



THE WATSON SCHOOL  
*of International*  
and Public Affairs  
BROWN UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND HUMANITARIAN STUDIES

# 2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT







# MISSION

*Our mission is to promote a more just, peaceful and secure world by furthering a deeper understanding of global human rights and humanitarian challenges and encouraging collaboration between local communities, academics and practitioners to develop innovative solutions to these challenges.*

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# WELCOME

## Letter from the director

I am pleased to begin my tenure as the Director of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (CHRHS) at the newly launched Thomas J. Watson Jr. School of International and Public Affairs. As the Watson Family University Professor of International Security and Anthropology, I have had the privilege of working alongside CHRHS colleagues over the years, and I am excited to lead the Center into its next chapter.

I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to Dr. Adam C. Levine, who served as CHRHS Director since its founding in 2019. Under his leadership, the Center produced impactful research, engaging programs, and became the hub for human rights and humanitarian work at Brown. His vision and dedication have positioned CHRHS as a leader in advancing scholarship, policy, and practice in these critical fields.

This past year was a rewarding one for CHRHS. The Center and its affiliates published multiple new works, contributing to conversations on pressing human rights and humanitarian issues. The Center held engaging public events and lectures, including two half-day roundtable discussions— *AI for Impact and Justice* and *Reproductive Justice in an Era of Backlash*— bringing together scholars, practitioners, and students to exchange ideas and questions.

We also welcomed two outstanding visiting scholars: Megan Rhodes, who served for two decades at USAID, and Andrew Boyle, an attorney with the States United Democracy Center. Rhodes led a study group on *The New Era of Health Emergencies*, while Boyle shared insights on the Khmer Rouge tribunals in a public event. Both spent time mentoring undergraduate and MPA students.

Our commitment to student engagement remained strong, offering experiential learning opportunities like internships and training. This summer, we placed six undergraduate and three graduate students in funded internships with leading human rights and humanitarian organizations, providing them with hands-on experience to complement their academic studies.

We continued to support the Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ), which trains undergraduates to provide free legal representation to asylum seekers. We also hosted our annual Hack for Humanity, which brought together students from across disciplines to design innovative solutions on the theme of *Global Health Security*.

Looking ahead to the coming academic year, our public programming will focus on the issues of detention, disappearance, and deportation. While arbitrary detention and forced disappearance have been a grim reality in many parts of the world, especially in countries governed by authoritarian regimes, we are now witnessing these practices take place in our own communities. To understand what they do to human rights, both at home and abroad, we are inviting leading scholars, journalists, legal advocates, and our community partners, including Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice and Refugee Dream Center, for a series of public talks and conversations.

Many more initiatives are in the works, including the inaugural annual human rights lecture and symposium in Spring 2025, as well as expanded opportunities for internships and research grants. I encourage you to visit our website for the most up-to-date information about upcoming events and ways to engage with our work.

As I begin my tenure as Director, I look forward to building on CHRHS's strong foundation, deepening partnerships and collaboration, and continuing to promote human rights both at home and abroad.

Sincerely,

**Ieva Jusionyte, Ph.D.**

Director, Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies  
Watson Family University Professor of International Security and Anthropology  
The Watson School of International and Public Affairs



# PEOPLE

## Leadership & Staff

**Ieva Jusionyte**  
Director

**Maggie Murphy**  
Program Manager

## Student Assistants

**Elena Bernardi**  
MPA Director's Fellow

**Xuanjie (Coco) Huang**  
CHRHS Communications Intern

**Tristan Keyser-Parker**  
CHRHS Student Assistant

**Kate Selbig**  
CHRHS Communications Intern

**Evan Warren**  
MPA Director's Fellow

**Sofie Zeruto**  
CHRHS Student Assistant

## Affiliated Faculty

**Ruhul Abid**  
Associate Professor, Division of  
Cardiothoracic Surgery

**Adam Aluisio**  
Assistant Professor of Emergency  
Medicine

**Keisha Blain**  
Professor of History and Africana  
Studies

**Robert Blair**  
Joukowsky Family Assistant  
Professor of Political Science and  
International and Public Affairs

**Dawn Brancati**  
Senior Lecturer in International  
and Public Affairs

**Abdullah Chahin**  
Assistant Professor of Medicine

**Stephanie Chow Garbern**  
Assistant Professor of Emergency  
Medicine

**Elizabeth Dean Hermann**  
Professor of Landscape  
Architecture, RISD

**Patrick Heller**  
Professor of Sociology and  
International and Public Affairs

**Jennifer Johnson**  
Associate Professor of History

**Seny Kamara**  
Associate Professor of Computer  
Science

**Ramu Kharel**  
Assistant Professor of Emergency  
Medicine

**Adam C. Levine**  
Associate Dean of Global Health  
Equity, Warren Alpert Medical  
School, Professor of Emergency  
Medicine and International and  
Public Affairs

