

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Tous les êtres humains naissent libres et égaux en dignité et en droits. Ils sont doués de raison et de conscience et doivent agir les uns envers les autres dans un esprit de fraternité. Alle Menschen sind frei und gleich an Würde und Rechten ausgestattet. Sie sind mit Vernunft und Gewissen begabt und sollen einander im Geiste der Brüderlichkeit begegnen. Todos seres humanos nacen libres e iguales en dignidad y derechos. Dotados de razón y conciencia, deben comportarse fraternalmente los unos con los otros. Tutti esseri umani nascono liberi ed eguali in dignità e diritti. Essi sono dotati di ragione e di coscienza e devono agire gli uni verso gli altri in spirito di fratellanza. Todos os seres humanos nascem livres e iguais em dignidade e direitos. Dotados de razão e de consciência, devem agir uns para com os outros em espírito de fraternidade. Alle mensen worden vrij en gelijk in waardigheid en rechten. Ze zijn voorzien van verstand en geweten en behoren zich elkaar te gedragen als broeders. Wszystkie ludzie rodzą się wolnymi i równymi pod względem godności. Są oni obdarzeni rozumem i sumieniem i powinni postępować wobec innych w duchu braterstwa. Minden ember születik szabadon és egyenlő jogokkal. És testvériségben kell egymással viselkedniük. Kõik inimesed sündinuvad vabade ja võrdsed. Nad on endale teinud vastutuse võtma ja teineteise vastu käituma õiglaselt. Kõik inimesed sündinuvad vabade ja võrdsed. Nad on endale teinud vastutuse võtma ja teineteise vastu käituma õiglaselt.

# GLOBAL CAMPUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS MAGAZINE

16<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

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Europe	Central Asia
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# Editorial



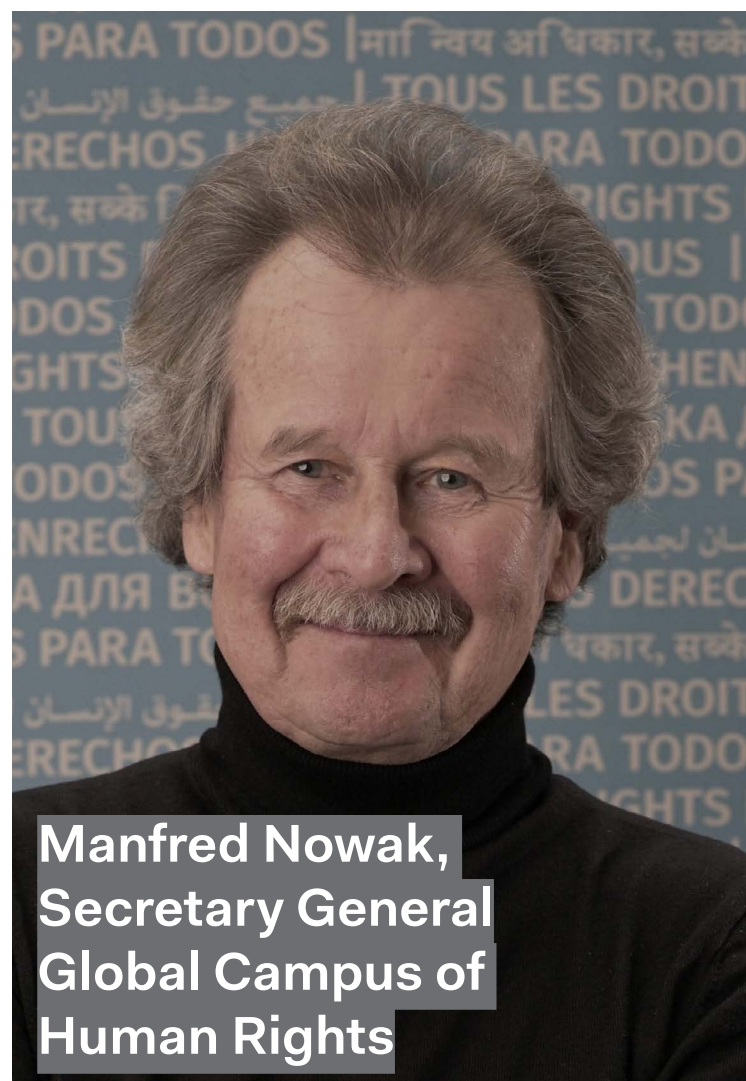
The bulk of this edition is again devoted to storytelling on Capstone Projects in the context of our Online Course “**Authoring Justice**”. In the News and Events Section, many recent projects of our Capacity Development Department relating to human rights education in Pakistan, climate justice and children’s rights education in Moldova as well as a recent initiative to develop human rights education in Belize are presented. Other recent events include our Human Rights Conversation on the importance of education and sports to embrace peace at the local and international level, our 2024 Annual Report on “Persistence of Frontline Human Rights Educators”, a Global Gathering of members of our Child Leadership Team and our Youth Advisory Group in Venice, the World Congress on Justice with Children in Madrid, co-organized this year by the Global Campus, a Hope-Based Approach to Human Rights introduced in our annual Venice School for Human Rights Defenders, the Regional Correspondents Scheme aimed at Empowering Voices of our GC Alumni, and our interaction with the 2025 Architecture Biennale “Intelligens, Natural, Artificial Collective”

In the Interview Section, our Communications Department has again managed to interview a number of highly interesting people. The current President of the European Court of Human Rights, the French judge Mattias Guyomar, reminded us of the importance of the Court in times of a progressive erosion of adherence to the principles and binding obligations arising from the European Convention on Human Rights and the judgments of the Court. He stressed the principle of shared responsibility between the Court, States, domestic courts, lawyers, civil society and academia. In this respect, the contribution of the Global Campus by educating lawyers, judges and students about the contents and procedures of the European Convention on Human Rights and judgments of the Court, is highly appreciated.

Barbara Hintermann is Director of Terre des Hommes (TdH) in Lausanne, the largest Swiss children’s rights organization with more than 2,000 colleagues working in 27 countries and supporting around 5 million children and their families. TdH was the main organizer of the re-

cent World Congress on Justice with Children, together with Penal Reform International, the International Association of Youth and Family Judges, the Global Campus of Human Rights and the University of Comillas in Madrid. As our large delegation from the GCHQ, Barbara was equally impressed by the magnitude of this year’s World Congress, held from 2 to 4 June in Madrid. In her opinion, the “**basis for change is of course education ... only when children and young people are aware of their rights, they can first help design fair justice systems and second make sure that their rights are being acknowledged and respected. This is why the concept of the world congress is so fundamental: Child-centered systems can never be designed without the perspective and inputs of children and young people themselves.**”

Soledad Vallejos is one of the founders of the grassroots feminist movement “Ni una menos” (“not one less”) 2015 in Argentina protesting



against femicides and gender-based violence which quickly spread, thanks to the power of social media, to many other Latin American and European countries. Despite this success, Soledad is “by nature pessimistic” but feels that there is no other option than trying to take action.

This is in contrast to the philosophical convictions of Carlo Ratti, the curator of the Biennale Architettura 2025, who believes that “optimism is essential” or even a duty as it is our responsibility to shape the future for the better, starting with the design of the places and communities we inhabit. In his opinion, architecture today is much more than buildings, “it is about shaping how we live together”. Climate adaptation is the top priority and is deeply connected to both human and planetary rights, including the “rights of non-human entities: rivers, forests, and entire ecosystems”.

