



**SIM WILL HOST THE AHRI CONFERENCE IN UTRECHT THIS YEAR**

**SIM**  
Newsletter

Spring 2016

**IN THIS ISSUE**



## Human Rights Conference 2016

*By Antoine Buyse*

*Director of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM)*

On 1-3 September 2016, SIM is very proud to be the host of the international research conference of the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI). The conference will also mark SIM's 35th birthday. The title of the conference is: "50 Years of the Two UN Human Rights Covenants: Legacies and Prospects". The conference will serve as a platform for presenting international human rights research across different disciplines. The conference will have six tracks:

- Indivisibility and interactions of norms and regimes;
- Citizenship, migrants and refugees;
- Non-state actors;
- EU and human rights;
- Human rights and the global economy;
- New avenues in human rights research

The conference is open to both AHRI and non-AHRI members and aims to bring together both junior and senior academics to present innovative human rights research in the law, the humanities, the social sciences and other disciplines. AHRI is the global network of over 50 member institutions that carry out research and education in the field of human rights. AHRI's objective is to bring together human rights researchers from across various disciplines, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and collaboration, and to promote research, education and discussion in the field of human rights. SIM was one of the founding institutions of AHRI.

The [call for papers](#) is available on the websites of [SIM](#) and [AHRI](#). Information on the programme registration will become available on these websites. We are looking forward to welcoming many of you in Utrecht in September!



Lorena Sosa wins Max van der Stoel Award

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Katherine Fortin awarded PhD cum laude

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Apply for SIM Summer Schools on human rights and gender

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### • PUBLIC LECTURE BY PROF. KEES FLINTERMAN ON HIS EXPERIENCES WITH UN HUMAN RIGHTS WORK

29 February 2016, 15h30-17h00, Room 0.24 (ASP200), Utrecht

**Prof. Kees Flinterman** (former director SIM) was member of the UN Women's Rights Committee between 2003-2010 and of the UN Human Rights Committee between 2011 - 2014. In 1993, he headed the Dutch delegation to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, where the 'universality of human rights' was central to the discussion and the women's rights lobby reached its highest level, signalling great changes of direction in the human rights arena.

**Prof. Kees Flinterman** will share his experiences trying to strengthen human rights on this various roles, and will address questions about the workings of the UN treaty bodies outside of the public eye. How much influence does a UN treaty body member have? What does one say to the Saudi Arabian government when it reports to the CEDAW Committee about women's rights in that country? What do the CEDAW Committee and the Human Rights Committee have to say about the human rights of LGBTIs? The lecture will provide an interesting view on human rights practice at the international level. To attend this event, please register by sending an email to [m.vandenbrink@uu.nl](mailto:m.vandenbrink@uu.nl).

### • DISCUSSION ON INADMISSIBILITY DECISION CEDAW

29 February 2016, 17h45-19h45, (ASP200), Utrecht

The KNVIR Working Group on Feminism & International Law, in cooperation with SIM, will hold an open meeting to discuss an individual complaint concerning the Netherlands, filed before the CEDAW Committee and declared inadmissible. **Jeannette Kruseman**, the acting lawyer, will present the case, and **Prof. Kees Flinterman**, former member of the CEDAW Committee (2003-2010) and former director of SIM (1998-2007), will comment on the outcome on the basis of his CEDAW experience. Time permitting, the discussion will continue towards the question of whether the Women's Rights Convention (CEDAW) should not become a 'Gender Convention'. If interested in joining the event, please send an e-mail to [m.vandenbrink@uu.nl](mailto:m.vandenbrink@uu.nl) and you will receive the reading material prior to the meeting.

## SIM PARTICIPATES

### PILPG:

### Handbook for Civil Society Organizations

On 23 November 2015, together with colleagues from the Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG), Dr. Brianne McGonigle Leyh (Assistant Professor SIM) and Julie Fraser (PhD Candidate SIM) helped organize a side event at the International Criminal Court's Assembly of State Parties. The event launched PILPG's handbook for civil society organizations and their efforts to document serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

### Training:

### The Rule of Law in Times of Transition

On 1 December 2015, Prof. Antoine Buyse (Director SIM) and Dr. Brianne McGonigle Leyh (Assistant Professor SIM) gave a one-day training organized by the Hague Academy for Local Governance on 'The Rule of Law in Times of Transition'. This training was part of a two-week course entitled "Conflict, Rule of Law, and Local Security" and aimed at professionals from government agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations.



