

Annual Highlights

2024-2025

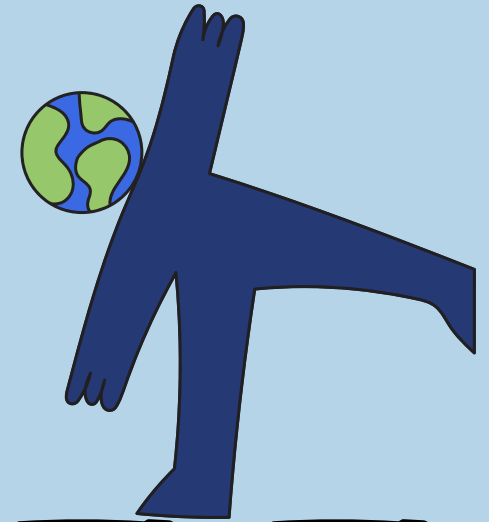
 Bonaverro
Institute of
Human Rights



Equal Human Dignity

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Welcome

From our Director

I am writing my last welcome to the Bonavero Institute's Annual Highlights Report as Director. It is hard to believe that it is nine years since I came to Oxford as the inaugural Director of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights. I am deeply grateful to the Faculty of Law and Mansfield College for placing their trust in me to serve in this role. I am also grateful to my academic colleagues as well as the professional support staff and students at the Bonavero Institute, in the Faculty of Law and in Oxford more broadly, who made me welcome and have supported me throughout these years.



The last year has been a very difficult year for human rights. The devastating situation in Gaza, the ongoing war in Ukraine, the decline in democratic and human rights indices globally, and the rise in populist leaders who are openly contemptuous of a world order founded on the rule of law, the protection of human rights and democracy, are more than alarming. In such circumstances, it is easy to lose hope.

In thinking of our theme for this year's Annual Highlights, the letter written by former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela to Albertina Sisulu, the wife of his long-partner and ally, Walter Sisulu, seem very fitting. **"I never dreamt", he wrote, "that time and hope can mean so much to one as they do now ... Hope is a powerful weapon even when nothing else may remain."**¹ Mandela wrote this to Albertina on 31 January 1970, nearly six years after he had arrived on Robben Island to serve his life sentence, and twenty years before he would be released in February 1990. Those dark years of apartheid

were very dark indeed and hope did seem to be all that was left. Yet, in the decades that followed 1970, millions of people in South Africa and around the world rallied to protest and organise against the apartheid government in South Africa, and those protests and that organisation finally bore fruit. Of course, the transition in South Africa has not been perfect and the work of building a society based on equality, human dignity, and freedom as the South African Constitution promises is still unfinished, but the South African story must remind us, as the Irish poet Seamus Heaney did that sometimes **"hope and history rhyme"**.²

Once again it has been a busy year at the Bonavero Institute. At the end of the 2024 – 2025 academic year, the Bonavero staff, including research assistants, numbered 21. The Bonavero has continued to organise its work under five strategic goals.

1. Building a Community of Scholars

Core activities in this field include the research visitor programme, the early career fellowship programme, and the Graduate Research Student Residents' programme. We hosted 16 research visitors, two early career fellows and 23 Bonavero Graduate Research Student Residents, who spend a year at the Bonavero working in the Helena Kennedy Reading Room.

2. Fostering collaborative world-class research in human rights law

The Bonavero Institute engages in innovative, rigorous, and collaborative research.

We pursue two broad lines of inquiry: human rights frontiers, which asks how human rights law and doctrines can adequately respond to contemporary and new challenges; and **human rights actors**,

¹ Nelson Mandela "Nelson Mandela: Conversations with Myself" (Macmillan 2010) 176 – 177. ² Seamus Heaney, The Cure at Troy: A version of Sophocles' Philoctetes.

institutions, and processes, which investigates the origins, effectiveness, reform, legitimacy and interactions between human rights actors, processes, and institutions in domestic regional and international law.