**Katelyn Moretti**  
Assistant Professor of Emergency  
Medicine

**Emily Oster**  
Royce Family Professor of  
Teaching Excellence, Professor of  
Economics

**David Polatty**  
Senior Fellow in International and  
Public Affairs

**Josiah Rich**  
Professor of Medicine and  
Epidemiology

**Poulami Roychowdhury**  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
and International and Public  
Affairs

**Malika Saada Saar**  
Senior Fellow in International and  
Public Affairs

**Craig Spencer**  
Associate Professor of the Practice  
of Health Services

**Selim Suner**  
Professor of Emergency Medicine  
Professor of Engineering,  
Professor of Surgery

**Nina Tannenwald**  
Senior Lecturer in Political Science

**Elizabeth Toll**  
Professor of Pediatrics and  
Medicine

**Suresh Venkatasubramanian**  
Professor of Data Science and  
Computer Science

**Tara White**  
Assistant Professor of Behavioral  
and Social Sciences

**Vazira Zamindar**  
Associate Professor of History

## Affiliated Fellows

**Cyril Bennouna**  
PhD Candidate, Political Science

**Emma Cortes**  
Global Emergency Medicine  
Fellow, Department of Emergency  
Medicine

**Giovanna De Luca**  
Global Emergency Medicine  
Fellow

## Visiting Scholars

**Andrew Boyle**  
Senior Counsel, States United  
Democracy Center

**Megan Rhodes**  
Former Senior Advisor for Global  
Health Security, USAID

## Advisory Board

**Paulo Abrão**  
Former Executive Secretary of the  
Inter-American Commission on  
Human Rights

**Omar Bah**  
Founder & Executive Director,  
Refugee Dream Center

**Seth Berkley**  
CEO, GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance

**Chevaan Daniel**  
Executive Group Director, The  
Capital Maharaja Organization  
Ltd., Sri Lanka

**Blanche Greene-Cramer**  
Epidemiologist, Health Emergency  
Information & Risk Assessment,  
World Health Organization

**Guillermo Luz**  
Chief Resilience Officer, Philippine  
Disaster Resilience Foundation  
(PDRF)

**Kenneth Roth**  
Former Executive Director,  
Human Rights Watch

**Armand Sprecher**  
Public Health Specialist. Médecins  
Sans Frontières

**Julie Thompson**  
United Nations Office for the  
Coordination of Humanitarian  
Affairs, Geneva

**Rabih Torbay**  
President & CEO, Project HOPE

**Shari Turitz**  
Vice President for Programs,  
American Jewish World Service

**Samantha Wolthuis**  
Vice President, Global Operations,  
Resolve to Save Lives

**Sam Worthington**  
Former Chief Executive Officer,  
InterAction



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

*CHRS is committed to training the next generation of leaders by offering Brown University students exciting opportunities to engage with human rights and humanitarian practitioners.*



# CHRRS Study Group



**The New Era of Health Emergencies:**  
Drivers of today’s outbreaks, and the tools we need to respond to a new threat environment

**MEGAN RHODES**  
CHRRS VISITING SCHOLAR  
GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY EXPERT

Megan Rhodes, Senior Advisor for Global Health Security at USAID, led this year’s study group, *The New Era of Health Emergencies*. Rhodes has more than twenty years of experience in international development and humanitarian response, having worked in over 15 countries and across nearly every major U.S. global health initiative of the last two decades. In her most recent role, she oversaw efforts with more than 50 partner countries to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging infectious disease threats, including rapid outbreak deployments. Drawing on this breadth of experience, she introduced students to the complex drivers of modern health emergencies and the tools needed to reduce their impacts, particularly on the world’s most vulnerable populations.

