



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND & WALES

Biennial Report
2018-2019

Foreword

It was a real privilege to be elected Chair of BHRC at the end of 2018. Firstly, I must thank and acknowledge my brilliant predecessor, Kirsty Brimelow QC, for the substantial service and effort she gave to BHRC, growing us into the organisation that we have become today. I am tremendously proud to lead an organisation which continues to grow in its expertise, influence and commitment to human rights across the globe, at a time when its presence could not be more needed. It is with great honour that I continue as its Chair.

Reflecting now on the world and work we were focusing on in 2018 and 2019 can feel rather unsettling. It was a time untouched by the difficulties and uncertainty brought upon each of us by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we still faced urgent demand for our ability to produce high-quality, independent trial monitoring and observations, amicus curiae briefs, training and intervention on situations of grave incursions into human rights and the rule of law around the world. This year, as the pandemic has ground us in the United Kingdom, we have watched with alarm as regimes have sought to utilise this health emergency as a cover for oppression and suppression and a means of distraction from the most egregious human rights abuses. More of that in next year's report.

It is important, though, to keep some hope alive. The community of lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and civil society fighting to strengthen rights and the rule of law across the world is a bright spot in dark times. Some of our own personal highlights have included our collaborative efforts with so many courageous colleagues around the world. We have also welcomed the opportunity to meet with many of the international legal community in joint programmes which demonstrate the desire, and need, for so many to engage with international law and human rights.

As lawyers, we have a special duty in our work to promote, protect and uphold the rule of law as underlined by the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. The notable assault on the rule of law in recent times has been wide-ranging and has occurred even in unexpected places. Our pro-bono commitment can be challenging and our capacity is stretched by the need for international pro bono assistance. But I continue to be in awe of the many members of the Bar who give of their time and expertise so generously, believing as they do, rightly, that human rights work matters. We hope by taking the time to reflect on our work as a whole, we can more clearly see its value to those who we support, and in our strong partnerships to promote human rights and the rule of law around the world.

The 2020-21 term is now well underway with a newly elected Executive Committee. We were delighted to welcome three new members to the Executive. We have also welcomed a second member of staff, which is testament to the demand for our assistance.

We are ready to meet the challenge of the years ahead. Please join us and encourage your colleagues to do so too.

Schona Jolly QC
Chair, Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales
December 2020

Cover photo:

Hong Kong, China. A lone protester sits down in the road in front of a line of riot police outside the Legislative Council building, during the mass protests against Chief Executive Carrie Lam's extradition bill.

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Who we are

The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) is an independent and non-political body of barristers called to the Bar of England and Wales, dedicated to promoting principles of justice and respect for fundamental human rights through the rule of law.

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 members are barristers called to the Bar of England and Wales, pupil barristers, legal academics or law students. Our members include some of the UK's foremost human rights barristers, legal practitioners and academics. Our Executive Committee and members offer their services pro bono, alongside their independent legal practices, teaching commitments and legal studies. Between 2018-19 BHRC was supported by a full-time Executive Officer.

Our mission is to protect and promote international human rights through the rule of law, by using the international human rights law expertise of some of the UK's most experienced human rights barristers.

2018-2019 at a glance

The previous two years have been very active for BHRC. At the end of 2018 we bid farewell to Kirsty Brimelow QC after she completed six years as Chair and fifteen years on the Executive Committee. We thank Kirsty for the enormous work and service she put into growing BHRC into the organisation it is today, and we are delighted to continue working together through BHRC's Advisory Board, which she has now joined.

2019 began under the direction of new Chair Schona Jolly QC. Stephen Cragg QC took her place as co-Vice Chair, continuing alongside Blinne Ni Ghralaigh as the second co-Vice Chair. A strategic decision was taken by the Executive Committee to move towards longer term projects, and focusing on three areas in particular: China (and by extension into Central Asia), South Asia (where BHRC has worked for many years) and its continued work on Turkey. Each of these areas are facing growing crises in human rights and rule of law issues. BHRC continues work on other areas and countries in which it has been operating, including in particular its trial observation and rule of law work, including in Colombia, Bahrain and Egypt.

BHRC's expertise in trial observations, human rights law training, *amicus curiae* and statements of concern are, perhaps depressingly, in high demand. BHRC is grateful to its members, as well as its Executive Committee, for their commitment to our work over and above the demands of their busy practices and professional lives. BHRC is also grateful to the Bar Council for its continued support, funding and collaboration over important rule of law issues, as well as both our new and longstanding partners.

In 2018-19, BHRC addressed a wide range of human rights issues across 24 countries and territories, in accordance with its remit and objectives.

The remit of BHRC extends to all countries of the world, apart from its own jurisdiction of England and Wales. This reflects the Committee's need to maintain its role as an independent but legally qualified observer and critic.



Where we work

- Bahrain
- Brunei
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Egypt
- Greece
- Hong Kong
- Honduras
- India
- Iran
- Israel and Palestine
- Kashmir
- Kazakhstan
- Kuwait
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Russia
- Turkey
- United States
- Zimbabwe

What we do

BHRC's mission is to protect and promote international human rights through the rule of law, by using the international human rights law expertise of the UK's most experienced and talented human rights barristers.

Our objectives are to:

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

We achieve our objectives through a number of activities, including conducting international fact-finding investigations and investigative research on human rights situations, conducting trial observations, capacity building, providing training and support, monitoring human rights violations, intervening in international litigation through *amicus curiae* briefs, promoting the rule of law and human rights through public events, and assisting individuals and groups to hold states accountable for abusive practices. The remit of BHRC extends to all countries of the world, apart from its own jurisdiction of England and Wales. This reflects the Committee's need to maintain its role as an independent but legally qualified observer and critic.

Trial Observations

Fair trials are fundamental for justice and the rule of law. BHRC sends impartial observers to countries around the world to ensure the right to a fair trial through the impartial administration of justice. The aim of trial observation is to report independently on the adherence of hearings to international fair trial standards.

