



Spring 2018

International Justice Resource Center

Newsletter

Fighting Forced Sterilization

In recent months, we have been pleased to help bring international attention to the forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada. With IJRC's technical assistance and guidance, our Canadian partners were able to secure a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights at its February 2018 session in Colombia.



Maurice Law, the first Indigenous-owned national law firm in Canada, represents a putative class of women who have been subjected to forced sterilization in Saskatchewan in recent years.

As a result of the IACHR hearing, Canada publicly acknowledged its role in forced sterilizations, via the administration of public hospitals, and pledged to share the relevant information and documentation in its possession.



Canada.

In April, IJRC traveled to Ottawa, Canada to further assist Maurice Law in meetings with the UN Special Rapporteur's during her official visit to Canada.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Dubravka Šimonović, who was also present for the hearing, then solicited Maurice Law's input for her visit to

RightsCon Summit 2018

IJRC has organized a panel, *Naming, Shaming & Litigating: Access to Human Rights Information Online*, at the seventh RightsCon Summit, which will be held in Toronto, Canada from May 16 to 18.



Our panel, which will include the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, David Kaye; Liliana Tojo of the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL); Kristin Antin of HURIDOCs; Brice Djeugoue of the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA); and Lisa Reinsberg of IJRC will provide a cross-system look at the practical and technical challenges for civil society and human rights bodies in using the Internet as a tool for research, justice, and communication.

Join us at 4:00 p.m. on May 17.

RSVP

New Resources

Recent additions and updates to IJRC's Online Resource Hub include a new guide on the [Exhaustion of Domestic Remedies](#) in the Inter-American Human Rights System and [country factsheets](#) for each of the 35 countries that are Member States of the Organization of American States.

Visit the Online Resource Hub

In May, IJRC will join Maurice Law at the IACHR session in the Dominican Republic to further educate Commissioners on this issue. Also in May, we are hopeful that other States will raise the forced sterilization of Indigenous women during Canada's Universal Periodic Review.

These efforts are part of IJRC's work to support the informed use of human rights protections and to share practical insights and advice with first-time users of human rights protections.

IJRC is grateful to the Urgent Action Fund for supporting our collaboration with Maurice Law.

[Learn more](#)

Civil Society Engagement Project

IJRC is preparing a series of reports on the rules and practices that help or hinder civil society engagement with supranational human rights bodies, particularly in public hearings and sessions.



June.

The second report will focus on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and will be published in July 2018. A third report in this series will examine civil society activities and space around the United Nations Human Rights Council.



IJRC has traveled to The Gambia and to Colombia to observe civil society engagement and interview advocates for this project.

Stay tuned for the report on the African Commission!

Human Rights News

Human rights experts [condemned](#) the Peruvian President's decision to issue a humanitarian pardon to former President Alberto Fujimori, convicted of crimes against humanity.

The Inter-American Court [published an advisory opinion](#) concluding that States have an obligation to permit transgender individuals to change their name and gender on identity documents, to recognize same-sex marriage, and to ensure the economic rights of those in same-sex relationships.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [called on the Tunisian government](#) to respect demonstrators' rights following protests in January.

The European Committee of Social Rights [published its 2017 conclusions](#) regarding 33 States' implementation of the European Social Charter's provisions related to health, social security, and social protection.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child [published a decision](#) holding Mauritania responsible for child slavery.

At the end of January, three international human rights bodies took [substantial steps](#) to ensure protection of children's rights.

Several bodies examined [Venezuela's](#) compliance with its human rights and international criminal law obligations amid the ongoing crisis there.

The [advanced draft of the Copenhagen Declaration](#) prompted concern among supporters of the European Court of Human Rights, but the revised version was formally adopted by all 47 Member States of the Council of Europe in April 2018.

The Committee Against Torture issued a [new general comment](#) on non-refoulement.

The CEDAW Committee recommended a [gender-based approach](#) to environmental disasters.

The European Court delivered a [landmark judgment](#) on universal jurisdiction and torture.

The African Court decided its [first case on right to a nationality](#).

The Council of Europe elected its [first female](#) Commissioner for Human Rights.

International election observers, civil society, and protesters raised concerns over the fairness of [Hungary's April 8](#)

Continued Human Rights Oversight of Pipeline Projects in U.S.

In March 2018, IJRC, the ACLU, and the International Indian Treaty Council submitted a letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights providing updates on the ongoing impacts of the Trump administration's Executive Order, "Expediting Environmental Review and Approvals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects."



This letter details developments since the IACHR's [March 2017 public hearing](#) on U.S. executive orders, which IJRC coordinated other groups in requesting.

[Read the letter](#)

IACHR Addresses Killing of Colombian Human Rights Defender

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) published a [merits report](#) in a case concerning the 1988 extrajudicial killing of Colombian human rights defender Valentín Basto Calderón, which has gone unsolved.

In 2013, IJRC had submitted an [amicus curiae brief](#) to the IACHR that provided supplementary analysis on the relevant international human rights standards, with a focus on Colombia's obligations specific to human rights defenders.



The merits report, published in January 2018, finds Colombia responsible for violating Mr. Basto Calderón's human rights, and urges it to adopt legislative and other measures to reduce

[parliamentary elections](#) that resulted in the re-election of incumbent Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

[Visit the News Room](#)

Upcoming Civil Society Deadlines

The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances will hold its 14th Session from May 22 to June 1 in Geneva. Civil society organizations wanting to attend the session must register by May 17 through the [Indico system](#).

The Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold its 78th Session from May 14 to June 1 in Geneva. Civil society organizations wanting to attend the session must register by June 1 through the [Indico system](#).

The Inter-American Commission will hold its 169th Period of Sessions from September 27 to October 5, 2018. The system to request hearings and working meetings for these sessions will be available on the [IACHR website](#) from June 28 to July 12, 2018.

On June 22, the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs will hold a meeting in New York with organizations with consultative status with ECOSOC, on the relationship between NGOs and the UN. Organizations may submit [written responses](#) by May 31, and may register to participate by June 11 through the [Indico system](#).

For other human rights bodies' sessions and visits, see our [online calendar](#).

[See the calendar](#)

Human Rights Night

On December 7, human rights advocates in the Bay Area gathered for the sixth annual San Francisco Human Rights Night. We reflected on the the highs and lows for human rights in 2017, and raised a glass to the 69th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

the risks for human rights defenders, among other recommendations.

IJRC welcomes the IACHR's decision, and its analysis of States' obligations to protect human rights defenders.

[Learn more](#)



Thank you to Amnesty International, Asylum Access, the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, Center for Justice & Accountability, Human Rights Advocates, Human Rights Center at Berkeley Law, and Human Rights Data Analysis Group for their co-sponsorship!

Can We Count on You?

You are part of the fight to ensure access to justice and accountability for human rights violations. By helping provide informational tools, technical support, and training, your support makes a difference to advocates and victims around the world. Thank you for being our partner.

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