



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND & WALES



Bar Human Rights Committee of England & Wales

BIENNIAL REPORT

A review of BHRC's global human rights and rule of law advocacy, events and programmes in 2022-2023



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PART ONE

Foreword



Stephen Cragg KC

Chair of the 2022-2023 Executive Committee, Bar Human Rights Committee of England & Wales

As the outgoing Chair of the 2022-23 Executive Committee, I am delighted to introduce the biennial report of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England & Wales (BHRC), which highlights and spotlights the extraordinary work, activities, initiatives and advocacy of BHRC, our partners and our members in this two-year reporting period.

After six years at the helm of BHRC – two as Chair and a previous four as Vice-Chair - I am immensely proud to be handing on the mantle to our incoming Chair, **Michael Ivers KC**, and to our new Executive Committee for 2024-25. I know you will all continue BHRC's momentum into the future.

These have been two remarkable years for BHRC in its 32-year history, not least of which because in July 2023, BHRC was officially given NGO consultative status by United Nations Economic

and Social Council (ECOSOC) at a special session in New York. Our new status strengthens and reinforces our dedication to safeguarding the fundamental rights of individuals around the world, and, also entrusts us with an expanded responsibility to advocate for human rights defenders, promote human rights education, conduct trial observations, and ensure that the world's most egregious human rights violators are not allowed to act with impunity.

Over these last two years, BHRC has delivered multiple high-level and grassroots projects, reports, toolkits and events, and worked in close collaboration with our valued partners including, the Bar Council, the Human Rights Lawyers Association (HRLA), Advocates for International Development (A4ID), the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP), Peace Brigades International (PBI),

The IBA Human Rights Initiative (IBAHRI), the Yazidi Justice Committee, the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI), the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) among many other partners. We have conducted trial observations at Guantanamo Bay (as the only UK-based human rights organisation to have been awarded official observer status to monitor military trials at Camp Justice) and in Turkey. I was pleased to participate in March 2023 as part of an international delegation of UK lawyers and human rights advocates to Guatemala, organised by PBI and funded by the FCDO's Rule of Law Expertise initiative.

I have also been especially proud to chair and oversee BHRC's vital programme of virtual and hybrid events, workshops and training opportunities, which in 2022-23 have included *The Edge of Law* series on the erosion of rule of law and human rights in Asia; the five-part *Diminishing Democracy* panel series which spotlighted human rights concerns in South Asian states including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh; our unique and memorable keynote event welcoming **Mary Lawlor**, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; and our valuable virtual workshop on wellbeing and resilience for human rights defenders. A special mention must go to our recent outstanding one-day seminar held in partnership with the HRLA's Young Lawyers' Committee, *Human Rights Careers, Skills & Values*, designed to inspire and motivate the next generation of human rights defenders.

In all that we do, BHRC aims to use our significant legal expertise to build capacity for legal practitioners and human rights defenders on the ground. Our goals are to provide them with the necessary training and support, to monitor human rights violations, conduct trial observations and international fact-finding investigations and research, promote the rule of law and human rights through public events, and assist individuals and groups to hold states accountable for abusive practices. Our work, and that of our partners, has taken on new significance and urgency in recent years, during which the erosion of the rule of law in many parts of the world has become, in my view, one of the most serious issues of our time.

The rule of law serves as the foundation upon which all other human rights are built. It ensures that justice is accessible to all, that laws are applied consistently and fairly, and that states are held accountable for their actions. Yet, in too many parts of the world, we witness the subversion of the rule of law where human rights present an ideological and existential threat to political power, authoritarianism and autocratic rule. This subversion of the rule of law, and the inevitable weakening of international human rights law, undermines the very essence of democracy and continues to pose a grave threat to the realisation of universal, international human rights.

The role of human rights defenders over these recent years has thus become vital but their situation made much harder by the hostile

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environment of creeping authoritarianism that has regressed human rights in many parts of the world, liberal democracies included. Throughout our 32 years, BHRC has sought to bear witness, to respond, monitor, advocate and intervene to protect human rights defenders as the space for civil society continues to shrink around the world. In so doing, over the years, we have developed strong expertise and exceptional relationships on the ground amidst the escalating persecution of human rights practitioners and defenders. We see that lawyers, judges, journalists, civil society and NGOs are increasingly under threat, persecuted, arrested, detained, tortured and criminalised through targeted sanctions, the cynical and opportunistic use of anti-terrorism and national security laws, and through digital surveillance and harassment that increasingly spills over from the anonymised online environment into the real lives of human rights defenders in nearly every corner of the globe.

All of these issues are key priorities for BHRC, and areas of work in which we have been able to deliver significant impact in the last few years. This biennial report details our activities and achievements in this reporting period; it documents the strategy of the Executive Committee of 2022-23, and it records the vital work carried out by the Committee and our excellent and committed staff members. I look forward to continuing to support BHRC's vital work as a member of the Advisory Board, and as BHRC lives up to its legacy in the future, I wish the incoming Chair and Executive Committee all my very best for their continued success and influence.



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Who We Are

The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) is the independent, international human rights arm of the Bar of England and Wales, working to protect the rights of advocates, judges, and human rights defenders around the world. BHRC is concerned with defending the rule of law and internationally recognised legal standards relating to human rights and the right to a fair trial. It is autonomous of the Bar Council.

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.

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.

BHRC members are primarily barristers called to the Bar of England and Wales, as well as pupil barristers, legal academics, and 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. BHRC is also supported by two Project Officers and a Project Administrator.

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2022-23 At a Glance

BHRC is delighted to share this Report which highlights its work in 2022-23. BHRC has focused on four key objectives reflecting its strategic priorities in this period:

Upholding the rule of law and internationally recognised human rights norms and standards, with particular focus on the right to peaceful protest, which has come under acute strain, and on atrocity crimes.

Protecting and supporting practising lawyers, judges, and human rights defenders, with particular focus on the shrinking space for civil society.

Promoting knowledge and interest in human rights law and practice through training programmes, workshops and events, which have often been conducted remotely owing to the pandemic; and

Supporting and collaborating with other organisations and individuals working for the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law, through creative and persistent use of technology, outreach, and partnerships.

These objectives have translated into work in which BHRC has developed expertise and strong relationships on the ground. Our focus in 2022-23 has been primarily on Central Asia (including China and Hong Kong), the Middle East (including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Gaza and Israel), and South Asia (including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Pakistan). These regions continue to suffer from

acute human rights crises and substantial rule of law concerns, with regression in human rights in these and other states having become even more deeply entrenched after the pandemic in 2020-2022. Fundamental rights most at risk in this reporting period have been related to the detention, harassment, exile, torture and persecution of human rights defenders, lawyers, judges, and civil society, and have included the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and access to information. BHRC also continues to advocate against and raise international awareness of the arbitrary detention of political prisoners and the continued use of torture and the death penalty in states across South Asia and the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia and Iran.

BHRC's work was impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, which required that all activities involving international travel such as trial monitoring, and other international advocacy projects, training, and initiatives, were suspended or postponed. In 2022-23, BHRC has been able to resume these projects and international trial observations, including to Guantanamo Bay. BHRC is the only UK-based organisation with official Observer status for the ongoing trials in the Military Commissions. BHRC has observed two cases at Guantánamo and has expressed serious concern that these proceedings demonstrate fundamental flaws and departure from fair trial norms, launching substantive trial observation reports which were mentioned in major advocacy pieces in the

international press such as the New York Times and the Guardian.

