



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND & WALES

BIENNIAL REPORT 2016-2017





"BHRC is what we refer to in my office as a professional "goto" entity meaning a reliable low-cost-high-return partner."

Ikponwosa Ero

UN Independent Expert on enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism

"All of the barristers who work with BHRC provide their services on a pro bono basis, in addition to their normal legal practices. They continuously provide exceptional, impactful work to those who need it most and are willing to find creative solutions to challenging problems. We are grateful for their assistance whenever we ask..."

Reprieve

"Wonderful training and workshops....excellent facilitators... great knowledge and impact."

Feedback from Nigerian lawyer at the training on Child's Rights in 2016

WHO WE ARE

The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) is an independent body of barristers called to the Bar of England and Wales, committed to the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights. It was founded and is funded by the Bar Council and has a distinct but close relationship with it.

Our vision is for a world in which human rights are universally protected, through every government and state actor's adherence to international law obligations and internationally-agreed norms.

BHRC works internationally to support and defend those under threat of human rights abuses, particularly lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals, as well as marginalised or vulnerable groups including children, women and refugees.

OUR MISSION

is to further, protect and promote human rights through the rule of law. To achieve our mission, we utilise our members, who are experienced human rights barristers working in England and Wales.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. Uphold the rule of law and internationally recognised human rights norms and standards.
2. Support and protect practising lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are threatened or oppressed in their work.
3. Further interest in and knowledge of human rights and the laws relating to human rights, both within and outside the legal profession.
4. Support and co-operate with other organisations and individuals working for the promotion and protection of human rights.

We provide training, resources and guidance to support the development of human rights protections in countries where legal systems are lacking. We raise awareness of human rights abuses through trial observations and fact-finding missions. We intervene in human rights cases by submitting amicus curia briefs in local and international courts, and we send letters of concern to government officials and leaders abroad.

A MESSAGE FROM BHRC CHAIR **KIRSTY BRIMELOW QC**

Kirsty Brimelow QC



In the last two years, BHRC has significantly expanded its work, addressing human rights abuses in over 30 countries.

In 2016 and 2017, BHRC sent trial observers to more than 15 different hearings in 9 cases in Cameroon, Egypt and Turkey with the defendants in Egypt and Cameroon being released without conviction after the observations were published. BHRC has written and contributed to more than forty statements of concern and

letters to governments around the world and has been a regular commentator in the media national and international on human rights violations. It has intervened in six cases with Amicus Curiae briefs and expert opinions, with successes in the case of Lopez Lone and others in the Inter- American Court and, eventually, in the case of David Ravelo Crespo through various judicial processes in Colombia.

BHRC also has conducted extensive training on child rights in Nigeria with over 300 judges and magistrates trained in 2016 alone. In 2016, BHRC sent the only barrister led fact-finding mission into the demolition of the Calais refugee camp “The Jungle”. I was proud and dismayed to be part of this mission. Our subsequent report was commended to legal practitioners by Justice Bernard McCloskey, the former President of the Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chambers. BHRC has established itself as one of the leading voices for the rights of unaccompanied child refugees, working alongside politicians such as Lord Dubs, barristers conducting the litigation and actors such as Vanessa Redgrave highlighting injustices through film.

But a particular highlight of 2016 was my invitation by the Colombian government, specifically former Colombian Ambassador to the UK, Mauricio Rodríguez Múnera to the signing of the Peace Accord in Cartagena between the Farc and the Colombian government. It ended a 52 year old conflict which has claimed over 220,000 lives.

As I enter 2018, the final year of my 6 years as Chair of BHRC, I am allowing a little reflection as to the ingredients of its success – measured in part by positive impact upon cases and strengthening of the Rule of Law.

BHRC has longevity and depth in its work. Having been established in 1991, it probably is the oldest human rights lawyer organisation in the United Kingdom. The decades have developed strong and deep partnerships with lawyers, judges, journalists, non-governmental organisations, politicians and victims of human rights violations around the world. These longstanding relationships, incorporated into its institutional continuity, mean that BHRC is able to quickly identify patterns of human rights violations in particular countries. BHRC then is able to consider past remedies and whether a different approach is required.

BHRC has diversity and expertise in its members. BHRC is composed of high-level practitioners who conduct litigation within England and Wales and before international tribunals. This means that they bring practical expertise to trial processes, case law and legislation and analyse evidence within a legal framework. BHRC's membership now includes academics who provide essential in-depth legal expertise. In addition, law students are a welcome part of the BHRC fabric, and opportunities for these junior members of BHRC and partnerships with universities have been further developed over the last two years. Students are the future of international human rights.

BHRC benefits from a lack of bureaucratic barriers. It is nimble and always ready to respond. And the organisation is powered by a dedicated Executive Committee who remain the unsung heroes as they work pro bono and tirelessly.

I thank each and every person who has contacted and worked with BHRC. The fact that you care and keep faith with our capacity to make a difference, drives BHRC forward as an organisation. With thanks to the Bar Council, whose support of BHRC through its core funding keeps BHRC moving forward and allows it to carry out trial observations. Thank you to Doughty Street Chambers, which provides an office for BHRC's Executive Officer and generously donates space and refreshments for BHRC events and meetings whenever required.

But a huge thank you goes to our membership. Quite simply, without you BHRC would not exist. The world can be a much better place, and we as barristers are well placed to implement that change.



Kirsty Brimelow QC speaking at the UN on the 1988 Massacre in Iran

WHERE WE WORK

In the last two years, BHRC has significantly expanded its work, addressing human rights abuses in over 30 countries, including....