Carlo Ratti’s optimism is also shared by Alessandro Lenzi, Director of Raizes Theatre, who is a close friend and collaborator of the Global Campus and performed recently during the Venice School for Human Rights Defenders together with the Venezuelan Sakharov Laureate Lorent Saleh. He recalls: “There was a moment during the rehearsals when observing Lorent on the stage I understood that we were no longer talking about his imprisonment, but we were telling his desire for freedom, his capacity for resistance and his courage that are certainly able to inspire many people and invites them to resist and continue to stand for freedom and democracy.” Alessandro takes his strength and optimism from his artistic skills because “art allows us to be reborn everyday”.


In his philosophy, the “search for human rights ... is grafted into that deep and peaceful place that exists in every human being, the place of conscience where love for creation, for the world and its inhabitants is grafted.”

The final interview was conducted with our EMA Student Representatives Vitória Viana Assis and Dhurv Vijay Maroo. While appreciating the EMA programme and experience of living in Venice, they are at the same time highly critical about the politics of the City of Venice with their focus on tourists to the detriment of

residents, students and others. In particular, they criticize the cost of living, the prohibitively expensive and underregulated housing market, the “commodification of housing that prioritizes short-term tourism or vacation ones”, the very expensive public transportation system and the lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities. In her final message, Vitória expresses her conviction “that the GC is not only an academic opportunity, but a community that is built from a shared passion to learn, and a strong will to fight for a life where hope for the future belongs to us all.” As Secretary General of the Global Campus, I fully agree with her and am proud of our community of students, alumni, professors and staff.



# Interviews and Contributions



## Interview with the President of the European Court of Human Rights, Mattias Guyomar

*The Press Office had the honour to interview the President of the European Court of Human Rights Mattias Guyomar about the important role of the institution and the importance of professional education on the field of human rights such as the CEDU trainings we organise.*

What role can the European Court of Human Rights play in a context where human rights are constantly under threat?

As this year marks the 75th anniversary of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, it is important to emphasize the consistency with which the European Court of Human Rights, since its inception, has worked to preserve democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

The Court was created with the aim of ensuring the application of the Convention, a treaty signed in 1950 by the member states of the Council of Europe to guarantee respect for fundamental freedoms, regarded as the essential foundation of justice and peace in the world.

The signing of this Convention took place in the aftermath of World War II, which itself marked the failure of the peace efforts during the inter-war period, particularly that of the League of Nations. In this regard, in his speech in Zurich, Winston Churchill stated: "If the League of Nations was not successful, it is not because its principles were lacking, but rather because the

states that founded it have abandoned those principles. It failed because the governments of that time did not dare to face the truth." .

All proportions kept, this observation allows us to draw a link with the period we are going through today. For a few years, Europe has indeed been the theatre of a progressive erosion of adherence to the principles upheld by the Founding Fathers of the Convention, which are now being called into question. In this context, the Court plays a more essential role than ever by interpreting the Convention in continuity with the values on which it is based, thereby effectively contributing to the protection of human rights.

To evoke the role that the Court is called to play in the current context, it is necessary to grasp the scope of the principles underlying the Convention. It aimed to enshrine, through law, the values asserted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 by developing a regional Charter intended to be its European counterpart. In a Europe then fractured and scarred by the ravages of Nazism and Fascism, the objective was to build an order based on peace and justice. This project, carried by the

Council of Europe, materialized through a legal instrument designed to express legal humanism: the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. It is based on the recognition of fundamental rights and freedoms and finds its foundation in what constitutes the very essence of the human person: dignity, the right to life, to privacy and family life, as well as freedom of expression and association.

From its inception, the Convention has thus aimed not only to contribute to the reconstruction of Europe but also to protect it from new drifts. In 1946, and even more so in 1950, the threat of a new division of the continent becomes tangible, particularly with the rise of communist totalitarianism. At the heart of these emerging tensions, an island of humanity rises from the ashes of the two world wars, in the hope of avoiding, to quote Pierre-Henri Teitgen, "the restoration or establishment, in certain countries, of totalitarian dictatorships like those we experienced in Italy and Germany before the war". This dual purpose of the Convention – to serve both as a founding impetus and a bulwark against authoritarian drifts – allows for a parallel to be drawn with the current period. In the current context, the Court must, more than ever, fully assume a preventive role, to "prevent the return of horror."

Regarding the form of the Convention, it was drafted in a few weeks, using broad statements similar to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, with the idea that fundamental rights should not be expressed as a catalogue of duties and obligations, but rather presented in the form of welcoming statements, so as to allow the Convention to evolve with the times and to fulfil its role as a "living instrument". Thus, judges, through their power of interpretation, must adapt it to the current context.

It must therefore be recalled that the creation of the European Court of Human Rights was not self-evident. Its establishment led to numerous debates, particularly about the appropriateness of endowing the Convention with its own jurisdiction responsible for ensuring

compliance. However, as early as 1959 – less than ten years after the adoption of the Convention – the Court became operational.

Since its establishment, it has dealt with more than one million cases and has gradually asserted itself as a true constitutional court for human rights at the European level. By adjudicating individual cases specific to a state, the Court upholds fundamental principles that contribute to the definition of common standards intended to permeate the national legal systems of the 46 member states of the Convention – and which often inspire beyond the European continent.

Today, as at its origins, the European Court of Human Rights remains entrusted with an essential mission: to enhance the legacy of the founding fathers of the Convention based on a common foundation of values established seventy-five years ago.

**What are the recent rulings of the European Court of Human Rights that have marked case law? What cases with significant legal stakes are currently pending before the Court and could lead to changes in the European human rights law?**

Recently, rulings have marked the case law of the Court in areas deeply rooted in current events, reflecting the profound changes that society is undergoing. In the ruling *Verein Klimasenioren Schweiz and others v. Switzerland*, delivered on April 9, 2024, the Court addressed climate justice directly for the first time, meaning the handling of climate disruption through law.

Even though the Convention does not contain a specific provision concerning environmental protection, the Court has recognized that climate change represents an immediate threat to the effective enjoyment of fundamental rights. One of the major contributions of this ruling also lies in the consideration of future generations. The Court thus acknowledged the possibility of accepting the admissibility of complaints filed on behalf of others. While its case law already contained certain elements related to the 'locus standi' of legal persons, a significant step was taken here by admitting the standing of the applicant association. The

Court indeed establishes a close link between the particular nature of climate issues, which necessarily diffuse individual rights and affect the interests of future generations, and the use of collective means to address them.

On the substance, the Court has outlined several positive obligations placed on States under Articles 2 – the right to life – and 8 – the right to private life – of the Convention. In this regard, these cases are characteristic of the dynamic interpretation that the Court gives to the Convention, taking into account the current context, to update the requirements in light of contemporary needs.

In another context, the Court has been called upon to rule on numerous cases concerning violence against women, an area in which it has already issued significant judgments .

Before addressing recent developments in case law, it is appropriate to highlight the diversity of the violence examined by the Court, ranging from the most extreme violence, in which case Articles 2 and 3 of the Convention may be invoked, to the most symbolic violence, which may result in a violation of Article 8.