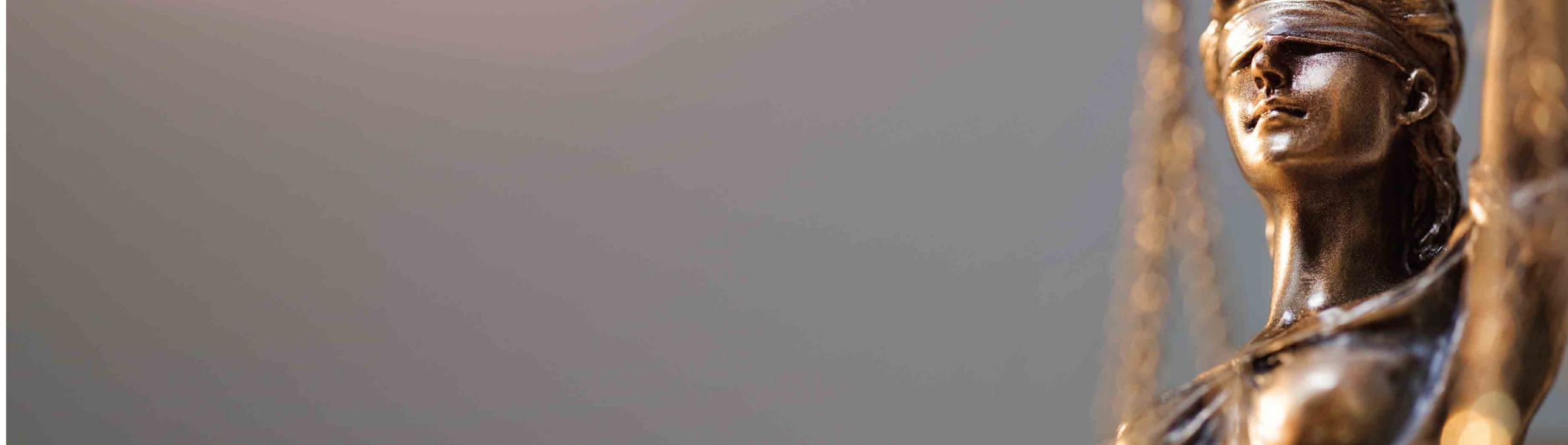
BHRC has successfully used a hybrid model of events advocacy, delivering exceptional results for BHRC and expanding its international reach and influence. As a result of its many events, panels, seminars and training events held in this reporting period, BHRC is proud to have been able to form valuable new alliances with key partners around the globe, and to have invited diverse voices from underrepresented communities to participate as part of virtual panels.

BHRC continues to prioritise substantial infrastructural work with several internal projects and workstreams to improve and 'future-proof' the productivity, efficiency, and long-term sustainability of the organisation. This includes ongoing work on our membership, our website (which was rebranded and relaunched in the summer of 2023), and formalisation of our institutional memory, as well as streamlining processes and operations to promote BHRC through social media advocacy, new and exciting partnerships, and the publication of key reports and toolkits.

In this and every reporting period, BHRC remains grateful to our members as well as to the Executive Committee and the Project Officers, all committed human rights defenders, lawyers, academics and advocates, for their commitment to our work over and above the demands of their busy practices and professional lives. BHRC is especially grateful to the Bar Council for its continued support, financial assistance, and collaboration, as well as that of other funding organisations and partners.



What We Do



BHRC's mission is to protect and promote international human rights through the rule of law, by relying on and bringing in the international human rights law expertise of many 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 using our legal expertise, amongst other work, to conduct trial observations, capacity building, providing training and support, monitoring human rights violations, intervening in international litigation through *amicus curiae* briefs, international fact-finding investigations and research, promoting the rule of law and human rights through public events, and assisting individuals and groups to hold states accountable for abusive practices.

Trial Observations

Fair trials are fundamental for justice and the rule of law. 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 and by NGOs as well as lawyers. 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 was granted observer status (the first British legal organisation to have such status) by the United States to send trial observers to the Guantanamo Bay Military Commission in Cuba. We are very grateful to the Bar Council, which has provided funding to our trial observation unit since 2015.

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. These typically elicit a response from governments. BHRC also conducts advocacy through publishing op-eds, events, reports, and submissions, and through high-level meetings. Some advocacy efforts are conducted publicly, whilst others are more effectively done in a private sphere. BHRC engages both avenues, as appropriate and effective.

Amicus curiae briefs and expert opinions

BHRC's assistance on *amicus curiae* briefs or expert opinions 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, or their lawyer, alleging their rights have been violated. Legal interventions of this type demonstrate the relevance of international law and can, over time, lead to significant change.

Training and events

BHRC furthers interest in and knowledge of human rights primarily through legal training and events. The pandemic has changed how BHRC has conducted these, and since 2020 we have successfully managed to hold international human rights law training and virtual panel events remotely. This has enabled us to welcome a wider pool of legal and human rights expertise from around the world as speakers and as participants, allowing BHRC to significantly expand its international reach, influence and impact.

Partnerships

BHRC works with domestic and international organisations to advance human rights and promote the rule of law. These strategic and significant partnerships have provided opportunities for BHRC to develop relationships with other organisations and individuals, to pool knowledge and expertise and to ensure

impactful work with a wide range of partners on the ground.

BHRC receives substantial core funding from the **Bar Council of England and Wales**. Although it works independently of it, both organisations maintain a close relationship and work together on activities that crossover into mutual areas of concern.

BHRC works closely with the **Bar Council of England & Wales** and with bar associations and legal human rights organisations on issues relating to lawyers at risk around the world, including at UN and diplomatic levels. BHRC has a strong MoU partnership with **Advocates for International Development (A4ID)**, and longstanding relationships with the **International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)** and with **ROLE-UK**, which has previously provided support and assistance for our training and partnerships in Nigeria, India and Turkey. BHRC has also worked closely with our partners at the **American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)** on a series of virtual dialogues confronting rule of law challenges in Asia, and with **Article 19** on a training programme for Turkish lawyers as well as other interventions. BHRC has received funding and support from the **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** on various projects. BHRC also works closely with **Human Rights Watch**, **Amnesty International**, the **Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network**, the **Peace Brigades International (PBI)**, and the **Commonwealth Lawyers Association**, and has ongoing relationships with many other civil society partners both at home and abroad.

PART TWO

BHRC Objective 1 | 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.

Central Asia

BHRC has been building on its work in East and Central Asia in recent years. Its work has focused primarily on allegations of atrocity crimes in Xinjiang and on the swift and severe clampdown on political and democratic freedoms in Hong Kong, as well as on Chinese human rights lawyers who continue to face a bleak crackdown. Several of BHRC's flagship projects in this reporting period include:

China / Hong Kong / Central Asia. In September 2022, BHRC and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative released their joint report, *The Edge of Law: A regional approach to confronting key legal challenges* at an online event on 28 September 2022, co-chaired by Stephen Cragg KC, BHRC Chair. The Report synthesised the findings of a path breaking virtual dialogue series hosted between November 2021-March 2022, addressing specific dimensions of forced labour / modern slavery, sanctions, data security / digital privacy, and judicial independence in Asia,

with discussions designed to speak to the overarching question: What is the role of the legal profession in protecting human rights and the Rule of Law?

Chaired alternately by a senior representative of BHRC and ABA ROLI, each of the virtual dialogues were designed to conclude with solid, actionable steps that participants and other stakeholders can import into regional law practice and policymaking. For each event, we invited speakers from and based in Asia, Australia, the UK, Canada, and the US. All speakers were experts in their fields and addressed human rights concerns in Asia, with a focus on international law and the rule of law. Our discussions were highly interactive in nature and exceptionally well-attended by members of the legal profession, regional Bar Associations and Law Societies, the judiciary, civil society and NGO representatives, human rights defenders, writers, and academics.