BHRC's expertise is regularly sought by concerned individuals and human rights organisations around the world. Our trial reports are widely circulated and have been referenced in court proceedings.

In 2018-19, BHRC conducted observations across multiple hearings in seven countries and territories. BHRC was due to send observers to Egypt in Autumn 2019 with its partner EuroMed Rights. This work has been halted pending the security situation in Cairo.

We are very grateful to the Bar Council, who have provided funding to our trial observation unit from 2015. This has enabled us to increase the number and scope of trial observations we undertake.

BHRC also conducts trial observations through its partnerships. In mid-2019, BHRC won approval to be part of the international legal observer panels

for Guantanamo Bay, and sent its first observers in February 2020.

In 2018, BHRC formalised its partnership with Article 19 in order to conduct trial observations relating principally to freedom of expression. BHRC also joined a second trial observation programme organised by EuroMed Rights, involving a collective of Turkish and international trial observers looking at a variety of cases relating to accusations stemming from the attempted coup in 2016.

International Advocacy

Public statements and letters of concern are an important means of holding governments to account, highlighting specific legal concerns and drawing international attention on alleged violations. BHRC also conducts advocacy through publishing op-eds, events, reports and submissions, and through high-level meetings.

Amicus curiae briefs

BHRC's assistance on *amicus curiae* briefs continues to be sought for diverse human rights concerns across the world. Our intervention in cases will often come at the request of NGOs already working on a specific issue, or from an individual claiming that their rights have been violated. Legal interventions of this type demonstrate the relevance of international law and can, over time, lead to significant change.

The resource-intensive nature of preparing *amicus* to a high standard means that BHRC seeks to intervene only in the gravest cases of suspected violations of a defendant's fair trial rights. In most cases, this involves those facing the death penalty. BHRC condemns the death penalty as a means of punishment but is also concerned with the flawed circumstances in which it is often applied.

Training and events

BHRC furthers interest in and knowledge of human rights primarily through training and events. In addition to holding its own events, BHRC is routinely asked to lend its expertise to other public events around the world.

Partnerships

BHRC works with domestic and international organisations to advance human rights and promote the rule of law. These strategic partnerships have provided opportunities for BHRC to develop relationships with other organisations and individuals. Often, BHRC is asked by its partners to intervene in situations relevant to its work and to meet with international human rights organisations and individuals.

BHRC works closely with bar associations and legal human rights organisations on issues relating to lawyers at risk around the world. BHRC is a member of the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk, the Attorney General's International Pro Bono Committee, the EuroMed Rights Network and the Lawyers' Advisory Committee for Peace Brigades International (PBI).

BHRC also has a strong relationship with Rule of Law Expertise-UK (ROLE), which has provided support and assistance for our training and partnerships in Nigeria, India and Turkey.

BHRC has a memorandum of understanding with the **Nigerian Bar Association** to further their relationship and to enhance the skills of Nigerian lawyers in the practical application of human rights law in the domestic, regional and international context.

BHRC receives substantial core funding from the **Bar Council of England and Wales**, although it remains independent of it. Both organisations maintain a close relationship, and work together on activities that crossover into both organisations' areas of work.

Upholding the rule of law and internationally recognised human rights norms and standards

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

Fighting the use of the death penalty

BHRC opposes the death penalty in all circumstances. International law requires 'super due process' wherever capital punishment is contemplated, in recognition that it is impossible to rectify any defect after the sentence has been carried out. Although the death penalty, *per se*, is not a breach of international law, it is clear that the execution of an individual will violate international law in circumstances where a State has not ensured strict adherence to fair trial rights and other due process and procedural obligations protected by international treaties.

To mark the 16th World Day Against the Death Penalty, BHRC released a statement raising concerns for the conditions of confinement on death row in Bahrain, Egypt, Jamaica and the United States.

In October 2018, BHRC, through Kirsty Brimelow QC and Nathan Rasiah, submitted an amicus brief to the military tribunal in **Guantanamo Bay** in the case of **Ali Abdul Aziz Ali** (also known as Ammar Al Baluchi) in regards to the international standards on the right to freedom from torture and the inadmissibility of torture derived evidence. The brief was made available publicly in February 2019 in conjunction with the release of a short documentary by The Guardian on conditions in Guantanamo and the defence team representing Mr Al Baluchi.