Bahrain
Bangladesh
Cameroon
China
Colombia
Egypt
France
Guatemala
Honduras
Hong Kong
India
Iran
Iraq
Israel/OPT
Japan
Kenya
Mexico
Myanmar
Nigeria
Poland

Qatar
Russia
Saudi Arabia
Somaliland
Sri Lanka
Syria
Tanzania
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States
Zimbabwe

United States

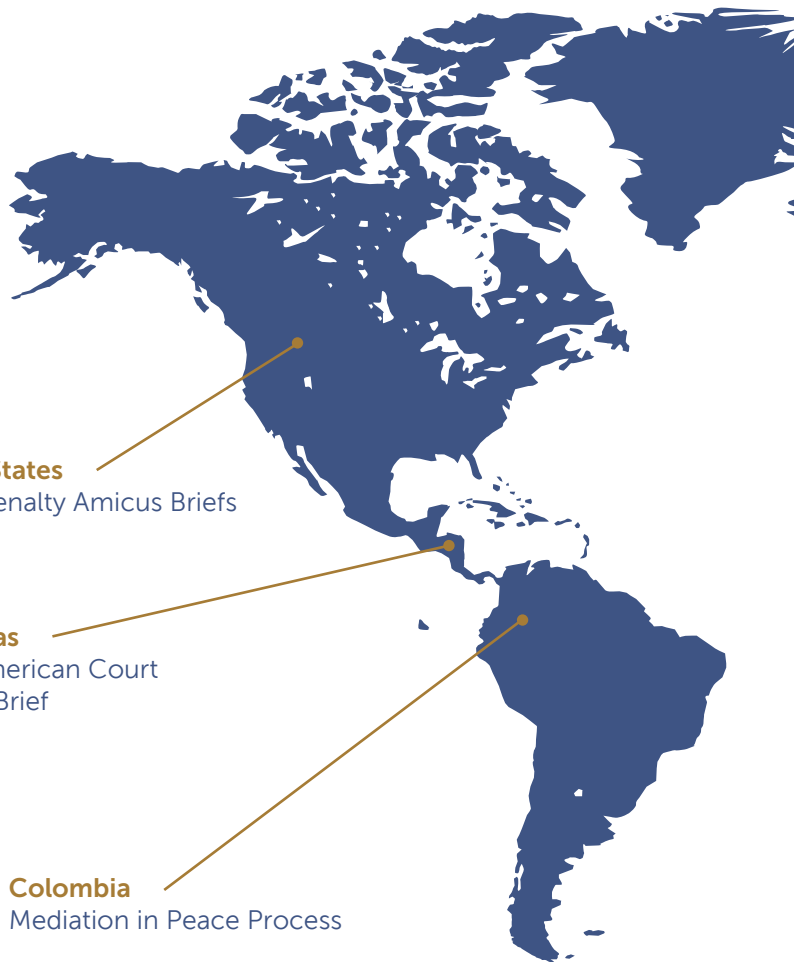
Death Penalty Amicus Briefs

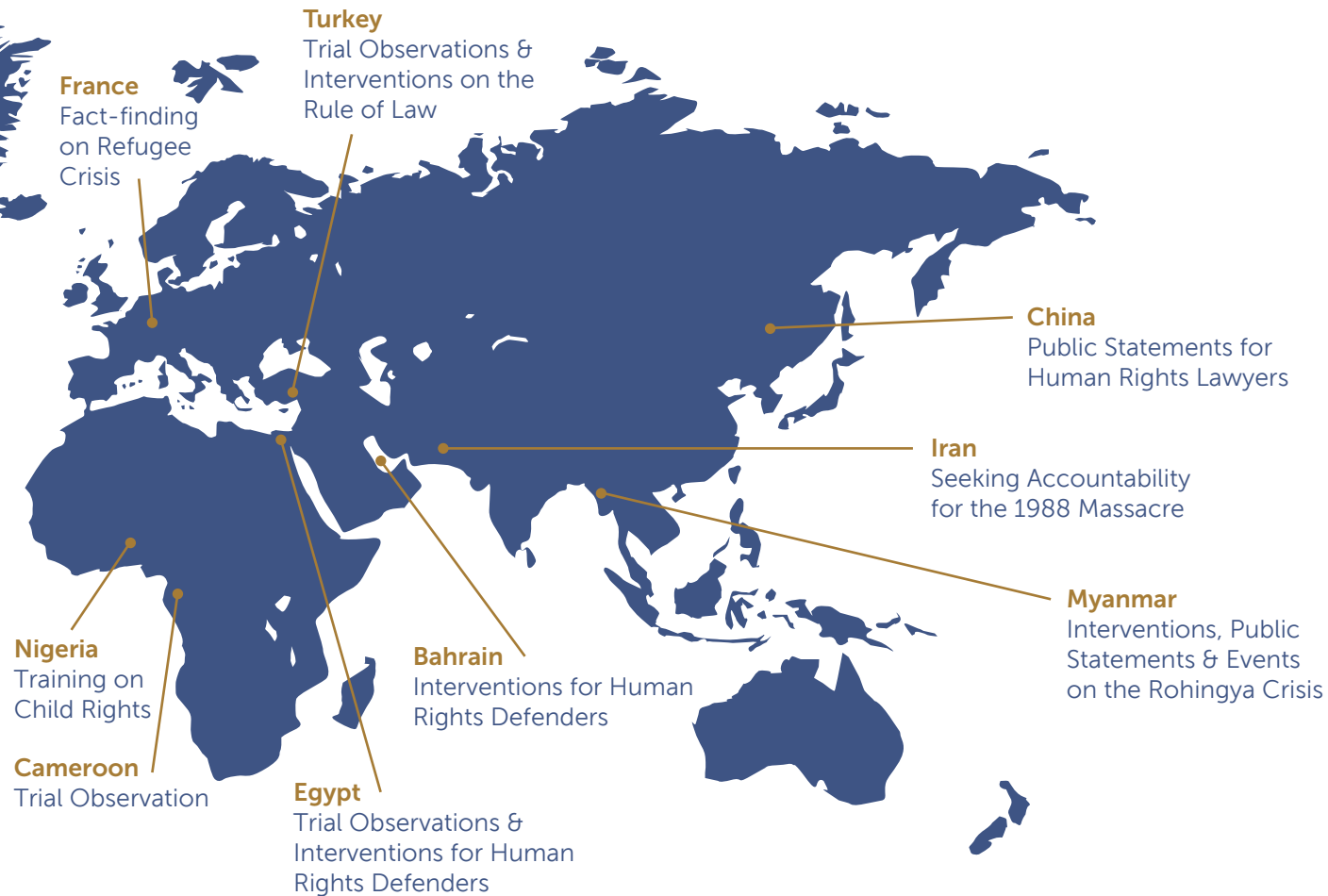
Honduras

Inter-American Court
Amicus Brief

Colombia

Mediation in Peace Process





UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW & INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED NORMS AND STANDARDS

BHRC works around the world to bring accountability for human rights breaches, including those arising from atrocities, use of the death penalty, interferences with the right to a fair trial and the independence of the judiciary, inhuman treatment, and interferences with the right to freedom of association and assembly.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BREACHES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

BHRC has sought accountability for the Yazidi genocide in Iraq, the 1988 massacre in Iran of political prisoners, and the continuing attack and displacement of the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar. BHRC has issued public statements, held seminars and provided comments at multiple hearings before the UK Parliament and the United Nations, as well as for national and international media outlets. BHRC has petitioned the International Criminal Court prosecutor, urging an immediate investigation of the Yazidi genocide using applicable legal standards.

These activities have seen positive results. For the first time in three decades, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran has addressed the 1988 Massacre in her General Assembly report and called for

an investigation. In June 2016, the UN recognised the Yazidi Genocide, and in November 2017 the UN Security Council passed a resolution to investigate the crimes against the Yazidis.



BHRC co-Vice Chair Schona Jolly QC on BBC discussing atrocities against the Rohingya



Mohamed Ramadhan visiting with his son while in prison in Bahrain.

Bahrain BHRC intervened in the case of Mohamed Ramadan and Husain Mossa, both facing the death penalty in Bahrain. Both men were convicted primarily on confessions allegedly extracted through torture. BHRC was contacted by Reprieve and wrote a letter calling for the torture allegations to be investigated. BHRC then submitted a petition for clemency to the King of Bahrain, raising concern over the fairness of the proceedings and the lack of due process required for death penalty cases. The petition was published and covered by the international press. The case is still ongoing.

United States BHRC submitted an amicus brief with other international bar associations to the Supreme Court of the United States urging the Court to hear the case of Bobby James Moore v. Texas raising questions about

DETER THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY

prosecutors pursuing the death penalty against mentally disabled defendants. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case and determined the state had not properly taken into account the mental health issues. The case was sent back to the state court for a rehearing, where the state prosecutor decided not to pursue the death penalty. The case is still ongoing.

Bangladesh BHRC challenged, through a statement of concern, the death sentence imposed on Motiur Nizami, the leader of the opposition Jamaat-e-Islami party. BHRC had previously raised concern for Mr Nizami when he was first convicted and sentence to death in 2014 by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal.



Motiur Nizami, leader of the opposition Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh

PRESERVING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

Bangladesh BHRC has spoken at several meetings in the Houses of Parliament and written letters of concern regarding the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) set up by Bangladesh to investigate and prosecute suspects for the 1971 atrocities carried out by members of the Pakistani army and local paramilitaries. Concerns were raised over a lack of the most basic fair trial rights protected and upheld by international law, and about the independence and impartiality of the judges. BHRC has repeatedly called for Bangladesh to suspend the court pending a full, independent and impartial investigation, and BHRC is in regular contact with NGOs, politicians and states regarding Bangladesh.

Poland In 2017, BHRC wrote a letter to the Polish President urging him to veto legislation that would give the Polish government substantial influence over the appointment of judges, eroding the independence of the judiciary and threatening the rule of law. After the significant public pressure from BHRC, the Bar Council and others, the President exercised his veto.

Zimbabwe BHRC issued a joint statement in partnership with the Bar Council and other Bar Associations around the world urging President Mugabe to veto proposed changes to the judiciary that threatened its independence.

“For a democracy to survive and flourish, a robust rule of law and an independent judiciary are essential.... Independent judicial appointment and independent judicial functioning enables due process as well as people’s confidence in due process.”

BHRC Chair Kirsty Brimelow QC on the independence of judges in Poland.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

India In 2016, BHRC issued a statement on the abolition of the Lawyers Collective, an NGO responsible for legal challenges against the Indian government on issues including discrimination based on sexual orientation and persons affected by HIV.

Russia BHRC issued a statement of concern calling on Russian authorities to uphold the religious freedom of Jehovah's Witnesses. Litigation on behalf of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the right to religious freedom, is currently pending before the European Court of Human Rights after all in-country appeals have been exhausted.