From within the region, BHRC is proud to share that we welcomed participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam. From the wider international community, participants logged in from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Fiji, Germany, Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Spain, the Solomon Islands, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Zambia.



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The Edge of Law report is a decisive blueprint for practitioner-led action and empowerment in the region. The recommendations that are annexed to this report are a distillation of the rich analysis of our rapporteurs and report authors. *The Edge of Law* series has enabled us to maintain our engagement within the region, working in solidarity with our regional and international counterparts in finding solutions to significant human rights challenges.

For the launch event in September 2022, we welcomed back some of our key speakers from *the Edge of Law* events, to reflect on the findings of the report and their contributions to the key topics covered in the series, including **Surya Deva**, Professor at Macquarie Law School and **Nighat Dad**, Executive Director of the Digital Rights Foundation in Pakistan (who both contributed forewords for the report); **Dr Felicity Gerry KC**, leading international law practitioner, who authored the Executive Summary; and **Desi Hanara**, academic and international human rights practitioner.

Laos / China. In August BHRC joined many international bodies and organisations in expressing grave concerns regarding the arrest and detention of well-known Chinese human rights lawyer **Lu Siwei** by Lao authorities since 28 July 2023, following serious concerns that he was at risk of forced repatriation to China where he was highly likely to face ill-treatment. Lu Siwei is a renowned human rights defender and lawyer

in China and has been targeted with intimidation and harassment, including being disbarred, since May 2021.

South Asia

BHRC has longstanding experience and expertise in South Asia. It has continued to work with partners in the region throughout 2022-23 as a febrile climate for human rights has worsened in many countries. The BHRC virtual panel series, *Diminishing Democracy*, was a series of five dialogues spotlighting serious human rights and rule of law concerns in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The events welcomed leading speakers, academics, legal practitioners and civil society leaders to examine tensions and challenges for human rights defenders in those states and in South Asia more broadly. A report and recommendations are currently being drafted as a synthesis of the series discussions, which shall be published in 2024 by BHRC.

India. In September 2021, BHRC and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights held a joint panel event titled *A Diminishing Democracy? Human Rights and the Rule of Law in India Today*. The event was chaired by **Dame Diana Johnson MP** and examined the many human rights challenges currently facing the world's largest democracy, particularly in connection with reports of crackdowns on

dissent and media freedom; the erosion of minority rights and increased discrimination against minority groups; and the shrinking space for civil society. As an outcome of that event, BHRC wrote a letter to then-Foreign Secretary **Liz Truss** raising concerns about rule of law and human rights protections in India, and received a response in March 2022. Subsequently a meeting was organised for the BHRC Chair with **Lord Ahmad** in the Commons in late May 2022 to further BHRC's advocacy on India.

Sri Lanka. In May 2022, BHRC wrote to the UK Foreign Secretary with the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) to raise concerns about the serious threat to human rights and the rule of law in Sri Lanka, to raise awareness as necessary and seek an inter-governmental response. In September 2022, BHRC released a statement joining the chorus of respected global human rights voices in drawing attention to the heightened environment of human rights violations taking place in Sri Lanka under President Wickremasinghe. And as part of our ongoing *Diminishing Democracy* series, BHRC hosted a panel event in October 2022 on human rights and rule of law challenges in Sri Lanka, which was chaired by BHRC Vice-Chair **Aswini Weeraratne KC** and welcomed **Upul Jayasuriya PC**, former Chair of BASL; **Dr Deepika Udagama**, Professor, human rights activist and former Head of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka; and **Ambika Satkunanathan**, Fellow, Open Society Foundation and former Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. Speakers discussed the importance of the rule of law in Sri Lanka and of the obligations of Sri Lanka under international law (including the illegality of the Prevention of Terrorism Act under international law); Sri Lanka's international obligations as a party to the ICCPR not only to respect and protect the rights to freedom of assembly and expression but also to actively promote and facilitate their exercise; the need for protection for lawyers, judges, journalists and all those involved in recording and reporting on these developments in Sri Lanka; and the

economic crisis which is aggravating widespread violations of economic, social and cultural rights protected by the ICESCR. The recording of this session is available on BHRC's YouTube channel. In June 2023 BHRC joined Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), the International Commission of Jurists and other organisations, in a statement to express concern about the ongoing violations of fair trial rights in the trial of Sri Lankan lawyer and human rights defender of **Hejaaz Hizbullah**.

Pakistan. BHRC hosted our third panel event in the *Diminishing Democracy* series in February 2023, this time spotlighting human rights and the rule of law in Pakistan. Chaired by **Zimran Samuel MBE**, Member of the BHRC Executive Committee, the panel discussion welcomed **Farooq Aftab**, Human Rights Activist, Solicitor & Secretariat, Human Rights Committee, UK; **Jalila Haider**, Human Rights Attorney & Activist, Pakistan; and **Saif Ul Mulook**, Human Rights Attorney & Activist, Pakistan. The Pakistan event was the third in a series of panel discussions focused on human rights and rule of law concerns in South East Asia, and followed earlier events on India (held in September 2021) and Sri Lanka (October 2022, see below).

Myanmar. BHRC hosted the fourth panel event in the *Diminishing Democracy* series in June 2023, this time spotlighting human rights and the rule of law in Myanmar. This panel event follows earlier events on rule of law in India (held virtually in September 2021), Sri Lanka (October 2022), and Pakistan (February 2023). Chaired by BHRC Chair **Stephen Cragg KC**, the panel discussion welcomed UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, **The Honourable Tom Andrews**, alongside **Elaine Chan**, Human Rights Officer, UN Human Rights Asia; **Dr Felicity Gerry KC**, Barrister & Professor of Legal Practice; **Antonia Mulvey**, Founder & Executive Director of Legal Action Worldwide (LAW); **Aarif Abraham**, Barrister and Writer; and **Hanh Nguyen**, Senior Labour Rights Researcher at the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre.

Bangladesh. In July 2023 BHRC hosted its final panel event of the *Diminishing Democracy* series, on human rights and the rule of law in Bangladesh. Chaired by **Aswini Weeraratne KC**, Vice-Chair of BHRC, the panel discussion welcomed **Sultan Mohammed Zakaria**, County Specialist for Bangladesh and Pakistan, Amnesty International USA; **Shahanur Islam**, Founder Secretary General, JusticeMakers Bangladesh; **Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman**, Programme Coordinator at Asian Legal Resource Centre / Asian Human Rights Commission; and **Kalpona Akter**, Founder & Executive Director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, Ambassador for The Circle.

The MENA Region

Gaza / Israel. In October 2023 BHRC endorsed the High Commissioner's condemnation of Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians, the consequences of a siege on Gaza, and supported his conclusion that 'we need to find solutions guided by the full respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law'.

BHRC also made a formal written request to the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, **Karim Khan KC**, asking him for a formal 'preventative statement' regarding the continuing escalation of the conflict in Israel and Palestine. BHRC asked the Office of the Prosecutor urgently to remind all parties to the conflict, as well as third party States, of their obligations under international law, and in particular their obligation to respect the fundamental international law principle of distinction between civilians and combatants.