In the case of *L. and others v. France*, the three applicants complained about the lack of effective protection against rape in the French legal framework, as well as the failure to adequately take into account their status as minors and their vulnerable situation at the time of the events . Recalling that consent must “reflect the free will to have a specific sexual relationship, at the time it occurs”, the Court considered that the authorities had failed in their positive obligations requiring them to effectively apply a criminal justice system capable of punishing non-consensual sexual acts, concluding that there had been a violation of Articles 3 – prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment – and 8 – right to respect for private life – as well as Article 14 – prohibition of discrimination – taken in conjunction with Articles 3 and 8 for one of the applicants, due to the secondary victimisation she suffered.

In your opinion, how important is the professional training of lawyers in the field of fun-

damental rights? What is so essential about the approach used in the Global Campus of Human Rights courses to integrate the Convention into national judicial systems?

Lawyers are the primary actors in the defense of individual freedoms. They bear the essential responsibility of ensuring effective access to justice and protecting the fairness of proceedings, invoking the rights guaranteed by national and international standards. Their work thus contributes directly to the realization of the law and the consolidation of the rule of law.

As a sign of the paramount importance given to lawyers in the treaty system, it is worth highlighting the opening for signature on May 13 of the first international treaty aimed at protecting the legal profession, on the occasion of the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Council of Europe, held in Luxembourg: the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Legal Profession. Its aim is to impose on States the obligation to guarantee that lawyers can exercise their professional activities "without being the target of attacks, threats and acts of harassment or intimidation," or "undue obstruction or interference".

In this regard, as the Court noted in *Morice v. France*, "to have faith in the administration of justice, the public must also have confidence in the ability of lawyers to effectively represent litigants".

At the level of the Convention system, an approach such as that proposed by the Global Campus of Human Rights appears entirely beneficial, in light of the principle of shared responsibility.

**Can you leave a message for the Global Campus of Human Rights community?**

The Court is not the only body to guarantee the protection of human rights within the Convention system. Each legal actor, at their own level, contributes to this great mission.

It is through this principle of shared responsibility, which guides my commitment, that I would like to leave you with a final message. This message, which finds its full expression within the framework of the Convention system, is based on the idea that the effective

protection of human rights is not the sole responsibility of international institutions, but also, and primarily, of States, and more particularly, of domestic courts. By virtue of this principle, it is up to every legal actor to promote, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, this shared responsibility between the Court and States, with the aim of ensuring effective protection of human rights.

The Convention, as bequeathed to us by the Founding Fathers, is thus a common good that binds us all. Actually, this responsibility extends far beyond the walls of the courts.

This shared responsibility must enable us to move forward, hand in hand, to ensure the consistency of the protection of fundamental rights throughout the European legal area. It is not only a matter of safeguarding rights and freedoms, but also of developing them, as the Preamble to the Convention invites us to do.

Together, we will continue to effectively defend the universality of human rights.

I would like to conclude by quoting the optimistic words of Jean-Paul Costa, at the opening of the judicial year marking the 60th anniversary of the Convention, in his seminar entitled "The Convention Belongs to You": "It seems to me that the European system for the protection of human rights, as it stands and as it has been enriched by fifty years of case law, has all the potential to guarantee it a beneficial future."



## Interview with Director Barbara Hintermann

*The Press Office had the possibility to interview the Director of Terre des Hommes Lausanne Barbara Hintermann on the work of the institution she represents and their role as co-organisers of the World Congress Justice with Children 2025 in Madrid.*

Could you introduce the institution you represent and your background to our audiences?

Terre des hommes Lausanne is the largest Swiss children's rights organization; we employ more than 2'000 colleagues worldwide and are currently active in 27 countries. We were founded in 1960 in Lausanne, where we are based until today. Over the years, other independent European organizations with the name Terre des hommes were founded; for instance, Tierra de hombres España, who we collaborated with for the organization of the fifth World Congress on Justice with Children. Since the 1960s, our mission has remained the same: Advocating, giving voice and empowering children worldwide in their quest for a better future and just life. Today, we support around 5 million children and their families each year in collaboration with our local staff members and partners.

I am the director of Terre des hommes Lausanne since 2020. Although I originally started my professional career in the private sector, I have now spent more than 30 years engaging myself for humanitarian causes. This journey started with UNICEF in Zurich, and most of it – twenty years in total – I spent with the Interna-

tional Committee of the Red Cross, both at HQ in Switzerland as well as in various countries in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

I think my humanitarian journey begun with my Grandma: She had always been very passionate about helping others and working in the humanitarian sector herself, although her path led her in another direction. Her dream and aspirations might have given me this desire to affect others positively and drive change for a better future.

With Terre des hommes, I am thrilled to be back where I started: Working for the benefit of children and advocating for their rights. I am convinced that children are the key to a sustainable and just future, they are our society's architects of tomorrow.

Your institution was a co-organiser of the World Congress Justice with Children this year with the other partners including the Global Campus of Human Rights. Could you briefly explain why is this large event so relevant and describe the most important take aways?

I am very appreciative that together with partners, we were able to organize already the fifth edition of the World Congress. Considering numerous humanitarian crises worldwide,

the issue of justice for children might be more pressing than ever. There are politicians and all sorts of adults who take fundamental decisions often impacting the lives of millions of civilians, yet it is the children who are the first to suffer the consequences of violence, war, and conflict.

I heard many stories of young people who were in conflict with the law or in a position of witness. Mélodie, a member of the Child and Youth Advisory Group, gave a very impressive testimonial during the opening day of the congress. Her experience supporting a peer through a difficult case of sexual assault, and how this experience opened her eyes to the realities of being involved with the justice system is really what it is about. Describing the experience as “(...) embarrassing, intimidating and scary,” we can start to understand how children and young people feel in such difficult situations.

It is stories like hers that demonstrate the importance of amplifying the issue of a child-centered justice and putting it on the map worldwide. The world congress not only allows us to do that, but it also connects numerous experts and decision makers from all over the world. The sharing of experiences and best practices allows us to ensure that all our individual learnings have an impact and foster positive change.

Next to knowledge sharing and connecting people, the collaboration with the Global Campus of Human Rights and our other partners for the world congress of course also allows us to share resources and make sure that our efforts yield the biggest effect possible. In times where the global system of humanitarian aid is being reshaped fundamentally and the respect for human rights is decreasing, I am convinced that closer cooperation, collaboration and resource-pooling – also by involving young people – is the only solution to ensuring the full respect of children’s rights within human rights in general.

For me personally, I am impressed by the magnitude of the congress and the people from all over the world who are engaged in the issue of child-centered justice. Particularly, I am very

touched and inspired by the testimonies of the young people, all of them appealing to us adults: Having all the conventions, treaties, resolutions we do – it is time to put them into real action and make sure they do not remain empty promises. It gives me great hope and joy to see that so many capable individuals fight for the issue worldwide. Although change is complex and there is no shortcut to ensuring that each and every child is being treated according to their rights, I am convinced that we are on the right tracks and that progress is possible: Through a strong political will of leaders at all levels, hard work and dedication, and of course with our collective and aligned effort.

That is why the world congress is so important to me: it proves impressively what can happen if actors and decision makers from all over the world come together with a common goal and the desire to drive positive change.

**In your opinion what are the challenges in the field addressed at the World Congress and the role you see for the human rights education?**

I think the biggest challenges are the complexity and scope of the issue: justice is a global concept, yet justice systems often follow local laws and regulations. In addition to that, affecting change in justice systems takes time and a lot of effort.