Over four hybrid sessions, Rhodes and roughly 15 undergraduate students examined case studies of avian influenza, the 2018 Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and climate-driven dengue resurgence. Discussions explored how climate change, fragile humanitarian contexts, and conflict create overlapping crises that heighten the risks of infectious disease outbreaks. Students considered the challenges of working in resource-limited environments, debated how to prioritize interventions with constrained information, and reflected on the role of health in advancing both humanitarian goals and national security. Guest speaker Nidhi Bouri, a global health, humanitarian, and foreign policy expert, provided additional perspective on outbreak response in fragile contexts.

In the final session, Rhodes encouraged students to look ahead to new tools—such as AI, predictive analytics, and innovations in diagnostics and vaccine development—that may change the way global health actors prepare for and respond to future emergencies. Students were active participants throughout, bringing critical questions, personal experiences, and reflections on how public health strategies intersect with broader foreign policy and humanitarian challenges. One participant, Ellia Sweeney ’25, emphasized the value of the group in “making sense of changes in how we approach global health on a national stage,” while Rhodes herself noted that she “loves working with young people” and appreciates the opportunity to connect practice and scholarship. The Center and its students were grateful to host Rhodes, whose career demonstrates how global health expertise, humanitarian response, and foreign policy intersect in addressing today’s most urgent crises.

# Summer Internship Program

CHRRS integrates education and research with on-the-ground action by connecting students with experts through funded internships at top humanitarian and human rights organizations. These curated internships are carefully crafted with our partners so as to provide students with valuable hands-on experience and working knowledge of humanitarian and human rights issues and best practices. Partnering with the Brown SPRINT program, we placed six undergraduate students in internships with Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, Project Hope, the Gammadda Initiative, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, and the Refugee Dream Center. We also placed three graduate students in internships at Kobo Toolbox, InterAction, and GCPEA.

“*This experience was my first in a high-level, multilateral setting and allowed me to engage with an extraordinary range of complex global issues... As a Palestinian refugee who grew up witnessing the UN as a lifeline for my community, contributing directly to this work was a deeply meaningful milestone in my professional journey. I am now left contemplating a career in the international crisis resolution research and advocacy field more strongly than ever.*”



**MUSTAPHA KARBOUCH**  
CLASS OF 2027  
INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY





# Hack For Humanity

## Global Health Security

The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies hosted its annual Hack for Humanity, a humanitarian-focused hackathon in October 2024, with the theme Global Health Security. Over 60 students, organized into 14 teams, worked collaboratively across two days to design innovative solutions addressing challenges such as pandemic preparedness, chemical and biological threats, and the intersections of human, animal, and environmental health.

Participants were guided by nine mentors with expertise in global health and humanitarian response and inspired by a keynote address from Megan Rhodes, Senior Advisor for Global Health Security at USAID. The weekend concluded with team pitch presentations evaluated by a panel of judges for creativity, feasibility, and humanitarian impact.

First place was awarded to BatAware, a risk communication and community engagement campaign for zoonotic disease prevention in Thailand. Other winning projects included Deng-Away, Water Conservation in the Lithium Triangle, and HerAid, a platform addressing period poverty in refugee camps. The event also provided a \$3,000 seed grant to support further development of the winning project.

Hack for Humanity continues to foster student innovation and collaboration in addressing pressing humanitarian challenges through creative, practical, and community-driven solutions.



# Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice

Through a collaborative partnership now entering its sixth year, CHRHS and the Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ) train and mobilize undergraduate students to provide free legal representation to asylum seekers and to organize for immigrant justice. Through SCIJ's training program, our students gain a deep knowledge of immigration law, learn about the history of and systemic issues with US immigration, and build skills in community organizing. After students have been trained, they are mobilized to provide representation to asylum seekers by pairing students with SCIJ's partner attorneys and immigration organizations.

As students work on cases, they create intentional relationships with clients, the local immigrant community, and other immigration organizations to understand and identify issues most directly impacting immigrants locally, and then organize for policy change. Seventeen Brown undergraduate students were trained this past year.



Photos courtesy of Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice.



# STUDENT RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: WATSON DIRECTOR'S FELLOWS

During the 2024–2025 academic year, CHRHS benefited from the support of the Watson Director's Fellowship Program. This program pairs Master of Public Affairs (MPA) students with Watson Institute faculty, researchers, and staff to collaborate on key projects. Fellows are placed with centers, initiatives, or faculty-led research groups across the Institute, allowing them to contribute directly to ongoing work while gaining valuable professional experience.



