CAHRnews
The Centre for Applied Human Rights
Newsletter Issue #10
Autumn - Winter 2019

CAHR hosts new human rights defenders and pilots a new Protective Writing Fellowship
CAHR has welcomed six new fellows on its Protective Fellowship Scheme for Human Rights Defenders at Risk this autumn. The fellows come from Brazil, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria and Pakistan and work on issues such as transparency and extractive industries, children’s rights, LGBTQI+ rights and legal defense of marginalised communities. The fellows are participating in CAHR’s teaching activities as well as working on their own research projects which will be implemented in their own communities on their return home. The public is welcomed to attend open lectures by CAHR’s visiting fellows in the Learning from human rights defenders lecture series. For more information, visit the cahr events page.

In spring 2020 CAHR will pilot a new Protective Writing Fellowship aimed at leaders in human rights movements. The successful fellow(s) will take up the 3-month fellowship in May 2020, and spend time in York reflecting and writing on learnings from their local human rights struggles. The current call for nominations is open until 3 December 2019. For more information, visit the protective fellowship homepage.

The Barcelona Guidelines on Wellbeing and Temporary International Relocation of Human Rights Defenders at Risk officially launched
On 22 October 2019, the Barcelona Guidelines on Wellbeing and Temporary International Relocation of Human Rights Defenders (the ‘Barcelona Guidelines’) were officially launched during the European Union Temporary Relocation Platform. The Barcelona Guidelines are based on the findings from interviews with over 100 mental health professionals, coordinators of relocation initiatives, human rights defenders, and other protection actors who participated in a collaborative research project between CAHR, ICORN, Justice and Peace Netherlands, The Martin Roth Initiative, Adam Brown of The New School in New York, and independent expert on human rights and civil society, Sasha Koulaeva.

The Guidelines highlight that the wellbeing of defenders needs specific attention, from the very way relocation initiatives are designed, to the activities planned, expectations of defenders, and the resources and funding allocated to the programmes. Defenders may arrive at their relocation initiatives exhausted and struggling with the mental health issues such as burnout, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Coordinators and other staff involved in relocation initiatives can also suffer in terms of their own wellbeing. The Guidelines provide specific guidance on how to handle issues related to wellbeing on relocation initiatives, and we hope that they will be useful to defenders,
relocation coordinators, wellbeing service providers, funders, and other protection actors.

The Barcelona Guidelines were launched on 22 October 2019 and are available in five languages.

International Retreat Held to Develop Ways to Support Human Rights Defenders with Wellbeing

Over forty mental health professionals, coordinators of temporary international relocation initiatives, researchers and other human rights advocates from around the world gathered in Barcelona in June to share approaches to supporting human rights defenders with their wellbeing. The event, organised by CAHR with support from Justice and Peace Netherlands, provided the opportunity for participants to network, learn about and experience a range of therapeutic interventions, and discuss and feedback on the Barcelona Guidelines.

The three-day event had a truly international feel, with all sessions delivered simultaneously in English and Spanish, and with attendees from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the MENA region. Researchers and practitioners from across the world shared their research and experiences of supporting human rights defenders, highlighting many consistencies, but also important differences in terms of understanding and supporting the wellbeing of defenders.
Participants had the chance to experience a range of different therapies used by mental health professionals in different contexts. The term ‘mental health professional’ is broadly defined within the project, and includes anyone trained in supporting others with their wellbeing. As well as psychologists and psychiatrists, this means dance therapists, arts therapists, reiki instructors, yoga teachers and so on. Participants therefore gained hands-on experience of techniques including body mapping, Laban dance, tapping, theatre of the oppressed, peer-to-peer interventions, and more. A core objective of the Retreat was to discuss and feedback on the Barcelona Guidelines on Wellbeing and Temporary International Relocation of Human Rights Defenders at Risk.

The Barcelona Guidelines were launched on 22 October 2019 and are available in five languages.

Human Rights Defender Hub holds workshop on Civil Society Resistance and Resilience

The HRD Hub held a two-day workshop in York on 4-5 November, which focused on civil society strategies to push back against shrinking space. The workshop sessions centred on two core themes: 1) empirical, evidence-based studies of civil society resistance and resilience, and 2) historical precedents, lessons and insights of relevance to current situations.

Academics, human rights defenders and practitioners from across the world, working on a broad range of issues and geographical regions, attended the workshop.

The workshop opened with sessions on strategic issues around leadership and funding. These sessions were followed by two country-specific panels: one which analysed the increasingly tightening and hostile human rights movement in Turkey, and another which took a gendered perspective on the resistance in Hong Kong, with panelists
analysing their observations and experiences gathered around violence against women in the anti-extradition law protests in 2019.

Sessions on the second day of the workshop tackled themes of resistance and resilience in relation to socio-economic rights, networks for protection and sustainability, architecture and civic space, and changing the narrative on human rights. Regionally focused panels examined elements of human rights activism in Africa and Latin America.