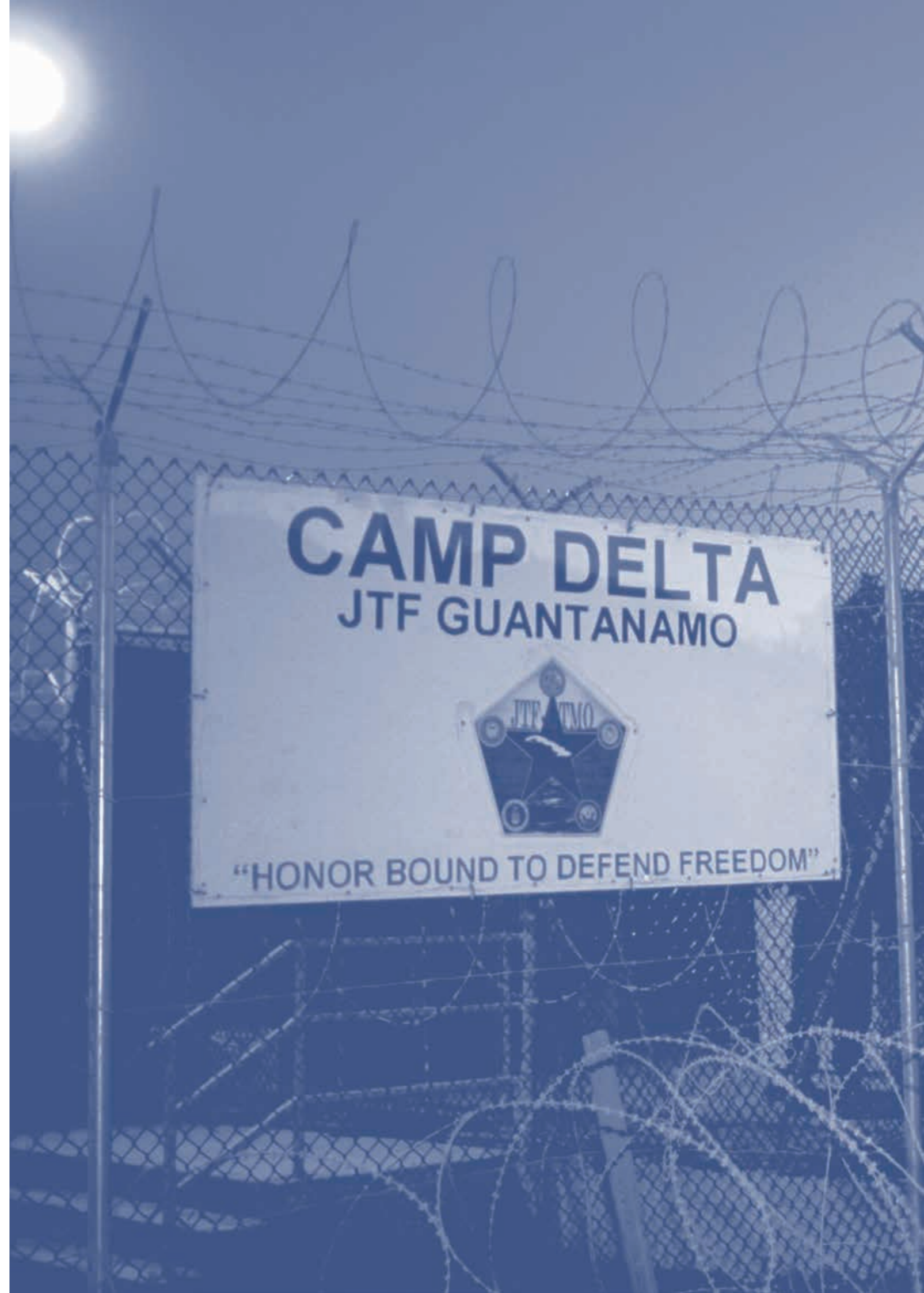
Defending and upholding the right to a fair trial

Fair trials are fundamental for justice and the rule of law, including the right to a fair and public hearing, within a reasonable time, by an independent and impartial court.

In February 2018, Blinne Ni Ghrálaigh observed the opening of the trial against 17-year-old **Ahed Tamimi**, her mother **Nariman Tamimi** and her cousin **Nour Tamimi** at Ofer, in the West Bank. The Tamimi family faced charges relating to an altercation between the women and a number of heavily armed Israeli soldiers. A video of the incident which went viral showed in particular, **Ahed** being pushed by an Israeli soldier, and her hitting and kicking him.

The occupied Palestinian territory has been under Israeli military occupation since 1967. Its Palestinian population is subject to a system of Israeli military law, infringements of which are prosecuted in Israeli military courts, by Israeli military prosecutors, before an Israeli military judge. It is estimated that approximately 800,000 Palestinians have been prosecuted in the Israeli military courts since the occupation began, including between 500-700 Palestinian children prosecuted each year. The courts have an almost 100% conviction rate.

The trial observation report raised concern for the



ongoing detention of Ahed and her mother in Israel, rather than in the occupied Palestinian Territory, in violation of Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The report also raised serious concerns about fair trial standards in the Israeli military courts, including the impartiality and independence of the Israeli military tribunal, presiding over trials of Palestinian civilians for alleged offences against Israeli officers.

Since the hearing, Ahed and her mother were sentenced to a term of imprisonment as part of a plea agreement with the Israeli military prosecutors. The vast majority of cases in the Israeli military courts are determined in this way. They were both imprisoned in Israel.

In May and July 2018, BHRC observers, including Amanda Weston QC and Pete Weatherby QC, attended two hearings before the Court of Cassation in Kuwait regarding the conviction and sentencing of more than 70 anti-corruption protesters. The proceedings were in relation to what were largescale peaceful protests at the Kuwait National Assembly calling for allegations of corruption against members of parliament in office between 2009-2011 to be fully and impartially investigated. Pete Weatherby QC was denied a visa by the Kuwaiti government and was unable to observe the hearing in July 2018.



Amanda Weston QC and Pete Weatherby QC in the Court of Cassation with the father and lawyer of one of the accused and Tahar Boumedra, the organiser of the observation, during the 6 May hearing.

Protecting the rights of protesters

The right to peaceful protest is articulated in many regional and international instruments, particularly as a manifestation of the right to freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression.

Following unrest during anti-government protests in Zimbabwe between 14–17 January 2019, with reports of acts of violence against property and persons in several places in the country, BHRC undertook a trial observation mission to assess and report on compliance of the country's Magistrates' courts with domestic and international fair trial standards.

Michael Ivers QC observed trials at two Magistrates' courts in and around Harare between 30 January and 1 February 2019. Particular concerns were identified regarding pre-trial detention and denial of bail, the right to legal representation and to prepare an adequate defence, and the rights of juveniles in criminal proceedings.

In January 2018, BHRC sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Nepal raising concern for the government's response to the death of 66 people, including 10 police officers, during protests in the Terai region of Nepal in 2015 and 2016. BHRC has further raised concerns for the arrest and continued detention of Madhesi human rights activist Dr Chandra Kant Raut, for his alleged involvement in a gathering that took place in support of him in front of the court where he was appearing. In a public statement, BHRC raised concern for Dr Raut's health in light of reports from his family that he has not obtained urgent medical treatment in a timely manner, has suffered harassment and ill-treatment and that his conditions of detention are not conducive to his health.