Prof. Antoine Buyse

### Lecture:

### Accountability of Armed Groups

On 11 February 2016, Katharine Fortin (Assistant Professor SIM) gave a Hague Initiative for Law and Armed Conflict (HILAC) lecture on the accountability of armed groups under international law at the T.M.C. Asser Institute. The HILAC is a lecture series on the subject of law and armed conflict organised by the T.M.C. Asser Institute since 2005, in cooperation with the Netherlands Red Cross and the Amsterdam Centre for International Law.



Dr. Katharine Fortin in The Hague

## Workshop: The Role of Human Rights in the EU's Regional Partnerships and Bilateral Cooperation

Dr. Alexandra Timmer (Assistant Professor SIM) and Dr. Lorena Sosa (Assistant Professor SIM) participated in an international workshop on "The Role of Human Rights in the EU's Regional Partnerships and Bilateral Cooperation", organized in the Context of the FRAME project and hosted by the Institute of Political and International Studies at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, 18-19 January 2016. The workshop focused on the human rights tools and instruments the European Union uses in its regional and bilateral relationships and their local impact in third countries, with the participation of academics and EU representatives. Alexandra chaired a panel on the EU Relations with China, India and South Africa. Lorena chaired a panel on the EURO-Mediterranean partnership and the Africa, Central America and Pacific.



From left to right: Matthieu Burnay, Alexandra Timmer and Ákos Kopper.

## Conference: International Human Rights Integration

Julie Fraser (PhD Candidate SIM) and Henrike Prudon (former Junior Researcher) presented at the international Human Rights Integration conference hosted by Ghent University, Belgium from 9 – 11 December 2015. Julie and Henrike presented a paper as part of a panel on legal pluralism, entitled: Integrating Human Rights with Local Norms: Ebola, Burial Practices and the Right to Health in West Africa. The paper examines culturally sensitive approaches to human rights regarding the right to health.

## Lecture: Interdisciplinary Methodologies

Dr. Lorena Sosa (Assistant Professor SIM), gave a lecture on Interdisciplinary Methodologies on Human Rights during the Annual Research Day of the School of Human Rights. The event, organized by the University of Groningen and held on 25 November 2015, focussed this year on the topic of Human Rights Research Methodologies.



From left to right: Henrike Prudon, Prof. Barbara Oomen and Julie Fraser.

## European Parliament: Feminism and Faith



Dr. Lorena Sosa at the European Parliament.

Dr. Lorena Sosa (Assistant Professor SIM) was invited by the European Parliament Platform for Secularism in Politics (EPPSP) to speak about "Feminism and Faith: the position of women in religion" on the 17th of February at the European Parliament. The EPPSP is a working group of members of the European Parliament, which organizes public meetings to discuss a wide range of policy issues, such as sexual and reproductive health rights, LGBTI and women's rights. Representatives from civil society and the EU institutions actively participate in the debates. The meeting started with an introduction by MPs Sophie in't Veld and Virginie Rossier, followed by video message by Sami Nevala (Fundamental Rights Agency, FRA) sharing the main results of the [EU-wide survey on violence against women](#). Panel discussants were Dr. Daniela Bankier, Head of Unit for equality between women and men in the Directorate-General Justice, Dr. Niels Spierings, assistant professor at Radboud University, specialized on Islam, Middle East, gender and sexuality, Kristina Lunz, founder of [StopBildsexism](#) and author of [#ausnahmslos](#), and SIM's [Lorena Sosa](#), who presented on Gender Equality and Stereotyped Conceptions in the jurisprudence on religious symbols and clothing.

## Workshop: Inter-American Human Rights Network

Dr. Lorena Sosa (Assistant Professor SIM) presented at the Expert Workshop of the Inter-American Human Rights Network, hosted by Ghent University, Belgium from 29 – 30 January 2016. She presented a paper during a panel on the Implementation of Decisions of Human Rights Bodies in the Context of Women's Rights, discussing the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on femicide from an intersectional perspective.



## Conference-Workshop: Transnational Justice and Democratic Institution-Building

The Conference 'Challenging Conventional Wisdom: Assessing the Impact of Transitional Justice Mechanisms on Democratic Institution-Building' (TJDI) and the workshop 'Assessing the Impact of Transitional Justice Mechanisms on Democratic Institution-building' organized by the TJDI team, took place at Utrecht University on 19-20 November 2015.

