012: Stephen J. Rapp, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues; Param-Preet Singh, Senior Counsel, International Justice Program, Human Rights Watch; Toby Cadman, Barrister, 9 Bedford Row International; Larry D. Johnson, Adjunct Professor of Law, Columbia Law School

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE: HOW THE U.N.’S INDEPENDENT EXPERTS PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

October 25, 2012: Theodore Piccone, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; and Jamil Dakwar, Director, Human Rights Program, ACLU

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD: MULTIPLE STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN THE U.S. AND LATIN AMERICA

November 13, 2012: Katrina Anderson, Lara Rabiee, and Katy Mayall from the Center for Reproductive Rights

THE TRANSFER OF PERSONS AT RISK OF TORTURE IN EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAW: THE RELATIVE PROTECTION OF AN ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION

November 15, 2012: Andrea Saccucci, leading counsel in Italy for cases before the European Court of Human Rights

DELIVERED INTO ENEMY HANDS: U.S.-LED ABUSE AND RENDITION OF OPPONENTS TO GADDAFI’S LIBYA


Left to right: Jamil Dakwar, Director, Human Rights Program, ACLU and Theodore Piccone, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
AMERICA AND PAKISTAN: PROSPECTS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP
November 20, 2012: Cameron Munter, former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan

LAW AND LAWYERING AT NATO
November 26, 2012: Peter Olson, Legal Adviser to Secretary General, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

CURRENT ISSUES IN THE LAW OF MILITARY OPERATIONS
November 28, 2012: Major-General Blaise Cathcart, Judge Advocate General, Canadian Armed Forces

THE TERROR FACTORY: INSIDE THE FBI’S MANUFACTURED WAR ON TERRORISM

THE ARAB SPRING’S TALL ORDER: SECURITY, POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY
February 4, 2013: Lotfi Maktouf, Tunisian civil society activist and founder of Almadanya

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA—A DISCUSSION WITH THE LEGAL RESOURCES CENTER
February 5, 2013: Legal Resources Center attorneys Jason Brickhill and Cameron Mcconnachi. Co-sponsored with Columbia Law School’s Social Justice Initiatives

THE LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT AND DRUG POLICY DEBATE
February 11, 2013: Marco Sassoli, Director, Department of International Law and International Organization, University of Geneva; Noam Lubell, School of Law, University of Essex; Gabor Rona, International Legal Director, Human Rights First. Co-sponsored by Center for Human Rights and Drug Policy, and Righstlink
HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN NON-INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT
February 12, 2013: Marco Sassòli, Director, Department of International Law and International Organization, University of Geneva

NATIONAL SECURITY AND EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAW
February 20, 2013: Iain Cameron, Professor of Public International Law, Uppsala University

WAR AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE
March 5, 2013: Francesco Francioni, Visiting Professor, Columbia Law School; Professor of International Law and Human Rights and Director of the Law Academy, European University Institute

THE ICJ JUDGEMENT IN GERMANY V. ITALY, ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND STATE IMMUNITY FOR GRAVE BREACHES OF HUMAN RIGHTS
March 13, 2013: Francesco Francioni, Visiting Professor, Columbia Law School; Professor of International Law and Human Rights and Director of the Law Academy, European University Institute

HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA: LITIGATION, POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND THE PATH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE
March 14, 2013: Jorge Contesse, Visiting Human Rights Fellow, Yale Law School

Wendy Patten, Open Society Justice Initiatives, and Gabor Rona, Human Rights First
Full text for much of the scholarship listed below can be found on our website. Visit: web.law.columbia.edu/human-rights-institute/publications


Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic, *Counting Drone Strike Deaths* (October 2012)


Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic, *Access to Justice: Ensuring Meaningful Access to Counsel in Civil Cases*, Response to the Fourth Periodic Report of the United States to the U.N. Human Rights Committee (August 2013) (endorsed by National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel; National Legal Aid & Defender Association; Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.; National Center for Access to Justice at Cardozo Law School; Brennan Center for Justice; Center for Law and Social Policy; Sargent Shriver Center on Poverty Law; Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute; Northeastern University School of Law Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy)
Faculty and Staff

Columbia Law School has been a pioneer in international human rights since the 1960s, when the late Professor Louis Henkin transformed the teaching of law here to reflect the growing need for this new field of study. Today, Institute faculty and scholars continue to break new ground, drawing on the Law School’s deep human rights tradition, to support and influence human rights practice in the United States and throughout the world.

