



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FACT-FINDING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

New York University School of Law
November 1-2, 2013

Conference Announcement, Invitation, and Call for Papers

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (New York University School of Law) is pleased to announce a major global conference on International Human Rights Fact-Finding in the Twenty-First Century, to be held in New York on November 1-2, 2013. This conference will bring together leading practitioners and scholars to facilitate a critical and constructive discussion about the key challenges and opportunities in international fact-finding, a subject that is fundamental to human rights, but has thus far received far too little scholarly attention or critical analysis.

Confirmed Speakers

Philip Alston (NYU), Jay Aronson (Carnegie Mellon University), M. Cherif Bassiouni (DePaul University; Istituto Superiore Internazionale di Scienze Criminali), Theo Boutruche (REDRESS), Claude Bruderlein (Harvard University), Elora Chowdhury (University of Massachusetts), Rob Grace (Harvard University), Sam Gregory (WITNESS), Thomas Hammarberg (EU Special Representative to Georgia), Sarah Knuckey (NYU), Molly Land (New York Law School), Joanne Mariner (Amnesty International), Frédéric Mégret (McGill University), Obiora Okafor (Osgoode Hall Law School), Diane Orentlicher (American University), Steve Ratner (University of Michigan), Brian Root (Human Rights Watch), Ken Roth (Human Rights Watch), Margaret Satterthwaite (NYU), Alex Vitale (Brooklyn College), Alex Whiting (International Criminal Court), Susan Wolfinbarger (AAAS).

Additional speakers will be announced in the coming months.

Conference Panels and Call for Papers

The confirmed speakers will present new scholarship on the following key issues in human rights fact-finding. We also invite submissions of additional paper proposals on these key issues:

- Politics and imperialism: In what ways can human rights fact-finding enact or further imperialism, support injustice hierarchies, and be wielded as a political tool? Which of the methods, principles, and aims of fact-finding are most problematic? What could a non-imperial or non-elitist fact-finding mission look like?
- Victims and witnesses: What is the role of witness evidence in fact-finding? How is testimony obtained, how is it used to construct human rights narratives, and what problems result? To what extent is fact-finding extractive? How can the need for objective and independent investigations be balanced with the interests and rights of witnesses and victims, particularly around autonomy, security, consent, and re-traumatization? How successful are recent efforts to democratize fact-finding, empower victims, and/or improve the gathering of reliable testimony?
- Enforcement mechanisms and litigation: What is the relationship between fact-finding, enforcement mechanisms, and litigation? How can the differing goals and mandates of various fact-finders, as well as institutional competition and siloing, fragment information or undermine accountability? What fact-finding practices can best contribute to effective complementarity, information-sharing, and respect for the rights of alleged victims and perpetrators?
- Interdisciplinary expertise and methodologies: How are social science methods influencing the way human rights fact-finders acquire and synthesize information? How have human rights practitioners responded to the methodological critiques and techniques being brought to bear on human rights fact-

finding from other disciplines? How do such methods enable the field to better—or differently—see or provide human rights abuses? Do such changes come at a cost?

- Social media, crowd-sourcing, big data: How is the human rights field using new technologies in fact-finding? How is this expanding available information on abuses, democratizing fact-finding, and/or what concerns do new technologies pose for efficacy, utility, accuracy, reliability, safety and ethics?
- International fact-finding guidelines: Is there a need for guidelines or international norms for fact-finding? Why does the field resist standardization in this area? Are guidelines possible that would not be too bureaucratic, stifling, incompatible with grassroots efforts, or too general to be useful?

Conference Registration and Paper Proposal Submission

The conference is open to all academics, students, practitioners, and the general public, but space is limited. To register to attend, please email: Veerle Opgenhaffen (Executive Director, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice) at opgehaffen@exchange.law.nyu.edu. Please include your name, email address, and affiliation.

To propose a paper for presentation at the conference, please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words to Sarah Knuckey (Director, Initiative on Human Rights Fact-Finding, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice) at sarah.knuckey@nyu.edu by August 15, 2013. Accepted papers will be published in a volume of essays, to be edited by Philip Alston and Sarah Knuckey. Presenter conference travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice.

For more information, please visit: <http://chrgi.org/event/factfindingconference>.