The conference held four sessions with NWO-ORA members and discussants from different backgrounds (human rights practitioners, Law, Sociology, History, Anthropology, and Non-Governmental Organizations). Members of the TJDI team presented the preliminary findings of the comparative analysis of the project, focusing on eight countries (Brazil, Chile, East Germany, Hungary, Japan, Sierra Leone, South Korea and Uganda). Dr. Anja Mihr (Associate Professor SIM) presented the findings on the relationship between Rule of Law and Transitional and Dr. Sandra Rios Oyola (Postdoc Researcher SIM) presented the results on the effects of Transitional Justice on Civic Participation.

On November 20, the Conference speakers were joined by Nancy Adler (Amsterdam University) and Dion van der Berg (Pax for Peace) in a closed workshop, focused on the policymaking implications of the findings of the project. The analytical model promoted by the project helps to answer questions related to the impact of transitional justice on democracy, yet new questions arise, with more innovative ways to assess and identify patterns in Transitional Justice.

## Seminar: ECHR and Positive Obligations

On 23 October SIM co-organised a seminar on the European Convention on Human Rights and Positive Obligations. The seminar, chaired by professor Antoine Buyse (Director SIM) and concluded by professor Janneke Gerards (Fellow SIM), was organized by PhD students Malu Beijer and Gijseelaar, in co-production with the Utrecht Centre for Accountability and Liability Law, SIM, and Radboud University Nijmegen. The seminar approached the notion of positive obligations as an issue cutting across private law, administrative law, and criminal law.

## Garance Talks: Humanitarian Norms in Armed Conflict

On the 26th of November 2015, Katharine Fortin (Assistant Professor SIM) took part in the Garance Talks in Switzerland. The Garance Talks are an initiative organised by Geneva Call, an organisation dedicated to promoting respect by armed non State actors for humanitarian norms in situations of armed conflict. The Garance Talks are designed to provide a platform for discussion and consultation on areas of law relating to armed groups.

## Seminar: European Equality Law Network

On 24 November 2015 the European Equality Law Network organized its annual legal seminar in Brussels. Representatives from the European Commission, equality bodies and equality and non-discrimination law experts from across Europe attended. Prof. Sandra Fredman from Oxford University provided the keynote on intersectional discrimination and EU law. Alexandra Timmer (Assistant Professor SIM) chaired the closing session. More information can be found [here](#).

## Lecture: Legal Forum

Antoine Buyse delivered a lunchtime lecture at the Ministry of the Interior on 9 November on socio-economic rights as part of their Legal Forum series.

## Expert Workshop: Judicial Independence in the Americas

Dr. Stefanie Lemke, (Postdoc Researcher SIM), organised an expert workshop on "Institutional and Socio-Political Determinants of Judicial Independence in Latin America" on 1 and 2 December 2015 at Utrecht University. The workshop was organised in the context of the research project on judicial independence and the protection of human rights in new democracies, with an emphasis on Latin America, led by Dr. Lemke and Prof. Javier Couso (Universidad Diego Portales, Chile, and holder of the Prince Claus Chair in Equity and Development, 2014-2016). The event gathered 20 leading scholars from the Americas and Europe from a wide range of backgrounds such as law, history, political science, sociology and anthropology, including the representative of Prof. Mónica Pinto (UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers), Prof. Luis Pásara (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, España), Dr. Pilar Domingo (Overseas Development Institute, London), Dr. Elin Skaar (Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway), and Prof. René Urueña (Universidad de los Andes, Colombia). The workshop focused on the institutional and socio-political context in which courts operate in the Americas, exploring factors encouraging countries in the region to consolidate independent judiciaries. The keynote speech, entitled "Judicial Independence, Independent Judges and Judicial Power: A puzzle?", was delivered by Prof. Carlo Guarnieri (Director of the Centre for Judicial Studies (CeSROG), University of Bologna), complemented by presentations on topics such as judicial independence as a legal fiction, the judicialisation of politics, the relationship between international law, transnational networks and judicial independence, the status quo of the rule of law in Mexico, the role of women in courts, and political manipulations in the Argentinian National Supreme Court.



From left to right: Prof. Buyse, Prof. Couso and Prof. Guarnieri.

## Human Rights Dialogue: Ethnic Profiling

On 26 January 2016, the third Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) took place in the Dutch Parliament on the topic of ethnic profiling in the Netherlands, especially in the framework of police checks. The HRD provided a platform to discuss the topic among members of parliament and invited experts, including Paul van Musscher (Police Chief of The Hague), Sinan Cankaya (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Friso Roscam Abbing (Fundamental Rights Agency), David Martin (Fuenlabrada police force, Spain), Sir Simon Hughes, (British politician) and Natasha Dhumma, (Senior Engagement Officer, Stopwatch). Civil society organisations and members of the public attended the Dialogue. The human rights dialogue is an initiative by the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM), Cordaid, the Dutch Commission of Jurists for Human Rights, in cooperation with Open Society Foundations and Dietz, Dröge en Van Loo.