During this year, the Bonavero Institute hosted seven externally funded research projects:

- Our partnership in the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council
- A European Research Council grant for the iManage project, which investigates the use of artificial intelligence by employers, led by Professor Jeremias Adams-Prassl, until March 2026
- A British Academy funded Global Professorship (2020 – 2025) led by Professor Martin Scheinin, investigating the intersection between international human rights law and the digital world, which ended in February 2025
- Two Leverhulme funded early career awards, one held by Dr Ekaterina Aristova, investigating the use of strategic climate litigation against corporations and the other by Dr Moiz Tundawala, whose research is exploring “Legalising Sovereignty in South Asian Constitutionalism”
- A grant provided by the Global Foundation for Human Rights funding the Symposium on Strength and Solidarity for Human Rights, led by Professor Chris Stone at the Blavatnik School and Professor Kate O'Regan
- A Volkswagen Foundation grant “Frames”, led by Professor Başak Çalı, which investigates how the relationship between reality and normativity in European human rights law at the Council of Europe is negotiated across three areas: climate change, migration, and authoritarianism

3. Enriching the exposure of students to human rights, as well as promoting human rights conversations amongst law students globally

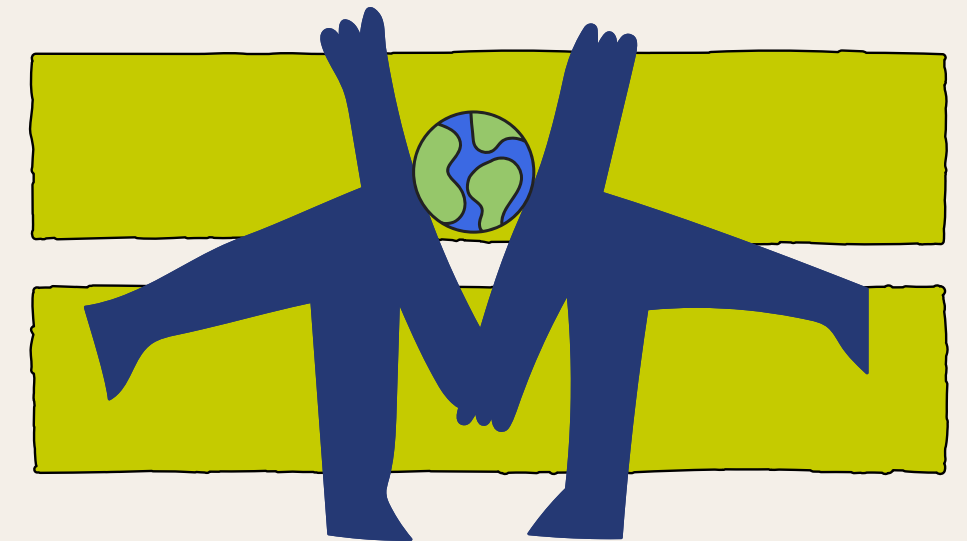
This pillar is led by Programmes Manager and Research Fellow, Dr Eliza Bechtold, and includes the following five programmes:

- a. Together with George Washington University School of Law (GWU), the Bonavero Institute presents a Summer School in International Human Rights Law.
- b. The Monroe E Price Media Law Moot Court competition, which has been run by Bonavero Institute since 2018.



The winning team representing National Law School, Delhi

- c. The Bonavero Institute provides Oxford law students with opportunities to work in the broad field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law by partnering with a wide range of organisations across the world who host Oxford students as interns.



In 2024-2025, we placed students at the following partner organisations: JUSTICE, Reprieve, REDRESS, the Public Law Project, the AIRE Centre, Amnesty International's Strategic Litigation Unit, the Equal Rights Trust, Turpin & Miller LLP, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (Berlin), International IDEA (the Hague), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (Arusha), Dejusticia (Colombia), the Social and Economic Rights Institute (Johannesburg), and the Namibian Supreme Court (Windhoek).

- d. The Bonavero Institute, in partnership with the Centre for Criminology and Oxford firm of solicitors, Turpin & Miller LLP, runs two legal aid clinics for prisoners at risk of deportation. During 2024-2025, ten students participated.
- e. Finally, the Bonavero Institute provides a home to the Bonavero Graduate Research Forum, (the BGRF), which is a forum for graduate research students to present their work convened by doctoral students, Gideon Basson, Adrija Ghosh, and Konrad Ksiazek, on a fortnightly basis in term time.



