



THE WATSON SCHOOL
of International
and Public Affairs
BROWN UNIVERSITY

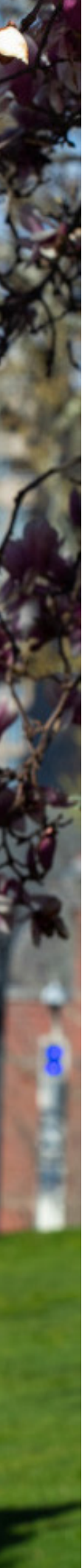
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
AND HUMANITARIAN STUDIES

2025-2026 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

As the Director of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (CHRHHS) at the Watson School of International and Public Affairs, I am pleased to share with you our 2025-2026 annual report.

This year, CHRHHS has continued its mission of deepening understanding of human rights and humanitarian challenges both in the United States and abroad. Two issues in particular were the focus of our programming: detention and deportation of migrants and asylum seekers in the United States and global gun violence. Through our Human Rights seminar series, we hosted several public events with journalists covering immigration around the country, from Texas to Chicago to Providence, and welcomed on campus our local partner organizations - Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ) and Refugee Dream Center (RDC) - to learn from their experiences. Our annual Hack for Humanity student project competition in November was dedicated to addressing global gun violence. Thirteen teams of students pitched projects during the weekend-long event, which included a keynote address from Dr. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz, senior researcher at Asser Institute for International & European Law at The Hague. From 13 team projects, the panel of judges selected three winners, which were offered awards to develop their ideas – ranging from a software program that blocks 3D printers from making ghost guns to an educational curriculum on gun safety for school kids – further.

In March, CHRHHS hosted its inaugural Human Rights Lecture and symposium, which this year addressed the issue of forced disappearances in Mexico. The auditorium was packed for the Mexican journalist Marcela Turati's opening keynote, followed by two panels of human rights professionals, lawyers, and journalists who work on uncovering the mechanisms behind the major human rights crisis south of the border.

The Center was also involved in a number of other events, including hosting the launch of Prof. Keisha Blain's new book, "Without Fear: Black Women and the Making of Human Rights," in conversation with the former Mayor of Boston Kim Janey, in October, welcoming journalist Paola Ramos to discuss her book "Defectors: The Rise of the Latino Far Right and What It Means for America" in November, and co-sponsoring several events in collaboration with other centers and departments at Brown throughout the spring.

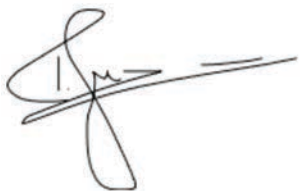


Nothing is higher on our list of priorities at CHRHS than supporting Brown students who want to learn more about human rights and humanitarian issues through research and training. This year we have awarded grant funding to four Brown students and one postdoctoral research associate enabling them to spend the summer doing fieldwork, archival and community-engaged research in the United States, Mexico, UK, Nepal, and Ukraine. In addition, this year we were able to support nine student internships, securing their placement with leading global human rights and humanitarian organizations, including Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group, among others. We were also able to fund three graduate student internships, allowing them to gain hands-on experience to complement their academic education in the field of human rights and humanitarian studies.

The Center continued partnership with the Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ), training a new group of fifteen undergraduate students to provide free legal representation to asylum seekers and to organize for immigrant justice. Students who took part in the program received academic credit through Brown University for their participation in their intensive, 14-week training, after which they were paired with supervising lawyers and local refugees in Rhode Island seeking asylum from persecution in their countries of origin. Meanwhile, our own community at CHRHS has continued to grow as we welcomed three new affiliated faculty members and six new graduate students and postdoctoral associates to our midst this past year.

On behalf of CHRHS, I want to express my gratitude to our staff, students, affiliated faculty and fellows, alumni, advisory board, and donors for all of the time, guidance, and resources they have provided us over this past year, my first in the role of director. It's all uphill from here! I am excited by what lies ahead in 2026-2027. We have plans! Come and join us!

