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# INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER

APRIL 2016



NEWSLETTER

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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.



## CONSULTATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES

The International Justice Resource Center was among the organizations invited to participate in a consultation among the Inter-American and United



## REGIONAL NEWS

The IJRC News Room covers significant developments at the regional and universal human rights bodies. For a monthly overview of their activities, see our posts from [March](#) and [April](#).

Nations human rights bodies held on April 9 in Washington, D.C. The [agenda](#) featured current and former United Nations special procedure mandate holders and members of the Inter-American Commission and Court.

The discussion, which focused on the role of human rights defenders and collaboration among human rights bodies, will feed into a globally-focused workshop on these topics to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2016. This series of workshops, organized by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, builds on a [workshop on regional and sub-regional courts](#), in which IJRC participated last October. The consultations represent an increase in the formal exchange of information and best practices among regional and universal rights bodies, as well as an important commitment to harmonizing their efforts.

[See the Agenda](#) |



### SPECIAL EVENT WITH DAVID KAYE

IJRC hosted an intimate and informal evening reception with David Kaye, the United Nations-appointed expert on freedom of expression, on the evening of March 31st, 2016.

David Kaye is the [UN Special Rapporteur](#) on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and a member of IJRC's [Advisory Board](#). As Special Rapporteur, David has raised global awareness of key free speech concerns, including protection of

Other recent stories are summarized below.

In **Africa**, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted a [draft protocol](#) on the rights of persons with disabilities, the first step toward a new legal instrument for the continent. It also published [guidelines](#) on protecting human rights while countering terrorism, and launched a campaign to [decriminalize abortion](#). The African Court issued its sixth merits judgment, holding that [Tanzania](#) was required to provide legal assistance to criminal defendants. While [Rwanda](#) indicated its intent to withdraw the African Court's jurisdiction over individual complaints, the East African Community welcomed [South Sudan](#) as its sixth member, bringing the young State under the jurisdiction of the East African Court of Justice. Meanwhile, human rights monitors criticized [Gambia's crackdown](#) on political opposition.

In the **Americas**, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found that same-sex partners must have equal access to social benefits, in a case concerning Colombia's administration of [survivor pensions](#). It also confirmed indigenous peoples' [land rights](#) in a case against Suriname. The Inter-American Commission reported on the grave human rights situation in [Mexico](#). Military agents are being prosecuted for crimes against humanity including sexual slavery, in a landmark domestic trial in [Guatemala](#).

In **Asia**, the United Nations convened a [regional forum](#) to discuss implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Monitoring bodies criticized [China's](#) increased repression of human rights defenders.

In **Europe**, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found no violation in the United Kingdom's failure to prosecute any individual officer for the [police killing](#) of an unarmed man erroneously thought to be a terrorism suspect. It did, however, find that [Croatia](#) must make same-sex couples equally eligible for family-based migration. The

whistleblowers and online anonymity.

Earlier in March 2016, he [weighed in](#) on the dispute over Apple's encryption of the iPhone, advising the judge deciding FBI's search warrant request on the international human rights standards relevant to encryption and freedom of expression.

This event was co-sponsored by Amnesty International, Electronic Frontier Foundation, American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, Human Rights Advocates, and the International Law & Practice Section of the Bar Association of San Francisco.

[More IJRC Events](#) |



## NEW TEAM MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome Brittany West and Haley Pedersen to the IJRC team.

Following a highly competitive selection process, Brittany joins IJRC as Staff Attorney to take the lead on numerous projects within IJRC's Online Resource Hub, advocacy support, and training programs. Brittany worked previously with Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, where she focused on advocacy before regional human rights bodies in Africa. As a law student at American University Washington College of Law, she worked on domestic and international human rights issues through the International Human Rights Law Clinic and wrote for the *Human Rights Brief*.

ECtHR also ruled that the Swiss disability insurance scheme discriminates against [working mothers](#). The European Committee of Social Rights released its concluding observations for 2015, finding many violations of the [European Social Charter](#). The European Court of Justice gave its opinion that EU law does not prohibit States from imposing specific residence requirements on certain [migrants](#).

[Visit the News Room](#) |



## UNIVERSAL NEWS

Within the **United Nations**, efforts are underway to select a [new Secretary General](#) while the organization struggles to address allegations of sexual exploitation by [peacekeepers](#).

The newly-created Special Rapporteur on [privacy](#) released his first report, while the Special Rapporteur on [counter-terrorism](#) emphasized the need to protect freedom of speech in addressing violent extremism.

A special tribunal found that the conditions at UN camps in [Kosovo](#) violated the human rights of displaced persons due to the poor living conditions and contamination in the camps.

The Commission of Inquiry on [Syria](#) reported on widespread abuses and killings of detainees.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued a new general comment on [sexual and reproductive health](#).

Haley joins IJRC as a Human Rights Fellow. She previously worked with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, where her work focused on international climate negotiations and regulation of transnational corporations' human rights impacts. She holds a bachelor's degree in global studies from California State University, Monterey.

[Meet the Team](#) |



## RIGHTSCON

[RightsCon](#), an annual conference on technology and human rights, took place in San Francisco this year with three days of panel discussions, from March 30 to April 1. The conference brought together human rights defenders, lawyers, engineers, government officials, corporate representatives, and technologists to discuss technology's benefits as a tool for protecting human rights and its pitfalls as a catalyst for rights abuses.

IJRC attended a broad range of panels, met advocates from around the world, and shared our experiences via [Twitter](#).

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The Human Rights Committee found that Guantanamo detainee [David Hicks](#)' right to liberty was violated by his post-transfer detention in Australia.

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that [Julian Assange](#) has been arbitrarily detained in Ecuador's London embassy.

The [International Labour Organization](#) issued its annual report on States' compliance with international standards related to employment.

Governments around the world were implicated by the release of the "[Panama Papers](#)," raising questions about the human rights implications of lost tax revenue.

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## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW NEWS

Recent months saw an end to several international criminal proceedings. The International Criminal Court (ICC) terminated charges against Kenyan Deputy President [William Ruto](#) and his co-defendant amid allegations of witness tampering.

The ICC convicted [Jean-Pierre Bemba](#) of crimes against humanity and war crimes for his role in attacks against civilians in the Central African Republic.



## LOCAL OUTREACH

IJRC strives to support and increase local law students and lawyers' awareness of international human rights law.

On February 10, IJRC's executive director, Lisa Reinsberg, spoke on a panel at UC Berkeley School of Law advising students on building a career in international public interest law. The International Law Section of The State Bar of California organized the event, which included panelists Natalie Bridgeman Fields of Accountability Counsel, Amalia Greenberg Delgado of Asylum Access, and Sarah Burt of Earthjustice.

Also in February, Lisa was invited to join the Executive Committee of the [International Law & Practice Section](#) of the Bar Association of San Francisco. The new section's [first event](#) focused on forced labor in supply chains, and Lisa looks forward to organizing future panels on topics related to public international law.

[Learn More](#) |

The [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#) acquitted a journalist and television station on charges of contempt of court for broadcasting information about witnesses.

[Read More News](#) |



## SAVE THE DATE!

IJRC, together with the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, will host a training on the human rights of migrants, to be held in San Francisco on September 23, 2016. Additional details will be provided shortly. For now, please save the date!

[IJRC Trainings](#) |

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