4.Capacity building for early career scholars and human rights practitioners

To this goal, the Bonavero Institute partnered with the Symposium on Strength and Solidarity, a five-year project (2020 – 2025) funded by the Global Foundation for Human Rights that ended in April, to build organisational strength and increase solidarity across human rights organisations globally. The Symposium convened organisational leaders, activists, scholars, and movement builders bi-annually to discuss the challenges they face.

The Bonavero Institute's role in the Symposium was to develop training materials for the symposium, and to support its the work of the Symposium in other ways. The Principal Investigators in Oxford were Professor Christopher Stone at the Blavatnik School of Government and Professor Kate O'Regan at the Bonavero Institute. Additionally, Daniella Lock was employed as a postdoctoral researcher at the Bonavero Institute to work on the Symposium.

Perhaps the most important weekly event for the Bonavero community in Oxford is Bonavero Perspectives, an in-house weekly, term time, work-in-progress workshop series. See page 6 for details. This year, it was convened by Başak Çalı with the support of research assistant, Advait Tambe. Academic staff, early career researchers, and research visitors take turns to present their work at Perspectives.

To pursue this fourth strategic goal, we also partner with other organisations to build capacity for scholars and human rights practitioners. Philip Leach of Matrix Chambers and Başak Çalı of the Bonavero Institute hosted a series of four one-hour well-attended webinars focussing on cutting-edge issues arising in international human rights litigation, including the African, European, and Inter-American regional human rights systems and the UN Treaty Bodies. The chairs and speakers were leading practitioners and scholars. The webinars discussed substantive law, practice and procedure, as well as questions of strategy and priority.

5.Fostering public understanding of human rights

During the year, we host a range of in-person, hybrid, and online events to foster public understanding of human rights. These include book panel discussions, law lectures, and roundtable discussions.

Since 2019, we have hosted the Eric Barendt Annual Media Law lecture on behalf of the Journal of Media Law. This year Ronnell Anderson Jones presented the lecture exploring the use of defamation law in the United States to challenge electoral disinformation.

For the second consecutive year, we partnered with the constitution building programme of International IDEA to host a roundtable workshop for practitioners and scholars concerned about the global pattern of democratic backsliding. The workshop focussed, in particular, on attacks on civil society organisations and the media in Central and Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Latin America.

The aim was to exchange experiences and insights on how attacks on civil society organisations, and media have unfolded, and what, if anything, has proved successful in withstanding the attacks.

In closing, I would like to thank the Institute's professional support staff for their dedication. I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of our donors: Yves and Anne Bonavero and their family, and the AB Charitable Trust, who not only established the endowment for the Institute, but who also have provided support for the Prison Clinics programme; Eric Lewis, who has supported the Student Fellowship programme since its inception; Alan Weiler, who provided generous support to the Monroe E Price Moot Court this year; Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, who provided an endowment for one of our Summer Fellowships; and the Fund for Global Human Rights, which supported the Symposium on Strength and Solidarity for Human Rights. We are sincerely grateful to them all for their support and commitment to the Bonavero Institute.

Finally, I should like to wish my successor, Rachel Murray, well as she takes on the role of Director at the beginning of the next academic year. Under her expert and principled leadership, may the Bonavero Institute serve as a beacon of hope for those who seek to achieve a better and fairer world.

Kate O'Regan

Oxford, June 2025

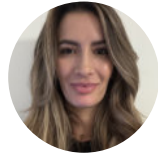
Highlights



Meet the Team



Basak Cali
Head of Research
[Contact me](#)



Beatrice Dobrin
iMANAGE - Projects Officer
[Contact me](#)



Ekaterina Aristova
Leverhulme Early Career Fellow
[Contact me](#)



Eliza Bechtold
Programmes Manager and Research Fellow
[Contact me](#)



Jeremias Adams-Prassl
iMANAGE - Principal Investigator
[Contact me](#)



Kate O'Regan
Institute Director
[Contact me](#)



Marija Jovanovic
Research Fellow in Business and Human Rights
[Contact me](#)



Moiz Tundawala
Leverhulme Early Career Fellow
[Contact me](#)