**ELENA BERNARDI**  
MPA '25  
WATSON DIRECTOR'S FELLOW

Elena Bernardi is a Class of 2025 graduate of the Master in Public Affairs program, where she also served as a Watson Director's Fellow, working hand in hand with the Military Fellows Program and CHRHS. As a Director's Fellow, Elena worked on a project titled *Analyzing the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*. The last several years, she has worked in international development, risk-assessment, and countering violent extremism. Her interests are at the intersection of public opinion, security, and political language. Elena obtained her bachelor's degree in peacebuilding and development from Eastern Mennonite University with foundations in law from Université Libre de Bruxelles. Elena is fluent in Amharic, French and Italian, and proficient in Spanish. She is from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



**EVAN WARREN**  
MPA '25  
WATSON DIRECTOR'S FELLOW

Evan Warren is a Class of 2025 graduate of the Master of Public Affairs program. Alongside CHRHS, Evan worked on a project titled *Understanding Public Attitudes Towards Civil-Military Coordination in National Pandemic Response*. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science (honors) from the U.S. Naval Academy. While in Annapolis, he revived installation-wide sustainability efforts by creating student leadership roles and writing a formal sustainability policy, and authored an award-winning honors thesis, titled *The Chesapeake Bay Watershed in Black and White: Analyzing Race-Based Environmental Resource and Risk Inequity within the Mid-Atlantic Region*. His policy interests include climate change, human security, national security, and renewable energy. Evan is from Finksburg, Maryland, and is a former member of the Navy football team.



*From the Director's Fellowship, to the wealth of networking opportunities and the incredibly diverse and accomplished faculty, the Watson community has opened doors I didn't know existed. It's been a space of serious growth—professionally and personally—all while remaining genuinely enjoyable.*

*Elena Bernardi*  
MPA '25





# RESEARCH

CHRHS conducts and facilitates interdisciplinary research on pressing global human rights and humanitarian challenges. In addition to our core research projects at CHRHS, we annually fund pilot research studies through our Seed Grant Program. This program is designed to stimulate original, innovation-driven research that addresses topics of disaster preparedness, humanitarian response, post emergency reconstruction, and human rights.

## Humanitarian Networks & Partnerships Week

**Geneva, Switzerland | March 23-28, 2025**

Faculty and research assistants from CHRHS participated in the 2025 Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW), held March 23–28, in Geneva. HNPW is one of the largest humanitarian forums of its kind, bringing together participants from the UN, NGOs, Member States, the private sector, the military, and academia to address pressing challenges in humanitarian affairs and foster collaboration across sectors.

Dr. Adam Levine attended alongside Lt. Col. Christopher Russell and Elena Bernardi, MPA '25, presenting preliminary findings from their collaborative project with UNOCHA on the use of armed escorts for humanitarian convoys—an area with no publicly available database. Their presentation explored operational and security considerations in humanitarian contexts, generating discussion among participants on practical approaches to convoy protection.

Reflecting on the experience, Bernardi noted that it was “truly inspiring” to witness the dedication, coordination, and innovation required across humanitarian sectors, reinforcing the importance of preparing the next generation of leaders to address complex challenges in the field. The event offered participants a unique opportunity to exchange ideas, deepen partnerships, and gain insight into the evolving landscape of global humanitarian operations.



## Core Research Projects

### GAUGING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF MILITARY AND POLICE ROLES IN US DOMESTIC PANDEMIC RESPONSE DURING COVID-19

This study examined American public perceptions of the U.S. military and law enforcement’s involvement in the domestic COVID-19 response, addressing a gap in humanitarian-military relations research that has focused primarily on international contexts. Using a survey of 1,500 respondents, the research found broad support for military and police participation, with the military viewed more favorably than police. Trust and comfort were strongly tied to the type of services provided, such as healthcare, logistics, or enforcement. Political affiliation, ideology, vaccination status, age, and gender were key factors shaping perceptions. While respondents generally trusted civilian providers, this did not preclude positive views of armed actors. The findings highlight implications for future crisis response policy and call for further study on whether these attitudes extend beyond public health emergencies. The full article, published in *Frontiers in Public Health* is available on the CHRHS website.

