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## INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER

JANUARY 2016



NEWSLETTER

We are pleased to share our news and updates with you. Read on for the details of the International Justice Resource Center's new materials and activities. As always, we invite you to [share your suggestions](#) with us.



### WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL & SUBREGIONAL COURTS

In October 2015, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights invited IJRC's executive



### GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

The [refugee and migrant crisis](#) in Europe drew global attention, as well as [criticism of States' responses](#).

director to participate in its [Workshop on Regional and Subregional Courts](#), co-organized by the European Court of Human Rights and held in Strasbourg, France. The workshop brought together members of the UN and regional human rights bodies, as well as judges from subregional and national courts, to discuss areas of common concern and cooperation. Participants included the heads of the European Court of Human Rights, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

As one of three civil society organizations invited to attend this intimate gathering, IJRC shared information on sources and best practices for legal research in the area of international human rights law.

The presentations from the workshop are available on the [OHCHR workshop webpage](#). IJRC's new guide on [Researching International Human Rights Law](#) can be downloaded from that site or from the [Research Aids](#) section of our Online Resource Hub.

While in Strasbourg, the workshop participants also had the opportunity to sit in on the Grand Chamber's hearing in [Hutchinson v. United Kingdom](#), a high profile case concerning life imprisonment in Britain.

[See the Presentations](#)

A civil society campaign, [GQUAL](#), seeks to address the gender imbalance among the membership of international courts and human rights bodies.

New universal standards include: a new General Recommendation on [women's access to justice](#), the [Paris climate change agreement](#), and a protocol on [forced labor](#).

The UN human rights treaty bodies in session over recent months included the [Human Rights Committee](#); Committee on [Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#); Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against [Women](#); Committee Against [Torture](#); Committee on the Elimination of [Racial Discrimination](#); Committee on the Rights of the [Child](#); Committee on [Enforced Disappearances](#); and [Subcommittee](#) on the Prevention of Torture.

Fourteen States underwent examination during the most recent session of the [Universal Periodic Review](#). Also in session were the Human Rights Council's [Working Group on Situations](#) and the [NGO Committee](#).

A number of Human Rights Council special procedures issued new reports, including those concerning the [extraterritoriality of the torture convention](#) and the [World Bank's role in extreme poverty](#).

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## MENA DELEGATION VISIT

In December, IJRC was honored to welcome a visiting delegation of human rights defenders from countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The advocates, who were traveling under the auspices of the United States Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program, met with the IJRC team to learn about our work and share their own experiences.

The delegates are each pursuing important human rights initiatives - from ending female genital mutilation to eradicating slavery - in their home countries of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. Their descriptions of the obstacles they face, including threats and government opposition, were a powerful reminder of the real risks that so many human rights defenders face.

IJRC was one of three area organizations that the delegates chose to meet.

[More IJRC Events](#)



## REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

The IJRC News Room covers significant developments at the regional human rights bodies. Recent stories are summarized below.

In **Africa**, human rights bodies' attention has been focused on the crisis in [Burundi](#) and the coup in [Burkina Faso](#). The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights issued its [fifth judgment](#), finding various due process violations in the trial of Alex Thomas. The African Commission welcomed two new commissioners during its [57th Ordinary Session](#). And, the African human rights bodies engaged in dialogue with the [European Union](#) and with [national and regional courts](#).

In the **Americas**, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held its [156th Ordinary Session](#); released new reports on [gender equality](#) and its [friendly settlement](#) process; criticized Ecuador's attempts to dissolve a [Fundamedios](#), a free press association; and, welcomed Mexico's compliance with its decision concerning the discharge of [soldiers with HIV](#). The Inter-American Court of Human Rights met in Honduras for its [53rd](#)



## HUMAN RIGHTS NIGHT

IJRC hosted our fourth annual [Human Rights Night](#) on December 10, 2015. The informal evening reception brought together more than 80 human rights defenders to reconnect, celebrate, and learn about one another's work.

IJRC was pleased to have the co-sponsorship of Accountability Counsel, Amnesty International, Asylum Access, the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, the Center for Justice & Accountability, Human Rights Advocates, and the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti.

Human Rights Night also featured a silent auction, with more than \$750 raised to support human rights educational and networking events in 2016.

[See the Photos](#)



[Extraordinary Session](#). The Inter-American Working Group of the Protocol of San Salvador publicly reviewed six States' implementation of economic, social, and cultural rights.

In **Europe**, the European Court of Human Rights decided a number of prominent cases, including challenges to the detention of Azerbaijani journalist [Tofiq Yagublu](#), the prosecution of mass [protesters in Ukraine](#), State [surveillance of mobile phones in Russia](#), and the [YouTube ban in Turkey](#). The tribunal also imposed [new requirements](#) for applicants. The European Committee of Social Rights convened for its [283rd session](#), during which it reviewed collective complaints and State reports.

[Visit the News Room](#)



## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW NEWS

In a new report on Sri Lanka, the United Nations human rights office called on the government to establish a [new hybrid tribunal](#) to prosecute abuses committed during the civil war.

## NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Two lawyers, Nia Freeman and Aynur Jafar, have recently joined the IJRC team.

Nia holds a J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law, where she earned a certificate in International Comparative Law and interned with Human Rights Watch. She has most recently been working with an organization in Costa Rica dedicated to protecting and promoting the land rights of communities on the Caribbean coast. Nia is a licensed California attorney.

Aynur holds an LL.B. from Baku State University and LL.M. degrees from Baku State University, the University of Oslo, and the University of California Berkeley School of Law. She previously worked as a human rights lawyer in her native Azerbaijan for more than seven years, with organizations including the Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

[Meet the Team](#)

[Read More News](#)

The International Criminal Court reported on the status of its [preliminary examinations](#), including one concerning the [South Ossetia conflict](#) (since approved for investigation), and pursued [witness tampering](#) charges related to the trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba.

Before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda closed its doors, it [reduced the sentences](#) of the Butare defendants. Its records have been made more accessible to the public through a new [Judicial Records and Archives Database](#).

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia ordered the [retrial of two defendants](#) who had been acquitted at trial. The ICTY also pursued contempt of court charges related to witness intimidation and ordered the early release of one defendant.

Amid recent activity at the [Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia](#), experts both hailed progress in the Khmer Rouge prosecutions and criticized the quality of the proceedings.

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**Thank you!**

**We surpassed our year-end fundraising goal, thanks to your support. If you would still like to contribute, please [click here](#).**

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