### Panel:

## Human Rights Education

On 18 December, Antoine Buyse (Director SIM) chaired a panel on the role of the state at the big Human rights Education conference organised by University College Roosevelt in Middelburg.

### Lecture:

## Jeckyll and Hyde

Antoine Buyse (Director SIM) delivered a short lecture entitled 'Jeckyll and Hyde' in Strasbourg at a conference organized by Leiden University to mark the 65th birthday of the European Convention on Human Rights.



University College Roosevelt



European Court of Human Rights

## SIM PARTICIPATES

### Panel Discussion: Business and Human rights

On 20 January 2016, the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights welcomed Jasper Teulings from Greenpeace International and Sarah Daitch from Access Facility to take part in a panel discussion on business and human rights. Jasper Teulings focused predominantly on human rights and climate change, introducing some of the major litigation that Greenpeace International has lead over the past decade. Sarah Daitch presented the possibilities that mediation offers for communities that have suffered harm at the hands of large corporations. The panel discussion was attended by the masters students from the LL.M. Public International Law.

## NEWS

### New Assistant Professors:

#### Dr. Katharine Fortin and Dr. Alexandra Timmer

Dr. Alexandra Timmer and Dr. Katharine Fortin have been appointed as Assistant Professors at Utrecht University's Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM). Alexandra has worked as Postdoc Researcher at SIM in relation to the FRAME project and is currently coordinator gender equality law for the European Equality Law Network. Her area of expertise is equality and non-discrimination law. Katharine has been a lecturer at SIM since August 2015 and her research focuses on the legal frameworks that apply to non-international armed conflict. Congratulations to both!

### Expert Meeting:

#### Vulnerability in Human Rights

On 29 February 2016, an international group of researchers will meet at SIM to discuss the concept of vulnerability in human rights law. In a small-scale setting, the researchers will debate the challenges and possibilities of using this concept in human rights law. The day is organized by Alexandra Timmer. Lorena Sosa and Alexandra Timmer have examined the concept of vulnerability in EU human policies, in the context of the [EU FP7 FRAME project](#).

### PhD Defense:

#### Katharine Fortin

On 23 October 2015, Katharine Fortin defended her PhD thesis on the Accountability of Armed Groups under Human Rights law and was awarded a *cum laude* by a reading committee composed of Professor Andrew Clapham, Professor Jann Kleffner, Professor Elies van Sliedregt, Professor Cedric Ryngaert and Professor Fred Soons. Her supervisors were Professor Cees Flinterman, Professor Harmen van der Wilt and Professor Terry Gill. Congratulations Katharine!

(Photo to the left).



### Research Grant:

#### Daphina Misiedjan

Daphina Misiedjan (PhD Candidate SIM) will be receiving a research grant from the Dr. Silvia W. de Groot Fund to complete field work in Suriname. This grant is designed to give students and young researchers from the Caribbean, preferably of Maroon descent, financial support in the preparation of a scientific publication on Caribbean issues. Daphina Misiedjan's PhD research focusses on the human right to water and includes sustainability requirements. Suriname serves as one of the two case-studies.

### Promotion:

#### Dr. Brianne McGonigle Leyh

In January 2016, Dr. Brianne McGonigle Leyh was appointed Associate Professor at Utrecht University's Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM). Brianne has worked at SIM for almost a decade and specializes in human rights, victims' rights, transitional justice and international criminal law and procedure. Congratulations Brianne on the appointment!

## NEWS

### Max van der Stoel Award: Dr. Lorena Sosa

Dr. Lorena Sosa (Assistant Professor SIM) received the Max van der Stoel Award on Human Rights for her PhD thesis on intersectionality in the human rights framework on violence against women. She shared the first prize with Arne Vandenboogaerde of the University of Antwerp. The award was established in 1995 as an incentive for academic work in the field of human rights and it was joined by the School of Human Rights Research as of 1998. Since 2002 the Human Rights Award is named after Max van der Stoel, the former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, in honour of his work in this field.



The Jury and winners of the Award.