### ANALYZING THE USE OF ARMED ESCORTS FOR HUMANITARIAN CONVOYS

In complex emergencies, humanitarian convoys play a critical role in delivering necessary life-saving aid to vulnerable populations. However, in many crises, the safe passage of these convoys is jeopardized by both violence and criminality. To mitigate these security risks, in certain contexts, humanitarian organizations have resorted to using armed escorts (AE) for humanitarian convoys, provided by various armed actors.

To better understand the use of AE and support measures that provide consistency to this practice, Brown University, in support of and in collaboration with UN OCHA’s Civil Military Coordination Service, designed and conducted a study on the current practice of the use of AE for humanitarian convoys in complex emergencies worldwide. As no publicly available database exists on the use of AE by humanitarian convoys globally, the research team utilized three different methods to estimate the proportion of contexts in which AE were being used for humanitarian convoys, the types of humanitarian actors who were using them, and the reasons for their use. These methods included a cross sectional survey of humanitarian providers working in complex emergencies globally, an artificial intelligence (AI) guided review of media reports and other publicly available data mentioning the use of AE in specific contexts, and qualitative interviews with humanitarian key informants in specific humanitarian contexts.



# NEGOTIATING HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND CIVILIAN MILITARY COORDINATION IN BURKINA FASO, HAITI, AND THE WESTERN SAHEL

This research project investigates humanitarian responses in contexts with heavy involvement of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and assertive state governments, where external humanitarian assistance is obstructed. Focusing on three diverse contexts - Haiti, the Western Sahel, and Ethiopia - the study delves into the role of civilian-military coordination and negotiating in facilitating humanitarian access amidst such challenges.

Key research questions include exploring the tactics employed by assertive states and NSAGs to restrict humanitarian access, examining the impact of such limitations on population well-being and mortality rates, and documenting best practices implemented by humanitarian actors to overcome access barriers. By synthesizing findings into three comprehensive case studies supported by a policy document, this project aims to contribute to evidence-based approaches in navigating humanitarian response to crises in contexts of restricted access.

This project was generously funded by the United Nations World Food Programme. Find the full report on the CHRHS website.

# THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

On the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325, building the foundations of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS), this project explores how women-led civil society organisations (CSOs) and feminist activists are reimagining the Agenda “from below” in four South-West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) contexts: Lebanon, Sudan, Syria and Turkey. Rather than focusing on the global backlash against the Agenda, this project particularly centers on the organizing practices that persist despite shrinking civic space, economic collapse and ongoing violence. Using a relational feminist lens that treats agency as socially embedded, the paper synthesizes up-to-date secondary literature and targeted conversations with grassroots activists to map, in each case, structural barriers to women’s participation in peace and political processes and local strategies that subvert, bypass or transform those barriers, before concluding with their implications for regional and international policies. The report’s findings expose a persistent gap between stated ambitions, such as providing sufficient resources, and the realities faced by diverse women in the SWANA region. Lebanon’s successive National Action Plans demonstrate that, while there is normative uptake of the WPS agenda, sectarian governance structures and the systematic underfunding of both the Agenda itself and women-led CSOs significantly reduce their impact. In Sudan, revolutionary feminist mobilization actively resists militarised patriarchy, particularly amid the deepening state collapse and continued civil war. Syrian women play critical roles in grassroots governance and localized aid delivery yet remain excluded from formal negotiations and increasingly vulnerable amid donor retrenchment. Turkey’s WPS architecture remains shallow and blind to Kurdish and displaced women’s rights and representation in the months following the announcement of the historic ceasefire between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party.

This project is generously funded by a Pembroke Faculty Seed Grant. You can find the full report available on the CHRHS website.

# Seed Grant Research & Trainings

The CHRHS Seed Grant Program stimulates original humanitarian and human rights-focused research and training programs. Seed grants further a deeper understanding of human rights and humanitarian challenges or test innovative solutions to these challenges.