In March 2019, significant protests erupted in Hong Kong following the introduction of proposed amendments to change Hong Kong's extradition law under the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019. The people of Hong Kong took to the streets in protest, resulting in violent clashes with government officials. In a joint report on the Extradition Bill, BHRC found that the proposed amendments failed to

adequately protect human rights and fundamentally imperil the operation of the rule of law.

Protests continued over the following months, along with serious and credible reports of police brutality. BHRC continues to work with partners in Hong Kong, particularly within the legal, media and academic communities to respond to this developing rule of law crisis.

Fighting persecution

In China, it is estimated that over 1 million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are being detained in "political education camps", with millions more subject to restrictions on their liberty. It has been reported that individuals in those camps have been subjected to forced political indoctrination, renunciation of their faith, mistreatment and torture. There are further concerns that lawyers in China are being systematically prevented – by arrest, prosecution for sedition and disbarment – from challenging such unlawful acts.

BHRC has set up an expert legal task force to continue to develop BHRC's work in China. In conjunction with the Parliamentary Human Rights Group (PHRG), BHRC held an important panel discussion in Parliament to consider the treatment of Turkic Muslims in the Xinjiang region of China and to explore how to hold China to account for human rights violations there.

Schona Jolly QC has been involved in work relating to the Rohingya persecution and their mass expulsion to refugee camps in Bangladesh for some years on behalf of BHRC. This has included diplomatic and parliamentary meetings, as well as media publications.

Mediation in Colombia

As part of BHRC's broader work in supporting the peace process and transitional justice in Colombia, BHRC has followed reports of increasing attacks against lawyers and human rights defenders



BHRC-PHRG panel discussion considering the situation in Xingjiang.

after the signing of the peace agreement between the Government and the FARC. In December 2018, BHRC joined the Bar Council, Law Society and other professional bodies and sent an open letter to the President of Colombia raising concern for the safety of Colombian lawyer Daniel Prado Albarracin, who has represented victims of crimes committed by the paramilitary group "The 12 Apostles" in Antioquia, Colombia.

Mr Prado Albarracin had been subjected to numerous acts of intimidation including death threats; being followed by armed men after attending court hearings; and, defamatory public statements against him by high ranking public officials.

During its existence, the 12 Apostles sought to carry out what many have referred to as 'social cleansing' – eliminating those considered 'undesirable' to the group such as sex workers and drug addicts. In addition, the group targeted members and supporters of guerrilla groups. The group is considered to be responsible for over 500 murders and disappearances during this period. BHRC has attended several hearings of the trial against Santiago Uribe Vélez, the brother of former President Álvaro Uribe Vélez. Mr Uribe Vélez is accused of grave crimes arising from allegedly establishing and directing the 12 Apostles.

BHRC hosted a roundtable discussion with Colombian human rights lawyer Luis Guillermo Pérez in June 2018, to highlight the ways the international community can assist the Collective in their efforts for justice and accountability for atrocities in Colombia. The discussion was chaired by Kirsty Brimelow QC, in partnership with Peace Brigades International UK.

Supporting and protecting practising lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are threatened or oppressed in their work

Attacks on lawyers have a chilling effect on the profession. They undermine access to effective and independent legal assistance to protect human rights, in contravention of the rights of both the lawyers and their clients. As an organisation of lawyers, BHRC supports and protects practising lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are threatened or oppressed in their work.

BHRC has followed the situation in **Bahrain** closely for a number of years. This includes advocating for the release of human rights defender **Nabeel Rajab**, who was sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges that impact his right to freedom of expression, including comments made on Twitter. BHRC is delighted to confirm that Nabeel Rajab was released in June 2020.

The independence of the legal profession remains

under serious threat in **China**. The 709 crackdown in 2015 led to nearly 250 Chinese human rights lawyers, their staff and human rights defenders being arrested and detained by police. Some remain detained and some were subsequently charged with vague crimes against the State, based on insufficient or non-existent evidence. On the third anniversary of the crackdown BHRC issued a statement of concern for the continued detention of human rights lawyers. In January 2019, BHRC joined international organisations in raising concerns regarding the conviction and sentence of lawyer **Wang Quanzhang**, the longest detained lawyer of the 709 Crackdown.

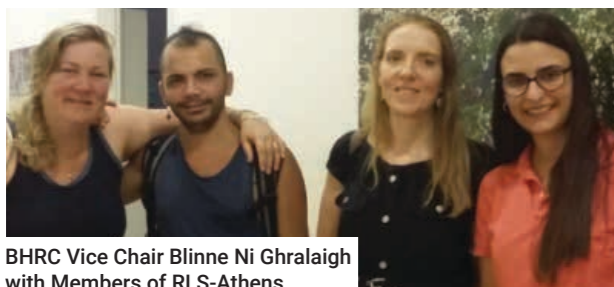
BHRC has followed closely the deteriorating conditions for human rights defenders and lawyers in **Egypt**, particularly since the military coup. **Khaled Ali** is a prominent Egyptian lawyer who was prosecuted



Nabeel Rajab
© Moosa Satrawi



Artwork of the 709 Crackdown
© China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group



BHRC Vice Chair Blinne Ni Ghraígh with Members of RLS-Athens

and subsequently convicted in September 2017 for violating public decency by “making of an obscene gesture” outside the Supreme Administrative Court while celebrating a victory in his case. His prosecution has been widely condemned by international observers as politically motivated.

BHRC attended substantive hearings of the appeal proceedings in Cairo in January and March 2018. The report recommendations included abolishing the use of cramped cages to hold defendants in the courtroom and providing defendants with the opportunity to communicate confidentially with their lawyer to prepare their defence.

