

CAHRnews

Centre for Applied Human Rights newsletter

Dear Friends,

This autumn has brought a lot of changes to CAHR. Mainly, we have said good-bye to our long-time colleague Dr Lars Waldorf, who changed Yorkshire for Scotland, and welcomed our new Senior Lecturer Dr Ioana Cismas, who did the opposite! Our teaching has been more integrated with our parent departments, the Politics Department and the York Law School, while CAHR and the HRD Hub will focus increasingly on research.

This autumn we have welcomed 7 new human rights defenders on our Protective Fellowship Scheme, and are hoping to welcome two more in January. This past year has seen a lot of research activity focusing on transitional justice, development alternatives, refugees, and HRD protection with workshops and field research taking place from Colombia to Uganda, Bangladesh and Malaysia, not to forget about York. The year's main event has been the declaration of York as the UK's first Human Rights City.

In the next six months we are looking forward to celebrating CAHR's 10th Anniversary in January 2018 with a series of events. We hope you will join us!

Sanna Eriksson
Centre Co-ordinator, CAHR

Welcomes and Good-Byes

CAHR would like to thank long-time staff member, dear colleague, LLM programme convener, Senior Lecturer Dr Lars Waldorf who left CAHR in September. Lars took up a new post at the University of Dundee in Scotland.



"Lars has been at the Centre for most of its 10 year existence. He has helped to shape all aspects of our work, from teaching to research and outreach. His lectures and presentations - part wonderful expert knowledge, part stand up comedy - will be missed by many. The staff at CAHR will miss his intellect, his collegiality and his larger-than-life personality. We wish him the very best in his new post."

Prof Paul Gready, Director of the Centre, CAHR

CAHR has welcomed [Dr Ioana Cismas](#) as our new Senior Lecturer from the start of October 2017. Ioana joined us from the University of Stirling. Ioana's research falls within the broad area of international law, with particular interest in examining the status and roles of different types of actors in international law. Ioana convenes Applying International Human Rights Law in the autumn term and contributes to Defending Human Rights. In the spring, she convenes the new optional module Modern Actors of International Law.

New book on refugee law and policy in Canada

Martin Jones has recently published the second edition of his [textbook on Canadian refugee law and policy](#) (with Sasha Baglay). The textbook is the leading text on Canadian refugee law and has been cited favourably by other academic authors and in the jurisprudence of all levels of Canadian courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada's recent decision in *Kanthisamy v. Canada (Citizenship and Immigration) 2015 SCC 61*. The second edition substantially updates the textbook to account for legislative developments (including the substantial amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act passed under the last Conservative government) and policy developments (including the recent mass resettlement of Syrian refugees under the current government).

CAHR Celebrates its 10th Anniversary in January 2018

In the evening of 24th January the Vice-Chancellor of the University will host a [major public event](#), launching CAHR's 10th anniversary celebrations. Speakers will include Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and Jestina Mukoko, a Zimbabwean human rights defender and former Fellow at CAHR.

25-26 January CAHR will host a [workshop](#) under the auspices of the Human Rights Defender Hub on the arts and human rights research. On Saturday 27 January we will welcome postgraduate and defender alumni to [our first alumni event](#).

Other related events include [Arts + Activism \[an exhibition\]](#) from 20 January—5 February, [Music for Activism](#) on 25 January, [Art, Activism & the Political Imagination](#) on 26 January, and [Embroidery for Peace](#) on 27 January. Book your free tickets now!

Symposium discusses cutting edge research on human rights defenders

On July 13th and 14th, the Human Rights Defender Hub of the Centre for Applied Human Rights hosted a two-day research symposium for early career researchers. The symposium brought together more than a dozen early career researchers at various stages of doctoral and post-doctoral research. Nine papers on human rights defenders were presented and discussed. The papers were based on fieldwork in Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, and Uganda and applied a wide range of disciplinary points of view and methodologies to the study of human rights defenders. The research represented some of the best new thinking about the emerging human rights defender paradigm and the challenges facing human rights defenders on the ground.