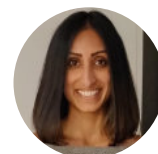
Naz Ghanea
IHRL Professor
[Contact me](#)



Rosie Stuart
Institute Events Coordinator
[Contact me](#)



Sarah Norman
Programmes Administrator
[Contact me](#)



Shreya Atrey
Associate Professor of International Human Rights Law
[Contact me](#)



Six Silberman
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
[Contact me](#)



Zoe Davis-Heaney
Institute Manager
[Contact me](#)

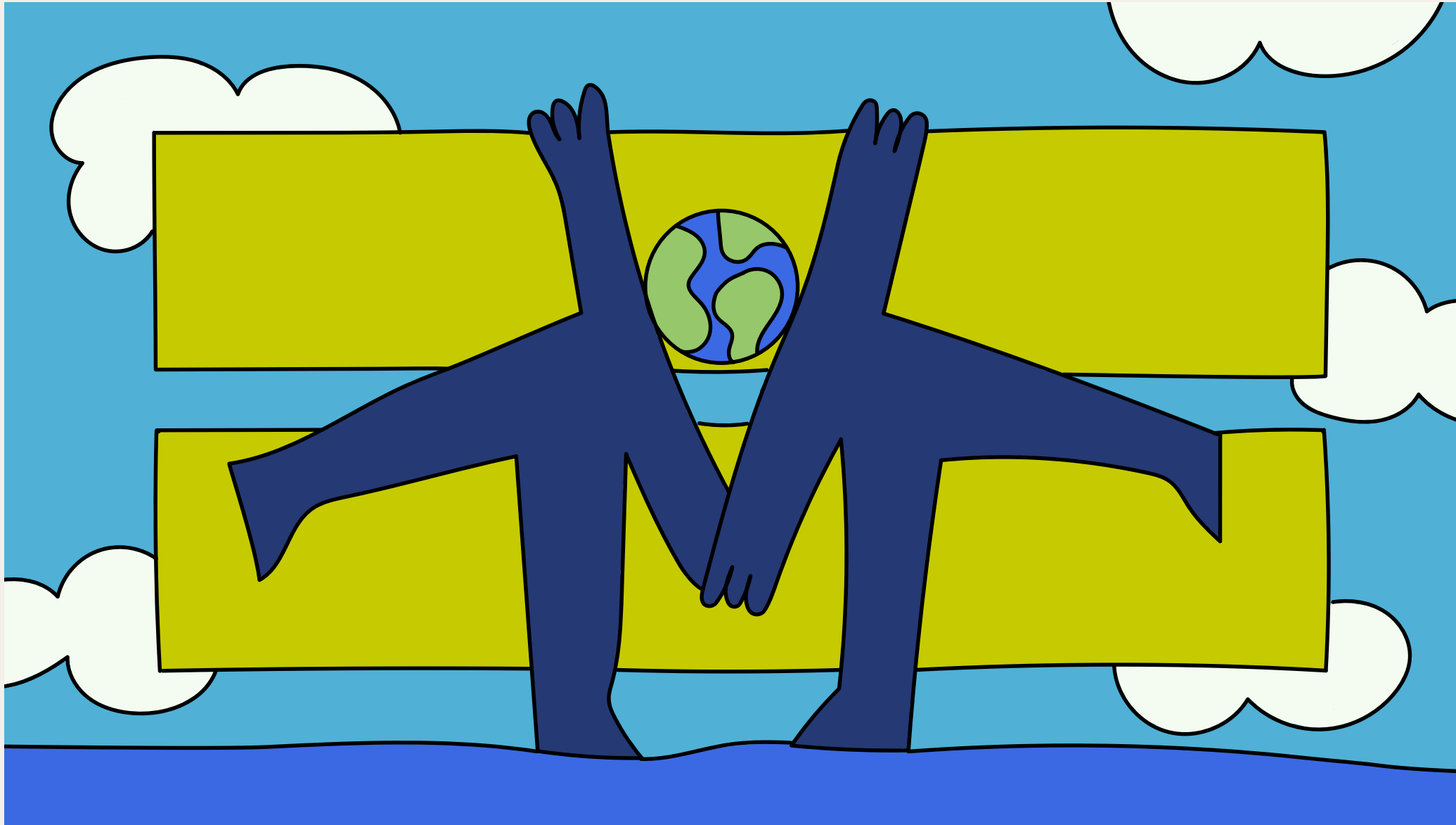
Farewell and thank you to:

Advait Tambe, Bharat Shivan, Christos Kypraios, Daniella Lock, Halefom Abraha, Hivine Zen-Aloush, Isabelle St-Hilaire, Juliet Scott-Barrett, Konrad Ksiazek, Luis Eder, Luz Orozco Y Villa, Maisy Bentley, Marcelo Lozada Gomez, Martin Scheinin, Naomi Lott, Nina Keese, Richard Mackenzie-Gray Scott, Victoria Adelmant, Zaki Rehman.

We welcomed: 9 part-time research assistants, 2 early career fellows, 16 research visitors, and 23 Graduate Student Residents. See the [Current](#) and [Past visitor](#) pages of our website, plus additional [Resident Students](#).



Highlights



‘Holding Equity’ by Laure Rees-Smith

“Two figures working together to hold open the symbol of equality. Their heads are represented by a shared image of the Earth, symbolising universal, shared humanity. The figures are grounded and surrounded by sky, placing them within a wider, living world. Together, they embody the principle that dignity is not an individual possession, but a shared responsibility upheld through mutual support, collective strength, and global solidarity. It reminds us that equal human dignity is not a given, it must be actively maintained by societies and systems that prioritise justice and freedom for all.”

Laure Rees-Smith is a Bristol based designer and illustrator for environmental and social impact

VISIT HER WEBSITE
TO LEARN MORE



Bonaverro Publications

Our research on human rights frontiers address climate change, new technologies, business and human rights, migration and human rights, human rights in an autocratising world, labour exploitation as well as discriminatory practices and inequalities within and across societies.

Plus, our research on institutional approaches to human rights, study, inter alia, domestic constitutions and constitutional courts, regional human rights courts, United Nations human rights treaties and mechanisms.

Publications Highlights 2024-2025	Authors
Climate change on the board: navigating directors' duties . <i>Journal of Corporate Law Studies</i> , 24(2), 479–514. (Co-authored with Nichols)	Ekaterina Aristova , Leverhulme Trust Early Career Research Fellow at the Bonaverro Institute of Human Rights
Grounds of Affirmative Action (2025) 47 Human Rights Quarterly 187-211	Shreya Atrey , Associate Professor of International Human Rights Law
Courts and the Body Politic , The Hamlyn Lectures 2022 (Cambridge University Press, 2025)	Catherine O'Regan , Director of the Bonaverro Institute of Human Rights
'A Tale of Disregard? Reception of the CRPD Committee case law before the European Court of Human Rights', <i>Human Rights Quarterly</i> (2025) co-authored with Galand [forthcoming].	Başak Çalı , Professor of International Law and Head of Research, Bonaverro Institute of Human Rights
'Re-examining the Relationship Between Free Speech and Democratic Legitimacy After the January 6 Insurrection', in Ashutosh Bhagwat and Alan Chen (eds) <i>The Elgar Companion to Freedom of Speech and Expression</i> [forthcoming].	Eliza Bechtold , Programmes Manager and Research Fellow, Bonaverro Institute of Human Rights
'Restoring Protections for Modern Slavery Victims: How to Make the Modern Slavery Measures in UK Immigration Law Compatible with Human Rights' Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, January 2025.	Marija Jovanovic , Research Fellow in Business and Human Rights, Bonaverro Institute of Human Rights
The Foreignness of Law in India's Constitutional Imagination' in <i>India at its Limits</i> , Atreyee Majumdar ed, Cambridge University Press (2025) [forthcoming].	Moiz Tundwala , Leverhulme Research Fellow, Bonaverro Institute of Human Rights

Bonaverro Perspectives

The 'Bonaverro Perspectives' seminar is the weekly research seminar series of the Institute, where the Bonaverro research community - including our academic staff, academic affiliates, Research Visitors, Early Career Fellows, and Graduate Resident Students - comes together to discuss research in progress.