Russian Jehovah's Witnesses await hearing at the European Court of Human Rights
Photo Credit: JW.org



ABOLISHING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

In our last biennial report (for 2014-2015) BHRC highlighted its work to help to bring about legislation in the UK to protect potential victims of FGM.

In April 2016, BHRC jointly launched the online platform, with FORWARD UK, the United to END FGM (UEFGM) European Knowledge Platform for professionals working directly or indirectly with FGM. The platform includes eLearning platforms, country focused reports for eleven EU member states, and access to online platforms and discussion boards to connect professionals across the network.

Zimran Samuel speaks
at launch event of
UEFGM European
Knowledge Platform



ISSUE IN FOCUS: TRIAL OBSERVATIONS

A core element of BHRC's work is to observe and report on trials around the world that raise concern for the right to a fair trial, and other human rights violations.

EGYPT

Between March 2016 and April 2017, at the request and assistance of EuroMed Rights, BHRC observed several hearings in the case of Aya Hegazy (co-founder of the Belady Foundation) and others, whose prosecution was believed to be part of a state clampdown on civil society in Egypt. BHRC issued an interim and final observation reports raising issues in Ms Hegazy's trial as well as systemic issues of the excessive use of pretrial detention, and difficulties of access to lawyers; the length and number of trial adjournments; routine refusal of release on bail; and continued detention following acquittal. Ms Hegazy, her husband and six other defendants in the case were acquitted and released in April 2017. BHRC held an event with EuroMed Rights to launch the trial report to discuss the systemic issues which exist in Egypt.



Aya Hegazy following her release in Egypt.

"Aya Hegazy's case is unfortunately not isolated. Many of the issues identified in her trial are not unique to her case but are systemic within the Egyptian criminal justice system..."

Moataz El Fegier, EuroMed Rights Executive Board Member

TURKEY

Even before the attempted coup in 2016, and especially since, BHRC has followed the deteriorating situation for lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and judges in Turkey. Tens of thousands of professionals have been arrested, detained and charged with offences related to the coup, often on what seems to be the flimsiest of evidence.

BHRC has sent trial observers to seven trials of journalists and lawyers in the last two years, including a trial of 43 lawyers. The findings in the ensuing reports, highlighting significant fair trial breaches, have helped to oppose Turkish extradition requests for lawyers and judges abroad.

BHRC undergoes trial observations in order to....

- Ensure fundamental principles of the right to a fair trial are upheld
- Document abuses of such rights
- Identify possible systemic violations
- Support international advocacy efforts to combat fair trial and human rights violations



Turkish journalists from the daily newspaper Taraf facing prosecution
In the wake of the crackdown on civil society.
Photo Credit: PEN International

CAMEROON

In April 2017, BHRC conducted a trial observation of 28 protestors from the Anglophone region of Cameroon. They were prosecuted for protesting the imposition of French-speaking judges and civil law systems in regions where most of Cameroon's English-speaking minority live. The subsequent BHRC report found multiple fair trial rights violations, including the use of military tribunals and accusations of abuse by the police. It received considerable publicity. In late August 2017, all of the Cameroonian protestors were released by an order of the President. All charges were subsequently dropped by the prosecution.

SUPPORT AND PROTECT LAWYERS, JUDGES & HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WHO ARE THREATENED OR OPPRESSED IN THEIR WORK

BHRC has signed more than 40 letters and statements of concern on behalf of legal professionals and human rights defenders facing persecution around the world.

CHINA

BHRC published and sent multiple letters and statements of concern regarding the detention, torture or enforced disappearance of various human rights lawyers as the situation for human rights lawyers in China continued to deteriorate. Letters concerning Wang Quanzhang, Wu Gan, Li Yuhan and other human rights lawyers and legal professionals still detained since the “709 Crackdown” of 2015 were among those circulated to human rights groups in China and translated into Mandarin. The letters provide support to the human rights organisations operating in China on behalf of the arrested lawyers.



Artwork depicting images of various lawyers arrested during the 709 Crackdown
Photo Credit: CHRLCG

“BHRC considers that [China’s repeated violation of the right of lawyers to perform their professional functions freely and effectively] are having a deleterious impact on the protection of human rights and the respect for the rule of law in China.”

BHRC statement on the arrest and detention of human rights lawyer Li Yuhan in December 2017

David Ravelo Crespo
Photo Credit: Peace
Brigades International



COLOMBIA

BHRC has worked extensively on the case of David Ravelo Crespo, a Colombian human rights defender who has been in prison since 2010. It submitted two amicus briefs in his case, the most recent being in 2017 to the Supreme Court of Colombia. BHRC argued that the trial fell short of Colombian and international legal standards and called for a swift and just end to the process. In June 2017, David Ravelo Crespo was released from prison after seven years of incarceration. However, he continues the fight to clear his name and prove that the charges and conviction against him were politically motivated.



Ibrahim Halawa
Photo Credit: Reprieve

EGYPT

BHRC has followed closely the deteriorating conditions for human rights defenders and lawyers in Egypt, particularly the use of extensive pretrial detention, excessive travel bans and public mistreatment. BHRC has raised concern for lawyers and human rights defenders generally, as well as in a number of specific cases, including for Ibrahim Halawa, an Irish citizen detained by Egyptian authorities after attending a peaceful protest in Cairo; for Azza Soliman, a prominent women's rights lawyer in Egypt; and for Malek Adly arrested for his involvement in bringing a constitutional challenge against Egypt, and held for 100 days in solitary confinement. Soliman, Adly and Halawa have all been released since BHRC's statements were issued.