The symposium gave participants a chance to receive feedback on their draft papers and provided a forum to discuss cross-cutting definitional, conceptual and methodological issues. More established academics also spoke to participants about how to navigate the challenges of publishing and applying for academic positions. One participant commented:

"fascinating, constructive, generous discussion, feedback and intellectual inspiration!" The papers presented at the symposium will be published over the next year in the Hub's working paper series.

More information on the Human Rights Defender Hub can be found at: www.hrdhub.org.

Sharing research results with human rights defenders in Bogota, Colombia



Above: The research team with 3 of the participants

Human rights defenders (HRDs) face very high levels of insecurity and violence in Colombia. Examples of human rights violations that have occurred in recent years include extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and the criminalisation of HRDs. Colombia is one of the 5 countries studied in the research project, *Navigating Risk, Managing Security and Receiving Support: A study of Human Rights Defenders at risk in Colombia, Mexico, Egypt, Kenya and Indonesia*, led by Dr Alice Nah from the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR).

CAHR staff member, Patricia Bartley, travelled to Colombia in July 2017 to run a workshop jointly hosted by the University of York and Fellowship for Peace and Reconciliation (FOR) Colombia on 7th July. The workshop brought together participants (HRDs) from the research study, other HRDs from across the country, lawyers, NGO workers, staff from FOR and researchers from CAHR at the University of York.

After a general explanation of the project

led by Patricia Bartley, Peter Cousins and Emily Schmitz presented the research findings for Colombia. This was followed by questions and a discussion of some of the main issues raised. The defenders were keen to stress that since the government signed the peace accord with FARC in November 2016 they are facing greater levels of violence, abuse and threats.

The second part of the workshop was devoted to a discussion of some of the themes raised during the data analysis: stigmatization of HRDs; impunity and lack of justice; the protection of families and loved ones; and the protection of communities and collectives. The workshop participants reported that they very much appreciated the opportunity to hear more about the study and to be consulted on the recommendations.

Both the discussion paper with the research findings for Colombia and a series of policy briefs being produced from this study will be available soon on the [Security of Defenders project website](#).

Remembering Ourselves in Our Struggle: Showcasing Artistic work from a Research Project at York Festival of Ideas

Around the world people who struggle for human rights have been threatened and attacked as they question those in power, demand accountability, and challenge social and cultural norms. Dr Alice Nah is leading an international research project on human rights defenders at risk called 'Navigating Risk, Managing Security, and Receiving Support'.

Artists from around the world were invited to produce creative responses to the research findings from this project. These [responses](#) included poetry, music, short films, animation, drawings, paintings, and murals.

During the York Festival of Ideas in June 2017 some of the artistic outputs were presented to the public during an event named 'Remembering Ourselves in our Struggle'.

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Milestone workshop on refugee law in the Middle East and Asia

On July 24th and 25th, Martin Jones hosted a second workshop on refugee law in the Middle East and Asia as part of his ESRC / Global Challenges funded project on the Law of Asylum.



Above: Martin Jones discussing points raised.

The workshop provided a first look at data on the legal environment and experiences of lawyers in refugee protection in Egypt, India, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for participants from the leading refugee legal aid organisations in each of these jurisdictions to discuss case selection for the next stage of the project: litigation of more than 80 cases on behalf of refugees in the four jurisdictions.

The Law of Asylum project is a two year research project that aims to change the way that refugee protection is conceived in many locations in the Middle East and Asia.

In large parts of these regions, the law, legal professionals and legal processes are viewed as secondary to the more overtly political negotiation of protection space.

The project seeks to explore the viability of legal strategies for refugee protection, both by identifying replicable successes as well as challenges facing legal professionals in these jurisdictions.

The project uses a unique story based methodology to gather data, to ensure the voices of all participants (including refugees) are not lost, and to achieve impact. More information on the Law of Asylum project can be found on the [project website](#).



Above: Participants in discussion; the group.