The workshop closed with the first UK screening of a short film about a Kenyan human rights defender, followed by a Q&A with the filmmaker.
The workshop took place in Cape Town on the 5th and 6th December which included presenting ReUnite to delegates at the University of Western Cape (UWC). The workshop was part of a series of planning events for a major project on the role of Universities in conflict (ReUnite). ReUnite will evidence and enhance the capacity of Universities in the Global South and North to respond to contemporary conflicts and crises.

**Inspiring Human Rights Activism exhibition held 4-9 November**

*The standard in the art competition was high.*

On 4th November, the Inspiring Human Rights Activism art exhibition launched as part of the 2019 ESRC Festival of Social Sciences. Artists, activists, and other members of the public who took part in a competition celebrating human rights activism created the artwork on display. Over thirty pieces of original artwork were displayed, covering a huge range of issues from the local to the global, celebrating inspirational human rights activism at the individual to the collective level.

Participants were asked to consider the following when preparing their
artwork:

Every day, around the world, inspiring individuals risk their lives to fight for and defend the human rights that many of us take for granted. Their commitment to the causes they defend, despite the risks they face, is deeply inspiring.

What does human rights activism mean to you and why should we celebrate it? Has a particular human rights defender inspired you? What about a moment you witnessed, experienced or read about that made you value human rights and those who defend them? Which human rights causes are particularly close to your heart that you want to inspire others to think about?

Vouchers for art materials were awarded to the winners and runners up by an independent judging panel, who based their decision on the effect of the artwork, the research into human rights activism done, and the artistic skill and imagination of the piece. While the original intention was to select two winners in each category (adults and under-16s), the quality of entries was so high that after some discussion the competition organisers agreed to include two runner-up prizes. We would like to extend our congratulations once again to the winners listed below, and a huge thank you to all of those who took part.

**Adults:**

First prize: Francisco Amézaga, Tzopantli 43  
Second prize: Heather Stroud, LAN: 10 Years in Detention  
First runner-up: Violet Cannon, Activism! A Choice?  
Second runner-up: Maria Amparo Gomar Vidal, Our Lady of the Menstruation (Bloody Mary)

**Under-16s:**

First prize: Marianne Jones, Happy Life  
Second prize: Ben Piercy, Symbol of Change
First prize winner Tzopantli 43 by Francisco Amézaga.

Independent Western Sahara documentary screened
Filmmaker Rodrigo D. E. Campos introduces his documentary "A Thread of Hope"

On 26 November, around forty people attended a documentary screening and panel discussion held as part of teach-out activities organised by CAHR during the UCU strike. The documentary, A Thread of Hope: Independence or War in Western Sahara (2018, 94 min, Brazil), was introduced by filmmaker, PhD student in Politics and Western Sahara activist Rodrigo D. E. Campos.

Largely neglected by the world, Western Sahara is one of the longest unresolved independence struggles. This independent documentary tells the story of resistance of the Saharawi people in Africa's "last colony", and also explores the growing frustration of the population towards the UN peace process, both in the refugee camps, the liberated zones and in the Moroccan-occupied territories. The film also questions Brazil's neutral stance towards the conflict, which is one of Latin America’s few countries that still has not recognized the independence of Western Sahara, therefore contributing towards the normalization of a systematic violence against the Saharawi people and the plight of their natural resources.

A Q&A session with special guests Sidi Breika (Representative of the Polisario Front to the UK), Joanna Allan (Leaverhulme Research Fellow
at Northumbria University and volunteer with Western Sahara Resource Watch and Western Sahara Campaign), and Rodrigo D. E. Campos followed the screening.

Student video in recognition of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and Human Rights Day

CAHR students of the [LLM in International Human Rights Law and Practice](#) and the [MA in Applied Human Rights](#) have put together a video in recognition of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and Human Rights Day. Students have thought to express how inequality contributes to gender-based violence and shapes the decisions women and girls make in their communities. "The video also expresses what we hope to see in the world: #GenerationEquality", says Nabila Okino, student of the LLM in International Human Rights
Law and Practice.

You can see the video [here](#).

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*Defensem*

In November CAHR was invited to speak on the Protective Fellowship Scheme as part of *Defensem! Conversations with human rights defenders from Latin America*. Hosted by the Taula Catalana per Colombia human rights defenders from Mexico, Colombia and Guatemala along with representatives of relocation schemes and NGOs, met in Barcelona for five days of debate, workshops and reflection on the protection of defenders in Latin America.

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*CAHR participates in the International Shelter City Network in The Hague*
Between 7 and 9 October 2019, the Centre for Applied Human Rights participated in the International Shelter City Workshop, organised by the Dutch organisation Justice and Peace Netherlands in The Hague. The Workshop, titled ‘Towards a greater security for human rights defenders’, was intended as a forum to exchange ideas, best practices and challenges in relation to Shelter City programmes around the world. ‘Shelter Cities’ are temporary relocation programmes for human rights defenders. They are managed by local authorities and/or civil society organisations and are meant to provide defenders with a period of rest and respite in a safe environment generally outside their country. During the three-day Workshop, participants from Shelter Cities and public authorities in the Netherlands, Italy, Nepal, Costa Rica, Georgia, Tanzania and the United Kingdom discussed issues such as the wellbeing, digital security, accompaniment, training and development of human rights defenders hosted through these initiatives. Strategic issues including communication, partnerships and
minimum standards for Shelter Cities were also addressed during the Workshop.