In **India**, BHRC has long raised concern of the misuse of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) 2010 to narrow the space for civil society activists and human rights defenders and failure to comply with international norms and standards. In July 2019, the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation conducted raids at the homes and offices of prominent human rights lawyers **Indira Jaising** and **Anand Grover** in New Delhi and Mumbai, alleging receipt of foreign aid in violation of the FCRA. In a public statement, BHRC expressed its alarm at the raids and called on the Indian government to ensure that the work of human rights lawyers and defenders is not impeded through disproportionate and unnecessary obstacles.

In **Iran**, there have been widespread reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions of lawyers and human rights defenders. In January 2018, BHRC and the Bar Council sent a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei calling for the release of lawyers and other persons arrested for their work defending others’ rights. The letter raised particular concern for two lawyers, **Abdolfattah Soltani** and **Narges Mohammadi**, currently serving a 12-year sentence and a 6-year sentence respectively. Both were prosecuted for crimes related to their human rights efforts in Iran.

In June 2018, Iranian human rights lawyer **Nasrin Sotoudeh** was arrested at her home on 13 June 2018. In March 2019 she was informed that she had been convicted of seven charges in response to her peaceful human rights work. She was sentenced to 38 years’ imprisonment and 148 lashes, one of the harshest punishments documented against a human rights defender in Iran in recent years. The criminal prosecution of lawyers, as well as the manifestly excessive sentence in this case, represents a grave threat to the rule of law in Iran, and places Iran in breach of its international obligations. BHRC continues to call for her release.

In response to reports that Asia Bibi’s lawyer, **Saif Ul Malook**, had received death threats and had been granted temporary asylum in the Netherlands in November 2018, BHRC and the Bar Council issued a joint statement calling for the protection of lawyers at risk in **Pakistan**.

The number and intensity of attacks against lawyers in the **Philippines** has increased significantly since President Duterte took office on 30 June 2016. At least 46 lawyers and judges and 134 human rights defenders were killed between July 2016 and September 2019. Lawyers are also harassed and intimidated. They are subjected to (death) threats, surveillance, labelling, and other forms of attacks. Most killings of and attacks upon lawyers are believed to have taken place because they were discharging their professional duties or are otherwise believed to be work-related. Along with its international partners, BHRC has called on the Philippines to adequately protect the safety and independence of lawyers in accordance with the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and to take all necessary measures to prevent extrajudicial killings, to carry out independent investigations and to hold perpetrators accountable.

In January 2018, BHRC expressed its solidarity with **Memorial**, a leading human rights organisation in **Russia**. On 17 January, its Ingushetia office was destroyed by masked arsonists just one week after the arrest of its Chechnya director, Oyub Titiev. Titiev has led Memorial’s work in Chechnya since 2009, after the kidnapping and murder of his colleague Natalia Estemirova. His arrest was widely condemned by international organisations, as well as the United States and the Council of Europe.

Spotlight: Turkey

BHRC continues to do a significant amount of work addressing the human rights and rule of law crisis in Turkey in connection with the aftermath of the attempted coup in 2016. The last decade has seen a dramatic collapse of freedom of expression and the rule of law in Turkey. Many Turkish lawyers face difficulties in getting cases successfully heard before the European Court of Human Rights.

BHRC has also explored how BHRC can provide assistance and support to the legal community working on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers from and travelling through Turkey through a fact-finding mission in Greece.



Freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial

Turkey has one of the worst environments for freedom of expression in the world. As part of its strategic partnership with Article 19, BHRC has sent several trial observers whose reports have documented a pattern of systematic violations of fair trial rights and freedom of expression. These include, but are not limited to, the emblematic cases of the novelist **Ahmet Altan**, politician **Selahattin Demirtaş** and philanthropist **Osman Kavala**. Schona Jolly QC attended the closing stages of the trial of 11 defendants who had worked in different capacities for the **Turkish newspaper Zaman** in May 2018. The trial observation report was published in July 2018 and received press coverage in the UK and Turkey. It continues to be used as a reference point in Turkey for fair trial rights.