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

Watson Family University
Professor of International Security
and Anthropology

Maggie Murphy

Program Manager

Student Assistants

Xuanjie (Coco) Huang

CHRHS Communications Intern

Sofie Zeruto

CHRHS Student Assistant

Affiliated Faculty

Roy Aaron

Professor, Orthopedic Surgery,
Director, Orthopedic Program in
Clinical/Translational Research,
Research Director, Miriam
Hospital Joint Replacement Center

Ruhul Abid

Associate Professor, Division of
Cardiothoracic Surgery

Nadje Al-Ali

Robert Family Professor of
International Studies and Professor
of Anthropology and Middle East
Studies

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

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

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

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

Elena Shih

Manning Assistant Professor of
American Studies and Ethnic
Studies

Craig Spencer

Associate Professor of the Practice
of Health Services

Nina Tannenwald

Senior Lecturer in Political Science

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**Avani Ashtekar**

PhD Student, Department of
Anthropology

Kate Birkbeck

Postdoctoral Research Associate,
Watson School of International
and Public Affairs

Emma Cortes

Global Emergency Medicine
Fellow, Department of Emergency
Medicine

Giovanna De Luca

Global Emergency Medicine
Fellow

Eugenia Morales Viana

PhD student in the Department of
Anthropology

Shelby O'Neill

Postdoctoral Research Associate,
Watson School of International
and Public Affairs

Esteban Salmón

Postdoctoral Research Associate,
Watson School of International
and Public Affairs

Mairéad Smith

Doctoral Candidate, Department
of Anthropology

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

Ana Lorena Delgadillo

Human Rights Lawyer

Blanche Greene-Cramer

Epidemiologist, Health Emergency
Information & Risk Assessment,
World Health Organization

Guillermo Luz

Chief Resilience Officer, Philippine
Disaster Resilience Foundation
(PDRF)

Jorge Peniche

Senior Researcher on Mexico in
the Americas Division, Human
Rights Watch

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.





Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice

Through a collaborative partnership now entering its seventh 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. Fifteen Brown undergraduate students were trained this past year.



Summer Internship Program

CHRRHS 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 eight 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 Techo Dominica-Haiti.



Project HOPE reinforced my desire to pursue a career that combines research, medicine, and global health. It strengthened my analytical skills, taught me how to communicate scientific information to diverse audiences, and showed me how multidisciplinary collaboration is essential for solving complex public health challenges.



KRISTIN CHO
CLASS OF 2028
PUBLIC HEALTH



INTERNATIONAL
**CRISIS
GROUP**

project
HOPE®

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH



'The Heart of the Village'

Hack For Humanity

Global Gun Violence

The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies hosted its annual Hack for Humanity, a humanitarian focused project competition, on November 8-9, 2025. This year's competition focused on the theme of global gun violence, which encompasses the wide-ranging effects of firearm-related harm around the world. According to Amnesty International, more than 600 people die every day from firearms globally.

Over 50 students, organized into 13 teams, worked collaboratively to design innovative solutions addressing challenges related to global gun violence. Students considered subtopics such as:

- Illicit Gun Trade and Arms Trafficking
- Armed Conflict and Gang Violence
- Youth, Schools, and Education
- Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence
- Mass Violence and Extremism

Teams worked together over the course of two days to develop creative ideas for innovative social programs, policies, and technologies that addressed one of these subtopics. Participants were guided by five mentors with interdisciplinary expertise in these topics.

The weekend began with a keynote address from Dr. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz, senior researcher at Asser Institute for International & European Law at The Hague. After the keynote, students broke out into their teams to brainstorm. Teams spent the morning engaging their creativity to imagine novel solutions to one of global human security's perpetual challenges.



Pitch Presentations

The weekend concluded with team pitch presentations evaluated by a panel of judges for creativity, feasibility, and humanitarian impact.

First Place: Luna

A safety-tracking app to prevent gun-related femicides in Ecuador.

Runner Up: Ghostbusters

An innovative software tool that uses pattern recognition to flag high-risk 3D-printing designs associated with ghost guns.

Runner Up: Stop the Spiral

A domestic violence education program for children in Rhode Island.

Winning teams were offered the opportunity to apply for funding to develop their projects further, with \$3,000 offered to the winning team, and \$1,500 to the runners up.

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







RESEARCH

CHRRS conducts and facilitates interdisciplinary research on pressing global human rights and humanitarian challenges. In addition to our affiliated faculty's research, we directly support emerging scholars by funding undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral research through our summer research grants.