Adly and Soliman are still subject to a travel ban and their personal funds are subject of a freezing order. BHRC also sent a joint letter with EuroMed Rights and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies to President el-Sisi concerning the right for lawyers to practice without harassment and the duty of the state to enable such an environment.

Adán Guillermo López
Lone
Honduran judge
dismissed in 2009.
Photo Credit:
Peace Brigades



HONDURAS

BHRC filed an amicus to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) regarding the continued dismissal of three judges who joined a demonstration against the coup in 2009. Although the IACHR had previously ruled that their dismissal violated the judges' rights to freedom of expression, association and judicial guarantees, the Honduran government claimed they could not reinstate the judges because the positions were already filled. The IACHR agreed with BHRC's position and held that the only appropriate remedy was reinstatement.

KENYA

The Bar Council and BHRC sent a joint letter to the Kenyan High Commissioner to the UK, urging him to take action to protect legal practitioners following the murder of Kenyan lawyer Willie Kimani. Police officers were indicted in the murder of Kimani, and at the beginning of 2018, the trial is still ongoing.



Kenyan Lawyer
Willie Kimani



Protestors in the OPT clash with Israeli soldiers

ISRAEL/OPT

In May 2016, BHRC issued a statement calling on Israel to protect and safeguard the rights of Palestinian human rights defenders. The statement highlighted a pattern of death threats, harassment and violence aimed at curtailing the work of Palestinian human rights defenders and activists. BHRC also raised concern over the continuing arrest and prosecution of Palestinian human rights defenders for exercising their right to peaceful protest.

TANZANIA

BHRC has raised serious concern about the situation of lawyers in Tanzania since the President of the Tanganyika Law Society, Tundu Lissu, was first detained in August 2017. Shortly after he was released on bail, Mr Lissu was shot eight times outside of his home.

BHRC issued two statements of concern on behalf of Mr Lissu, after his arrest and again after he was shot. The statements also raised concerns for all lawyers in Tanzania under threat. The media attention in the African press attracted by the statements was instrumental in ensuring that Mr Lissu could eventually access medical treatment abroad.



Tundu Lissu

TURKEY

In addition to trial observations, BHRC has issued numerous statements of concern calling for the release of the thousands of lawyers, judges, journalists and human rights defenders detained since the 2016 attempted coup. BHRC and the Bar Council urged Theresa May to raise human rights concerns with President Erdogan during his visit to the UK and called upon the Turkish Constitutional Court to urgently address human rights abuses.

ZIMBABWE

BHRC expressed grave concern over the arrest and prosecution of Pastor Evan Mawarire, the leader of a popular movement seeking to put pressure on the Zimbabwean government to combat poverty and corruption. He was arrested and charged with subverting a constitutional government, and faced a possible sentence of up to 20 years' imprisonment. Pastor Mawarire was released in September 2017, and the prosecution was dropped.



Pastor Evan
Mawarire

ISSUE IN FOCUS: COLOMBIAN PEACE PROCESS

The conflict in Colombia is the longest running conflict in Latin America. BHRC has been part of capacity building and mediation in Colombia since 2003. BHRC, through its Chair, Kirsty Brimelow QC, has been mediating on behalf of the San Jose de Apartado Comunidad de Paz (the Peace Community) since 2012, travelling to the region five times in the last two years. BHRC is seeking clearer practices in evidence-gathering on paramilitary activity in Colombia.

In 2016, BHRC attended human rights meetings with the President of the Constitutional Court, Vice Minister of Defence, a Commander of the Colombian Army 17th Brigade and the President's human rights adviser.

The fiscalia started investigations and prosecutions of several murders of community members and the 17th Brigade Commander publicly apologised for stigmatising one of the leaders of the Peace Community.

BHRC has held events raising awareness about the struggles of the peace community in Colombia. BHRC members have also spoken at events with the former Colombia Ambassador, Peace Brigade International, members of the peace community, and Lush at Doughty Street, House of Lords, Inner Temple, Law Society, and The Hague.

PEACE AND CONFLICT BY KIRSTY BRIMELOW QC



The sun was beating down and it was a hot day in Cartagena in Colombia.

All of us were dressed in white, wearing dove badges of peace, clutching umbrellas, with doves joyfully painted across canopies, against the burning rays of the sun, as words of hope and conciliation showered from Farc leader Rodrigo Londoño (nom de guerre "Timochenko") and President Santos.

Fanned around them were 13 Presidents of Latin American countries, Ban Ki Moon the Secretary General of the United Nations and dignitaries from around the world.

It was September 2016 and here was Colombia ceremonially ending its 52 - year conflict with a stroke of a pen made from bullets. The crowd chanted “abrazo” (hug) but whilst a hug did not take place between President Santos and Timochenko it didn't matter.

The world then embraced them in its own hug and handed awards to the President, including the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Council of the European Union decided to lift the sanctions against the Farc (officially created in 1964), effectively suspending the organization from the EU list of designated terrorists. The USA however, which had placed the Farc on their list of terrorist organisations in 1997, has left it firmly there.

After the euphoria, the accord was narrowly rejected by 50.2% of the Colombian people in a referendum on 2 October 2016. On 24 November 2016 the accord emerged from talks with amendments and I again watched the bullet pen in the hands of Timochenko and President Santos. This time we were in Bogotá. The agreement includes commitments relating to rural land reform, political participation, illicit drug production, the end of the armed conflict, verification and victims.

A year later the Constitutional Court embedded the agreement for three complete presidential terms. The Farc now is a political party, the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Comun) People's Alternative Revolutionary Force (still the acronym Farc).