CAHR new research blog

You can now follow CAHR's evolving research through the Centre's new, dedicated research blog, which features writing by both CAHR's academics and PhD researchers. The first blog post by Ruth Kelly discusses [bottom up definitions of human rights in ActionAid's work on unpaid care](#).

CAHR academic organises peace-building conference and scholarly visits in Sri Lanka

Lars Waldorf (CAHR) and Rajesh Venugopal (LSE) organized a series of events in Colombo from 30 June to 4 July 2017: a public conference focused on peacebuilding in Sri Lanka; an academic workshop on comparative peacebuilding; and a field visit of scholars and civil society activists to the Northern Province. The visit consisted of meetings with high-ranking government and military officials, Sri Lankan academics, and civil society groups working on peacebuilding. It also encompassed visits to iconic sites, such as Mullivaikkal beach (where the war ended) and Jaffna Public Library (which had been torched in 1981).

Lars arranged for Ruki Fernando, a well known human rights activist and former CAHR Protective Fellow, to accompany the group and share his experiences of working with families of the disappeared and those protesting military occupation of their land. These events were funded by the Independent Social Research Foundation, the Asia Foundation, and the ESRC, and sponsored by the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) and the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS).



From left to right: Mr. Aung Naing Oo, Amb. Danesh Casie-Chetty, Professor Duncan McCargo, and Dr. Dewi Fortuna Anwar at Comparative Peacebuilding in Asia Conference in Sri Lanka, June 2017.

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Remembering Ourselves in Our Struggle

These included three short films:

[Dust on Paper](#) by Emilie Flower, [Greater than Love](#) by Alejandra Jimenez and [Vis-à-vis](#) by filmmaker Simona Manni and dancer Christie Barnes along with a display of paintings and an embroidered quilt.

The screenings were followed by a panel discussion on how the artists have explored the reflections and emotions of human rights defenders at risk across the world.



Above: *Dust on Paper* short film screened at York Festival of Ideas.

Ground-breaking research on empowerment through dance and law in Sri Lanka

Lars Waldorf spent most of his research leave in Sri Lanka leading an AHRC and ESRC funded research project. The project examines an innovative way of empowering persons with conflict-related disabilities through an unusual combination of dance and law that was pioneered and piloted by VisAbility, a German association, in mid-2015.

Lars and Hetty Blades (Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University) spent time observing (and occasionally participating in) the workshops and public performances in Batticaloa and Jaffna. They also conducted interviews and focus groups with VisAbility staff and workshop participants. In addition, Lars had background discussions with a range of people working on disability issues.

In conjunction with the project, Lars organized a panel on disability as part of a conference on intangible cultural heritage at the Swami Vipulananda Institute (Eastern University) and gave a class on research methods to law students at the University of Peradeniya.

Lars, Hetty, and Adam Benjamin (Plymouth University) will conduct follow-up research in Sri Lanka in December-January. More information about the project (including blog posts from the field) on the [Performing Empowerment project website](#).

Arts-based research workshops take place in Bangladesh and Uganda

In July, CAHR associate and filmmaker Emilie Flower and CAHR doctoral researcher Ruth Kelly travelled to Bangladesh and Uganda for two arts-based workshops with artists and activists; the workshops were experimental, testing how doing/practicing art in different mediums can help disrupt our ways of knowing, make us sensitive to how we perform development and allow us to explore alternative models for resistance and alternative visions for the future. The workshops are the first component of an AHRC-funded project in collaboration with international NGO ActionAid establishing a research network with practitioner, artist and activist participation.



Above: Theatre workshop at the Makerere Art Gallery, Kampala, Uganda.

At the Makerere Art Gallery in Kampala, we were joined by five activists involved in creative campaigning challenging corruption, unemployment and land grabbing and three artists – a poet and academic, a young script-writer and director, and a rap artist. During the workshop we did theatre games, worked with film and drew on paper and on the walls, as well as working up definitions of development/alternatives/utopias and discussing symbolic objects everyone had brought along. Most participants pointed to the powerful session on oral poetry led by poet Susan Kiguli as one of the highlights. We spent the third day



Above: Participant in front of a body map at the Bangladesh workshop.

making short films of poetry our activist colleagues wrote in response to our poet's session.

