



*Celebrating 25 Years*

***25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law:  
Human Rights in Practice***

American University Washington College of Law (WCL) established the Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law in 1990 as part of its long-standing commitment to international human rights and the rule of law. In honor of the Center's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, WCL invites students, staff, faculty, alumni and the community at large to participate in a series of panels on priority issue areas of the Center. For over 25 years, the Center has worked with students, faculty and the international legal community to provide scholarship and support for human rights initiatives around the world. In that time, the Center has created opportunities for students, practitioners and activists through training, outreach, workshops and conferences, and research and publications. In addition to serving as a clearinghouse for the wide scope of activity concentrated on human rights and humanitarian law at WCL, the Center has also created a host of original projects with partners around the world and has brought in experts with their programs and has built projects to support faculty initiatives which have often been on the cutting edge of emerging areas of international law. All this has helped to ground the Center as a core resource to the NGO community and a bridge between academia and activists.

**PROGRAM AGENDA**

**Date:** Tuesday, April 12

**Location:** Claudio Grossman Hall

8:30am-9:00am      Breakfast and Registration

9:00am-9:15am      Welcome Remarks

**Claudio Grossman**, Dean, American University Washington College of Law

**Macarena Saez**, Faculty Director, AUWCL Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law

9:15am-10:45am      Panel 1: Enforcing International Standards in the Fight against Torture

The legal framework prohibiting torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is one of the most developed in international human rights law. While torture and other ill-treatment are proscribed in the main international and regional legal instruments, the prohibition is also a norm of customary international law and enjoys the rare status of a *jus cogens* or peremptory norm of international law (along with the prohibition of slavery and genocide). Nevertheless, torture and other ill-treatment continue to take place in different circumstances around the world today. This panel will explore present-day opportunities and challenges in the fight against torture worldwide. Panelists will share their diverse efforts and experiences in the field

and discuss prospects for bridging the gap between international standards and realities and practices on the ground.

Speakers include:

- **Juan E. Mendez**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture
  - **Claudio Grossman**, Former Chairperson, United Nations Committee against Torture
  - **Annie Sovcik**, Director, Washington Office, Center for Victims of Torture
  - **Naureen Shah**, Director, Security with Human Rights, Amnesty International USA
- Moderator: Andra Nicolescu*, Assistant Project Director, Anti-Torture Initiative of the AUWCL Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law

10:45am-11:00am

Break

11:00am-12:30pm

Panel 2: Business Challenges and Human Rights: The Case of Apple

In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which, among other things, established the corporate responsibility to respect human rights in all business activities. Global companies, to include those in the information and communication technology sector, have faced a number of human rights challenges related to their global operations and supply chains. This panel will explore the framework established by the UN and efforts by the U.S. government, NGOs, and companies to implement corporate human rights responsibilities. Using Apple as an emblematic case the panel will discuss issues faced by the company such as ensuring users' right to privacy, the sourcing of electronic components containing conflict minerals mined in conflict zones, and the manufacturing of electronic equipment in factories implicated in workplace abuses, as well as Apple's response to these challenges.

Speakers include:

- **Rebecca DeWinter-Schmitt**, Director of the Human Rights in Business Program of the AUWCL Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law
  - **Rebecca MacKinnon**, Project Director, Ranking Digital Rights
  - **Meg Roggensack**, Former Senior Advisor for Business and Human Rights, Human Rights First
  - **Tom Turner**, Democratic Republic of Congo Country Specialist, Amnesty International USA
- Moderator: Diane Orentlicher*, Professor of Law, American University Washington College of Law

12:30pm-1:45pm

Luncheon Keynote Address

**Kerry Kennedy**, President, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

1:45pm-3:15pm

Panel 3: Making Human Rights Local: Promoting Human Rights in the U.S.

For nearly 15 years, the Center has worked in close partnership with leading NGOs to promote the incorporation of international human rights norms, language and

strategies into the work of advocates on behalf of marginalized and vulnerable communities in the U.S. This panel will explore ways in which leading practitioners across diverse fields are working to enhance the understanding of international law and the ways that it can be applied in social justice work in the U.S. In their efforts to bridge the disconnect between the United States' promotion of human rights abroad and its adherence and appreciation for international law and standards as they apply within the U.S., panelists will discuss the growing use of human rights law in local and state advocacy by legal aid attorneys, in criminal justice advocacy, in promoting the right to housing, and in creating a global citizenry dedicated to the highest standards of justice and equality.

Speakers include:

- **Maria Foscarinis**, Founder and Executive Director, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
- **Hadar Harris**, Executive Director, Northern California Innocence Project
- **Karen Robinson**, Senior Education and Training Manager, Speak Truth to Power Program, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
- **Reena Shah**, Executive Director, Maryland Access to Justice Commission  
*Moderator: Melissa del Aguila*, Associate Director, AUWCL Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law

3:10pm-3:20pm

Break

3:20pm-4:50pm

#### Panel 4: Advancing Human Rights through Impact Litigation

Through the international litigation of pivotal cases, impact litigation seeks to promote the rule of law and democracy by enhancing the development and furtherance of international jurisprudence and standards. This panel will explore the emergence of impact litigation as a global tool to achieve broad and lasting effects in advancing human rights. Supported by the panelists' extensive experience in litigating human rights cases in national, regional and international fora, the panel will address litigation strategies for human rights advocates seeking to advance international human rights jurisprudence, ways of fostering public awareness and education of the important issues involved in impact litigation, and how to support networks of universities and non-governmental organizations committed to promoting human rights through development of this strategic work.

Speakers include:

- **Viviana Krsticevic**, Executive Director, CEJIL, Center for Justice and International Law
- **Michael Tigar**, Research Professor of Law, American University Washington College of Law
- **Richard Wilson**, Founding Director, AUWCL International Human Rights Clinic, & Professor of Law Emeritus, American University Washington College of Law  
*Moderator: Macarena Saez*, Faculty Director, AUWCL Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law

4:50pm-5:00pm

Break

5:00pm-6:30pm

Reception

The Center's anniversary conference will culminate in a reception honoring former Executive Director Hadar Harris for her 13 years of service. The reception will also celebrate the launch of the *Human Rights Brief's* new website at [www.hrbrief.org](http://www.hrbrief.org) with a presentation by the current Co-Editors-in-Chief.