## An analysis of Brown Human Rights Asylum Clinic’s (BHRAC) Case Processing, Impact and Outcomes

Cintia Collins, Brown Medical Student  
Claire Lin, Brown Medical Student  
Rishik Manthana, Brown Medical Student  
Dr. Therese Zink, Clinical Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Clinical Professor of Family Medicine  
Dr. Karen Saal, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medical Science

## Karenni Emergency Care Needs Assessment

Dr. Giovanna De Luca, Global Emergency Medicine Fellow, Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School

## Assessment of the Impact of High-Quality CPR Training Among Health Care Providers in Rwanda

Dr. Robert Bivove Gakwaya, Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellow, Brown Emergency Medicine

## Assessment of WHO Basic Emergency Care (BEC) Course in Rwanda and its Impact on Pre-hospital Processes

Sharmeen Jaffry, Department of Emergency Medicine, Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School

## Research Rounds: Building Local Health Research Capacity in the Solomon Islands

Dylan Bush, MD Candidate, Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School

## Promoting Local Ownership of Integrated Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) with Community First Aid Responder (CFAR) Training in Burkina Faso

Dr. Hannah Wild, CHRHS Global Fellow, Department of Surgery, University of Washington

## The Forgotten Jewry: An Everyday Life History of Jews in the Philippines, 1937-1945

James Carl Osorio, PhD Candidate, Department of History, Brown University

## State Violence and the Occupational Health and Safety of Migrant Asian Massage and Sex Workers in New York City

Elena Shih, Manning Assisnat Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies, Brown University



# EVENTS



*CHRHS provides an intellectual space for faculty, visiting scholars, students, and practitioners from around the globe to reflect upon and evaluate current human rights and humanitarian policies and procedures, while supporting interdisciplinary research by faculty and students into both the causes of, and solutions for, the most pressing global humanitarian and human rights challenges.*





# AI for Impact and Justice

April 8, 2025

In April, the Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Studies hosted *AI for Impact and Justice*, a multi-session roundtable convened and moderated by Watson Senior Fellow Malika Saada Saar. The event brought together leaders from NGOs, foundations, academia, and technology companies to explore how artificial intelligence can be applied to human rights and humanitarian challenges. The opening session featured Sarah Spencer of EthicAI and Megan McGuire of Médecins Sans Frontières, who discussed the opportunities and challenges NGOs face in integrating AI into their work and the ethical considerations that guide its use.

A fireside chat followed between Saada Saar and Devshi Mehrotra, Founder and CEO of Justice Text, highlighting how AI-powered tools can analyze body camera footage, enhance accountability, and support legal advocacy. The final session featured representatives from the DRK Foundation, Jigsaw, and Darsel, who shared their organizations’ approaches to promoting responsible innovation and aligning AI initiatives with social impact. Throughout the forum, participants discussed both practical strategies and broader ethical questions, emphasizing collaboration across sectors to maximize AI’s potential for justice. The event concluded with a reception, providing space for continued dialogue and networking among attendees.

# Reproductive Justice in an Era of Backlash

May 2, 2025

On May 2, CHRHS hosted *Reproductive Justice in an Era of Backlash*, a half-day workshop that convened experts from law, medicine, sociology, and journalism to examine the shifting landscape of reproductive rights. The first panel, *On the Ground: The Practice of Medicine, Law, Journalism*, featured practitioners and advocates from Pregnancy Justice, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, the Center for Reproductive Justice, and Brown University’s Warren Alpert Medical School, along with journalist Stephania Taladrid, who spoke to the lived realities of patients, providers, and reporters navigating the post-Dobbs era. Panelists highlighted how legal restrictions, medical challenges, and media coverage intersect to shape public understanding and access to reproductive healthcare.

The second panel, *Theorizing the Present: Sociological and Legal Perspectives*, brought together scholars from Washington University, Harvard, Brandeis, and UC Davis to situate current challenges within broader histories of law, social movements, and global health. Presentations explored issues such as the criminalization of pregnancy, the contested politics of personhood, lessons from international contexts, and the evolving strategies of reproductive justice movements. Across both sessions, speakers addressed themes ranging from bodily autonomy and maternal mortality to the tensions between grassroots activism and institutionalization.

Together, the panels underscored the urgency of defending reproductive justice amid mounting backlash, while also pointing toward frameworks and strategies for resilience and advocacy in the years ahead.





SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

**PACIFIC ISLAND RESILIENCE IN CLIMATES OF CHANGE**  
*CHRHS Visiting Scholar Lecture*



**SIAUTU ALEFAIO-TUGIA**  
Professor of Psychology, University of Otago

**ADAM LEVINE (MODERATOR)**  
Professor of Emergency Medicine and International and Public Affairs  
Associate Dean of Global Health Equity

CHRHS hosted Dr. Siautu Alefaio-Tugia for a lecture on Pacific Island resilience in the face of climate change. Drawing on her research and two decades of practice in psychology, Dr. Alefaio-Tugia discussed how Pacific communities and diasporas confront disaster vulnerability through cultural knowledge and collective strength. She emphasized the importance of Indigenous perspectives in addressing inequities and shaping global responses to climate-related challenges.

