



HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS ASSOCIATION YOUNG LAWYERS' COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Introduction:

It has been a busy year for the Young Lawyers' Committee ("YLC"). This report sets out what has been achieved in 2015, what the YLC aims to achieve in 2016, and the support that the YLC will require from the EC in order to achieve those aims.

2015:

(i) Journal

The inaugural edition of the Young Human Rights Lawyer ((2015) 1 YHRL) was launched on 22 October 2015 at a seminar at the London School of Economics, attended by Sir Keir Starmer QC MP, Joel Bennathan QC, Jago Russell, Alison Gerry, Kerim Fuad QC and members of the Executive Committee ("EC") and YLC. Hard copies of the Journal have been given to the contributors and to various organisations, and the standard of contributions has been repeatedly complimented as being very high.

The YLC wishes to place on record its gratitude to 1 Gray's Inn Square, Church Court Chambers, and Shoaib Khan for sponsoring the Journal, to the members of the EC who acted as the reviewing board (Daniel Denman, Shoaib Khan, Angela Patrick, Anna Tkaczynska, Emma Fenelon, Dervla Simm, and Nicola Jeffrey), and to all members of YLC for taking part in the first sift. Particular thanks are due to Asma Nizami for her work liaising with the printers to ensure that sufficient hard copies could be produced.

(ii) European Convention on Human Rights Seminar series

Three seminars have been held in 2015. The seminar on Article 5 was hosted by University College London in May 2015. The seminar on Article 6 and 7 was, as stated above, hosted by LSE in October 2015 and combined with the launch of the journal. The seminar on Article 8 was hosted by BPP Law School in Holborn in November 2015. All three seminars were very successful. High profile speakers, including Colm O'Cinneide, Sir Keir Starmer QC MP, Joel Bennathan QC, the Hon. Sir Michael Burton and Hugh Tomlinson QC, spoke at the events and it was excellent for our delegates to be able to hear them speak, ask them

questions and interact with them at the receptions afterwards. The YLC is very grateful for the financial support provided by the EC towards the reception after the Article 6 and 7 seminar, which helped to ensure that the journal launch was properly celebrated.

The YLC would like to thank the following speakers for their time this year:

Rory Dunlop (39 Essex Chambers)
Aswini Weeraratne, QC (Doughty Street Chambers)
Colm O'Cinneide (UCL)
Sir Keir Starmer, QC (Doughty Street Chambers)
Joel Bennathan, QC (Doughty Street Chambers)
Jago Russell (Fair Trials International)
Dr Awol Allo (Centre for the Study of Human Rights, LSE)
Sir Michael Burton (HMCTS)
Hugh Tomlinson, QC (Matrix Chambers)
Yasmine Ahmed (Rights Watch (UK))

(iii) Judicial Review Competition

The third annual JR competition took place in 2015, with the final being held at Middle Temple Hall in June. The final was judged by a distinguished panel presided over by Arden LJ, sitting with Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC and Professor Maurice Sunkin. The standard of advocacy was very high, and Arden LJ was particularly complimentary – one of the YLC was told by her clerk afterwards that she had never enjoyed a moot so much! The YLC is very grateful for the assistance of Kate Beattie in drafting the problem, Doughty St Chambers for hosting the preliminary round, and to those members of the EC who reviewed the written submissions (Alison Gerry, Kate Beattie, Nicola Jeffery, Daniel Denman, Anna Tkaczynska, Shoaib Khan, and Charlotte Haworth Hird) and judged the semi-finals (Dervla Sims, Shoaib Khan, James Holmes, and Asma Nizami)

(iv) Career days

Both the London and Leeds days were a great success, and the YLC is very grateful to all, including those members of the EC, who gave their time to speak at one or both of the events.

The feedback received from both events, and the Leeds event in particular, indicates that students gain a lot out of attending and being inspired by experienced human rights practitioners.

(v) Communications

The YLC has sought to further increase participation in its events through a supplementary newsletter to its membership and via its own Twitter feed. The format of the newsletters was designed to highlight forthcoming events and provide links to scholarships, internships and work experience

aimed at junior practitioners and students. For 2016 the YLC will liaise more closely with Willow and the EC to ensure that content is not duplicated and that members are not 'overloaded' with HRLA information.