This is exactly why the world congress is so important: it allows us to look at the issue from a global perspective and ensuring that child-centered justice does not remain a local exception but a global, fundamental right. Through the exchange with others, we can learn from their experiences, which then helps fostering change on the local level.

The basis for change is of course education. We need to ensure that not only juridical actors are experts in human rights, but all stakeholder and actors in justice systems, starting with civil society and including children themselves: only when children and young people are aware of their rights, they can first help design fair justice systems and second make sure that their rights are being acknowledged

and respected. This is why the concept of the world congress is so fundamental: child-centered systems can never be designed without the perspective and inputs of children and young people themselves. The Child and Youth Advisory Group who were actively involved in the congress from its design and concept to the program are invaluable in this regard. It is inspiring to me to see so many young adults so actively engaged and raising their voice.

**Could you share a message and a call to action to our students, faculty, experts, staff and partners of the Global Campus of Human Rights?**

I would like to encourage everyone who is engaged for human rights to contribute with their means and possibilities to also promote a child-centered justice. It can be hard to see the progress and the challenges and developments might seem unscalable at times. But change takes time and for many issues of our time, there is no simple solution. That is why we cannot stop advocating and fighting for human rights and freedom for all. We need to keep connecting and working together, so that we can do our best. Small changes are precious and encourage others to join. I thank everyone who is engaged in this fight for human rights worldwide, and I would like to encourage everyone to continue their efforts and to never give up on a just future for all.



## Interview with Director Soledad Vallejos

*The Press Office had the opportunity to interview Soledad Vallejos about her experience at the Global Campus Latinamerica and Caribbean LATMA sharing their experience at the movement of “Ni Una Menos”.*

**Did you know about the Global Campus and the LATMA Master's before? Why did you accept the invitation to teach?**

No, I didn't know about the Global Campus or the Master's programme. I accepted the invitation because I was interested in the possibility of contacting Argentine and international students who seek education in human rights and to learn firsthand about concrete cases of impact and intervention. That feedback is always interesting, and the opportunity to exchange ideas with young people coming from different experiences is extremely enriching.

**What approach did you adopt and what topics did you address?**

I sought an experiential yet complex perspective: to tell the story of a complex event, such as the initial mobilization of “Ni Una Menos” in 2015, from the aspect of organizing in the midst of an unprecedented situation. How the long history of grassroots feminist organizations' experience, which is deeply limited in its reach, combined with the expertise of journalists and producers from different media platforms at the time. finding themselves in an unprecedented dilemma: a mobilization proposed (by us) on social media that was exponentially accepted by millions of people who,

for the most part, had not had contact with feminist activism.

**What was the experience like? What kind of feedback did you receive from the students? What aspects did they find most relevant for their career (if it can be deduced from their comments/questions)?**

The experience was very enriching, at least for me, and according to the interventions and comments from students, mobilizing for them. My classes presented something that happened ten years ago, when they were in childhood or transitioning out of it, and the perspectives of what and how it happened were very different. In the cases of students from other countries, the situation became even more complex: in these years of distance from the foundational event (the “Ni Una Menos” mobilization) to the reality of 2025, social media, app development, and Through AI, situations of violence and virtual harassment have multiplied in unimaginable ways until a few years ago. And yet, many experiences found points of contact on which to dialogue and reflect.

**Could you tell us a bit about your experience as a co-founder of Ni Una Menos? And, if possible, some current data on gender vi-**

## olence?

Ten years after that event, the world seems to have travelled millions of kilometres and experiences. Today's social networks –even though they may seem similar on the surface– are not the same, their uses and the people who use them are not either. It's not a matter of individuals but of mentalities. I often think about that temporal distance that alters experience and the possibilities for social intervention or organization in –so to speak– unexpected ways, as it unfolds. Social networks in 2015 helped to catalyse a social conversation that converged on a series of demands and demonstrations; a group. A group of journalists and activists managed to channel it all in less than a month, in a country accustomed to the unexpected, to the unforeseen. And even so, what happened exceeded expectations, which definitely were not up to the level of what actually occurred. Currently, some issues that Ni Una Menos had claimed (and achieved) have been dismantled by political sectors in charge of the State: it is officially denied that there is such a thing as gender-based violence, the validity of sexual and reproductive rights is threatened, and there is an attempt to undo the guarantees for comprehensive sexual education. For that same reason, even the official measurements that allow establishing the dimensions of the problem are at risk.

## **Do you think that social media can help combat gender-based violence? If so, how?**

I believe that social media can always help to combat inequalities, inequities, and violence. But not in an absolute or magical way: there are balances, interests, social interests and concerns that must operate to that end. Also, unpredictable events that cannot be calculated. Sometimes I think that in this global reality, with social networks working as they do today, “Ni Una Menos” might not have grown into the event it became. But that doesn't mean I doubt its power to generate events of interest for the exercise of human rights. I believe there are always ways: we just have to work to create them.

## **Could you leave a message for the students, teachers, and human rights defenders of the Global Campus network?**

I am by nature pessimistic, but how can we not take action? Or at least, how can we not try? In human rights, what other option do we have? There is always something to contribute, to do, to seek, and to change. I believe that a large part of our mission, if we have one, is that. The other is to see others and understand that we are part of the same, whether we think the same way or not: there is no choice but to coexist, to guarantee the full exercise of human rights for us and for others is essential to enjoy our lives.



## Interview with Curator Carlo Ratti

*The Press Office had the honour to interview the Curator of the Biennale Architettura 2025, Engineer and Architect Carlo Ratti, about this famous international exhibition, the world challenges addressed and his views on human rights and democracy education.*

**Could you tell us about yourself and your background until you arrive at the important position of Curator of the Biennale Architettura 2025? Any important news to share about your career and next projects?**

I began my journey as an engineer, then became an architect, and pursued my PhD in a highly interdisciplinary setting—between the University of Cambridge and MIT. That cross-disciplinary approach shaped me. I have always seen cities not as static structures, but as dynamic conversations between disciplines—engineering, design, art, science, and beyond. That philosophy underpins the Biennale Architettura 2025.

At the Senseable City Lab and CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati, our research and design reflect the same ethos. We are currently diving deep into projects on both fronts. Some quick examples: on the research side, we are utilizing AI to analyze the cooling power of urban vegetation across millions of data points and cities worldwide—a vital issue as global temperatures rise. On the design front, we are on-site in Modena, working on one of Southern Europe's largest cultural centers: the Sant'Agostino Complex. It features a movable, origami-inspired roof designed in collaboration with my Harvard colleague Chuck Hoberman.

And while I enjoy the energy of this Biennale Architettura this summer, I am also sketching out ideas for what comes next!

**For the first time, the Exhibition features over 300 contributions from more than 750 participants: architects and engineers, mathematicians and climate scientists, philosophers and artists, cooks and coders, writers and carvers, farmers and fashion designers, and many others. You said that in these times of adaptation, architecture must rethink authorship and become more inclusive. How do you see the relationships between architecture and our discipline of education on human rights and democracy and also with the academic research in the field? And in particular, in the Exhibition you had curated?**

Architecture today is about much more than buildings – it is about shaping how we live together. At this Biennale, we champion what I call polyphonic authorship: multiple voices working together. It is a call for architects to become listeners—a surprisingly difficult task! This approach strongly echoes the values of human rights and democratic education. Both demand inclusive, participatory processes.