On the second day of the Workshop, Manon Muti, who works as training coordinator for Justice and Peace Netherlands, presented *The Barcelona Guidelines on Wellbeing and Temporary Relocation of Human Rights Defenders*, a publication to which the Centre for Applied Human Rights contributed substantially in collaboration with other organisations. Dr Piergiuseppe Parisi, research associate at the Centre for Applied Human Rights participated in the Workshop.

**Generating Respect for Humanitarian Norms: The Influence of Religious Leaders on Parties to Armed Conflict**

*Photo credit: Geneva Call*

Humanitarian norms, anchored in international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL), aim to 'humanise' war by requiring parties to armed conflict to protect civilians from attacks, detainees from abuse, and to facilitate humanitarian assistance. Yet, across the globe and all too often, civilians are killed, detainees are ill-
treated, and hospitals and aid convoys are bombed. This situation depicts the pressing need for the identification of new approaches to generate greater compliance with humanitarian norms.

A new project led by Dr Ioana Cismas and funded through a large grant awarded by the ESRC proposes such a novel approach. It focuses on the role that religious leaders (can) play in influencing state and non-state armed actors to internalise humanitarian norms with the ultimate aim of enhancing the protection of communities affected by armed conflict. Over the next three years, the project will be implemented by a team of eight researchers in close partnership with key humanitarian organizations and UN mechanisms. Read more about the project “Generating Respect for Humanitarian Norms: The Influence of Religious Leaders on Parties to Armed Conflict”.

The Verandah of Protection: Violence, History and the Protection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh and beyond

How do histories, individual and collective, of violence and displacement influence how people respond to appeals for protection from others? How might these histories be woven into understandings of refugee protection? A team of researchers from the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) and York Law School in collaboration with a local partner (the Geutanyoe Foundation) seeks to explore these questions using the novel case study of the thousands of Rohingya who have sought protection in Aceh (Indonesia) over the past decade in a British Academy funded two year research project with fieldwork in Aceh, elsewhere in Indonesia, Malaysia, and countries of resettlement.

The provision of refuge to thousands of Rohingya in Aceh, the northern-most province of Indonesia, over the last decade by a wide range of predominantly local actors (including local fisherman, civil society, and local government), often in opposition to the wishes of national authorities, stands as an exception in Southeast Asia where
the reception of refugees is normally marked by resistance, hostile rhetoric, and even violence (Nah, 2019). The project seeks to understand the significance of the relatively short history of such protection as both determined by and constitutive of longer histories of identity, violence and protection – of the Acehnese, Rohingya, and in Southeast Asia more generally.

Using a multi-site, inter-disciplinary, multi-method, and creative research process, the project examines the negotiation of these histories in Acehnese legal fora, in particular through sharia and adat (customary) law, which are themselves informed by histories of conflict. The project traces the onward movement of Rohingya to other parts of Indonesia and Malaysia and elsewhere, examining how (other) host communities – with(out) histories of violence – respond to their protection. The project explores ‘indigenous’ approaches to protection in contexts where international arguments are weak (particularly in Southeast Asia), problematising ‘expertise’ in protection (and research) that have hitherto privileged international over local actors (Jones, 2015).

The project will document the 'dissonant histories' (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Salim, 2008) in Aceh that informed the legal contestations around protection, involving local legal actors, norms and systems. Bringing a relatively rare example of the welcoming of refugees into discussions of protection in Southeast Asia, combined with the rescaling of analysis to the local level and the retemporalising of its significance within broader histories, has the potential to strengthen protection to those displaced from violence. The project also seeks to explore the impact of affirming dissonant histories in collective memorialisation and to examine linkages between the collective recuperation of these histories, sustainable peace, and the prevention of violence.

The project brings together a team of researchers from CAHR (Martin Jones, Alice Nah, Juliana Mensah, and Fitria Fitria) and builds upon the recently ended ESRC funded Law of Asylum project which did pilot research in Aceh and involved the same team. The local project
partner, the Geutanyoe Foundation, is a regional grass-roots civil society organisation founded by activists who have pioneered the humanitarian and non-violent civic movement in Aceh since 1999. The Guetanyoe Foundation were recently recognised through the prestigious Ockenden Prize for their pioneering work with the Rohingya, with the judges noting that their programming was both highly practical – and imaginative. The project also has the potential to involve CAHR's LLM in International Human Rights Law and Practice students in some of its fieldwork in Malaysia in the future.

For more information about the British Academy’s Heritage, Dignity and Violence programme. For more information about the project, please email Martin Jones.