This year Bonaverro Perspectives hosted twenty-four seminars to discuss research in progress spanning equality and anti-discrimination, populism and human rights, climate change and human rights, new technologies and human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and human rights in an ever autocratising world. The series was convened by our new Head of Research, Prof Başak Çalı, and supported by our Research Assistant, Advait Tambe.



Climate Change and Human Rights

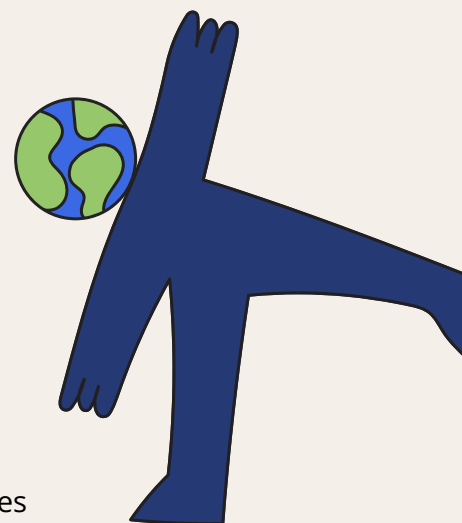
From 2 to 8 June 2025, the Bonavero Institute was proud to be a key partner in Oxford University's climate change and human rights global summit. Other partners included UN Human Rights, the Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Alliance, and the International Universities' Climate Alliance.

The summit's centrepiece was a 24-hour hybrid global plenary on World Environment Day (5 June), which brought together leading experts across the world to explore the intersection of climate change and human rights. Dr Ekaterina Aristova spoke about the growing accountability of corporations in the climate crisis.

On 4 June, Aristova chaired a panel discussing the role of universities in addressing the climate emergency, emphasising how legal scholarship and education can serve as powerful agents of change.

On 6 June, Başak Çalı and Marcelo Lozada Gomez, in collaboration with the Oxford Sustainable Law Programme, organised an international conference. The purpose was to advance understanding on how successful climate remedies can be formulated, concretised by constitutional and human rights courts, and ultimately implemented. Thereby contributing to public, constitutional, and human rights law, and ultimately implemented, thereby contributing to the broader legal and policy responses to climate change.

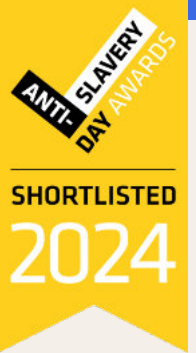
These events reflect the Institute's ongoing commitment to advancing climate justice through the lens of law and human rights. In a year marked by global challenges, the summit provided not only critical reflection but also hope, demonstrating the power of academic communities to shape a more just and sustainable future.



Photos by John Cairns



Addressing Modern Slavery



The Bonavero Institute of Human Rights is one of the three partners in the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), alongside Universities of Liverpool and Hull, based in the Oxford's University Humanities Division. Dr Marija Jovanovic is a Co-Investigator at the Centre.

The PEC has commissioned and supported over 60 cutting-edge research projects, and has worked to reshape modern slavery research, making it more equitable and informed by lived experience expertise.

This past academic year has seen the PEC make significant progress in its mission to enhance understanding of modern slavery and transform the effectiveness of law and policies designed to address it. For example, the Home Office published additional statistics in line with the PEC's recommendations to make them more transparent. The PEC also informed the priorities for the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2024-26, and its evidence was drawn on by the House of Lords Committee on the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Jovanovic authored a policy briefing for the PEC outlining how to make modern slavery measures in UK immigration law compatible with human rights. This provided a basis for a parliamentary event in January 2025, which PEC convened with the Human Trafficking Foundation, chaired by Baroness O'Grady of Upper Holloway. Jovanovic also provided evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights in the UK Parliament on the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Marija Jovanovic's piece on the 'survivors of modern slavery in UK prisons', published in [The Conversation](#), was shortlisted for the [Anti-Slavery Day Media Awards 2024](#). Fellow competitors included the Minister for Safeguarding Jess Phillips MP and the former prime minister Gordon Brown. The PEC's conference at the British Library in March, which marked the 10th anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act, was a 2025 highlight. With well over 200 participants, consisting of policymakers, researchers, representatives of civil society, and lived experience experts, the conference addressed pressing issues such as legal and policy reform, survivor support, exploitation in supply chains and of children, local responses and prevention strategies. The meaningful and ethical inclusion of people with lived experience of modern slavery was one of the key themes.