SARAH H. CLEVELAND, the Louis Henkin Professor of Human and Constitutional Rights, and faculty director of the Human Rights Institute, continues to pursue her interests in the domestic application of human rights law and the intersection of human rights, constitutional law, and national security.

Cleveland, together with Sir Daniel Bethlehem and National Security Fellow Rebecca Ingber, continued work on the Project on Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict. The project held two, multi-day meetings of the steering committee in New York and Washington, D.C., as well as a half-day consultation with other human rights experts and advocates, among other activities. The project’s final report on the application of the law of international armed conflict to conflicts involving non-state armed groups is due at the end of this year.

Building on her prior work on human rights sanctions in the country, Cleveland also helped to establish Columbia Law School’s Project on Rule of Law in Burma. Cleveland visited Burma in February where she presented the seminar “Burma’s 2008 Constitution and the Rule of Law” for Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the Myanmar Parliament, and participated in rule of law seminars for graduate students in Yangon and with representatives of the Myanmar Government and Kachin rebel forces hosted by the Myanmar Peace Center. She continues to assist in supporting law reform efforts in Burma.

Until April 2013, Cleveland served as the U.S. expert observer member to the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Council of Europe’s expert advisory body on constitutional and human rights matters. In April 2013, the United States joined the Venice Commission as a full member, and re-appointed her to a four-year term as the U.S. member on the commission. In this capacity, she participated in the ongoing work of the commission in evaluating the compatibility of national laws and legal reforms with fundamental rights.

Additionally, this year Cleveland was asked by the American Law Institute (ALI) to serve as the co-coordinating reporter to direct and oversee the entire development and production of ALI’s Restatement (Fourth) of the Foreign Relations Law of the United States.

Cleveland continues to serve on the Secretary of State’s Advisory Committee on International Law, which meets twice annually in Washington to provide the State Department with expert legal advice on matters of contemporary significance.

Together with Harold Hongju Koh, Scholar in Residence at Columbia Law School and Sterling Professor of International Law at Yale; Professor Laurence Helfer, Duke University School of Law; and Professor Ryan Goodman of New York University’s School of Law, Cleveland submitted an amicus brief for foreign and comparative law experts to the U.S. Supreme Court in Hollingsworth v. Perry, the California same-sex marriage case. The brief addressed evolving comparative foreign approaches to same-sex marriage.

A Farewell


Peter studied with Louis Henkin as an LL.M. student at Columbia in 1992. Upon his return to Columbia, Peter’s pioneering work on human rights and the global economy, particularly with respect to transparency in oil and mining contracting in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Liberia, and Equatorial Guinea. He also led students in research and advocacy related to mining projects in Peru and South Africa, and tea plantations in India, among others. Through his work with the Institute and the Human Rights Clinic, he has inspired generations of law students to pursue careers as human rights lawyers in the U.S. and around the globe.

We have been grateful for Peter’s inspiration, leadership, and deep knowledge. Peter is moving up the Hudson to Bard College where, in the great tradition of Louis Henkin, he will teach human rights law to undergraduates.
In August, Cleveland submitted an amicus brief together with Professor William Dodge of Hastings College of Law in the Supreme Court case of *Bond v. United States*, arguing that Congress enjoys constitutional authority to implement treaties such as the Chemical Weapons Convention under its Article I power to “define and punish ... Offenses against the Law of Nations.”

Cleveland presented a number of lectures and remarks on expert panels this year. In September, she gave the annual Louis Henkin Lecture on Human Rights at Miami Law School. In October, she was a panelist on “Guantanamo Military Commissions and the Future of the International Criminal Law” at a Columbia Law School roundtable honoring Louis Henkin, which was co-sponsored by the International Association of Comparative Constitutional Law in November. At the Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law in April, Cleveland was a panelist and organizer of a panel on “American Treaty Exceptionalism.”