But what does peace mean for the people of Colombia? The number of murders in the country as a whole has decreased. Between January and October 2017 there were 8,924 murders as compared to 9,383 for a similar period the previous year but 49.99 per cent of the murders are concentrated in 27 of the 1122 municipalities in Colombia. In summary, the suffering is in the rural areas. In Apartadó in Uraba, there was an 88% increase in killings (from 29 to 47).

The withdrawal of the Farc from its previous territory has created a vacuum into which illegal armed actors have stepped. The UNHCR categorises them as drug traffickers, renegade Farc and right-wing paramilitary groups. UNHCR reported that in 2017 there were 78 killings of leaders and members of social organisations and another suspected 13 murders.

Many of these leaders were already under protection measures from the State; protection measures which proved ineffective. In addition, in December 2017 the then Minister of the Defence Luis Vallegas stated that the murder of human rights defenders and social leaders was largely due to “tema de faldas” (disputes over women) and unpaid debts, a claim lacking in factual grounding.

Whilst, the use of bullets to sign paper agreements remain a powerful symbol of hope, the murder march in the rural areas cannot be dismissed as disparate brawls but should be seen as a bloody reality check.



A meeting in San José de Apartadó Comunidad de Paz (the Peace Community)

FURTHERING INTEREST IN & KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS & THE LAW, WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE LEGAL PROFESSION

In addition to events related to its other work, BHRC has provided high quality training programmes and educational events on key human rights issues, including child rights, witchcraft (in areas where this is an issue) and LGBTQ rights.

NIGERIA

In 2016, BHRC trained more than 300 judges, magistrates, social workers and members of the National Judicial Institute (responsible for training judges) across all States in Nigeria on international child rights law in partnership with Coram Children's Legal Centre. This has been part of a broader project that, since 2013, has trained at least 500 lawyers, social workers, judges, magistrates, members of the National Human Rights Commission, NGOs, and government lawyers.

BHRC has held events in London to raise awareness about the human rights issues facing the Nigerian people and is developing new training programmes in partnership with the Nigerian Bar Association.

BHRC's work has led to the first successful prosecution for rape of a child in one state in Nigeria and the creation

of the family court in Cross Rivers State. It also led to the creation of the first UN Special Representative on People with Albinism.



Members of the Child Protection Networks continue training on child rights law



Children held in prison charged as adults in "They Call Us Monsters"

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL

BHRC lent its support to two documentary films presented at the Human Rights Watch film festival in 2017. "The Settlers" looked at the world of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank while "They Call Us Monsters" looked at the lives of three juveniles, charged with violent crimes and facing decades in prison from the perspectives of the boys themselves.

LGBTQ RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

The UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group and BHRC hosted a special event to explore the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBTQ) around the world, with a special focus on Sri Lanka and the role the UK Government can play in promoting LGBTQ rights abroad. This is part of BHRC's broader work in support of the LGBTQ community, including Kirsty Brimelow QC taking part in Pride week in London in a televised discussion on the violation of LGBTQ people's rights internationally.



BHRC Chair Kirsty Brimelow QC serves on panel discussion on LGBTQ in Sri Lanka



Advertisement for the first UN Human Rights Expert Workshop on Witchcraft and Human Rights

UN HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERT WORKSHOP ON WITCHCRAFT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In September 2017, BHRC was overall moderator as well as Chair of sessions on a two day in depth conference on violations of the rights of people with albinism and the abuse of people through witchcraft beliefs. The event was the first of its kind and follows years of work by BHRC and other groups to highlight the use of belief in witchcraft to abuse human rights in developing countries.

ISSUE IN FOCUS: EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

BHRC has closely monitored the refugee crisis in Europe, in particular the plight of child refugees in the Calais Jungle camp.

"Policing and Access to Justice: Camps at Calais and Grand-Synthie" (July 2016) highlights allegations of police violence, police failure to protect residents within the camps, and a lack of access to justice. The report also underlines the high level of overall police violence within the camps and draws attention to a lack of adequate legal advice or legal observers within the camps.

"Breakdown: the dismantling of the Calais 'Jungle' and of the promises to its unaccompanied children" (October 2017) documents the demolition of the Calais 'Jungle' camp in October 2016 and the subsequent failures by French and UK authorities to adequately protect and process the estimated 1,000 unaccompanied minors living in the camp. The barristers from BHRC conducting observation were the only barristers granted access to conduct fact-finding during the dismantling of the Jungle.



Tents erected by refugees in the Calais "Jungle" Camp



A school for refugee children as it is being dismantled by French officials.

CHILD REFUGEES

BHRC also hosted a series of events around the issues faced by refugees. BHRC hosted a viewing of “Sea Sorow,” a documentary directed by academy award winning actress Vanessa Redgrave. The event featured Ms Redgrave, Lord Alf Dubs and Terry Waite. BHRC also hosted a panel discussion on the refugee crisis and the rights of child refugees at the annual Bar Conference in 2017.

BHRC has also published a series of letters and opinion pieces, including an opinion article in the Guardian

and the Times, a letter on street children and the UN General Comment , and a letter to the UK and French ministers responsible for the implementation of the so-called Dubs Amendment, committing the UK to admitting more refugee children.

BHRC’s efforts have received extensive publicity, and in late 2016, the decision to cap the number of unaccompanied children allowed to enter the UK under the Dubs Amendment was revisited and the number of children to be admitted was raised.