In November 2023, prior to an important vote in the House of Commons, BHRC endorsed a lawyers' letter signed by over 1,000 legal practitioners and academics, and originally sent to the Prime Minister on 26 October 2023. BHRC recognised and agreed with the powerful legal analysis in the letter in relation to the human rights situation in Gaza and Israel. Mindful of the calls by the United Nations Secretary General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and on the basis of the legal arguments in the letter of 26 October 2023, BHRC joined the calls on the UK Government as set out in the letter urgently to exert its influence to secure an immediate ceasefire in Gaza



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Egypt. BHRC released a statement in December 2021 in solidarity with Egyptian human rights lawyer **Mohamed el-Baqer** (Founder & Director of the Adalah Center for Rights and Freedoms) as he awaited his verdict on baseless criminal charges following years of reprisal by the Egyptian state. We called on the Egyptian authorities to drop all charges against el-Baqer, to promptly release him unconditionally, and to lift the restrictive measures imposed on him for his work as an attorney. We further called on the Egyptian authorities to halt the targeting of Egyptian lawyers for their legal defence work and exercise of fundamental freedoms. Mohamed el-Baqer received a presidential pardon on 19 July 2023.

BHRC has also continued raising awareness of prolonged arbitrary detention and the use of torture in the MENA, supporting the family of imprisoned human rights activist **Alaa Abd El-Fattah** when he began a hunger strike in April 2022. BHRC had previously released a statement calling for the release of Alaa Abd El-Fattah. Alaa Abd El-Fattah has, over much of the past decade, been repeatedly arrested and detained following participation in peaceful protests and the exercise of free speech through his published writing. BHRC has been following his case with serious concern over many years and considers that his case is emblematic of the profound crisis in respect for the rule of law and fundamental human rights in Egypt. The World Organisation Against Torture estimates that there were more than 80 lawyers in prison in Egypt in 2022.

Saudi Arabia. In March 2022, in the week of then Prime Minister Boris Johnson's visit to Saudi Arabia, BHRC issued a statement utterly condemning the mass execution of 81 men by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Saturday 12 March 2022. BHRC conveyed particular concern that Saudi Arabia continues to renege on promises made by **Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman** to limit the use of the death penalty. BHRC has continued to follow closely the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia and worked with other human rights organisation

on this issue throughout 2022. BHRC shares in international concerns over Saudi Arabia's use of counterterrorism laws and the Specialised Criminal Court as tools to curb the exercise of fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, opinion, and assembly. Under no circumstances can the death penalty be applied for offences stemming from the exercise of fundamental and protected rights. We remain gravely concerned that children remain subject to capital punishment in Saudi Arabia, which is strictly prohibited under international law. BHRC also condemned the resentencing to death of **Abdullah al-Howaiti**, who was only 14 years old at the time of the alleged offence.

Europe

Ukraine. BHRC joined with the Bar Council of England and Wales, the Bar of Northern Ireland, the Faculty of Advocates, the Bar of Ireland in issuing a statement in March 2022 condemning the unlawful invasion of Ukraine by Russia. BHRC also endorsed the statements made by the UN High Commissioner and various UN Special Procedures regarding Russian military aggression in Ukraine in breach of international law, and welcomed the decision of the ICC Prosecutor, **Karim Khan KC**, to proceed with opening an investigation into any past and present allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide committed on any part of the territory of Ukraine by any person from 21 November 2013, and supported the steps taken by 41 ICC State Parties to refer the situation to the Court.

The Americas

Guatemala. In March 2023 BHRC's Chair, **Stephen Cragg KC**, and Executive Committee member, **Haydee Dijkstal**, took part in an international delegation of UK lawyers and human rights advocates to Guatemala, organised by Peace Brigades International and funded by the FCDO's Rule of Law Expertise initiative. The delegation has urged



BHRC Objective 2 | Supporting and protecting practising lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are threatened or oppressed in their work

the Guatemalan authorities to uphold the rights of the Lajeb Kej Indigenous community they visited, having raised serious concerns over planned evictions. In October 2023, the delegation convened again to share the findings of their fact-finding mission and launched an in-depth report into indigenous rights, access to justice, and what the recent election results and ongoing turmoil means for rights and democracy in the country. This provides a perspective from international law that will serve as a tool for organisations and their lawyers in their legal work for access to land and the defence of human rights defenders.

Guantanamo. BHRC is the only UK-based legal organisation with observer status at Guantanamo, and in early 2020, former BHRC Executive Committee members **Amanda Weston KC** and **Jacob Bindman** observed hearings in Guantanamo. Their report was published in 2022. In October 2022 **Jodie Blackstock**, BHRC Treasurer, attended the *United States v Nashiri* trial at Guantanamo, and in June 2023, BHRC released its second Guantanamo Bay Military Commission trial observation report, recording Jodie's observations and analysis of the key fair trial concerns. BHRC launched this report at a virtual panel discussing fair trial rights, justice and human rights, which was chaired by **Stephen Cragg KC**, Chair of BHRC, with an expert panel of **J Wells Dixon**, Senior Staff Attorney, Center for Constitutional Rights focussing on unlawful detentions at Guantánamo Bay; **Alka**

Pradhan, Human Rights Counsel, Guantánamo Bay Military Commissions; **Carol Rosenberg**, Guantánamo Bay Correspondent, The New York Times; **Anthony Natale**, lead counsel for the defence in *Abdul Rahim Al Nashiri*; and **Jodie Blackstock** and **Amanda Weston KC** from BHRC. BHRC in September 2023 submitted an amicus brief to the Court, written by Stephen Cragg KC and Jodie Blackstock, highlighting that international law requires the exclusion of evidence obtained as a result of torture and highlights caselaw and UN conventions, general comments and guidance on the rights of detainees in the context of interrogation following torture. BHRC is now preparing to send other Executive Committee members to attend further trials at Guantanamo Bay in 2024.

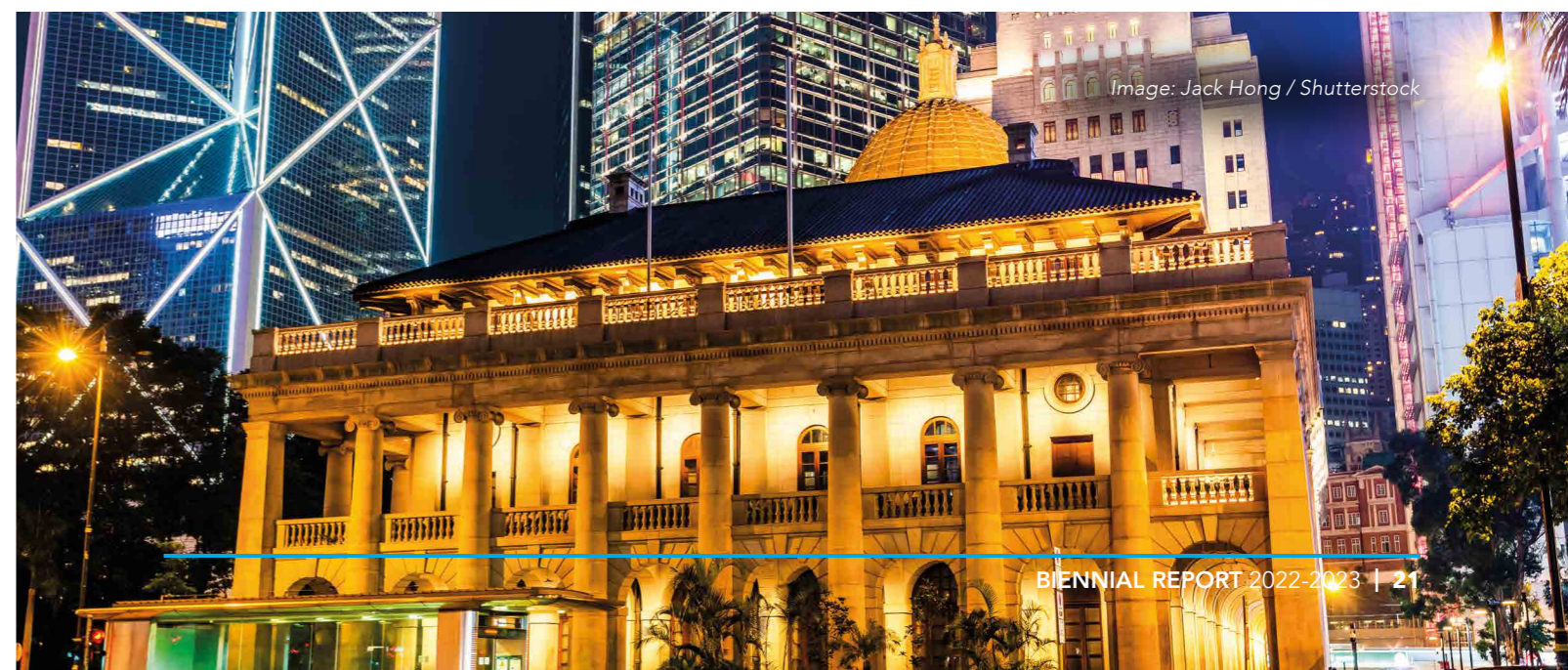
Attacks on lawyers have a chilling effect on the profession. They undermine access to effective and independent legal assistance to protect human rights, in contravention of the rights of both the lawyers and their clients. As an organisation of lawyers, BHRC supports and protects practising lawyers,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

