

BHRC x UNESCO Seminar on AI, Human Rights & The Rule of Law

Saturday 20 June 2026 | Inner Temple, London, UK



Time	Agenda	Facilitators
10:30 – 11:00	Participant registration / coffee and networking	
11:00 – 11:30	Opening Session - Michael Ivers KC , Chair of BHRC; Kirsty Brimelow KC , Chair of the Bar Council of England & Wales; and Dana Denis-Smith OBE , Deputy Vice President of the Law Society.	BHRC, The Bar Council & The Law Society
11:30 – 12:00	The UNESCO AI & Rule of Law Programme This session will introduce the UNESCO Guidelines for the Use of AI Systems in Courts and Tribunals , which set out practical recommendations for judges, court staff, and legal practitioners on the responsible development, procurement, deployment, and use of AI technologies in justice settings. Dr El Hilali will also discuss the wider UNESCO AI & Rule of Law programme, and opportunities for stakeholders from legal practice, civil society and education to become involved in their implementation.	Dr Kamel El Hilali , AI & Rule of Law Specialist, UNESCO
12:00 – 12:30	AI, Business & Human Rights <i>AI, Business and the Human Experience</i> Cyrus Suntook , Co-Founder, AI for Growth; Co-author, 'AI & Sustainability: Leading Responsibly', Saïd Business School, University of Oxford ----- <i>Responsible AI in practice: Human rights insights from the Thomson Reuters / UNESCO AI Company Data Initiative</i> Katie Fowler , Director of Responsible Business, Thomson Reuters Foundation	Cyrus Suntook , Co-Founder, AI for Growth; and Katie Fowler , Director of Responsible Business, Thomson Reuters Foundation
12:30 – 13:30	Civil Society and Policy Responses to AI What are the most critical accountability gaps in how AI is currently being deployed in policy, civil society and in the legal academy, and what could these stakeholders be doing together to close it? This session examines the growing role of civil society organisations in shaping, scrutinising,	Katie Fowler , Director of Responsible Business, Thomson Reuters Foundation, UK (moderating); Michael Navin , Principal Court Management Consultant, National Center for State Courts

	and responding to the use of AI in justice settings. We'll understand the practical applications and benefits of use of AI in court systems, and discover innovative tools, resources and programmes developed by judicial institutions and civil society. We will also consider implications for and innovative approaches in legal education, research and professional training, designed to prepare future lawyers with AI literacy and competencies as groundwork for effective and ethical use of AI in future legal / professional practice.	(NCSC)*, USA; Mary Towers , Technology Law and Responsible Innovation Policy Advisor at The Law Society of England & Wales; Professor Andrew Murray , Dean of the Law School, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK
13:30 – 14:00	Lunch & Networking	
14:00 – 14:30	The Human Impact of AI in the Justice System AI is often presented as a tool for efficiency, productivity and innovation, but the potentially adverse consequences of such use are profoundly human. This session will examine the impact of AI misuse on people who encounter the justice system, particularly those already facing structural disadvantage. The central question that the panel will address is: Can AI be governed in ways that protect the people around the world most affected by its use?	Susie Alegre , Associate Tenant, Garden Court Chambers, and Matthew Lee , Barrister, Doughty Street Chambers, with Jo Cecil KC , BHRC Vice-Chair (moderating).
14:30 – 15:15	AI Guidance for the International Bar and Law Societies Professional bodies across jurisdictions are increasingly developing guidance to support the responsible and effective use of AI in legal practice. The session will examine key areas of convergence across emerging governance frameworks, including the need for transparency in the use of AI-assisted outputs, safeguarding confidentiality and legal professional privilege, and ensuring appropriate human oversight and accountability. The session will consider how these principles are being translated into practical guidance for lawyers, identifying commonalities and points of divergence across jurisdictions.	Jodie Blackstock , Vice-Chair BHRC (moderating), with Henry Fingerhut , Technology & Innovation Policy Manager, The Bar Standards Board; Maria Mbeneka , CLA Council Member & Co-convenor of the Legal Technology & Innovation Committee, Commonwealth Lawyers Association*; Susie Alegre , Associate Tenant, Garden Court Chambers, Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance and Innovation
15:15 – 16:15	Governing AI in justice: Ethics, risk and accountability in a global context Following on from the earlier session on AI governance, this session - chaired by Louise Hooper , Barrister at Garden Court Chambers & 100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics List 2025 - continues the discussion on the ethical implications of the use of artificial intelligence in practitioner and judicial contexts, including algorithmic bias, transparency, inclusion, non-discrimination, fairness in decision-making, privacy, and data security, in the light of growing risks of misuse, systemic discrimination, opaque decision-making, intrusive surveillance of human rights defenders and civil society, and the erosion of fundamental rights and public trust in justice systems. Drawing on frameworks such as the UNESCO 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (among others), the session also introduces ethical impact assessment as a practical tool for responsible AI adoption and draws from cross-sector perspectives on AI and sustainability more broadly.	Nighat Dad , Founder, Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan; Thom Dyke , Barrister, Deka Chambers & Executive Committee, BHRC; Kay Firth-Butterfield , Associate Tenant, Doughty Street Chambers, CEO, Good Tech Advisory*; Dr Ewelina Ochab , Senior Programme Lawyer, IBA's Human Rights Institute; with Louise Hooper , Barrister at Garden Court Chambers, Enforce at the Irish Council for Civil Liberties & 100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics List 2025, UK (moderating).
16:15 – 17:00	AI, Judicial Independence & Capacity Building As courts and judges around the world increasingly turn to AI, profound questions arise for judicial independence and training. UNESCO's survey of judicial actors across 96 countries found that 44% are already using AI tools such as ChatGPT in their work, yet only 9% have received any	Dr Margaret Satterthwaite , UN Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers*; Dr John Sorabji , Associate Professor & Co-Founder & Co-Director of UCL Laws' Centre for Dispute