“The unaccompanied children of Calais have faced horror, both in their home countries and in France, in “the Jungle” camp. Nearly a year later, the horror continues as children remain vulnerable to trafficking, abuse, starvation and disease. These children bear silent witness to the failure that was the demolition of the Jungle camp. They are the exclamation marks that should litter this report.”

BHRC Chair Kirsty Brimelow QC speaking on the October 2017 report

“Breakdown: the dismantling of the Calais “Jungle” and of the promises to its unaccompanied children.”

SUPPORT & CO-OPERATE WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS & INDIVIDUALS **WORKING FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

BHRC has partnered with a number of domestic and international organisations. As well as those highlighted below, BHRC has worked with the Rule of Law Expertise UK (ROLE UK), Law Society of England and Wales, International Bar Association, American Bar Association Human Rights Committee, Coram Children's Charity, and the All Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

JAPANESE BAR ASSOCIATION

BHRC met with Japanese lawyers as part of their fact finding mission across Europe to learn more about criminal procedure in Europe, and especially the use of restraints before and during criminal proceedings. BHRC linked the lawyers with the Criminal Bar Association, organised and accompanied the lawyers to a meeting at the Old Bailey and organised a meeting between the Japanese lawyers and human rights lawyers.



BHRC Membership Secretary Michael Ivers QC meets
with members of the Japanese Bar.



BHRC Chair Kirsty Brimelow QC and Executive Officer Amanda June Chadwick meet with the President of the Nigerian Bar and members of the National Secretariat.

NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

BHRC attended the Nigerian Bar Conference in August 2017 in Lagos to discuss developing further training programmes on international human rights law for the Nigerian Bar Association. During the conference, BHRC also spoke with the broadcaster CNBC Africa on institution building.

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL

As part of its relationship with Peace Brigades International and the relaunch of the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk, BHRC has met with lawyers and human rights defenders from across Latin America, including Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and Colombia, to discuss their human rights concerns. Some of the most common concerns in the region are the persecution, detention and enforced disappearance of human rights defenders and the need to protect indigenous land rights.



BHRC Chair Kirsty Brimelow QC meets with Honduran human rights defenders as part of the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk with Peace Brigades International.

BHRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Bar Human Rights Committee's Executive is elected by BHRC members every two years to oversee the organisation's strategy and implement its work. Executive members contribute their substantial expertise pro bono to produce BHRC publications and statements, lead fact-finding missions, collaborate with local partners, and represent the Committee to the media, external organisations and the public.



Chair: Kirsty Brimelow QC, Doughty Street Chambers

Vice Chairs: Schona Jolly QC, Cloisters, Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh, Matrix Chambers

Secretary: Stephen Cragg QC, Doughty Street Chambers

Treasurer: Jodie Blackstock, JUSTICE

Membership Officer: Michael Ivers QC, Garden Court Chambers

Professor Bill Bowring, Birkbeck College

Joanne Cecil, Garden Court Chambers

Dr. Theodora Christou, QMUL and LSE

Melanie Gingell, Doughty Street Chambers

Phil Haywood, Doughty Street Chambers

Lucy Mair, Garden Court North

Gráinne Mellon, Garden Court Chambers

Nathan Rasiah, 23 Essex Street

Zimran Samuel, Doughty Street Chambers

Pete Weatherby QC, Garden Court North

Rupert Wheeler, 23 Essex Street

David Young, Red Lion Chambers

The Executive is supported by a full-time Executive Officer, an Advisory Board, and a Drafting Committee. BHRC is grateful to its Executive Officers/Coordinators from 2016-2017: **Celine Grey** (2014-April 2016), **Ed Gillett** (April 2016-June 2017); and **Amanda June Chadwick** (July 2017-Present)

ADVISORY BOARD

BHRC is developing an Advisory Board, made up of previous BHRC Office Holders, senior members of the Bar and the judiciary, and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment and/or service to the field of human rights. Members of the Advisory Board are appointed by the BHRC Chair, following consultation with the Executive and a majority vote. Current members are **Peter Carter QC & Mark Muller QC**.

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

Members of the BHRC Drafting Committee, who are all members of BHRC, are responsible for producing first drafts of statements and letters of concern, and providing research assistance for BHRC work. The drafts are provided to the Executive for review, amendment and approval before publication.

Illaria Arnavas
John Cubbon
Brenda Efurhievwe
Freya Forster
Rebecca Keating
Ruth Keating

Audrey Cherryl Morgan
Sarah Pinder
Navid Pourghazi
Aimee Riese
Kate Stone
Joe Tomlinson

FINANCIAL REPORT

2016-2017

Over the period 2016/17 BHRC's main expenses were covered through the generous support of two major donors. First, the Bar Council of England and Wales paid the salary of our Executive Officer and other staff related costs, and made a significant contribution to our trial observation unit. Staff related costs included turnover of three Executive Officers, maternity pay and recruitment.

Second, Doughty Street Chambers provided free of charge office space, utilities, administrative support and meetings and event space.

Reprieve kindly donated funds in 2016 to enable us to undertake work in Palestine. We are also very grateful to Coram for funding our child rights project work in Nigeria during 2015/2016.

Membership income increased over the period by 43%, which helped significantly towards funding the broad range of other BHRC activities around the world. All of these were undertaken pro bono by BHRC members.