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

**TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE FOR THE KHMER ROUGE ATROCITIES:  
CONTENT & CONTEXT**



**ANDREW BOYLE**  
CHRHS Visiting Scholar  
Senior Counsel at States United Democracy Center,

**YASMINE CHUBIN**  
Clooney Foundation for Justice's Docket initiative  
CHRHS hosted a hybrid event on transitional justice and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Speakers Andrew Boyle and Yasmine Chubin discussed the atrocities committed under the Khmer Rouge, the establishment and outcomes of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, and how this tribunal compares to other international criminal courts. The conversation highlighted both the achievements and limitations of the tribunal while situating it within the broader landscape of accountability for mass atrocities.

OCTOBER 9, 2024

**REFUGEE EXPERIENCES: PERSPECTIVES FROM RHODE ISLAND AND  
BEYOND**



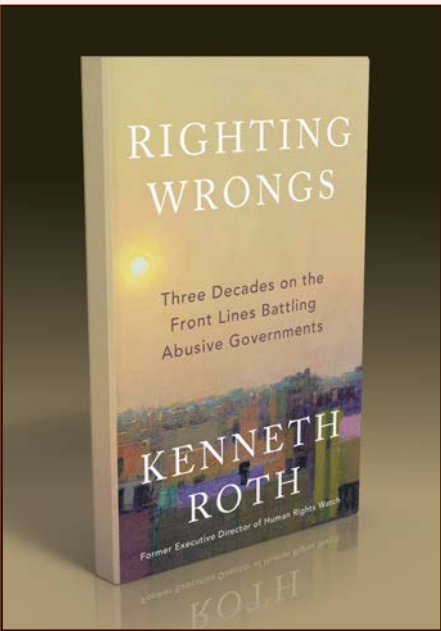
**DANIEL FARBER HUANG & THERESA MENDERS**  
Documentary Photographers, *The Power of Faces*

**DR. OMAR BAH**  
Co-founder and Executive Director, Refugee Dream Center

**KEITH COOPER**  
Executive Director, Beautiful Day  
In collaboration with Art at Watson, CHRHS hosted a panel discussion alongside the exhibit *The Power of Faces: Looking at the Global Refugee Crisis*. Photographers Daniel Farber Huang and Theresa Menders joined Dr. Omar Bah and Keith Cooper to share their experiences documenting and supporting refugee communities locally and globally. The panel highlighted the challenges refugees face, the importance of advocacy and resettlement efforts in Rhode Island, and the role of storytelling in fostering empathy and understanding.

APRIL 30, 2025

**RIGHTING WRONGS: THREE DECADES ON THE FRONT LINES BATTLING  
ABUSIVE GOVERNMENTS**



**KENNETH ROTH**  
Former Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

**IEVA JUSIONYTE (MODERATOR)**  
Director, Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies, Watson Family  
University Professor of International Security and Anthropology

The Watson Institute hosted Kenneth Roth, former executive director of Human Rights Watch, for a discussion of his book *Righting Wrongs: Three Decades on the Front Lines Battling Abusive Governments*. In conversation with Ieva Jusionyte, Roth reflected on his career confronting human rights violations and the strategies used to hold governments accountable. The event concluded with an audience Q&A, offering participants the chance to engage directly with Roth on contemporary human rights challenges.



# Upcoming Programming

*This year, our public programming will focus on the issues of detention, disappearance, and deportation. While arbitrary detention and forced disappearance have been a grim reality in many parts of the world, especially in countries governed by authoritarian regimes, we are now witnessing these practices take place in our own communities. To understand this, we are inviting leading scholars, journalists, legal advocates, and our community partners. Take a look at our Fall 2025 schedule on the following page and scan the QR code for more information.*

## FALL 2025 EVENTS

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| SEPTEMBER 17 | Rights and Realities of Asylum in New England   |
| OCTOBER 1    | Reporting on Immigration during the Second Trump Administration                               |
| OCTOBER 15   | New Book Talk with Keisha Blain<br>"Without Fear: Black Women and the Making of Human Rights" |
| NOVEMBER 8-9 | Hack for Humanity - Global Gun Violence   |







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