**You cared for generating a foundational**

**reflection, study and debate for the near future. In your opinion what will be the most important challenges we will need to address in the near future and how human rights defenders, activists and professionals of our network could contribute?**

Climate adaptation is at the top of the list - but it is not just a scientific or technical challenge. It is deeply connected to both human and planetary rights. I believe your global network can play a vital role, especially in protecting the rights of climate refugees, who are among the most vulnerable groups on the planet.

There is also a powerful conversation emerging around granting rights to non-human entities: rivers, forests, and entire ecosystems. This raises legal and ethical questions, and it is an area where the insights of human rights scholars could be incredibly valuable.


**Any particular causes that you have in your heart also for the activities of your non-profit Foundation for Architecture?**

We launched the Foundation for Architecture (FFA) to support the Biennale Architettura 2025 – and especially its most experimental dimensions. One of a curator's lesser-known tasks is fundraising, and FFA played a key role in enabling what we referred to as our "special projects."

Now that we have this vehicle, we are looking ahead. Together with our advisory board, we are exploring how the FFA can support experimental and temporary architecture more generally. These are fields that often struggle to access traditional funding channels, yet are rich with potential for innovation and impact.

**Could you give a message to students, professors, partners and staff of our more than 100 Universities of our academic network of the Global Campus of Human Rights?**

Even in today's challenging global context, I believe optimism is essential. The philosopher Karl Popper said that "optimism is a duty." Why? Because the future is not set in stone, it depends on us. It is our responsibility to shape it for the better, starting with the design of the places and communities we inhabit.



## Interview with Raizes Theatre Director Alessandro Lenzi

*The Press Office had the pleasure to interview our partner the Director of Raizes Theatre, Alessandro Lenzi, about the relations of arts and human rights and in particular his work with performances such as the one he brought for the opening of the Venice School for Human Rights Defenders 2025.*

**Alessandro, your work often blends activism and performance. What inspired "La caja de concreto", and how does it speak to the experiences of political prisoners or those who resist oppressive regimes?**

"La Caja de Concreto" was born from the meeting with Lorent and from the long conversations during which we addressed the theme of the importance of democracy, freedom and poetry in our lives, and during which we explored the importance of creating global awareness regarding the existence of so many kidnapped and prisoners throughout the world, often forgotten, who live every day in inhuman and degrading conditions and whose fate depends on us, on our degree of interest in their cases, in their lives, in their freedom which, ultimately, is also ours.

The performance speaks both to all citizens who suffer the oppression of totalitarian regimes and also to all those who are perpetrating oppression and supporting it, the performance speaks clearly and says in no uncertain terms that freedom has no limit, no end, and that, no matter how hard someone can try to repress our need for freedom, freedom will be reborn within us every day, and will allow

us to continue to stand against injustice and oppression.

There was a moment during the rehearsals when observing Lorent on the stage I understood that we were no longer just talking about his imprisonment, but we were telling his desire for freedom, his capacity for resistance and his courage that are certainly able to inspire many people and invites them to resist and continue to stand for freedom and democracy.

**You're both engaging with a new generation of human rights defenders here in Venice. What do you hope they take away from your presence and your work?**

This is a very difficult moment, in which the points of reference are rapidly changing, they are being erased. Here then the right and wrong binomial and our system of moral and constitutional values is continuously questioned and questioned.

Art and theater can undoubtedly rebalance the system, speak to our hearts, free our souls, and for a moment bring back clarity and hope. Theater is a prism and breaks the polarity, it allows us to listen to the world deeply for an hour or a little more.

The invitation to all the new human rights defenders is to keep clear in their hearts and minds their system of values, the set of all the principles in which they deeply believe and then seek, with imagination and creativity, the most creative solutions to ensure that rights, inclusion and democratic and free global citizenship are possible every day for the greatest number of human beings.

**Art has long been a vehicle for protest and change. How do you see theatre—and your collaboration in particular—contributing to the broader human rights movement? What gives you hope and drives you to continue your work?**

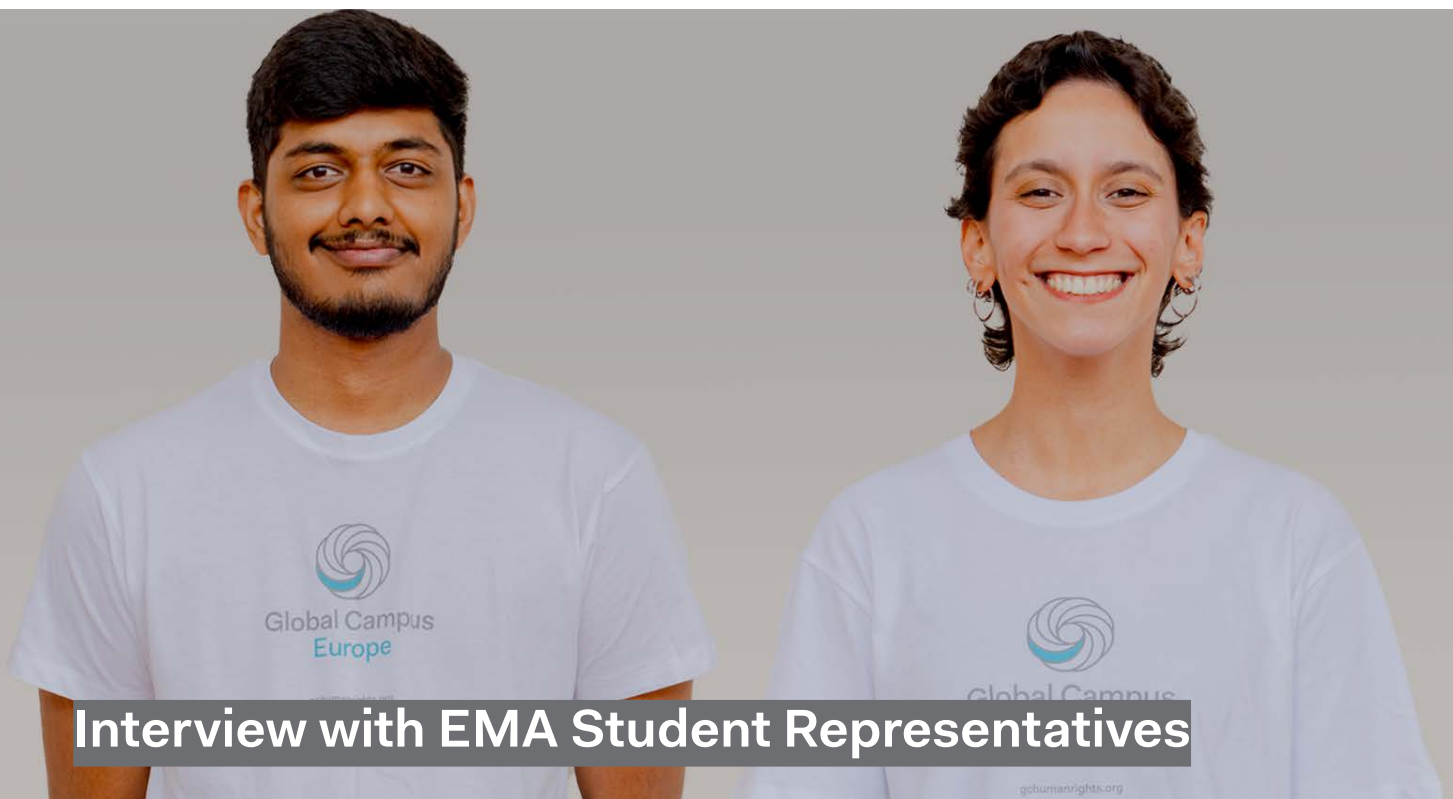
Art allows us to be reborn every day. Through the exploration of human dynamics, of the opposing and cooperative plots that exist between human beings, we find the reasons of the soul and its profound movements in the world.

