

On Wednesday 25 November 2015 the HRLA Young Lawyers' Committee organised the latest in our human rights student seminar series on Article 8 of the Convention, the right to respect for private and family life. This seminar was kindly hosted by BPP Law School in Holborn and was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Speaking on the panel were Sir Michael Burton, President of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, Hugh Tomlinson QC of Matrix Chambers, and Yasmine Ahmed, Director of Rights Watch (UK). Chairing the event was Shoaib Khan of S and S Immigration Law.

The topics of discussion were particularly relevant given the heightened interest in recent months in matters of national security, extremism and the freedom of the press.

The first speaker, Sir Michael Burton, recounted his experience of the recent and high profile case which was brought before the IPT by Liberty and a number of other NGOs. The case considered the interception and retention of communications under the controversial Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act ("RIPA"). The second speaker, Yasmine Ahmed, then focussed on the particular challenges arising out of the UK Government's Prevent Strategy which aims to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The issue is extremely contentious due to the statutory obligations placed upon public authorities such as schools and universities. The final speaker, Hugh Tomlinson QC, addressed the tensions that exist between the freedom of the press under Article 10 and the right of individuals to respect for their private lives under Article 8.

The lively discussion also covered many more of the most provocative issues of the past few years concerning Article 8, such as the far-reaching nature of the national security doctrine and the possible chilling effect upon free speech.

The student seminar series will continue after the Christmas break when we will hold an event on Article 9 of the Convention. Further details will be published on the HRLA website at <http://www.hrla.org.uk>.