In this reporting period, BHRC has written a number of statements, as part of a programme of advocacy (public and private), calling on governments around the world to uphold the rights of lawyers, judges and human rights defenders. These include:

Hong Kong. In January 2023, BHRC released a Special Report on Judicial Independence in Hong Kong SAR with a foreword by BHRC Chair **Stephen Cragg KC**, which applied the ABA Judicial Independence Monitor Toolkit designed

to assess vulnerabilities and strengths of judicial independence in different jurisdictions. The BHRC report concisely and authoritatively sets out the current situation and critical challenges in Hong Kong for members of the judiciary, the legal profession, and civil society (as at December 2022), and sets out a number of recommendations for reform.

Fiji. In December 2022, the Bar Council of England and Wales and BHRC joined the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) and Bar leaders around the world in expressing concern over the conviction of Indo-Fijian constitutional lawyer **Richard Naidu** by the High Court of Fiji for "scandalising" the court. Mr Naidu had made a comment on social media about a spelling mistake in a court judgment. The High Court of Fiji convicted Mr Naidu on 22 November, and he was due to be sentenced in January 2023. The Bar Council and BHRC





noted with concern the report of the observer acting for the Law Council of Australia and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute who found that Mr Naidu had been denied procedural fairness and had not been afforded a fair trial.. In July 2023, BHRC was delighted to hear that Mr Naidu had been freed after the Suva High Court ruled that no conviction was to be recorded against him and that the charge of contempt be dismissed.

Hong Kong / China. In December 2022, BHRC joined the 29 Principles, International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL), International Association of People's Lawyers – Australian Branch, Leitner Center for International Law and Justice, American Association of the International Commission of Jurists, the Law Society of England and Wales, Paris Bar and Geneva Bar in a statement expressing grave concern that defendants' right to receive legal representation of their choosing in Hong Kong was being seriously impinged. BHRC expressed grave concern about lawyers' rights to practice and the independence of the legal profession in Hong Kong, after the Chief Executive asked Beijing to rule on banning foreign lawyers in any national security case.

Global. In November 2022, BHRC welcomed **Mary Lawlor**, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, for a very special in-person and live-streamed keynote and panel discussion event at Garden Court Chambers in London. The panel event, *The*

criminalisation of human rights defenders: What can lawyers do?, examined the persecution and long-term imprisonment of human rights defenders and how the criminalisation, harassment, torture and detention of human rights defenders chills the exercise of fundamental freedoms. As Mary Lawlor has stated, many human rights defenders who have been detained are held in harsh conditions, suffer from ill health, and are deprived of adequate medical attention. Some are also denied regular access to their families. Some are at risk of being sentenced to death, and some have died in jail while serving long sentences. The criminalisation and imprisonment of human rights defenders – among them, labour leaders, journalists, lawyers, academics, and activists – also has a catastrophic impact on human rights defenders as individuals as well as on their families and whole communities.

The panel session was moderated by **Stephen Cragg KC**, Chair of BHRC, and welcomed human rights defenders with lived experience and from organisations that work closely with human rights defenders who have been criminalised by the state. The panel discussion also featured Mona Seif, human rights activist and sister of Alaa El Fattah; **Barbora Bukovská**, Senior Director for Law and Policy, Article 19; and **Sierra Schraff Thomas**, Strategy and Governance Advisor, Peace Brigades International UK Section. The event was very well-attended by legal practitioners, academics, NGO representatives, and students.

Iran. In October 2022, the Bar Council of England and Wales and BHRC joined the international legal community's call on the Iranian Government to end the arrest, detention, and intimidation of lawyers in Iran. These attacks represent a grave threat to the rule of law, and place Iran in breach of its international obligations. Protests across Iran began following the death on 16 September 2022 of 22-year-old **Mahsa (Jini) Amini** after her arrest and death. Subsequently there were mass arrests and violence against protesters, including the use of excessive and lethal force, with lawyers reportedly among at least 90 members of civil society arrested since protests began, including at least three lawyers arrested outside the Iranian Bar Association in Tehran on 12 October 2022 whilst attending a peaceful demonstration. The Bar Council and BHRC were particularly concerned by reports that several lawyers were being detained at undisclosed locations, including one lawyer who was arrested while representing their client in court. Reports indicate that law societies, bar associations and lawyers have also faced threats of arrest and closure of their premises after issuing public statements calling on the Iranian authorities to respect due process, the right to legal representation, and fair trials.

Palestine. In September 2022, **Stephen Cragg KC**, BHRC Chair, wrote to the British Consulate in Jerusalem, regarding Israel's escalating attacks on Palestinian civil society. This came after Israeli forces raided the offices of several leading Palestinian civil society organisations and detained and questioned several of their employees.

handed down to **Mucella Yapici**, Çiğdem Mater, **Hakan Altınay**, **Mine Özerden**, **Can Atalay**, **Tayfun Kahraman** and **Yiğit Ali Ekmekçi** in relation to the Gezi Park protests in 2013. These convictions were the latest in a series of grave injustices against civil society in Turkey, and we called for the immediate release and acquittal of all eight human rights defenders. BHRC Chair **Stephen Cragg KC** said: "BHRC expresses its grave concern over the flagrant and persistent disregard of the Turkish state to comply with the ruling of the Court and to discharge its international obligations. We strongly condemn Mr Kavala's conviction and believe it lacks legal credibility, is a clear abuse of the judicial process, and violates Mr Kavala's human rights. Turkey's use of the judicial system to stifle the voices of human rights defenders has harmed the rule of law and inflicted severe damage on Mr Kavala, his family, and other defendants facing these extremely dubious charges."

Tunisia. In March 2022, BHRC held a meeting together with the Bar Council and a cross-party parliamentary delegation coming from Tunisia to discuss the human rights situation of lawyers and judges in Tunisia, as well as the abuses against the judiciary as a whole, that have been taking place after the President's coup on 25 July 2021.. BHRC has followed developments in Tunisia closely especially after the announcement on 31 March 2022 that the Tunisian Parliament has been dissolved.