	<p>institutional training or guidance, exposing a stark and growing capacity gap. Chaired by Mark Emerton, this session will examine how AI can assist judges without undermining the independent human judgment that judicial decision-making depends on. Drawing on the recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, which cautions against "techno-solutionism" and insists that human judges must remain in control of decisions about AI in justice systems, and on the Consultative Council of European Judges' Opinion on assistive technology, the panel will explore the deficits in judicial training and institutional capacity needed to adopt AI responsibly without eroding independence or fairness.</p>	<p>Resolution, UK; with Mark Emerton, Former Board Member of the Judicial College, SSRB Member & Executive Committee, Human Rights Lawyers Association (moderating).</p>
17:00 – 17:45	<p>AI, Access to Justice & Human Rights</p> <p>The session, chaired by Ellen Lefley (Deputy Legal Director, JUSTICE), will explore how AI can be harnessed to widen access to justice, helping people understand their rights, navigate legal processes, and obtain reliable legal information while ensuring that its deployment strengthens, rather than erodes, the institutions on which the rule of law depends. The discussion will consider AI's potential to improve court administration, support self-represented litigants, and make legal information more accessible and trustworthy, alongside the risks of misinformation, unequal access, and diminished public confidence in justice. Drawing on emerging international standards, including UNESCO's guidance for courts and tribunals and JUSTICE's rights-based framework to guide AI use across the UK justice system, the panel will identify the practical safeguards, transparency requirements, and forms of meaningful human oversight needed to ensure that AI helps build fair, accessible, and peaceful rule-of-law-based institutions.</p>	<p>Robin Allen KC, Barrister at Cloisters & Co-founder of the AI Law Consultancy; Professor Yvonne McDermott Rees, Professor in Law at Queen's University Belfast, UK; Iverna McGowan, Tech & Human Rights Advisor at the UN OHCHR*, with Ellen Lefley, Deputy Legal Director, JUSTICE (moderating).</p>
17:45 – 18:00	<p>Close of event</p>	



Welcome to 'AI, Human Rights & The Rule of Law'

This is the first in a series of initiatives that the Bar Human Rights Committee and UNESCO will host on the uses, potential and risks of AI in the justice system. We are delighted to welcome you today and invite you to share your feedback on this event with BHRC at coordination@barhumanrights.org.uk. Your feedback is invaluable and will help us shape our follow up events in this programme. To download the agenda for today's event, please scan the QR code below.



Special Thanks To UNESCO & All Our Event Partners