Notable speakers included the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Eleanor Lyons, and the Minister for Safeguarding, Jess Phillips MP, who participated in a Q&A session hosted by ITV News presenter Julie Etchingham.

The high level and diversity of attendance demonstrate the interest and commitment to this important issue.

Academic year 2024 - 2025 highlights



**21 Reports Published
16 Blogs Posted**



**8 News Stories
7 Online Events
4 Policy Briefings**



Photo captions: (1) Olivia Hesketh (PEC's former Director of Policy Impact), Liz Williams (PEC, Head of Policy Impact), Marija Jovanovic (PEC Co-lead at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights), Ann Snowden (Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, Head of Anti Slavery and Human Trafficking). (2) Dr Marija Jovanovic giving evidence in Parliament. (3) TV News presenter Julie Etchingham hosting a Q&A with the Minister for Safeguarding, Jess Phillips MP at PEC's conference (4) The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

Programmes



Collaborative Legal Aid Clinics



Photo by Yoav Aziz on Unsplash

Our two collaborative legal aid clinics are run in partnership with the Centre for Criminology and the Oxford based law firm, Turpin & Miller LLP. These clinics provide Oxford University students with the opportunity to assist solicitors in providing immigration advice to foreign national prisoners in the UK.

[The HMP clinic](#), launched in 2018, provides legal assistance to male foreign nationals residing at HMP Huntercombe. [The women's clinic](#), launched in 2023, provides online legal assistance to female foreign nationals at other British prisons. Both clinics, which run during Hilary term, serve important human rights objectives, as most foreign nationals facing deportation from British prisons are unable to access legal representation due to longstanding cuts in legal aid.

This year, we were thrilled to have received a generous donation from the AB Charitable Trust, which will fund this important programme for the next five years.

International Human Rights Law Summer School



In July, we hosted the 30th Summer School in International Human Rights Law with our partner, George Washington University Law School. In addition to a plenary lecture series, the Summer School includes a core course for all students on the fundamentals of international human rights law, as well as a series of electives.

All faculty members involved are associates of the Bonavero and many events are hosted at the Bonavero, which creates a lively series of discussions around contemporary human rights issues.

This year, for the first time, we offered three tuition scholarships. The scholarships aim to support talented individuals who already have an established connection to the human rights field (whether paid or voluntary), and who have the potential to make change. We received 31 applications for the scholarships, many of which were outstanding and it was difficult to make final decisions. **All three recipients accepted the scholarships. Overall, 55 students participated this year.**

Price Media Law Moot Court Competition

18TH INTERNATIONAL ROUNDS

2025 International Moot Court Finals - at a glance



Global Participation
with 89 teams.



32 teams advanced to
the Final Rounds.



Final Rounds held
in Oxford, UK.



Took place between 17-
21 April 2025.



Winner: National Law
School, Delhi.

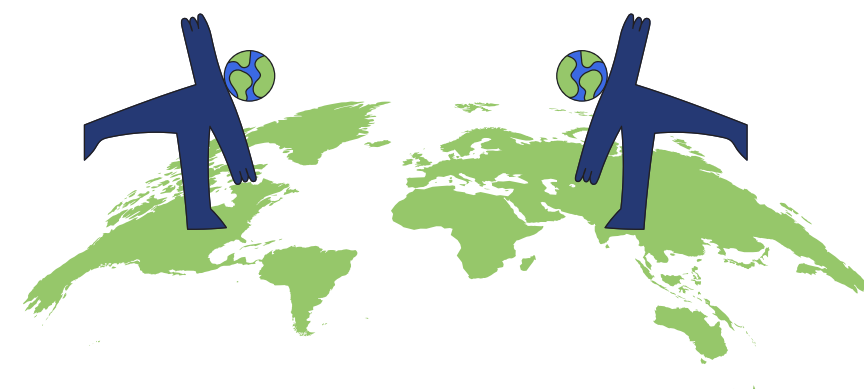
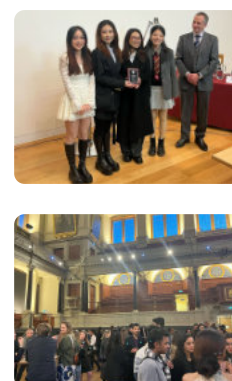


Runner-up: Singapore
Management University.