At the Global Platform activism hub in Dhaka we were joined by the Director of Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts and an academic specialising in theatre studies, as well as by an expert in participatory action research at grassroots level, a communist party activist, and two up and coming artists, a graphic designer and an installation artist. During the workshop we focused more on traditional cultural figures/archetypes and on visual culture than we had in Uganda. Inspired by Tagore's poetry, we worked together to imagine Bangladesh in 100 years' time and develop and perform scenarios in response, inspired by Bengali fiction.

Key themes emerging from the work include how practicing the arts can facilitate embodied cognition and challenges in moving away from cultural scripts of development, rights and alternatives. The artists involved are now developing artistic responses to the workshops, including two short films, a poetic response, a street mural and graphics project, and an installation project. These will be shown and we will discuss our findings in more depth at the HRD Hub's workshop on the arts and human rights research on 25-26 January 2018.

York: the UK's first Human Rights City

On 24 April 2017 the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of York, Cllr Dave Taylor, signed a declaration making York the UK's first Human Rights City.



Above: Doodling York's development of becoming a Human Rights City.

The declaration was the result of six years of work and campaigning, and had the support of all the main political parties within the Council. We were delighted to be joined by Cllr Thomas Rakajovics from Graz, Austria. Graz was declared Europe's first Human Rights City over 15 years ago.

We hope the declaration will drive more individuals and organisations to approach issues such as housing, living standards, education, inequality and health and social care through the lens of human rights. York: Human Rights City will seek to support such approaches where we can.

We believe that this declaration will have both local and national significance as we encourage people to further engage with human rights and connect with other cities and initiatives that are also pursuing similar objectives – to make cities and towns more vibrant, diverse,

fair and safe places to live, work and study.

The actual wording of the declaration is as follows:

York Human Rights City Declaration

York, in becoming a Human Rights City, embraces a vision of a vibrant, diverse, fair and safe community built on the foundations of universal human rights. This vision is shared by citizens and institutions in our city, including the City Council, North Yorkshire Police, voluntary organisations and faith communities.

We are building on York's own particular history of democratic innovation, philanthropy and an international outlook, all of which have shaped our commitment to social justice.

This declaration marks an ambition. A significant point in a journey, not a final destination. As the UK's first Human Rights City we are committed to making our vision real, putting fundamental rights at the heart of our policies, hopes and dreams for the future.



Above: The Lord Mayor of York, Cllr Dave Taylor (right) signs the York Human Rights City Declaration. To his left sits Stephen Pittam, chair of the York: Human Rights City

- ◆ Visit the [York: Human Rights City webpage](#) for further details about the declaration.
- ◆ Make a [pledge of support](#) for York as a Human Rights City if you haven't already done so.
- ◆ [Sign up](#) to receive regular updates about human rights and social justice events in York.

CAHR staff meet Amnesty International staff

In June 2017 CAHR staff members, Dr Alice Nah, Sanna Eriksson and Patricia Bartley met with several staff members from Amnesty International, International Secretariat (IS) and Amnesty International UK section.

We shared our respective areas of work and research and all parties are interested in working together more closely together in the future and in particular on Amnesty's new global campaign, [BRAVE](#) which focuses on human rights defenders (HRDs).



Amnesty UK will continue to support the Protective Fellowship Scheme, offering trainings for the HRDs whilst they are in York and there are plans to conduct more joint advocacy work.

Amnesty IS staff included Barbara Weber, Director of Human Rights Education; Guadalupe Marengo, Head of Human Rights Defenders Campaign; Sara Macneice, Head of Global Campaigns; Hoda Barakat, Regional Human Rights Education Project Manager. UK staff included Sara Rydkvist, head of HRD campaign; Rowena Seabrook, HRE manager; Andy Hackman, Head, Community Organising; Felix Jakens, Head of Campaigns; and Joe Philips, Head of Major Donors.