The Twitter feed has accrued 64 followers since going live in the run up to the launch of the Journal in October. The YLC hopes to increase this significantly in the coming year and provide a further channel for engagement with its membership.

2016:

(i) Journal

The call for papers has been drafted and will be sent out imminently. To assist the EC, the timetable that we envisage is as follows:

- Deadline for submissions – 14 February 2016
- Completion of first sift (conducted by YLC) – 24 March 2016
- Completion of review by EC – 27 May 2016
- Completion of checking and sending to printers – 29 July 2016
- Launch – w/c 10 October 2016

We would therefore ask for assistance from members of the EC in April and May 2016 to review submissions put through the first sift by the YLC. Approximately 40 submissions were received in 2015. We are hopeful that this number will increase in 2016. The higher the number of EC reviewers who volunteer the quicker this will be. This should not clash with the JR competition, which is being held earlier this year: see below.

(ii) Seminar series

The seminar series will continue into 2016 with Article 9. There have been some concerns expressed that Willow is not always kept in the loop. All members of the YLC have been asked to ensure that Willow is copied into all correspondence about seminars (venue booking, dates and times, speakers etc) to avoid duplication of work.

(iii) JR Competition

The problem is in the process of being drafted. The YLC would again ask for the assistance of Kate Beattie in reviewing the problem before it is sent out.

The timetable is envisaged as follows:

- Deadline for skeleton arguments – 15 February 2016
- Oral round – w/c 7 March 2016
- Final – 14 April 2016

We would therefore ask for assistance from members of the EC in February 2016 to review skeleton arguments and in March to judge the oral round. We also hope to hold the preliminary oral round at Doughty Street Chambers if possible. Experience over the last three years suggests that between 35 and 40 skeleton arguments will be received.

(iv) Career days

The YLC is attempting to set dates for the career days at an earlier stage this year, as (particularly with Leeds) inviting speakers can become a somewhat fraught and last-minute enterprise. We will be able to report further at the AGM as to any progress that has been made.

It is envisaged that the days will be held, as in previous years, in late May/early June (London) and late October/early November (Leeds). Once the dates are fixed, we would be very grateful to hear from any EC members who are either available to speak or can suggest someone at their firm/chambers/organisation who could speak. If every member of the EC can send one person from their firm/chambers/organisation, that would go a long way towards filling the number of speakers required.

(v) Film screenings

An idea has been mooted to organise film screenings for the student membership of films with relevance to human rights, both documentaries (e.g. *The Act of Killing*) and fictional/fictionalised history (e.g. *The Battle of Algiers*). A brief talk would precede the screening.

The YLC has been attempting to find out what copyright issues would arise and how those can be dealt with. Thus far, those researches have not borne fruit, so if any members of the EC are able to answer this question (e.g. from having been involved in film societies at university or otherwise) the YLC would be very grateful to hear from you. This is intended to be done on charitable basis whereby attendees would be able to make a gold coin donation to charities involved with the cause featured in the film or documentary.

(vi) YLC trip to Strasbourg

This idea was mooted at our first meeting of 2015, but the lack of a contact in Strasbourg has made it difficult to take it any further. The idea would be to take a party comprising YLC and student members to Strasbourg to observe a case and speak to some of the judges and staff. If anyone on the EC has a contact in Strasbourg who might be able to facilitate this, we would be most grateful to hear from you.

Participation:

In 2014 the YLC experienced some participation problems. In 2015 contributions were more widely spread amongst Committee Members. We will remind those who put themselves forward of the commitment required and of the provisions in the YLC constitution for removing members for non-attendance.

We have considered increasing the numbers on the YLC to accommodate the work required. This will depend on the number of nominations and will be discussed at the AGM.

Conclusion:

2016 has been a very successful year and the events put on by the YLC have been appreciated by both our membership as well as senior members of the human rights community.

The YLC is very grateful for all the support that it has received from the EC in 2015, and hopes that this report will enable the EC to support the YLC further in 2016 by setting out what is needed and when it will be needed in advance, so that EC members and Willow can plan accordingly.

**HRLA Young Lawyers' Committee
12 January 2015**