The world and humanity move in depth, the real plots of life move in depth, and that is where the theater takes us, in that hidden area where we discover that we have more hope, more strength, more courage, more love of life than we ever imagined.

This depth, this profound sense allows us to communicate with the entire human rights movement, with institutions, with civic movements, with young people, and to communicate in that area of life where fear feels stronger but leaves room for courage, and all its magnificent forms and expressions that allow us to survive.

The search for human rights is therefore a continuous movement that, like the theater, will never end, because it is grafted into that deep and peaceful place that exists in every human being, the place of conscience where love for creation, for the world and for its inhabitants is grafted.

The path for human rights will therefore always be full of hope, because life was designed to protect and survive and not for fratricide, lowering one's arms would be too unnatural, and it will not happen so easily. We are alive, therefore, and we continue step by step for ourselves and for others.



## Interview with EMA Student Representatives

*The Press Office had the opportunity to interview the Global Campus Europe EMA students representatives 2024-2025, Dhurv Vijay Maroo and Vitoria Viana Assis during their participation of the eight Online Global Campus of Human Rights Conversations and their experiences living in Venice.*

**Could you tell us more about yourself and your roles as EMA student representatives? Could you describe the experience of studying in Venice during the first semester of the Masters?**

As EMA student representatives, we act as a liaison between the student body and Global Campus/EMA staff, collecting feedback, concerns, and suggestions through both formal and informal channels during the entire academic year. We participate in EMA Executive Committee and Academic Council meetings, providing consultative input through reports and presentations on key decisions related to curriculum, student experience, and the overall programme. This year, we also started a series where we piloted monthly webinars on the practical application of human rights principles in the field, coordinating with experts and academics to share real-world insights and experiences with students across different networks. Our mandate has been to act as a bridge between the present student

cohort and the programme administration — facilitating communication, raising concerns, and helping co-create a participatory learning environment. But beyond logistics and advocacy, the role has also meant fostering solidarity within a deeply diverse class of peers, where each student brings unique cultural, academic, and professional experiences.

Living in Italy for us felt like a very unique opportunity, especially with so many of us coming from different countries around the world, not necessarily Europe. Venice is a city rich with history and beauty, which makes the “Floating City” feel even more magical throughout the seasons. We were surprised and excited to see different spaces open for engagement with local politics, such as Morion, and we were happy to attend demonstrations and take part in venetian society. Still, sometimes it felt like living in a small “bubble”, with a lot of tourism and a quite expensive life in terms of accommodation, as students.

**What could be a possible future for the city**

**in terms of hospitality of foreign students, academic offers, quality of living and ways to improve the current conditions you have experienced? Do you think there is a way for Venice to become more efficient, innovative, attractive and well-prepared to host important events and course studies? What could students like you need?**

**Vitória:** There are many ways in which Venice can improve and attract future students, especially with exchange programmes. A few direct areas of improvement that struck me the most were accessibility and cost of living.

As a very unique place with the canals and vaporettos, it is easy to romanticise living in such a beautiful city. Still, we must recognise that there is room for improvement. When speaking about accessibility I found not so many places are equipped or infrastructures available to comply with international accessibility principles. For a truly inclusive environment, Venice must improve or retrofit its infrastructure, introduce more accessible transportation, and consult directly with disability rights groups to redesign civic spaces. While we understand that Venice is a historic city with many old constructions, the advent of modern technology has enabled the addition of accessible infrastructure even in such limited spaces, which could address the glaring issue in the city regarding accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

In terms of cost of living, as international and local students, finding accommodation and living in Venice was a challenge for many of us. The prices are high and only increasing, with the housing market consisting mainly of vacation homes. Speaking to landlords was a challenge too, especially for those who do not speak any Italian, as many students later realised that the offers were not honest but rather scams and that the prices estimated for different bills did not reflect in reality what would need to be charged. To inclusively and encouragingly open space for students to go to Venice, the city must answer to their needs and readjust its approaches towards the market and regulation, so that students can have a good experience with practical matters, but

also in terms of quality of life.

**Dhruv:** Venice holds great potential to be an international academic hub, but it must address some structural barriers that inhibit inclusion, sustainability, and accessibility to improve the student experience. For example, the housing market in Venice is prohibitively expensive and also very underregulated. Several students were scammed while seeking rentals which is symptomatic of a broader issue with the commodification of housing that prioritises short-term tourism or vacation ones. At the same time, there were many buildings that were completely abandoned, and many clearly vacant vacation homes. If Venice seeks to be a student friendly city, it must reckon with these housing issues and better regulate the market.

Additionally, some parts of the city, particularly around Lido due to its history, carry symbols of fascist ideology and racial hate that are visible through graffiti in public places. Some students of colour also were victimised through both, racial microaggressions and overt discriminatory encounters. A city that seeks to host international scholars must also actively confront and deconstruct these hateful ideologies.

Finally, even with student discounts, basic services in Venice, especially public transport, remains very expensive. Venice must reconsider its pricing and accessibility models for essential services and increase subsidies for student residents. Ultimately, students like us need to feel dignity, belonging, and freedom in the cities that host our learning. Venice can be such a space if it is willing to include students, rather than only focus on tourists, as contributors to its future growth.

**How do you envisage the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) being integrated into the sustainable future of the city of Venice and the Region of Veneto? Do you have any specific concrete ideas? How might EMA students continue to help at the local level in the possible sustainable future scenarios? And in particular, what is your vision about students' participation in sportive events as you did for the Venice Marathon and ones abroad in the second**

### semester to promote peace?

The SDGs, particularly SDGs 11 (Sustainable Cities), 13 (Climate Action), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) could be integrated in Venice and the region of Veneto through different initiatives and offer an opportunity to work towards an actionable framework to improve the present and future. Some concrete actions could include advocating with local government and caretaker organisations for promoting reuse of historic heritage buildings for respectful public and educational purposes, rather than only being subject to exploitation by tourism. This can potentially include partnerships with institutions like our Global Campus to temporarily transform such spaces into hubs for knowledge sharing, inter-cultural activities, and human rights education.

Moreover, Venice is especially vulnerable to climate change due to its geographical location. Therefore, there must be a focus on advocacy and action for the mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change. Under these lights, students can use the skills and knowledge learned in class to support localised climate action through participatory research and advocacy, engagement with other activist student groups and organisations, and collaboration with environmental NGOs that operate in the Venice region. There are already many organisations, activist groups, and NGOs active in Venice that work on various fields of Human Rights and Democratisation. In some cases EMA students have already benefited from such organisations through attending workshops, knowledge-sharing sessions, advocacy panels, and other events. The EMA students, and the Global Campus community more broadly, can help build a “Venice Human Rights Network” which can function as a coalition of NGOs, activist groups, students, and other partners for co-hosting campaigns, strategising for meaningful action, and building long-term community involvement for the betterment of the city and its inhabitants.