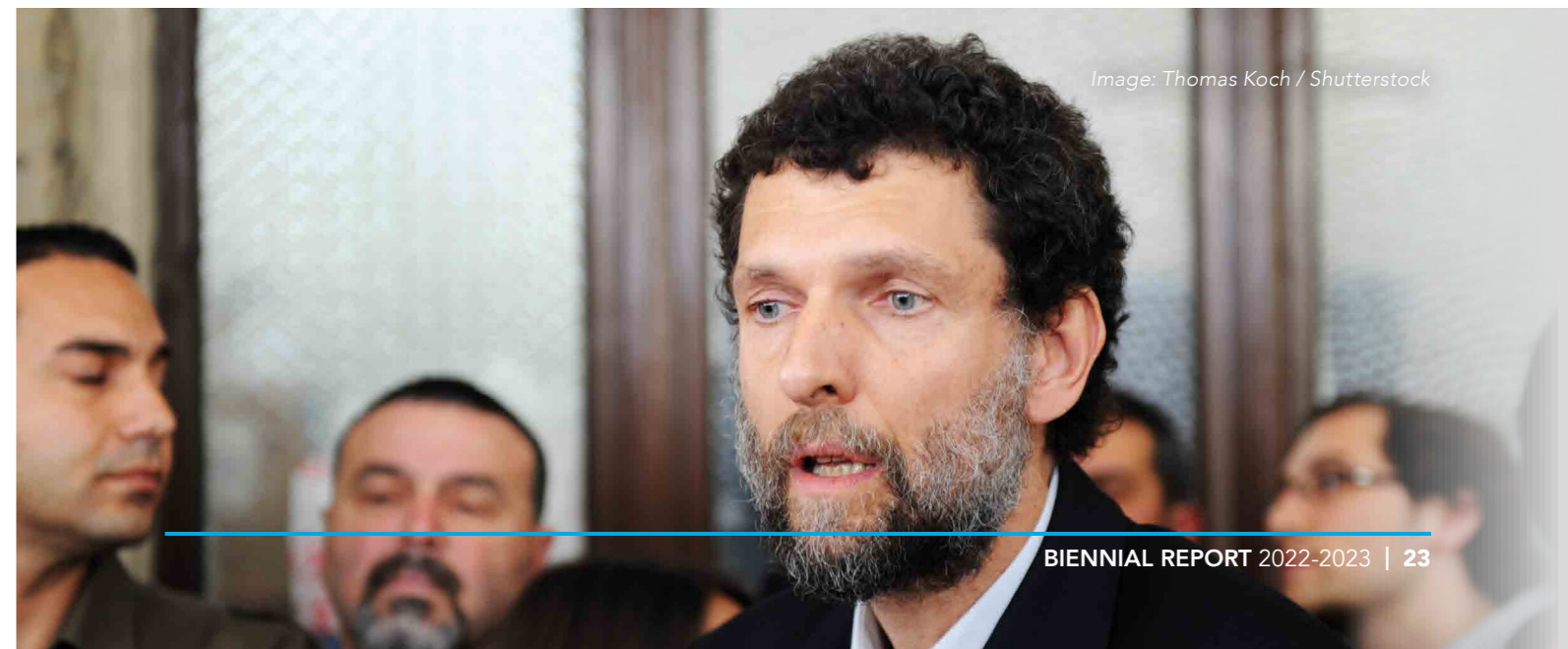


Image: Thomas Koch / Shutterstock

BHRC Objective 3 | Furthering interest in and knowledge of human rights and the laws relating to human rights, both within and outside the legal profession



BHRC furthers interest in and knowledge of human rights through a high-impact, action-oriented programme of virtual and in-person training and events, designed to bring academics, civil society, international development professionals and legal practitioners together to learn from each other, share expertise and inspire debate and advocacy.

Training & Events

Global. On 28 November 2023, BHRC and the Human Rights Lawyers Association Young Lawyers' Committee hosted a one-day virtual seminar, *Human Rights Careers, Skills & Values*, encouraging law graduates to consider human rights careers and supporting the development of human rights values and advocacy skills in the next generation of human rights defender. The free seminar was open to law students

(including undergraduates and postgraduate researchers), as well as trainee solicitors, pupil barristers and early- to mid-career solicitors and barristers who are interested in moving into human rights practice. These sessions aimed to demystify human rights careers, encourage law students to pursue human rights careers and specialisms, and to explore the positive impact of *probono* work. Speakers represented BHRC, the Human Rights Lawyers Association, A4ID, Peace Brigades International, Human Rights Watch, REDRESS, Lex Mundi, Doughty Street Chambers, Garden Court Chambers, The Bar Council's Young Barristers' Committee, and the Law Society of England & Wales. The video series is available on YouTube and a report and toolkit will be published in early 2024.

UK / Global. BHRC was proud to support the London Human Rights Watch Film Festival which took place in March 2022 and 2023. In 2023, BHRC was the Presenting Partner for *Delikado*,

which put a spotlight on brave environmental activists in the Philippines; *Seven Winters in Tehran*, which opened a window into the mass oppression and silencing of women in Iran; and *Theatre of Violence*, which raised complex questions around new forms of colonialism and asked: how do we define "justice" when the perpetrator is also a victim? In 2022 BHRC promoted two films, *Myanmar Diaries*, a mixture of documentary and fiction about life under military Junta in Myanmar, and *Judges Under Pressure*, a look at attempts by Polish government to arrest and detain judges. BHRC has supported the HRW Film Festival for many years and will continue to do so into the future, in celebration and solidarity of the festival's mission to mainstream human rights awareness and understanding among non-legal audiences.

Global. BHRC was proud to host a virtual panel and workshop, *Protecting Mental Health and Building Resilience: A Dialogue for Human Rights Defenders*, in July 2022. Human rights work demands extraordinary resilience and courage from defenders and practitioners who often work under immense personal risk and pressures which put them at greater risk of anxiety, depression, and PTSD, which can manifest as physical illnesses and adversely impact mental health. These conditions can lead to burnout and drive human rights professionals to exit the human rights field entirely, as the Human Rights Resilience Project has noted.

Through this virtual panel event, BHRC brought into focus the vastly underexplored dimensions of trauma, vulnerability, resilience and wellbeing to the work that we as human rights defenders do. This event, which was chaired by BHRC Executive Committee Member **Jodie Blackstock**, explored the challenges, personal risks and psychological impacts experienced by those in the human rights field; exchanged good practices in managing scepticism, hopelessness and burnout, proactively managing the emotional toll human rights work can take, and learning how to consciously and positively nourish their commitment to the crucial work that human rights defenders do; and highlighted the ways in which human rights defenders can maintain their mental health, build resilience, learn self-care and self-protection strategies, and importantly, create vital spaces for self-reflection to better understand and navigate the risks their work involves.

For this event, we were delighted to welcome **Nighat Dad**, Member of the Oversight Board & Executive Director of the Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan; **Satyajit Gupta**, Secretary, IBA Asia Pacific Regional Forum & Member, IBA Wellbeing Taskforce; **Dr Sana Hamzeh**, Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, Lebanon & Physicians for Human Rights; **Anjali Parrin**, Project of War Crimes and Mass Graves, Human Rights Clinic and Institute, Columbia Law School; and **Dr Gemma Houldey**,



Author of *The Vulnerable Humanitarian*, who led a taster workshop within the session on self- and collective care strategies for human rights defenders. The video recording of this event is available on YouTube on BHRC's YouTube channel.