**RISA E. KAUFMAN**, executive director of the Human Rights Institute and lecturer-in-law, continued to expand resources and opportunities for U.S. lawyers seeking to integrate human rights into their domestic practice, foster accountability for the U.S.'s human rights treaty commitments, and advance economic, social, and cultural rights within the United States.

Kaufman spoke frequently throughout the year on domestic implementation of human rights, and conducted trainings for U.S. lawyers around the country, including at the National Lawyers Guild’s annual conference in Pasadena, California; the Local Human Rights Lawyering Project’s conference “Human Rights Lawyering at the State and Local Level,” at American University Washington College of Law, in Washington, D.C.; the International Justice Resource Center’s training on the international human rights framework, in San Francisco, California; a roundtable titled “Is there a Human Rights Movement,” at the 2013 Law and Society Conference in Boston, Massachusetts; and at a co-sponsored training on human rights for legal services lawyers, at Columbia Law School.

This year, Kaufman also supervised a team of Human Rights Clinic students working with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, to contribute research and develop an experts convening related to her thematic report to the U.N. Human Rights Council on participation of persons living in poverty. In addition, building on work that Kaufman and students did with the Special Rapporteur related to her 2012 report to the U.N. General Assembly on access to justice and human rights, Kaufman and the students assisted a coalition of legal services providers in submitting a Complaint to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrant farmworkers to access legal services and other community providers and also engaged in advocacy around access to justice issues with the U.N. Human Rights Committee in conjunction with the U.S. review under ICCPR.

As part of the Institute’s work to build the field of domestic human rights lawyers, Kaufman continued to lead the Bringing Human Rights Home Lawyers’ Network. In addition, she developed and taught a new seminar at Columbia Law School titled “Human Rights at Home: Advocating for Domestic Implementation of Human Rights,” and is at work on a law school course book on domestic human rights advocacy with Martha Davis (Northeastern University School of Law) and Johanna Kalb (Loyola University Law School), forthcoming 2015.

**JOANN KAMUF WARD**, associate director of the Institute’s Human Rights in the United States Project and lecturer-in-law, leads efforts to build the capacity of state and local agencies and officials to implement human rights. In close coordination with the Human Rights at Home Campaign, she engages in advocacy and outreach at the international, federal, and local levels.

To raise public awareness of how states, cities, and counties are deeply engaged in human rights implementation, Ward published multiple op-eds, including, “Human Rights Principles Should Start Here at Home” in *Politico*. Along with members of two human rights commissions, she spoke about the benefits of using a human rights framework at the 2012
“Governing for Racial Equity Conference,” sponsored by the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative. During the trip, she and several students met with Seattle’s deputy mayor to explore opportunities for incorporating human rights locally. Ward also facilitated a training on state and local human rights implementation at the annual Urban Justice Center Human Rights Institute in March and spoke at the 2013 annual IAOHRA conference in Denver, Colorado.

To ensure that local human rights implementation remains a federal priority, Ward traveled to the U.N. in Geneva to meet with international human rights experts, calling on the U.S. to take concrete action to build state and local government capacity to understand and use human rights.

In addition, Ward co-coordinates the Bringing Human Rights Home Lawyers’ Network Inter-American Working Group. Her work includes engaging directly with the United States to improve U.S. engagement with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and developing resources for lawyers working within the Inter-American System. She also serves as co-counsel in several IACHR cases on behalf of the Institute. In a case challenging the sentence of juvenile life without parole in Michigan, Ward worked with the ACLU and the ACLU’s Juvenile Life Without Parole Initiative to draft and file a petition to the IACHR on the merits of the case. She also continues to advocate for implementation of the IACHR’s landmark decision in the Jessica Lenahan (Gonzalez) case with co-counsel, the ACLU and the University of Miami Human Rights Clinic. Ward presented on the significance of the Lenahan decision at the fall meeting of the ABA Section on International Law.

In 2012–2013, Ward also served as the acting deputy-director of the Human Rights Clinic.

TAREK Z. ISMAIL ’11, Counterterrorism and Human Rights Fellow, has spent the past two years engaging with grassroots communities, civil rights attorneys, and policy advocates to develop research and advocacy strategies, focusing particularly on domestic counterterrorism practices.