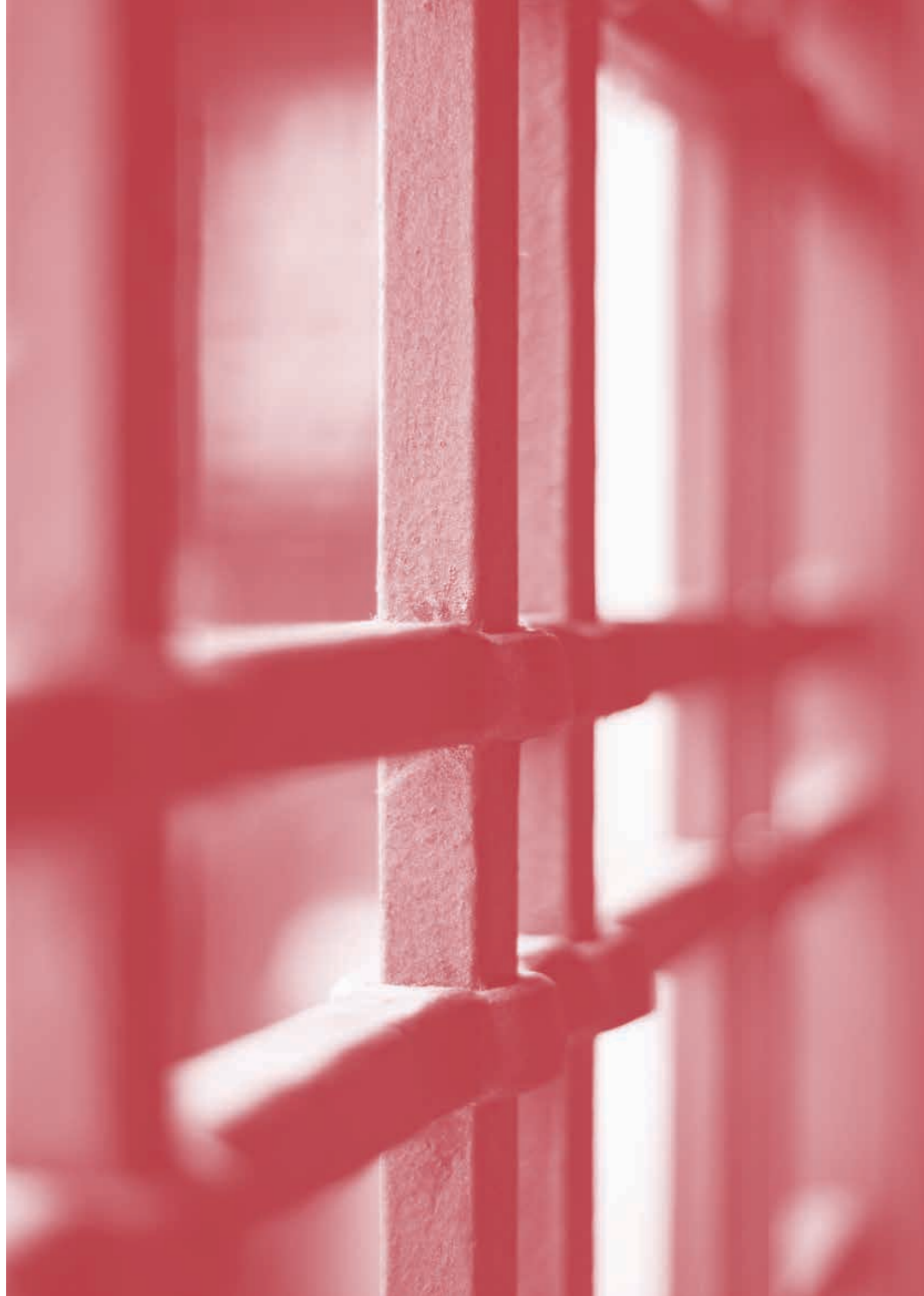
BHRC joined a two-year project led by EuroMed Rights on protecting human rights defenders, fundamental freedoms and fair trial in Turkey in 2018. This included trial observation workshops for Turkish lawyers to develop the strategy for the observations and identify the relevant cases, trial observations and a multi-stakeholder conference on issues relating to the rule of law in Turkey.

Persecution of judges and lawyers in Turkey

Since the failed coup in 2016, at least 599 lawyers have been arrested and detained (pre-trial detention), 1546 layers prosecuted, and 311 lawyers convicted and sentenced to a total of 1,967 years in prison. At least 14 presidents and former presidents of 12 provincial Bar Associations have been either arrested or detained, 34 lawyers' associations in 20 different provinces have been closed down, and 4260 judges and prosecutors have been dismissed.

Emergency decree laws have been adopted and subsequently enacted by Parliament. Additionally, Presidential decrees have eroded judicial and prosecutorial independence, undermined the right to legal representation and other fair trial rights, and led to the arbitrary arrest, detention and prosecution of lawyers and judges, as well as the closure of Bar Associations in Turkey.

Working alongside international partners including the Bar Council, the Law Society and IBAHRI, BHRC has continued to raise this issue through its international advocacy and engagement with international mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council and Turkey's Universal Periodic Review alongside its partners.



Furthering interest in and knowledge of human rights and the laws relating to human rights, both within & outside the legal profession

BHRC furthers interest in and knowledge of human rights primarily through training and events. The consistent requests for BHRC representatives to provide public comment on human rights issues is a testament to BHRC's strong reputation and expertise. These events provide more opportunities for BHRC to highlight its work and expand its network whilst influencing debate and actions.

In 2018, BHRC conducted a series of events across England and Wales to introduce the circuits to BHRC and how barristers, legal practitioners and law students can get involved. During the year, BHRC Executive Committee members travelled to Swansea,

Birmingham, Newcastle and Leeds. BHRC previously travelled to Manchester in 2017 as part of the Roadshow series. In November 2018 BHRC hosted a panel discussion on how women in the legal professions represent and champion women, including journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, themselves under attack for defending the rights of women.

In honour of International Women's Day, in 2019 BHRC and Garden Court Chambers co-hosted a panel discussion showcasing the work of human rights advocates and defenders fighting for women's rights and women human rights defenders around the globe.

BHRC representatives attended and spoke at a number of conferences and events including at the UK House of Commons, the United Nations, the Nigerian Bar Association Conference, the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, a judicial conference in Honduras, the Asma Jahangir Conference on Justice for Empowerment in Lahore, Pakistan, the FCO Global Media conference in London, and the TrialWatch launch by the Clooney Foundation and Microsoft.

Training

Between 2018 and 2019, BHRC conducted training in **Nigeria, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and India** and published a training video on interviewing vulnerable witnesses. The video uses a case study from BHRC's Child Rights Training manuals (funded by UNICEF) to highlight how to avoid common mistakes in interviewing children, particularly children who may have suffered trauma.

In **Nigeria**, BHRC conducted two training programmes in partnership with the Nigerian Bar Association and supported by ROLE-UK. The first training on the legal rights and protections for internally displaced persons (IDPs) was delivered to 55 lawyers in the North-Eastern branch of the NBA. It included practical training and exercises on evidence collection techniques,

including interviewing vulnerable witnesses.

In May 2018, BHRC held an event marking the 20 Years of the UN Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement at Mayer Brown in London. The event included remarks from the President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Abubakar Balarabe Mahmoud SAN and the former Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, Professor Chaloka Beyani.

The event was chaired by Kirsty Brimelow QC who also provided a summary of BHRC's training for Nigerian lawyers on the rights of IDPs.

“**This course has greatly improved my understanding about domestic and international law. It has been very useful because of the practical work going on day by day... I suggest it should be on a regular basis for all lawyers, not North-East Zone only.**”

Feedback from the IDP training course.



Trialwatch launch in 2019



Conference on Independence of Judges in Honduras. Judge López Lone (right), Kirsty Brimelow QC (centre), Magistrate José Luis Ramirez Barcelona.