Turkey. BHRC successfully held a series of training events for lawyers in Turkey on rule of law and international refugee law, in December 2021 and again in March 2022. The FCDO-funded project, titled *International Human Rights Law and Xinjiang: A regional approach to reinforcing protections for Uyghurs and at-risk populations in Turkey*, was conducted in partnership with Article 19. The aim of this project was to train lawyers in Turkey in the effective use and practice of international human rights law and mechanisms to reinforce protections for the Uyghur diaspora and other at-risk populations in Turkey. BHRC and Article 19 provided four virtual training sessions to lawyers in Turkey working with refugee and migrant populations, including Uyghur diaspora, in December 2021. These sessions covered issues such as refugee rights under international law and the European Convention on Human Rights. The second round of sessions held in March 2022 attracted an especially high level of interest and in total, BHRC and Article 19 trained 90+ lawyers. We also ran an additional training session for civil society organisations in Turkey who work with refugee and migrant populations. We look forward to continuing our close work with Article 19 in the future.



BHRC Objective 4 | Supporting and co-operating with other organisations and individuals working for the promotion and protection of human rights

BHRC works closely with a number of organisations, including bar and legal associations, NGOs globally and of course the Bar Council. BHRC also works closely with a range of international human rights legal and civil society organisations. Some recent examples of that cooperation are highlighted below.

ECOSOC. BHRC was officially granted United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) NGO consultative status at a special session in New York on 25 July 2023. ECOSOC is a strong endorsement of BHRC's 30-year commitment to upholding human rights and rule of law in every country in the world bar the United Kingdom (to maintain independence). With its new consultative status, BHRC looks forward to supporting the work of ECOSOC and intends to participate fully and formally in UN meetings. BHRC also looks forward to engaging with like-minded NGOs from around the globe to amplify our international human rights advocacy and rule of law work.

Israel / Palestine. BHRC collaborated with the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP) on a new report on Israel's 2022 rules on entry of foreign nationals into the West Bank, published in July 2023. Israel's new rules on the entry and residence of foreign nationals in the occupied West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), referred to as the 'Procedure for Entry and Residence for Foreigners in Judea and Samaria Area', came into force in October 2022. This new report shows how this Procedure severely

restricts the ability of foreign nationals, including millions of people with Palestinian heritage, to visit, work in, study or volunteer in the occupied West Bank. It finds that the Procedure is deemed to be intentionally confusing, complex and arbitrary, which allows broad discretion to Israeli army officials to deny entry, often on the basis of profiling individuals based on racial and ethnic origin. The process is further exacerbated by the fact that there are no clear routes for appeal. Written by **Dania Abul Haj** and **Illora Choudhury** of ICJP, with legal guidance and drafting assistance from members of BHRC's Executive Committee, this report demonstrates how the regulations are incompatible with Israel's duties and obligations arising out of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Turkey. BHRC is working in partnership with EuroMed Rights to observe trials in Turkey in a series of short trial observations in multiple cases to get a broad picture of human rights issues faced by defendants. Barristers are then required to produce short reports based on their findings that will be published in both BHRC's and EuroMed's names. In July 2023 BHRC sent a member barrister, **James Onalaja**, to observe a trial and further barristers will support this project later in 2023 and in 2024.

Mexico / Egypt. BHRC was proud to support International Fair Trial Day whose focus country in 2023 was Mexico and in 2022, Egypt. BHRC joined legal professional organisations, bar associations, and civil society organisations

in an International Fair Trial Day statement to condemn the injustices and human rights abuses taking place and urging the Mexican authorities to strengthen human rights and the rule of law.

Ukraine. In February 2023, BHRC was pleased to assist the Bar Council in its search for volunteers for the 'A Day at the Bar for Ukrainian Lawyers' scheme, launched on the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine in order to assist our Ukrainian colleagues' adaptation in the UK. The idea for the scheme arose out of a number of requests received by the Bar Council from Ukrainian lawyers who are now either working or seeking work in England and commonly raise queries about how English & Welsh court practice works. The scheme matched a volunteer barrister with a Ukrainian lawyer practising in the same/similar field so that the two of them can arrange a convenient day when a Ukrainian lawyer would be able to join a barrister for a day in court/tribunal/other hearing or otherwise in chambers observing the work and receiving some introduction to the member's work. The day was beneficial to both the Ukrainian lawyers who wish to understand how the English legal system works from an 'insider point of view but also allowed the Bar to foster new connections with their Ukrainian colleagues and counterparts.

Global. In September 2022, BHRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with A4ID, Advocates for International Development, to advance our shared interests in addressing rule of law challenges and bringing vital awareness, advocacy and action to mutual human rights concerns around the world, and in recognition of the strengths and synergies each party may offer to the other. As part of this agreement, BHRC and A4ID have agreed to implement a series of events, initiatives, trainings, and joint advocacy projects together; collaborate on joint training programmes covering key thematic priorities of both BHRC and A4ID, which may include the shrinking civil society space, rule of law challenges in jurisdictions outside of the United Kingdom, and the protection of human rights defenders, among other themes; join forces on joint advocacy programmes as and when such opportunities arise; and publish joint research and reports.



Image: Diego Grandi / Shutterstock

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair wearing a colorful headscarf with green, orange, and red patterns. She is looking off to the side with a serious expression. She is holding a young child with light brown hair and a blue headband. The child is holding a blue pacifier in their mouth. The woman is wearing a green and black patterned top. The background is out of focus, showing white fabric.

Syria / Iraq. BHRC is a member organisation of the Yazidi Justice Committee (YJC), formed in early 2020 as an ad hoc body of the following organisations: Accountability Unit; Women for Justice; International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI); Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales; and the Geoffrey Nice Foundation. Since March 2020, YJC has been investigating allegations of genocide committed against the Yazidis from early 2013 by the armed group, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) and the Republic of Iraq (Iraq). The Patrons of the YJC are **Baroness Helena Kennedy KC** and Lord David Alton, and the Committee is supported by an Executive Committee of which BHRC Vice-Chair **Aswini Weeraratne KC** is a Member. YJC’s primary objective was to determine whether the alleged violations of international law relating to genocide can be brought before a court of law in order that States who may be legally responsible for the commission of, or failure to prevent, the possible genocide of the Yazidis, are held accountable in addition to individual perpetrators.

To this end, YJC convened a High-Level Panel at the UK Parliament on 6 July 2022 which BHRC was proud to support. The Panel served as a platform for the launch of a major international report advancing the issue of state responsibility for the Yazidi genocide with contributions from leading practitioners and prominent politicians. The Panel was Co-Sponsored by the APPG for the Prevention of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity and the APPG on the Yazidis, and held under the auspices of the International Ministerial Conference 2022 to Promote Freedom of Religion or Belief hosted by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office.

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PART THREE

BHRC Executive Committee 2022-2023

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 and a Project Team of academics and administrators who work closely with the EC to deliver BHRC's initiatives and programme of events, communications and projects.

Office Holders (as at end 2023)



Chair
Stephen Cragg KC
Doughty Street Chambers



Vice-Chair
Gráinne Mellon
Garden Court Chambers



Vice-Chair
Aswini Weeraratne KC
Doughty Street Chambers



Treasurer
Jodie Blackstock
Garden Court Chambers



Secretary
Jo Cecil
Garden Court Chambers



Membership Secretary
Dr Theodora Christou
Queen Mary,
University of London
London School of Economics and
Political Science

Executive Committee Members (in alphabetical order)



Soraya Bauwens
1 MCB



Professor Bill Bowring
Birkbeck, University of London
and Field Court Chambers



Diana Constantinide
33 Bedford Row



Haydee Dijkstra
33 Bedford Row



Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh
Matrix Chambers



Michael Ivers KC
Garden Court Chambers



Louise Price
Doughty Street Chambers



Zimran Samuel
Doughty Street Chambers



Kate Stone
Garden Court North



Pete Weatherby KC
Garden Court North

Advisory Board Members (in alphabetical order)

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.