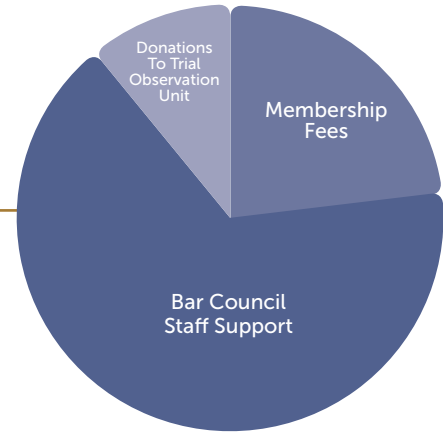
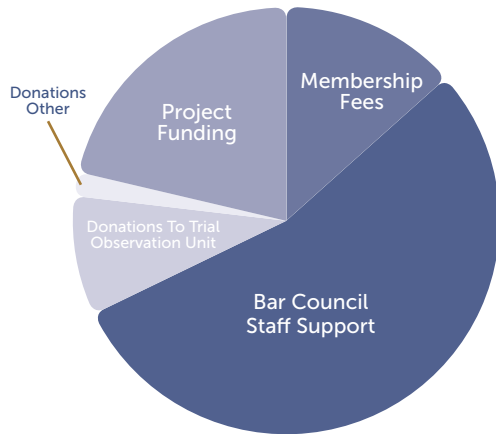
We would not be able to continue our important work without this significant commitment by barristers giving of their time and expertise. We are grateful to everyone who assisted us in 2016 and 2017.

As such, we ended each year with a surplus of funds, ensuring that our reserves continue to be modestly healthy and enable us to respond swiftly and flexibly to issues of concern.

INCOME

2016
£55,301

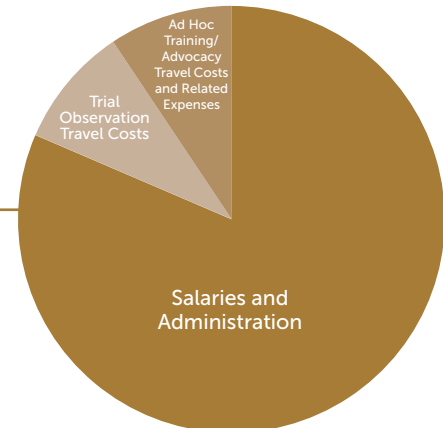
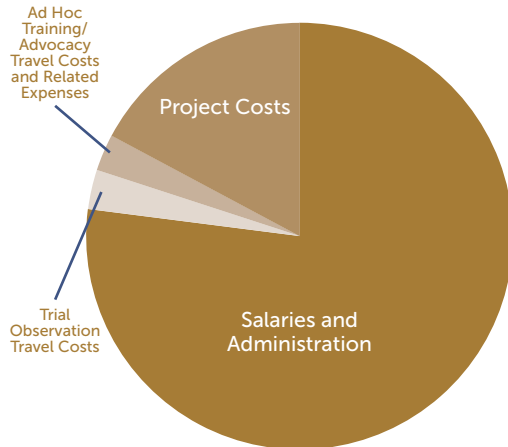
2017
£45,674



EXPENDITURE

2016
£49,046

2017
£39,179



JOINING THE BAR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Bar Human Rights Committee relies, to a large extent, on membership subscriptions and individual donations to fund our ongoing work around the world.

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

BHRC's core operational costs are covered by a grant from the Bar Council. This means that your membership subscription directly funds our project work, enabling us to send BHRC lawyers wherever they are most needed. Your support is vital to the growth of BHRC, and our ongoing work to protect advocates, judges, human rights defenders and vulnerable communities around the world.

Your support enables us to:

- Produce statements, letters of concern and amicus curiae briefs in support of people facing unfair trials and imprisonment.
- Send our Trial Observation Unit to witness and monitor unjust or unfair trials wherever they occur.
- Provide international training, support and leadership to lawyers, human rights defenders and civil society groups under threat.
- Lead investigations and publish detailed reports on serious human rights abuses.
- Lobby governments and other state actors to improve fair trial protections and legal standards.

As a member, you will also receive up to date news about BHRC's work, opportunities to assist with our international projects, statements, publications or other human rights work, and invitations to BHRC events.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN

BHRC Membership is open to every practising or non-practising member of the Bar of England and Wales, and all law students (including trainees and pupils) in England and Wales. To join the Bar Human Rights Committee, visit www.barhumanrights.org.uk/join

14 February

British lawyers urge top court to take up post-coup cases

FATMA DEMIRELLI

British bar

Bar Human Rights Committee and Bar Council call on Kenya to protect lawyers following Kimani murders

Written by: Bar Council | Posted On: 20th July 2016

The EastAfrican

23 SEPTEMBER 2017

Tanzania: UK Lawyers Say Independent Probe Needed in Lissu Attack

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA | OCTOBER 5, 2017 | 5:16 PM

Lawyers accuse UK-backed Bahrain watchdogs over torture inquiry

Justice | Witness

Demanding justice for the Yazidi genocide

ARTICLES

Call for International and Independent Investigation Into 1988 Massacre

Human Rights | 15 September 2017

BHRC calls on Turkish Constitutional Court to address human rights abuses

By SCF | February 14, 2017

UK lawyers call on Egypt to release tortured Irish student

#EgyptTurmoil

Bar Human Rights Committee says imprisonment of Ibrahim al-Sayid, who enters third year behind bars, is 'serious breach of'

law, 'national law'

Hong Kong

UK lawyers say Hong Kong rule of law under threat after jailing of activists

Arrests of Reuters journalists are "an egregious abuse of power": legal experts

f 16

SON CHAU | 18 DEC 2017

Immigration and asylum

Asylum: up to 400 refugee children stuck in France, lawyers say

Bar Human Rights Committee says applications have not had proper decisions and condemns UK's limits on Dubs scheme



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF ENGLAND & WALES