Building on those discussions, Ismail initiated research with Human Rights Clinic students into the human rights implications of counterterrorism-based surveillance, investigations, and prosecutions of Muslims in the United States. In the fall and winter of 2012–2013, Ismail and Associate Director Naureen Shah met with families, community members, and defendants impacted by “homegrown terrorism”–focused investigations and prosecutions.

Ismail has also worked to advance collaboration among experts on pressing concerns with U.S. counterterrorism policy. He facilitated a convening between criminal defense and civil liberties attorneys to enable a concrete discussion on opportunities for cooperation in domestic counterterrorism prosecutions. Ismail also commented on breaking news regarding U.S. drone strikes policy for radio and television outlets, including appearing on Arise America.
SIR DANIEL BETHLEHEM, KCMG QC, is a senior fellow at the Human Rights Institute, a visiting professor at Columbia Law School, and consulting senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). With Professor Sarah Cleveland, he is leading the Institute’s Project on Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict. As the former legal adviser to the U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Bethlehem was responsible for the legal oversight of all U.K. military, intelligence, and foreign relations activities during the period from 2006 through May 2011. He has extensive personal and professional relationships with legal and policy decision makers in the U.K. and other European governments, as well as with the U.S. military and intelligence leadership from both the Bush and Obama Administrations. As a former member of the law faculty at Cambridge University and director of the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, he also has an extensive background in the law of human rights protection.

REBECCA INGBER is an associate research scholar at Columbia Law School and a Consulting Fellow for Law and Strategy with the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). She has been the Human Rights Institute’s National Security Fellow this year with its Project on Harmonizing Standards in Armed Conflict, which is exploring avenues for raising legal standards in non-international armed conflicts. Ingber worked with Sir Daniel Bethlehem and Professor Sarah Cleveland to convene two meetings of the project’s steering committee, which is comprised of a distinctive group of leading experts in international humanitarian law from inside and outside of U.S. and foreign governments, and she is helping to produce the project’s report and proposal to states that will incorporate the results of these meetings. Ingber also published an article on national security and human rights decision making in the U.S. executive branch: “Interpretation Catalysts and Executive Branch Legal Decisionmaking,” 38 Yale J. Int’l. L., 359 (2013).

GRETA MOSESON, the Institute’s program manager, assisted with the planning of the Institute’s symposia, numerous conferences and workshops, and a robust speaker series of human rights practitioners for the Columbia community. In addition, Moseson assisted with media strategy and outreach for the Institute’s reports on counterterrorism and domestic human rights issues. She continued to serve as the main point of contact and communications for the Institute as well as provide support to Institute faculty and staff.
Graduates of Columbia Law School are actively engaged throughout the human rights movement, both in traditional fields and at the cutting edge. Leading positive change in the United States and across the world, they work for human rights NGOs, government, and academia. Others spearhead pro bono activities in the private sector or launch new organizations to bring innovative approaches to the fight for human rights and social and economic justice.

**SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI**

**CATHY ALBISA ’89** enrolled at Columbia Law School with a goal of becoming a constitutional rights attorney to fight for the rights of marginalized communities. After a clerkship with the Honorable Mitchell Cohen in the District of New Jersey, Albisa joined the national staff of the American Civil Liberties Union as part of the Reproductive Freedom Project and later helped found the Center for Reproductive Rights. After six years of litigation and federal lobbying, she came to feel that other strategies were needed to challenge the limitations of our domestic constitutional framework, including within her field the lack of recognition for a right to health. Turning to the human rights field and framework for innovative approaches to U.S. social change work, Albisa developed expertise in international human rights law while co-teaching the International Women’s Human Rights Law Clinic at CUNY School of Law and as the associate director of the Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School. Understanding that legal strategies were not enough on their own, she began to explore multi-sectoral approaches as she founded the U.S. Program at the Center for Economic and Social Rights, with a particular focus on supporting grassroots organizing. In 2004, Albisa founded the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI), which brings an interdisciplinary approach to supporting grassroots campaigns advancing human rights in the United States. NESRI is the only economic and social rights organization in the United States using local action with a global vision to create national change.