Two former CAHR fellows nominated for the 2017 Human Rights Tulip

Dina Meza (CAHR fellow 2013) and Azza Soliman (CAHR fellow 2015/16) were nominated for the Dutch government's annual human rights award, the Human Rights Tulip in August 2017. The award celebrates individuals or organisations that "promote human rights worldwide in innovative ways". The aim of the award is to increase the public profile of the awardee's human rights work.

Dina Meza is a Honduran journalist who developed the online news platform [Pasos de Animal Grande](#) during her time at CAHR in spring 2013. The platform promotes freedom of expression in Honduras, a country where journalists face extrajudicial killings and media is heavily censored.

Azza Soliman is an Egyptian lawyer, women's rights advocate and founder of the Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA). She was placed under a travel ban in December 2016 and her assets were frozen, as a part of the Egyptian government's mounting attack on civil society. Her [case](#) is highlighted as part of Amnesty International's [Brave campaign](#) that focuses on human rights defenders.

The 2017 Human Rights Tulip was awarded to Mexican WHRD Graciela Pérez Rodriguez.



Dina Meza (left) and Azza Soliman (right) were nominated for the Human Rights Tulip 2017.



Above: Valdenia Paulino Lanfranchi conducting a training in São Paulo, Brazil.

CAHR fellows continue supporting women's rights after end of fellowship with funding from the JA Clark Award

From 2014-2017 CAHR's work, including the Protective Fellowship Scheme for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) at Risk, was generously funded by the J. A. Clark Charitable Trust. This grant included £4,500 in start-up funding for 1-3 projects annually focusing on women's empowerment, developed by visiting fellows during their time in York. Three projects in Brazil, Papua New Guinea and Colombia respectively received funding. One more project will receive funding in 2018.

In spring 2016, Valdenia and Renato Paulino Lanfranchi successfully initiated a 6-month project entitled "Empowering Women in the Community" with the Sapopemba Human Rights Centre "Pablo Gonzales Olalla" (CDHS) in São Paulo, Brazil. The project targeted two groups of 20 marginalised women living in poor neighbourhoods. In the course of the human rights trainings they received, the women learnt about their rights and how to see themselves as agents capable of social change in their communities. Concrete results of the trainings included women gaining courage to report domestic violence and accessing other public services that had previously been unknown or inaccessible to them. Valdenia and Renato continue working in the favelas of São Paulo, among other initiatives with the Sapopemba School for Active Citizenship.

In the summer of 2016, Monica Paulus started the project "Empowering Human rights Defenders in the Community". The project addressed witchcraft-related violence against women in Papua New Guinea. Monica trained groups of women in six areas of Simbu Province on ways to assist victims of gender-based violence, and to assess and reduce sorcery related violence in the region. Oxfam and UN staff in Papua New Guinea attended the trainings and later met with provincial government officers to advocate for the recognition and protection of the work of these WHRDs. Monica has also established a rapid response network of women in Simbu Province to provide immediate assistance to the victims/survivors of gender and sorcery related violence.



Above: Simbu HRD Network, Papua New Guinea

The third J. A. Clark Award was awarded to Johana Rocha from Colombia, for a project entitled "Strengthening community capacities to build territorial peace conditions in areas degraded by extractive activities in Cauca, Colombia: A contribution to the Women Sub-commission's work, within the "Caucanian Committee in Defence of Water and Life". The project aims at strengthening the participation and leadership of Caucanian women in the community process to develop a Territorial Peace Agenda, and runs from December 2017-May 2018.

Providing concrete human rights project support after the HRDs return home is a way of extending the reach of the Protective Fellowship Scheme beyond York. It is a way of supporting HRDs during what is sometimes a difficult time when they return to their communities, by also providing support to the community the HRD works with. We are hoping to continue this project support also in the future.

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