Schona Jolly QC and Zimran Samuel at the Asma Jahangir conference in Lahore, Pakistan in October 2019



From left to right: Tim Cooke-Hurle, Kirsty Brimelow QC, Kevin Jon Heller, and Kemi Ojutiku



Human Rights Training in Kazakhstan



Jodie Blackstock, Kirsty Brimelow QC and expert Catherine O'Neil delivering advocacy and vulnerable witness training with local partners at NLU-Delhi, India

The second training on environmental law and alternative dispute resolution was delivered to nearly 100 lawyers from the Niger Delta branches of the NBA. The Niger Delta has been devastated by pollution with resulting environmental damage from extraction industries without adequate redress.

In **Kazakhstan**, BHRC delivered a three-day training project in Almaty, Kazakhstan in December 2019 on bringing international human rights law training into domestic practice. The training was delivered in partnership with the Legal Policy and Research Center to over 50 legal practitioners in Almaty and the surrounding regions and was supported by the British Embassy Nur-Sultan.

In **Turkey**, BHRC conducted a training programme on trial observations for 30 journalists and lawyers as

part of its partnership with Media Law Studies Association in Istanbul in September 2018. The training was funded in part by the Rule of Law Expertise-UK (ROLE UK). In October 2019, BHRC conducted training on trial observation hearings for P24, a Turkish NGO committed to freedom of expression and monitoring the trials of journalists in Turkey.

In **India**, BHRC delivered a six-day training programme for law students at National Law University Delhi in November 2019. The training was designed to introduce students to criminal procedure, general advocacy techniques and witness questioning, as well as to provide specific training on addressing the necessary adaptations to procedure, advocacy style and witness questioning when a case involves gender-based violence witnesses. The training was supported by the Verma family, ROLE UK and iProBono.



The Executive Committee 2018-2019

BHRC's Executive Committee is elected by BHRC members every two years to oversee the organisation's strategy and implement its work.

The Executive Committee then elects five Office Holder positions who hold additional responsibilities for leading the work of the organization.

Executive Committee members and Office Holders contribute their substantial expertise pro bono to produce publications, statements, lead fact-finding missions, collaborate with local partners and represent the Committee to the media, external organisations and the public.

The Executive Committee is supported by an Advisory Board, a Drafting Committee (until 2019) and one full-time staff member.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Executive Committee please email coordination@barhumanrights.org.uk.

Office Holders

- **CHAIR Schona Jolly QC** (from January 2019) | Cloisters Chambers
Kirsty Brimelow QC (until December 2018) | Doughty Street Chambers
- **VICE CHAIRS Stephen Cragg QC** (from January 2019) | Doughty Street Chambers
Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh | Matrix Chambers
Schona Jolly QC (until December 2018) | Cloisters
- **TREASURER Jodie Blackstock** | JUSTICE
- **SECRETARY Gráinne Mellon** | Garden Court Chambers
- **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Michael Ivers QC** | Garden Court Chambers
- **EXECUTIVE MEMBERS** (in alphabetical order)
Jacob Bindman | Garden Court Chambers
Dominic Boothroyd | Angel Chambers
Bill Bowring | Field Court Chambers and Birkbeck, University of London
Jo Cecil | Garden Court Chambers
Dr Theodora Christou | QMUL and LSE
Melanie Gingell | Doughty Street Chambers
Steven Powles QC | Doughty Street Chambers
Zimran Samuel | Doughty Street Chambers
Kate Stone | Garden Court North Chambers
Pete Weatherby QC | Garden Court North Chambers
Amanda Weston QC | Garden Court Chambers

Advisory Board

BHRC's Advisory Board consists of previous BHRC Office Holders, senior members of the Bar and the judiciary, and individuals that have demonstrated outstanding commitment or service to the field of human rights. Members of the Advisory Board are appointed by the Chair, following consultation with the Executive Committee and a majority vote.

- **Baroness Helena Kennedy QC** | Doughty Street Chambers and Director of IBAHRI
- **Christine Chinkin CMG FBA** | LSE and Matrix Chambers
- **Kevin Jon Heller** | University of Amsterdam and Australian National University
- **Kirsty Brimelow QC** | Doughty Street Chambers
- **Mark Muller QC** | Doughty Street Chambers
- **Peter Carter QC** | Doughty Street Chambers

Drafting Committee

The Drafting Committee is responsible for producing research assistance and first drafts of statements and letters of concern.

The Drafting Committee was disbanded in February 2020.

Nevertheless, the need for assistance with BHRC's large programme of work will not disappear. As a voluntary organization BHRC relies on the support of its members to fulfil its objectives and will continue to seek assistance from its members on specific projects.

We are grateful for the time and dedication of all the members of the Drafting Committee over the previous three years since it was established, and look forward to continuing to work with them as BHRC's work develops.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| ● Ilaria Arnava | ● Rebecca Keating | ● Aimee Riese |
| ● John Cubbon | ● Ruth Keating | ● Joe Tomlinson |
| ● Brenda Efurhievwe | ● Audrey Cheryl Mogan | |
| ● Freya Forster | ● Sarah Pinder | |

Staff

- **Amanda June Chadwick** | Executive Officer (July 2017 - September 2019)
- **Josie Fathers** | Project Coordinator (October 2019 - present)

Acknowledgements

BHRC thanks all its members for their support to realise its mandate and continue to expand its efforts to promote and protect human rights and respect for the rule of law internationally.

BHRC is appreciative of the financial support and partnership we receive from the Bar Council, which provides our core funding and trial observation budget.

BHRC is grateful for the generous support of its additional funders:
The Bar Council, ROLE-UK, the British Embassy Nur-Sultan.

