



Center for International Human Rights (CIHR) Activities for Academic Year 2019-2020

The Center for International Human Rights (CIHR) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, was established with a mandate to study the main challenges to the promotion and protection of internationally recognized human rights norms; analyze and assess the interactions between human rights violations and international crimes; investigate genocide historically and in the contemporary world; and devise educational programs aimed at increasing public awareness of these norms. The CIHR focuses on a critical examination of long-standing and emerging issues on the human rights agenda, as well as on equipping our students with the necessary background and experience to pursue their interests in human rights scholarship and advocacy. The Center regularly conducts research workshops, seminars (including panel discussions and lectures) and develops outreach programs. The workshops focus on cutting edge issues and bring together experts in the field to present and discuss their work and usually result in publications as books, or special issues in scholarly journals. In addition, CIHR is consistently looking for innovative outreach/awareness activities to actively involve the college community, as well as the broader public, on important human rights issues.

Below is a list of our activities for the 2019 – 2020 academic year:

Seminars, Panel Discussions, and Lectures

The CIHR continued its long-standing tradition of holding events in celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and of International Women's Day (IWD) :

December 9th, 2019: *Challenges to Human Rights Advocacy in the Era of Rising Authoritarianism*

• Co-sponsored by:

- Political Science Department
- MA in International Crime and Justice
- Minor in Human Rights Studies
- Students Without Borders

• Panelists

- Elisa Keppler, *Associate Director, International Justice Program, Human Rights Watch*
- Jackie Mariano, *Coordinator of ICHRP – New York City*
- Dr. Maria Luisa Mendonca, *Research Scholar at the Center for Place, Culture and Politics, Graduate Center, CUNY and Member, Defend Democracy in Brazil Committee in New York.*

Moderated by: Dr. George Andreopoulos, *Director, The Center for International Human Rights*

March 10th, 2020: *Women in the Academy: Challenges and Prospects*

• Co-sponsored by:

- MA in International Crime and Justice
- Women's Center for Gender Studies
- Minor in Human Rights Studies
- Students Without Borders

- Panelists:

- Lissette Delgado – Cuzata, *Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology, CUNY, John Jay, Co-Director, Program to Inspire Minority Undergraduates in Environmental Health Science Research (PrIMER)*
- Alexandra Johnson, *IC&J MA Student*
- Gohar Petrossian, *Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice; Director of the IC&J MA Program*

Also presenting and moderated by: Erin Thompson, *Associate Professor, Department of Art and Music, Faculty Director of the John Jay Women's Center for Justice Studies*

We were planning to hold one more panel discussion on the theme of Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights in April, but we had to cancel it due to the pandemic.

The following events were part of our Human Rights Conversation Series:

October 10th, 2019: *Skunk at the Garden Party*

- Co-sponsored by:

- Political Science Department
- MA in International Crime and Justice
- Minor in Human Rights Studies
- Students Without Borders

- Guest Speaker – Louis Charbonneau, *United Nations Director at Human Rights Watch*

November 20th, 2019: *Human Rights Education: Advancing a Human Rights Culture*

- Co-sponsored by:

- MA in International Crime and Justice

- Guest Speaker – Karen Robinson, *Program Director of Speak Truth to Power, RFK Human Rights*

February 19th, 2020: *Lethal Propaganda: Impact of Fake News in Post-Conflict Environment*

- Co-sponsored by:

- MA in International Crime and Justice
- Minor in Human Rights Studies
- Students Without Borders

- Guest Speaker – Vladimir Dzuro, *Chief of UN Office International Oversight Services, NY Headquarters*

Our final scheduled event in our conversation series was a talk by Phelim Kine (Physicians for Human Rights). Unfortunately, we had to cancel this event due to the pandemic.

Co-Sponsorship

CIHR Co-sponsored the following talk series hosted by the Institute for Criminal Justice Ethics:

February 13th, 2020: *Prospects for Privacy in the Age of AI*

Guest Speaker: Dr. Helen Nissenbaum, *Professor of Information Science at Cornell Tech and Director of the Digital Life Initiative*

Following Remarks: Professor Douglas Salane, *Chairman of Mathematics and Computer Science, Director of the Center for Cybercrime Studies.*

February 20th, 2020: *Surveillance and the Ethics of Intelligence*

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ross W. Bellaby, *Senior Lecturer in Security Studies in the Department of Politics, University of Sheffield*

Following Comments: Professor John Kleinig

March 5th, 2020: *AI, Human Rights and Risks to Community*

Guest Speaker: Dr. Hin-Yan Liu, *Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen, Director of the Center for International Law, Conflict and Crisis.*

Following Remarks: Professor George Andreopoulos, *Director of the Center for International Human Rights at John Jay College.*

Research Reports

In January, CIHR submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) a research report entitled *The Closing of Civic Space in the Philippines*. This Report was written in response to the invitation issued by OHCHR for an objective assessment of the situation of human rights in the Philippines, as mandated under resolution 41/2 adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council on 11 July 2019.

The report focuses on the shrinking democratic and civil society space in the Philippines. Specifically, it provides an analysis of the national security situation and the resulting patterns of human rights violations, intimidation, persecution of, or violence against members of civil society, human rights defenders, and journalists, as well as restrictions on the freedoms of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association in the country. It was prepared by a team led by George Andreopoulos, Professor of Political Science at John Jay College and the Graduate Center and CIHR Director, and Nerve Macaspac, Assistant Professor of Geography, College of Staten Island, that included four undergraduate and graduate students: Ray Hilker, Efim Galkin, Jennifer Hirst and Amid Alhyani. The research was conducted between September 2019 and January 2020 and is based on interviews with human rights experts and members of civil society in the Philippines and an analysis of government documents, news articles and published reports of human rights organizations on the situation of human rights in the country. One of the Report's key recommendations is addressed to the Human Rights Council and calls for the adoption of a resolution to create an International Commission to conduct an independent investigation into human rights violations and take steps towards ensuring justice for the victims and their families.

The CIHR team continues its research on this topic and plans to submit its findings to a scholarly journal for publication.



Pictured above: The CIHR Research Team (Prof. George Andreopoulos, Prof. Nerve Macaspac, Efim Galkin, Jennifer Hirst, and Ray Hilker) present the Report to Provost Yi Li, February 2020

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals who were part of the CIHR team during the 2019-2020 academic year and whose contribution made all of the above possible:

Amid Alhyani

Efim Galkin

Ray Hilker

Jennifer Hirst

Nerve Macaspac

Marie-Michelle Strah

Prof. George Andreopoulos

Director, CIHR