#### New at SIM:

### Janneke Gerards Joins UU

This Spring, SIM Board member Janneke Gerards will transfer from her current position at Nijmegen University to join Utrecht University. She has been appointed full professor of fundamental rights and will join Utrecht Law School's constitutional law department, where she will also closely cooperate with SIM in her new capacity as SIM fellow. Professor Gerards is one of the leading experts on European human rights law. SIM is very proud of its Board member and looks forward to an even closer cooperation.



### Cooperation: Dutch Visitors Programme

On 8 December 2015 and 2 February 2016, SIM welcomed a number of international high potentials as part of the Dutch Visitors Programme on Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The visiting professionals, both the government and the NGO sector, came from amongst others Bangladesh, South Africa, Vietnam, and Kazakhstan, and were interested to hear more about the work of SIM and the human rights situation in the Netherlands.

### APPLY NOW FOR THE 2016 SIM SUMMER SCHOOLS:

## International Human Rights Law: An Introduc- tion

Interested in learning about human rights? This one-week introduction course focuses on the major features of international human rights law. It begins by examining the philosophical and political bases of human rights and then explores human rights documents and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights at the international and regional levels. Human rights-based approaches for analyzing conflict and attempts to promote peace and justice will also be explored. Through lectures, interactive working groups, expert panels and excursion(s), participants will gain an understanding of the various elements - and their interplay - involved in this field. More information on dates and fees can be found [here](#).

## International Law from a Gender Perspective

Justice is to be done regardless of money, race etc. but also of gender. However, the law, including international law, is not a perfect system, and just like the people who made it, it is biased. This interactive one-week course will look at law from a gender perspective, encompassing cis, gay, trans\* and intersex perspectives. The focus is primarily on human rights but will cut across other areas of international law, such as refugee law. Through lectures, excursions, and group assignments, topical issues will be explored and analysed, linking theory and practice. More information [here](#).

### APPLY NOW:

## LL.M. Public International Law (Human Rights Track)

Click [here](#) for more information on the programme.



## Cooperation: SIM and NHRI

On 28 October SIM and the national human rights institution of the Netherlands, also based at Utrecht, signed an agreement of cooperation, which will involve the possibility of internships, visits, mutual guest lecture and more. The president of the institution, Adriana van Dooijeweert, and the head of the Law School, professor Ton Hol, signed the agreement, in the presence of the directors of both institutions.

From left to right: Prof. Antoine Buyse, Bart Dekker, Adriana van Dooijeweert and Prof. Ton Hol (Photo to the left).

## PUBLICATIONS (since October 2015)

### NETHERLANDS QUARTERLY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The newest issues of the NQHR (2015-4) features the following articles:



- K. Arts, 'Reflections on Human Rights in the Netherlands'
- A. Gurmendi Dunkelberg, 'Their Way of Punishing': Corporal Punishments by Indigenous Peoples and the Prohibition of Torture'
- C. Romainville, 'Defining the Right to Participate in Cultural Life as a Human Right'
- R. Pereira, 'Government-sponsored Population Policies and Indigenous Peoples: Challenges for International Human Rights Law'
- I. Kfir, 'Refugeeship and Natural Law: The European Court of Human Rights'
- B. Oomen, 'Where Law and Politics Meet': Looking at Human Rights Law Through the Lens of Legitimacy'

### ARTICLES

- Rogier Bartels and Katharine Fortin, 'Law, Justice and a Potential Security Gap: The "Organization" Requirement in International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law' (2015) *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* pp. 1-20.

### BOOK CHAPTERS

- Antoine C Buyse, 'Media in Post-Conflict Transitions - Balancing Protection Against Violence and Freedom of Expression' in Matthew Saul and James Sweeney (eds), *International Law and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy* (Routledge 2015) pp. 211-228 (18 p.).



- Antoine C Buyse, 'Tacit Citing - The Scarcity of Judicial Dialogue between the Global and the Regional Human Rights Mechanisms in Freedom of Expression Cases' in Tarlach McGonagle and Yvonne Donders (eds), *The United Nations and Freedom of Expression and Information - Critical Perspectives* (CUP 2015) pp. 443-462 (20 p.).
- Julie Fraser and Valeska David Contreras, 'Juvenile Criminal Justice before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: Aims and Limitations of the Imprisonment of Children' in Yves Haeck, Oswaldo Ruiz-Chiriboga and Clara Burbano Herrera (eds), *The Inter-American Court of Human Rights: Theory and Practice, Present and Future* (Intersentia 2015) pp. 573-592 (19p.).