When talking about sports, they are a powerful way to bring people together and promote peace and human rights. From our own experiences, Dhruv’s work with refugee communities

has allowed him to see how sports can be a tool to facilitate intercultural understanding, break down barriers, build trust, and help people feel like they belong. It also supports both physical and mental well-being, and provides a space where everyone can participate equally. Vitória’s work with different marginalised communities throughout the world also highlights the importance of sports when talking about inclusion and human rights, especially in terms of hope. When people feel connected through something, they share a mutual understanding that in spite of the hardness in life, there are ways to push through and find beauty and lightness in community.

It is increasingly obvious that sports and human rights are becoming even more connected. The United Nations and many other international entities have recognised the role of sport in promoting peace, equality, education, and inclusion.

Students can also better leverage sports during their time in Venice to promote the understanding of human rights, democratisation, and peacebuilding. The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) in Venice already runs local sports leagues for students which can be a valuable platform that the Global Campus can collaborate with. By integrating human rights advocacy into these sporting events through themed matches, awareness campaigns, fundraising for local NGOs, or educational workshops, we can increase the permeation of human rights values among other students in the region and thereby create more socially conscious future stewards of society.

**Which topics could be interesting to address in relation to your human rights and democracy education during these times of war conflicts, economic, environmental and health crises? Which will be the most important challenges in relation to promoting human rights and democracy in the years to come?**

**Vitória:** It is because we have been witnessing so much change in terms of democracy and multiple crises that we must continue to address and take on challenges regarding human rights now, and in the future. Personally, I be-

lieve some of these many important topics are:

**The intersection of armed conflicts and human rights education.** To protect the right to education is to preserve a tool for resilience, especially in times of conflict and chaos. Learning provides children with structure and community, and the fundamental aim of human rights education extends beyond knowledge transfer — we learn the importance of treating others with respect; and consequently of preventing conflict. Enhancing democratic capacities in institutions, whether in Europe or Non-Western localities, and the faith in change and collective action are matters intrinsic to education.

**Environmental justice and the climate crisis.** Understanding the relationship between human rights and the environment is the first and most essential step towards addressing its violations and destruction. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a framework for understanding how environmental protection is necessary in order to realise human rights overall. Still, the challenges faced are many and the harm is disproportional when we consider vulnerable communities, such as but not only indigenous peoples, women, and informal settlements in urban peripheries across the world. The urgency of climate change effects urges us to consider and dive deep into intersectional approaches, as to possibly find a way to minimise issues.

**Navigating political polarisation and the future of human rights.** Under these challenges, structural social inequality continues to fundamentally undermine democratic participation and human rights education. Future human rights formation needs to continue to more effectively address economic and social rights, which are often subordinated to civil and political rights in traditional human rights discourse. This is even more dire when talking about political polarisation, as human rights themselves become politicised issues — creating and protecting educational spaces where dialogue across differences is possible without compromising fundamental human dignity is a must.

Having all of these considerations in mind, as

a Brazilian woman studying human rights in a time of multiple converging crises across the world, I believe the most pressing challenge is actually developing and implementing approaches that acknowledge the interconnectedness of these crises, whilst maintaining hope in the possibility for change. Addressing rising inequalities, countering authoritarianism, and responding to environmental degradation all require educational approaches that combine critical analysis with practical action. The path forward must consider matters that are contextually relevant yet globally connected, theoretically grounded yet practically oriented, and critical of existing structures while preserving hope for the possibility of transformations.

**Dhruv:** The current state of the world, marked by increasing conflict, right-wing political shifts, shrinking civic space, and increasing attacks on the fundamental human rights values of society, demands a recalibration of how we approach human rights education. Some interesting emerging topics that I believe would be important to understand to deal with future challenges include:

**Misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech.** These are not just communication challenges, rather they are structural threats to democracy and social cohesion. Recent events have shown us the power of MDH to skew societal perceptions, promote hate, bigotry, and violence, and also directly impact governance policies. Most recently, I personally witnessed the effects of a large-scale coordinated disinformation campaign during the recent India–Pakistan escalation and I believe that we must be better equipped to counter propaganda, amplification of hate, and the manipulation of public opinion through our work and interactions with society.

**Climate change and displacement.** Human rights discourse must address climate-induced displacement not as a future risk but a present crisis. The gaps in legal protection for climate refugees are becoming increasingly evident as more and more people flee to seek safety and dignity. Currently, “climate refugees” are treated as an emerging concept

rather than a present pressing issue. Human Rights education must include components of the intersectionality of climate induced displacement, the relevant implications on human rights, and the corresponding application of International Law principles.

**Impunity and non-enforcement of IHRL.** The proliferation of conflicts has exposed the limits of existing international accountability mechanisms, even when dealing with heinous crimes. From Syria and Sudan to Ukraine and Palestine, parties in conflicts are openly violating IHRL and IHL with no actual repercussions. The challenge lies not only in enforcement but in building international pressure that can generate political will. Currently, I believe we are in a pivotal moment where international institutions are being forced to reckon with their systematic issues and complacent natures. Human rights education needs to prepare students to understand how online narratives are shaped, how hate is manufactured, and how to respond in ethical and effective ways. This is the perfect time for students and young activists to leverage their skills and create strong advocacy networks, as well as influence change through their respective personal and professional lives.

**Decolonising human rights.** One of the most important long-term challenges in Human Rights to me is rethinking how human rights are understood, taught, and practiced. Much of the current framework is still based on Western legal traditions and priorities, which can make it feel distant or even alienating in post-colonial contexts. The decolonisation of human rights means listening to different indigenous knowledge systems, recognising histories of oppression, and making space for communities to define rights in ways that reflect their realities. It's also about shifting from a model of "giving rights" to people (a narrative often employed when engaging with the Global South), to a model that acknowledges and supports community struggles for dignity and rights that have existed long before Western tools and frameworks such as the UDHR.

**Could you share a message with the Global Campus of Human Rights Community (pro-**

**fessors, experts, alumni, staff) and to their students in particular?**

**Vitória:** To all the Global Campus community: there is so much to be said, and yet very few words can describe the great depth of your work and its long-lasting effects. The endless support and encouragement offered from all of you is unparalleled and your openness inspires us to always take one step further in making the world a better place. I am every day more convinced that the GC is not only an academic opportunity, but a community that is built from a shared passion to learn, and a strong will to fight for a life where hope for the future belongs to us all. Here's to hoping the effort to confront the world's harshness continues with unwavering resolve, whilst its passionate advocacy for important causes allows future 'changemakers' to shine and stand against injustice.

To all the students across the network: to have the opportunity to learn in an environment such as this one, from not only renowned professors and experts, but also from your peers is unique and life-changing. To have this amount of access to education is a chance to embrace distinction, and most importantly to make a difference. Harness every ounce of potential. The study of Human Rights is not linear, but it is everlasting. This programme challenges you to learn, but also to step out of your comfort zone. Do not conform, but rather embrace the obstacles and ask difficult questions. Listen truthfully and think critically, for there is so much beyond our own realities. This can be a transformative time, both professionally and personally, if we let it be. Break away from patterns of thought and allow vulnerability. Lastly, and before anything else, do not lose hope in what we do. It is in times of despair and frustration that we understand the importance of it all.