STUDENT RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:

Undergraduate Research Team Joins Professor Jusionyte in Uncovering the Complexities of U.S.–Latin American Extradition

Undergraduate research assistants **Veronica Dickstein '26**, **Jude Farley '26**, and **Jack Zarate '27** collaborated with Professor Ieva Jusionyte on a research project examining US–Latin America judicial expulsions and extraditions. The initiative tackled a central, complex question: *Can justice be exported?*

To investigate the issue, the student team constructed a comprehensive database of extradition cases, analyzing public court records from PACER, government press releases, and media coverage. They also navigated the challenges of conducting qualitative interviews with prosecutors and legal professionals involved in diplomatic processes.

Supported in part by Brown's Undergraduate Teaching and Research Awards (UTRA), the project allowed the students to develop key methodology skills in both quantitative and qualitative research under Professor Jusionyte's mentorship, culminating in their report published on the CHRHS website.



Pictured from left to right: Jude Farley '26, Professor Ieva Jusionyte, Jack Zarate '27, and Veronica Dickstein '26

MEET THE 2026 SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWS



The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (CHRHS) awarded 2026 Summer Research Fellowships to two undergraduates, two graduate students, and one postdoctoral associate. These scholars spent 4 to 12 weeks investigating critical global human rights issues before sharing their work at our Fall Research Symposium.

- **Olha Burdeina '27** (Undergraduate, IAPA & Political Science) examined how Ukraine's wartime governance and decentralization affect services for over 1.2 million veterans.
- **Mustapha Kharbouch '27** (Undergraduate, Anthropology & IAPA) gathered oral histories from queer Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to document lived experiences of identity and displacement.
- **Lila K. Chamlagai** (PhD Candidate, Behavioral & Social Health Sciences) surveyed Bhutanese refugees in Nepal to assess depression and anxiety prevalence in camp environments.
- **Anjie Wang** (PhD Student, History) analyzed early Pennsylvania treaties to trace how 17th–19th century diplomatic language laid foundations for Indigenous rights activism.
- **Esteban Salmón** (Postdoctoral Research Associate, Watson School) interviewed corporate risk managers to study how Mexican retail businesses sustain growth amid intense regional violence.



EVENTS

CHRRHS convenes faculty, practitioners, and students for dynamic seminars, lectures, and symposia focused on critical themes in human rights and humanitarian studies. Our events provide a vital forum for open dialogue and difficult discussions, bringing diverse perspectives together to tackle complex global challenges.

FALL SEMINAR SERIES

New CHRHS fall seminar series brings community together to examine human rights crises.

In fall 2025, CHRHS launched a human rights seminar series, bringing together students, faculty, and community members to critically examine pressing global and domestic crises. Centered around the core themes of deportation, detention, and disappearance, the series featured expert panelists, leading journalists covering immigration across the country, and local advocates.

Highlights included campus visits from local partners, including the Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ) and the Refugee Dream Center (RDC), who shared frontline perspectives on navigating shifting immigration policies, supporting asylum seekers in New England, and fostering community resilience. CHRHS also welcomed local and national journalists from ProPublica, the Washington Post, Ocean State Media, and the Brown Daily Herald, to discuss reporting on immigration realities throughout the United States.





SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

RIGHTS & REALITIES OF ASYLUM IN NEW ENGLAND



JONATHAN GOLDMAN

Director, Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice

DR. OMAR BAH

Co-founder and Executive Director, Refugee Dream Center

Featuring Dr. Omar Bah (Refugee Dream Center) and Jonathan Goldman (Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice), this seminar examined the operational and legal challenges facing asylum seekers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The speakers detailed their organizations' grassroots legal aid and community support initiatives while reflecting on policy shifts affecting regional migrant populations. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A highlighting practical opportunities for student and community advocacy.

OCTOBER 1, 2025

COVERING IMMIGRATION DURING THE SECOND TRUMP ADMINISTRATION



ARELIS HERNANDEZ

Documentary Photographers, *The Power of Faces*

MELISSA SANCHEZ

Co-founder and Executive Director, Refugee Dream Center

LUIS HERNANDEZ

Executive Director, Beautiful Day

SOPHIA WOTMAN

Executive Director, Beautiful Day

This panel discussion brought together journalists and legal scholars to analyze the evolving landscape of immigration reporting under shifted federal policy frameworks. Speakers addressed the ethical, logistical, and narrative challenges reporters face when documenting immigration policies, enforcement practices, and border realities. The event emphasized the essential role of independent journalism in maintaining transparency and accountability within human rights discourse.