**CHRIS ALBIN-LACKEY ’04** decided to enroll in law school after three years in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia and Madagascar. He wanted to focus his studies on international human rights law after seeing how human rights abuses and unaccountable governance affected the lives of people he lived and worked with during those years. He chose Columbia Law School because he thought it offered the best combination of a strong academic focus on human rights issues and opportunities for practical work in the human rights field. Albin-Lackey spent his 1L summer in South Africa working for the South African Human Rights Commission and his 2L summer working with Human Rights Watch (HRW) in New York. He focused the bulk of his 3L year on projects undertaken by the Law School’s Human Rights Clinic, and had the opportunity to travel to Sao Tome and Principe to meet with key government and civil society leaders, including the country’s president, in connection with that work. After graduating, Albin-Lackey obtained a Sandler Fellowship to work for a year at HRW covering Ethiopia—a job he felt amply prepared to take on thanks to the experience he had gained at Columbia. That fellowship transitioned into a permanent job as a researcher, and he has been at Human Rights Watch going on nine years now. During that time Albin-Lackey has worked as the organization’s researcher on the Horn of Africa and on Nigeria, and currently serves as senior researcher on business and human rights.
PAOLA GARCIA REY ’10 LL.M.
came to Columbia to complete a Master in Law Program (LL.M.) on a partial Human Rights Fellowship. Before coming to New York, Rey worked with the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS)—a prominent NGO in her native Argentina—as lead attorney in the litigation before international human rights courts, mainly the Inter-American Human Rights System. She conducted several cases that involved the claim of indigenous right to land, migrants’ rights, the decriminalization of freedom of expression, and the situation of children deprived of their liberty. While at Columbia Law School she participated as one of a few LL.M.s in the Human Rights Clinic where she continued her work in the Inter-American Human Rights System. While in the clinic, Garcia Rey traveled to the Dominican Republic to work on Benito Tide Mendez, a case before the Inter-American Court and Commission involving the mass expulsion of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent from the Dominican Republic. She was also involved in advocacy and research related to domestic violence before the Inter-American System. While at Columbia, Garcia Rey was named a James Kent Scholar and a recipient of the Parker School Certificate of Achievement in International and Comparative Law. After completing her LL.M., Rey stayed on as counsel with the Human Rights Institute, leading the Inter-American System Project from 2010–2011. She also worked as a consultant at UNICEF-NY and the ESCR-Network. Since returning to Argentina, Rey has worked as a consultant at the Institute of Human Rights Policies of Mercosur and at the Defensoria General de la Nación. She is working now as coordinator of the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights Area at Amnesty International. García Rey continues to focus her work on the legal treatment of cases before national and international tribunals to work on structural patterns of human rights violations as well as to promote legal and policy reforms to advance democracy and human rights.

With an interest in studying human rights and rule of law issues, RAMZI KASSEM ’03 chose Columbia Law School because of its reputation for international law and human rights and the opportunity to earn both a J.D. and a French Maîtrise en droit through the Law School’s double degree program with the University of Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne. The summer of his 1L year, Kassem traveled to Haiti as part of the Human Rights Internship Program to work with the National Coalition for Haitian Rights. In his 2L year, the events of 9/11 and the U.S. government response pushed Kassem in a new direction. He worked with the ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights to identify and locate immigrant New Yorkers from Muslim-majority countries who were rounded up and imprisoned in the aftermath of the attacks. Upon graduating, Kassem received a public-interest fellowship to work at a law firm litigating high-impact cases stemming from wrongful convictions and police misconduct. Looking to get more involved in representing people affected by counterterrorism policies, Kassem taught and practiced clinically at Fordham and Yale Law Schools. Currently, he is a professor at the City University of New York School of Law, where he directs the Immigrant and Non-Citizen Rights Clinic. With his students, Kassem represents prisoners presently or formerly held at American facilities at Guantánamo, Bagram, at so-called “Black Sites,” and at other detention sites worldwide. Kassem also supervises the Creating Law Enforcement Accountability and Responsibility (CLEAR) project, which aims to address the underserved legal needs of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, and other communities in the New York City area that are particularly affected counterterrorism policies and practices.
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