BHRC would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their generous provision of pro bono services:

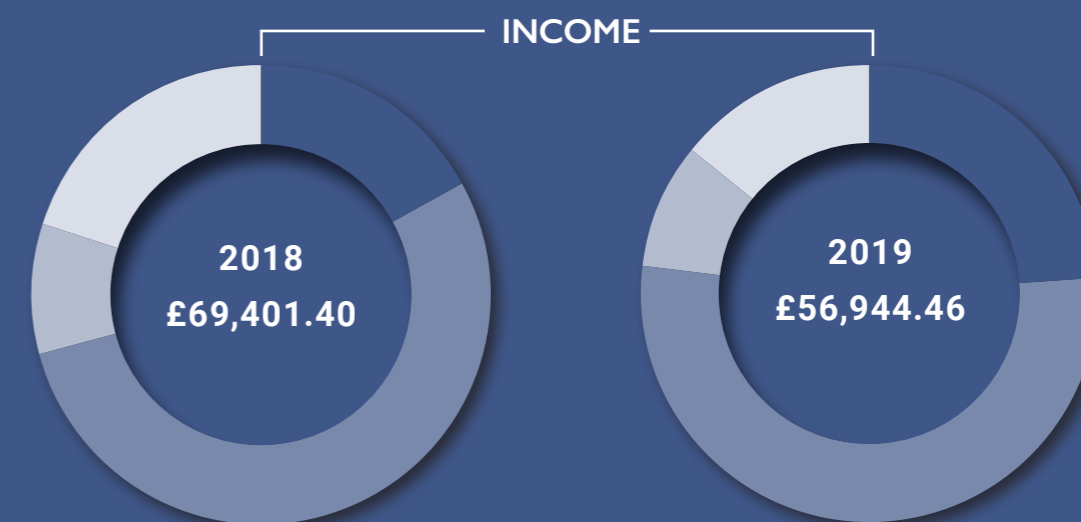
Kim Hooper, BHRC's payroll accountant.
BarTax, which manages' BHRC's accounts.

BHRC would like to thank the following organisations for their work and collaboration during 2018-19

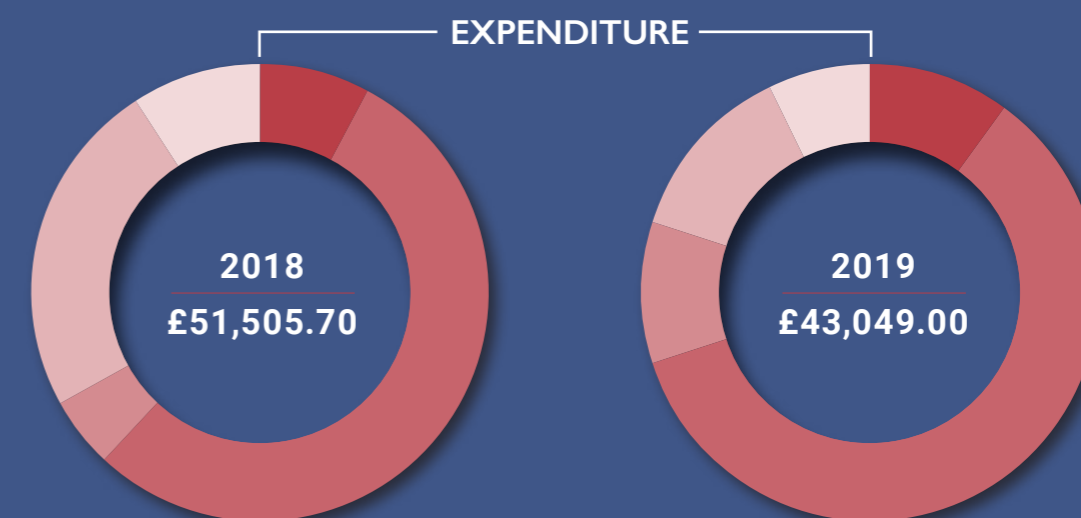
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights ● Amnesty International ● Article 19 ● Attorney General's International Pro Bono Committee ● BarTax ● Cloisters Chambers ● British Embassy Nur-Sultan. ● British Nigeria Law Forum ● Chinese Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group ● Colombia Caravana ● Coram Children's Legal Centre ● Defence Extradition Lawyer's Forum ● Doughty Street Chambers ● EuroMed Rights ● European Lawyers in Lesvos ● Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh ● Fair Trials ● Garden Court Chambers ● Human Rights Watch ● Human Rights Watch Film Festival ● Hong Kong Watch ● International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) ● International Forum of Extradition Specialists ● International Press Institute in Vienna | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● iProBono ● Irish Centre for Human Rights ● José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective ● Kim Hooper ● Lawyers Collective ● Legal Policy and Research Center ● Lesbos Legal Centre ● Matrix Chambers ● Memorial ● National Law University Delhi ● Nigerian Bar Association ● P24 ● Peace Brigades International ● Refugee Legal Support ● Rights Practice ● ROLE UK ● Solidarity Now. ● The Alliance for Lawyers at Risk ● The Bar Council ● The Commonwealth Lawyers Association ● The family of J.S. Verma, former Chief Justice of India ● The Law Society of England and Wales ● TrialWatch ● UNHCR ● UNICEF Nigeria |
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BHRC would also like to thank those individuals and organisations who we cannot name, for security or other reasons, who contribute so much, often with great courage, to the work we do.

Financial Report



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Membership Fees ● Bar Council Staff Support 54% ● Donation to Trial Observation Unit 9% ● Project Funding 20% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Membership Fees ● Bar Council Staff Support 53% ● Donation to Trial Observation Unit 9% ● Project Funding 14% |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trial Observation Costs 8% ● Salaries 54% ● Administration 5% ● Project Costs 24% ● Ad hoc training/advocacy/travel costs and related expenses 9% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trial Observation Costs 10% ● Salaries 60% ● Administration 10% ● Project Costs 13% ● Ad hoc training/advocacy/travel costs and related expenses 7% |
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Become a member of the Bar Human Rights Committee today!

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.



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

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 us, visit www.barhumanrights.org.uk/join



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