This year's moot problem focused on cutting edge issues involving online speech, protest, and press freedom. The winner was the National Law School, Delhi, with Singapore Management University as runner up in a thrilling final. The competition was judged by practitioners and academics from across the world, who volunteered their time to support the competition. The Final Bench Judges this year were Kate O'Regan, Gill Philips, Paolo Cavaliere, and Richard Danbury.

As always, the competition offered opportunities beyond the development of oral and written advocacy skills. During the week, participants attended various events, including a 'Mooting Masterclass' as well as talks on protecting freedom of expression through comparative case law and how campaigns to silence political dissent are attacks on the core tenets of freedom of expression.

More information about the [2025 Moot](#) and information about the broader Bonavero mooting community of judges, coaches, organisers, and the founders who keep the Price Moot going, is available [on the website](#). We are deeply grateful to all those around the world who make the competition possible, including our organising team led by Nevena Krivokapic Martinovic and Sarah Norman, our Regional Coordinators Ahmed Khalifa & Ola Nagy, Ain Shams University, Cairo (the Middle East), Nidhi Singh, Tejaswita Kharel, Srima Naskar, Angelina Dash, Debayan Bhattacharya and Ishita Tulsyan, Centre for Communication Governance at the National Law University, Delhi (South Asia), Sanya Samtani, University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg (Africa), Jordan Wappler, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, New York (the Americas), and Nada Abouel Seoud & Batoul Alanany, Cite, University of Paris (Europe), and those who so generously donate to the competition.



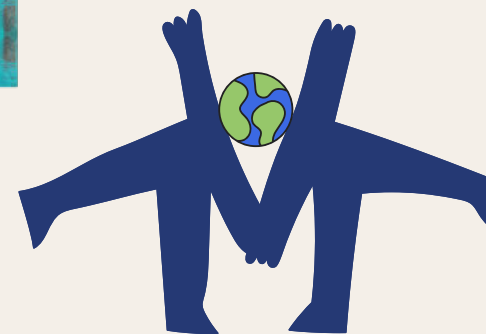
Regional Rounds were held in:
Asia Pacific, Middle East, South
Asia, Africa, Americas, and Europe.



Book Panel Discussions

Once again, the Bonavero Institute hosted a series of book launches and panel discussions. These were lively events, allowing faculty and students to engage with authors on groundbreaking work across the fields of human rights, democracy, international law, and the rule of law. As always, we are grateful to the authors who came to Oxford to discuss their work with us.

In 2024-25, we hosted more than one hundred events including discussion groups, public lectures, book launches, and roundtable workshops. Many were hybrid or fully online, enabling attendance from across the world. We were once again honoured to welcome leading human rights scholars, activists, judges, and legal practitioners as speakers, sparking engaging and thought-provoking discussions. Many of our events are recorded and available on our website under the Watch and Listen button.



WATCH & LISTEN
PODCASTS PAGE



International IDEA

In June, we hosted a second roundtable meeting with International IDEA in Oxford - "Resistance, reversal and resilience: Lessons from the Abuse of Law to attack Civic Space in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe and Turkey". The conference heard from participants from relevant civil society organisations as to how civic space has been under attack in jurisdictions across their regions.

In addition, experts on aspects of democratic backsliding and civil society including Mitali Mukherjee, the Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in Oxford, Richard Youngs from the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, Ezequiel Gonzalez Ocantos from Nuffield College, and the Department of Politics and International Relations, and Chris Stone from the Blavatnik School of Government contributed to the conversation. Two days of engaging and insightful conversations were held, enabling the exchange of ideas, experiences, and the building of networks between countries and regions.



Photo by John Cairns



Photo by Advait Tambe



Contact us

The Bonavero Institute of Human Rights
University of Oxford
c/o Mansfield College
Mansfield Road
Oxford
OX1 3TF

Tel: 01865 270999

Email: BonaveroIHR@law.ox.ac.uk



Photos by John Cairns and Bonavero Institute staff members