

Vance News

November 2016

Vance Center Helps Assess Central African Republic Justice Sector



Ms. Jean Baptiste and the members of the ILAC team of experts with the Minister of Justice of CAR

Photo Credit: Quinn O'Keefe

impunity in CAR. The government has committed to combat corruption and bring justice to the many victims of grave human rights violations committed during the conflict.

Vance Center Human Rights and Access to Justice Program Director, Marie-Claude Jean-Baptiste, recently joined a team of seven experts for an assessment mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), convened by the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) at the invitation of CAR's Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The mission sought to assess the state of CAR's justice system and particularly what is needed to rebuild and strengthen justice institutions.

The country is still recovering from a bloody conflict between Muslim and Christian militias during which state institutions, particularly the justice sector, were systematically looted. The damage caused by the conflict added to a long history of corruption and

The ILAC team of experts met with government officials, judges, lawyers, local NGOs, MINUSCA, other United Nations offices, and international organizations working in CAR to discuss the challenges the justice sector faces and the needed ingredients to rebuild key justice sector institutions. The results of the assessment as well as a list of recommendations to the CAR government, donors, and international partners will be published soon.

ILAC, of which the Vance Center is a member, is a consortium of over 50 legal and human rights organizations which provides technical legal assistance to rebuild justice systems in the aftermath of conflict. ILAC's objective assessments and recommendations are accepted by both local and international actors and contribute to a better coordination of justice sector reform efforts in post-conflict nations.

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Vance Center Client Receives Award for Environmental Peacebuilding



Dr. Jacobson received the Al-Moumin Award in Washington D.C.

Photo Credit: Maria Antonia Tigre

Vance Center Client Marie Jacobsson, Special Rapporteur for the UN International Law Commission, recently received the Al-Moumin Award in Washington DC. This award recognizes leading thinkers who have contributed to the field of environmental peacebuilding. Jacobsson has been a member of the UN International Law Commission since 2007 and was appointed as UN Special Rapporteur for the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict in 2013. With the pro bono help of the Vance Center and the international law firm of Cleary Gottlieb, she produced reports over three years on environmental protection before, during, and after periods of war.

Jacobsson's reports contain a set of principles that place demands on states and other stakeholders to take the environment into account in areas where there are conflicts. The reports merge the law of war with international environmental and criminal law, and international human rights law. This has led the International Law Commission to draw up 18 principles that include instituting preventive measures, taking environmental aspects into account in peace operations and peace processes, the obligation to cooperate, and the right of access to information to remedy environmental threats, among others.

The Al-Moumin Award was presented by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Environmental Law Institute, the American University's School of International Service, and other institutions. It is part of a broader effort to foster analysis of and dialogue on the connections between conflict, peace, and the environment. The Al-Moumin Lecture Series recognizes leading thinkers who are shaping the field of environmental peacebuilding, which aims to improve natural resource management to prevent, end, and recover from armed conflict. The award is in honor of Dr Mishkat Al-Moumin, a pioneering Iranian human rights and environmental lawyer who has devoted a considerable part of her professional life to strengthening the position and participation of women in peace processes.

During her lecture and award acceptance, Dr. Jacobsson thanked the Vance Center for the pro bono assistance provided in two of the three reports she developed.

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Vance Center Joins Anniversary Symposium at African Court

Africa Program Manager Brenda Kombo participated this month in a symposium commemorating the tenth anniversary of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha, Tanzania. Kombo also met with representatives of the African Court, African Union (AU), civil society, and funding organizations to develop partnerships to strengthen human rights on the continent.



The Vance Center has a long history at the African Court. In 2008, it brought together human rights lawyers, judges, and activists from Africa and Latin America at roundtables in Arusha and Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they shared experiences and strategies on

Brenda Kombo, Africa Program Manager from the Vance Center, Justice Ben Kioko and Osai Ojigho, Interim Pan Africa Director, Oxfam.

Photo Credit: Conference Photographer

how regional human rights systems can be effective tools for promoting and protecting human rights. The recent symposium was organized in collaboration with the Coalition for an Effective African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, of which the Vance Center is a member, the East Africa Law Society, and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives (Uganda).



Photo with Several High-Level Dialogue Participants. In the middle of the front row(left to right): Hon. Justice Ben kioko, Vice President of the African Court of the

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African Human and Peoples' Rights; Amb. Augustine Mahiga, Minister for Foreign Affairs, East African Regional and International Co-operation of the United Republic of Tanzania; Hon. Justice Sylvian Ore, President of the African Court; and Justice Mohamed Chande Othman, Chief Justice of Tanzania
Photo Credit: Conference Photographer

The Fifth Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa, organized by the African Union in collaboration with various development partners and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, followed the symposium. Kombo joined attendees in reflecting on human rights in the continent and contributing to the development of a 10-year human rights action plan for Africa. Participants

agreed on several core issues, including: (1) the need to ensure the ratification, domestication, and implementation of African human rights instruments by all AU Member States and to encourage more of these States to join a declaration recognizing the jurisdiction of the African Court; (2) the vital nexus between human rights, good governance, rule of law, peace, and development; and (3) the importance of improving coordination and collaboration between governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations to promote and protect human rights on the continent.