OCTOBER 15, 2025

KEISHA BLAIN – WITHOUT FEAR: BLACK WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF HUMAN RIGHTS



KEISHA BLAIN

Professor of Africana Studies and History, Brown University

KIM JANEY (MODERATOR)

Former Mayor of Boston, CEO of Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)

Historian and author Dr. Keisha N. Blain presented her book, *Without Fear*, highlighting the pivotal contributions of Black women to the modern global human rights movement. The talk traced historical narratives of activist resilience, showing how these leaders challenged systemic oppression and expanded the framework of international civil rights advocacy. Attendees gained deeper insight into the foundational role Black women played in shaping contemporary human rights paradigms.

NOVEMBER 18, 2025

PAOLA RAMOS – DEFECTORS: THE RISE OF THE LATINO FAR RIGHT AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR AMERICA



PAOLA RAMOS

Author and Emmy award-winning journalist

IEVA JUSIONYTE (MODERATOR)

Director, CHRHS

Emmy Award-winning journalist and author Paola Ramos discussed her book, *Defectors*, in a conversation moderated by CHRHS Director Ieva Jusionyte. Ramos explored the political motivations, ideological shifts, and cultural factors driving a growing number of Latino voters toward far-right politics in the United States. The event examined how traditionalism, fear, and political trauma have been leveraged to shape conservative political alignment within the Latino community.



MEXICO'S DISAPPEARED

Marcela Turati delivers keynote for inaugural human rights lecture



The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (CHRRS) hosted its inaugural Human Rights Lecture and Symposium, “Mexico’s Disappeared,” addressing the human rights crisis in Mexico, where over 130,000 individuals are officially registered as missing. Convening journalists, scholars, legal experts, and advocates, the two-part event examined the deep intersections of organized crime, state complicity, and the ongoing struggle for truth and accountability.

Mexican investigative journalist Marcela Turati delivered the keynote address, tracing how forced disappearances escalated following the militarization of the country’s drug war in 2006. Turati highlighted the work of *madres buscadoras*—searching mothers who have taken on the role of primary investigators to locate missing family members—and emphasized the necessity of investigative networks to protect reporters working under threat.



Journalists, Scholars, and Advocates Address Mexico's Disappearance Crisis in Two-Part Symposium

Following the keynote, the symposium featured two panels that examined the systemic, legal, and human dimensions of enforced disappearances.

Panel 1: Forced Disappearances and Forced Recruitment

- John Gibler: The Other Crime Scene: Forced Disappearance Case Files in Mexico
- Alejandra Guillén: Disappearance of Persons for Forced Recruitment in Jalisco, México
- Sibely Cañedo: The Massification of Absence: Enforced Disappearance, Narco-capitalism, and Systemic Impunity in Sinaloa

Panel 2: The Struggle Against Impunity

- Jorge Peniche: When the System Works: Disappearance as a Feature, Not a Failure
- Ana Lorena Delgadillo: Impunity and Enforced Disappearances
- Raúl Fernando Pérez Lira: My Family Is Not Complete: Representing Absence in a Photographic Project
- Janice Gallagher: Transformative Mobilization: Victims' Collectives & The Struggle Against Impunity in Mexico





Upcoming Programming

This fall, CHRHS is hosting a series of events we hope will lead to critical dialogue on global challenges. Our upcoming programming includes a book talk with William Lopez on *Raiding the Heartland*, our annual Fall Research Symposium highlighting the work of our summer grant recipients, and expert panels examining civilian protection in armed conflict as well as ongoing crises in the DRC and Sudan. We will also host our signature Hack for Humanity, bringing students together to tackle the critical issue of mis- and disinformation.

FALL 2026 EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 16

William Lopez — Raiding the Heartland: An American Story of Deportation and Resistance

SEPTEMBER 30

Fall Research Symposium

OCTOBER 14

Civilian Protection amidst Armed Conflict

OCTOBER 28

Armed Conflicts and Human Rights Violations in DRC and Sudan

NOVEMBER 7-8

Hack for Humanity - Mis/Dis-information



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