Kirsty Brimelow KC
Doughty Street Chambers



Peter Carter KC
Doughty Street Chambers



Christine Chinkin CMG FBA
London School of Economics
and Political Science & Matrix
Chambers



Kevin Jon Heller
University of Amsterdam &
Australian National University



Schona Jolly KC
Cloisters



Baroness Helena Kennedy KC
House of Lords, Doughty Street
Chambers & IBAHRI



Mark Muller Stuart KC
Doughty Street Chambers

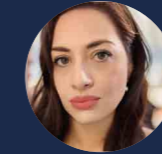
Projects, Communication, Events & Advocacy

(in alphabetical order)

The BHRC Executive Committee wishes to thank **Lydia Day**, **Dr Louise Loder**, **Sahar Sadoughi** and **Olivia Wheatley-Hince** for their invaluable support and contributions to BHRC's programmes, projects and publicity in 2022-23.



Lydia Day



Dr Louise Loder



Sahar Sadoughi



Olivia Wheatley-Hince

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 received from the Bar Council, which provides our core funding and trial observation budget.

BHRC is grateful for the generous support of its additional funders:

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

BHRC would like to thank the following organisations for their work and collaboration during 2022-23:

29 Principles
Advocate
Advocates for International Development (A4ID)
American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)
All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights
Amnesty International
Arrested Lawyers Initiative
Article 19

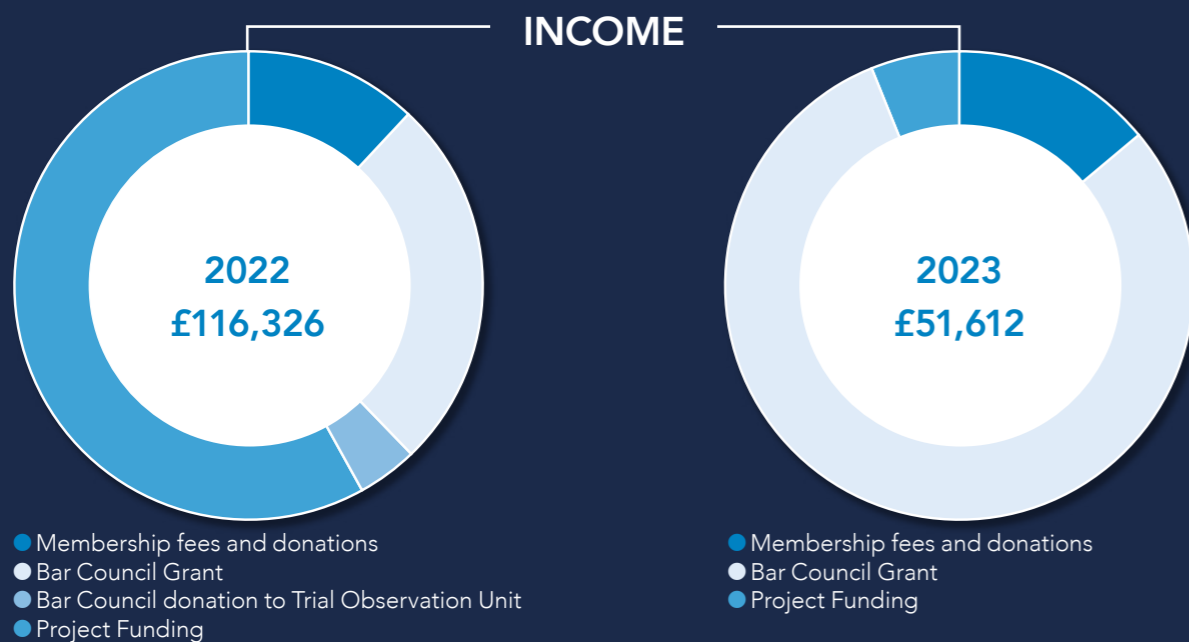
Commonwealth Lawyers Association
Doughty Street Chambers
EuroMed Rights
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (and British Embassies around the world)
Human Rights Lawyers' Association
Human Rights Watch (and Human Rights Watch Film Festival)
Hong Kong Watch
International Bar Association
International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)
International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP)
Peace Brigades International
Redress
Reprieve
ROLE UK
The Law Society of England and Wales

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 which we do.

Financial Report

Become a member of the Bar Human Rights Committee today

INCOME



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

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.

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:

How You Can Join

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

Partner with BHRC

BHRC partners with likeminded human rights and research institutes and organisations, universities, NGOs, foundations and changemakers to inspire interest and promote respect for and knowledge of human rights and rule of law in all of the jurisdictions around the world in which BHRC is engaged. Please email us with a brief outline of your interest and a senior member of our projects team will be in touch to explore the possibilities.

- 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.

EXPENDITURE

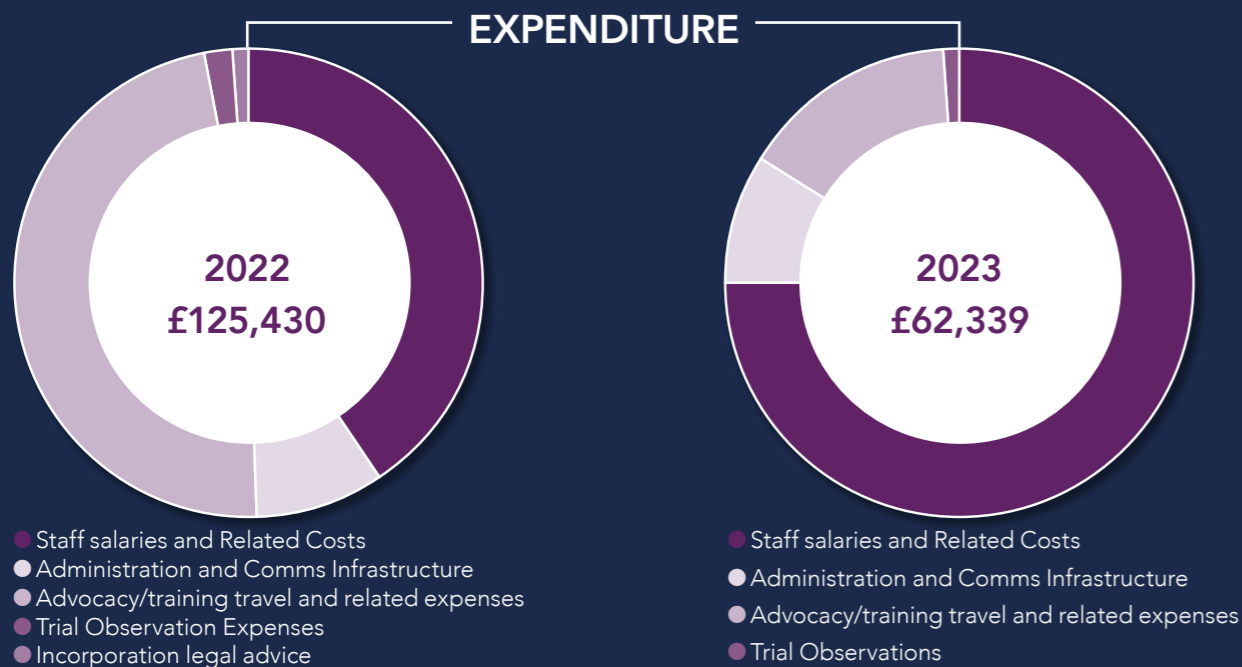




Image: Fotos52 / Shutterstock



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND & WALES

Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC)
289-293 High Holborn, London WC1V 7HZ, United Kingdom

Chair (2022-2023): **Stephen Cragg KC**
Vice-Chairs: **Gráinne Mellon & Aswini Weeraratne KC**
coordination@barhumanrights.org.uk www.barhumanrights.org.uk