On the final day of the Dialogue, participants visited the African Court for a tour by Court personnel and a meeting with the President of the Court, Honorable Justice Sylvain Oré, and Honorable Justice Rafâa Ben Achour. Kombo traveled to Dar es Salaam, where she met with representatives of the Tanganyika Law Society, law firms, and the Legal and Human Rights Center.

Vance Center Presents at 2016 European Pro Bono Forum





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Vance Center Executive Director
Alexander Papachristou Presenting
Photo Credit: Leire Larracoechea

Vance Center Executive Director Alexander
Papachristou and Senior Fellow in Pro Bono Practice
Leire Larracoechea participated in PILnet's 2016
European Pro Bono Forum, held in Amsterdam,
Netherlands, along with pro bono counsels and

lawyers from Vance Center Committee law firms and other partners.

During the Pre-Forum Clearinghouse Meeting, Papachristou led the working group on "Select Matters and the Co-Counseling Approach", where he described the Vance Center's co-counseling approach as applied in three program areas: Human Rights and Access to Justice, Environment and Good Governance. As opposed to other clearinghouses, which provide matchmaking services, "the secret of the Vance Center model lies in its substantive, active and managerial approach to our projects, where we act as co-counsel together with law firms and other partners worldwide, to provide pro bono legal support to non-governmental organizations and international human rights bodies", Papachristou explained.

Papachristou also joined Alberto Alemanno of The Good Lobby, Eithne Lynch of Public Interest Law Alliance, Claudia Schluckebier of ProBono, and Fiona McLeay of Justice Connect, on a panel entitled "Beyond Match-making: What Clearinghouses Can Really Do". Together, they discussed alternative clearinghouse models, analyzing how the unconventional clearinghouses that they manage develop in-depth initiatives, pursue law reform, and collaborate in clinics.

Papachristou emphasized the value added by the Vance Center, an organization where its eight in-house lawyers work hand in hand with its law firm and other partners. As an example of this model, he referred to the Vance Center's project on incarceration of women in the Americas, where the Center not only conducted research, but also engaged in advocacy efforts to pursue law reform. He also discussed working with Transparency International to pursue the definition of grand corruption as a crime.

Organized by PILnet, the forum offered participants the opportunity to share and broaden their experiences regarding pro bono work, to reflect on the effective participation of law firms and legal departments in promoting pro bono, and develop resources and opportunities for collaboration. Besides Papachristou and Larracoechea, participants included representatives from Vance Center partner law firms Davis Polk & Wardwell, Mayer Brown, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, Shearman & Sterling, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, Weil Gotshal & Manges, White & Case, and our clearinghouses partner in Argentina (Comisión de Trabajo Pro Bono e Interés Público del Colegio de Abogados de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires).



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Vance Center Lawyer Publishes Article on Climate Change Mitigation

Vance Center Environmental Program attorney Maria Antonia Tigre recently contributed to the Fifth Anniversary Issue of *Transnational Environmental Law* (TEL). Tigre's article, 'Cooperation for Climate Mitigation in Amazonia', can be accessed on this [link](#).

TEL focuses on the scope for law and policy beyond the state, and encourages critical and creative thinking about the potential to harness the contributions of non-state actors in the public interests. With the disruptive impact of political instability and economic uncertainty on environmental commitment in recent years, these non-state actors are especially relevant.

The anniversary issue contains innovative scholarship on the theme of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDRs) in transnational law. A core principle of the climate change negotiations, CBDR promotes differentiation between developed and developing countries. The adoption earlier this year of the Paris agreement on climate change committed all nations to undertake ambitious efforts in the global response to climate change. This represented an opportunity to re-evaluate the role of the principles of transnational climate change law, in particular CBDR, equity, and differentiation.

Tigre in the article explores new ways of ensuring differentiation at the regional level, particularly in terms of better engaging the responsibilities of emerging economies like Brazil. Entitled 'Cooperation for Climate Mitigation in Amazonia', the article sees leadership by emerging economies as part of cooperative regional efforts on climate change-related issues. The article discusses how cooperation can be a more effective way to ensure differentiation, especially by distinguishing emerging economies from other developing countries with fewer capacities. Tigre examines a case study of the little known Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization as an avenue for enhanced regional cooperation and Brazilian leadership in strategies for emissions reduction in this region.

