

## Report from the YLC Chair

It has been a great privilege to have been elected as chair for the Young Lawyers Committee (YLC) for 2023/2024. I am proud of all the work the YLC has done, especially in continuing to strengthen our three main annual events: the Lord Kerr Essay Competition, Careers Day and the Judicial Review Mooting Competition.

Following the success of the first edition of the Lord Kerr Essay Competition, the 2023 essay question was “Is there a human right to live free from poverty? Should there be?”. We received many excellent responses and the competition was fierce but ultimately Alexis Boddy wrote the winning essay and Francesca Jackson and Rhiannon Maher were the runners-up. All their essays can be read on the HRLA website. On 4 July, the YLC organised an event to celebrate the essay competition winners which featured prize giving, a panel discussion on whether the UK needs a bill of socio-economic rights, and an opportunity to network with fellow HRLA members. We are grateful to the generosity of Patrick Kerr, without whom this competition could not go ahead, the UKSC blog which published the winning essay, to CMS for hosting the post-competition event, and for our excellent panellists: Professor Geraldine Van Bueren KC, Dr Koldo Casla and Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC.

I am particularly pleased to note that Careers Day 2023 was a resounding success and received incredible feedback. As our most popular annual event, it was great to return to an in-person event. This was held at Goldsmiths University, Department of Law, and we hope to continue our partnership with them for future events. Panels covered various aspects of a human rights career including funding, perspectives from junior lawyers and alternatives to legal careers in the human rights world. These were also streamed online for virtual participants. Moreover, we had a keynote speech from Amanda Weston KC, a fireside chat with Nani Jansen Reventlow and a bustling networking session at the end. We are grateful to all of our speakers for sharing their expertise and to Goldsmiths University, Department of Law and BARBRI for sponsoring the event.

Our final activity of the year was the Judicial Review Mooting Competition. This took place from September to December and consisted of three rounds. The final took place at the Royal Courts of Justice and was judged by Lord Justice Singh, Philip Rule KC and Camila Zapata Besso. Both teams made a valiant effort, and in the end Jack Sheard and Harry Villa won the competition and Sharon Winter and Ella Higgs-Sharroock were the runners-up. Our congratulations to both teams who performed excellently throughout the competition. This competition requires a lot of time, effort and resources to run smoothly. We are extremely grateful for everyone who participated in making it a success, including Philip Rule KC for writing the problem, the semi-final and final judges, and everyone who marked the first-round entries. Special thanks to the Royal Courts of Justice for hosting the final, and Liberty and Church Court Chambers for providing prizes for the competition.

Aside from our events, the YLC was involved in the amendments to the HRLA Constitution and proposed more representation of the YLC on the EC to enhance collaboration between the two committees.

Looking forward, I would like to highlight a potential item for growth. The YLC aims to be accessible to students and young lawyers across the UK and we aim to offer virtual attendance at our events whenever possible. Furthermore, for the first time (thanks to our sponsors) we offered limited financial assistance to Careers Day attendees who may not have been able to attend otherwise. With due regard to the financial health of the Association, I believe continuing to expand our accessibility to young aspiring human rights lawyers, especially those outside of London, would be a worthy initiative. Similarly, investing in technology that would improve the hybrid aspect of our events and decrease reliance on third parties would greatly benefit our virtual attendees and the organising of future events.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the EC for supporting the YLC in our activities, especially to Joe Middleton KC, Shoaib Khan and Lui Asquith who have been formidable chairs and have supported and advocated for the YLC in numerous ways. I would also like to thank Claudia Hyde who has been an excellent vice-chair and stepped in whenever required as well as all of my fellow YLC members who have embodied a team spirit, brought fresh ideas and worked diligently to deliver all of the above.

It has been a pleasure to serve as YLC Chair and I am pleased to present this report to the Human Rights Lawyers Association.

Tooba Kazmi  
Chair, Young Lawyers Committee  
Human Rights Lawyers Association