**Dhruv:** To the Global Campus community: your work, support, and willingness to continue educating future generations gives the rest of us the language and tools to confront injustice with clarity and courage. You offer not just education, but hope that we can work towards a better future. Us students are bound to the

GC community not only by academic interest but by a shared moral project to build a more equitable and dignified world that enshrines the respect for human rights and democratic governance. In these times of escalating crises, I hope that the GC community continues its ever important work to advocate for meaningful change while also continuing to foster future change makers with the same commitment that we have personally seen during our experience and interactions with the GC community so far.

To the students across the network: I would like to share some insights from my experience and from the knowledge passed on to me by my mentors and inspirations in this field. This education is not a rehearsal for when things go wrong but rather a preparation to fight in the continuous battle for a better world. As we keep seeing every single day, the rights we are studying about in our classroom are constantly and increasingly under attack around the world, and our generation must decide how history will remember us. Take this time during your studies to unlearn harmful hierarchies, embrace discomfort, and build strong action-focused networks of peers. Look beyond the existing frameworks and ask hard questions to those in power. Let your solidarity be intersectional and your imagination radical. We must remember that in a world where cynicism towards human rights and humanitarian principles is increasingly prevalent, your insistence on justice is already a form of rebellion. Let us take what we've learned and be catalysts for this change that we keep speaking of. We must build alliances across regions, fields, and ideologies and show that solidarity with each other is not just a social media hashtag but a practice embedded within all of us. Above all, we must act, not only when it's safe or easy, but precisely when it can be hard and is needed most. Remember that as future practitioners and defenders, your role is not to echo the consensus but rather to challenge it. We must continue to act on our principles even when no one is watching. Finally, and most importantly, believe that human rights work is not naïve, it is necessary to ensure a better future for humanity.

The background of the slide features a blurred image of a keyboard on a wooden desk. A color gradient is applied across the entire image, transitioning from a light blue at the top to a warm orange at the bottom. The text is centered and presented in a bold, dark grey font on a white background.

**Online Course  
“Authoring Justice”:  
Capstone Projects**

# Introduction

From 12 May to 20 July 2025 the Global Campus of Human Rights ran the second edition of its online course called "**Authoring Justice**". The course focused on how to write powerful narrative nonfiction works about human rights and social justice issues – using storytelling to touch the hearts and minds of readers and affect change around the world. The second iteration included lessons from award-winning authors, activists and publishers, including Professor Andrew Leon Hanna (the main lecturer), Kao Kalia Yang, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Shahram Khosravi, Jemma Neville, Casey Gerald, and Joel Rickett.

The cohort of students included human rights experts, journalists, climate activists, professors, and researchers from across the globe with a wide range of focus areas – from migration to racial justice, from youth-led social movements to climate advocacy and beyond. The following pages feature a few selected examples of the students' "**Capstone Projects**," which were designed to be either standalone long-form works or components of books they are now beginning to write.

*Check the entire collection of the Capstone Projects [here](#).*

# Rooted identity: three generations of women across Europe and Latin America

*By Maria Eugenia Alurralde*

The warm smell of tomato, meat, onion, garlic, olive oil, and hot iron welcomed me every Sunday as soon as I stepped into my grandparents' house. I would run across the hallway into the dining room to greet my nonno, who sat at the big dining table reading the newspaper. The smell drew me to the room right in front: the kitchen. With her back to me, the stocky figure of my nonna and her short dark gray hair blocked the view of what was happening on the stovetop. But I already knew.

A large black iron pot was cooking the tuco (a bolognese-style sauce originally from Italy's Liguria region) that would accompany the homemade fettuccine for the family lunch. I was welcomed into the kitchen by my nonna's warm and comforting embrace. "Hola rosa!", she greeted me smiling. She used to call me that because she said that to her, I was a rose.

My nonna immediately grabbed a piece of bread, dipped it into the hot tuco, and gave it to me. The bread softened and turned red, soaked in the intense flavor of the sauce. I ate it in small bites so I wouldn't burn myself. That experience was even more sublime than eating the freshly made pasta for lunch.

The food I grew up with is what connects me the most with my Italian heritage. Along with the tuco and the homemade fettuccine, my childhood was shaped by pizza nights, olive snacks, and afternoons with pignolata - a traditional sweet and crunchy Sicilian pastry.

As the grandchild of two Sicilian immigrants who settled in Buenos Aires, Argentina at the dawn of World War II, half of my ethnic identity is rooted in Italy, a country governed by the principle of *ius sanguinis* (right of blood) that recognizes the transmission of citizenship by

descent. But according to my documentation, during the first 20 years of my life I was only Argentine.

Despite being born and raised in Argentina, my mother, daughter of Sicilian parents, is fully Italian by descent, and she only obtained Italian citizenship at the age of 50. “When I applied for Italian citizenship the consulate was closed, and it only reopened eight years later,” she tells me. It seems this was due to a corruption report involving a network that falsified Italian passports for football players.



My nonna's name was Annetta. She was born in 1925 in Maló, a small rural village in the Sicilian province of Messina. She lived in a two-story stone house on a hill with her parents Francesco and Giuseppina, her younger sister Margherita, a cat whose name was lost in ancestral memory and the goat Gigia (many years later, at the age of eighty and after my nonno died, she would have a small white poodle she would name Gigio.) She had a third sister who died as a baby. They never knew what happened to her.

Her father Francesco worked at a lime kiln in the valley area until he emigrated to Argentina in 1931 in search of better living conditions for his family, just like millions of Italians did during those years marked by economic crisis and difficult social conditions. My nonna was 6 years old when her father left, and she didn't see him again until 9 years later. “They lived a peasant's life, marked by the poverty of the interwar period and, in many cases, by medieval customs,” my mother explains when I ask her about my nonna's childhood.

My nonna went to a small school in the village until third grade. She loved her teacher very much. Her teacher loved her dearly too and always praised her intelligence. My nonna was fascinated by the books, and she quickly learned to read and write. But, at that time, in rural Sicily children were part of the workforce, so she wasn't allowed to keep learning anymore. They taught her to embroider, and she helped with farm tasks like picking olives and milking Gigia. “If she had been given a choice, she would have chosen books,” my mother says.

She couldn't choose.

Food was scarce, partly because there weren't enough men for labor. With her husband away, Giuseppina was alone with two daughters. "I believe part of my grandmother's violence was because she only had girls. She gave birth to three daughters, and she needed labor," my mother explains. My nonna grew up with an aggressive mother, so she spent her time hiding from her to avoid being hit. One day she was so scared of her mother's beatings that she hid in a barrel for many hours. The whole village went out looking for her.

In 1940, when she was 15 years old, my nonna and her family boarded the last transatlantic ship to depart from Genoa to America before the start of World War II. The ship was escorted by military submarines. My nonna didn't want to leave Italy. She didn't want to leave her friends, her family, her village, her cat, Gigia. Once again, she didn't have a choice.

Francesco was waiting for them in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They settled in a suburban neighbourhood a few kilometers from the capital. A community of Italians had taken root there - people who, like them, had come to the country seeking a better future.

Their first home in Buenos Aires was a small, cold room with a pit toilet. They didn't know anyone and they didn't speak Spanish. Having arrived nine years earlier, Francesco had already been working as a gardener for some time. Giuseppina made a living washing clothes for well-off families. Margherita was able to complete primary school in Buenos Aires. Like my nonna, her sister was very smart, and the school principal told Giuseppina to let her finish secondary school so she could become a teacher. But the family needed everyone to work. The most common thing there was to work in factories, yet Giuseppina wanted something better for her daughters, so they continued learning sewing, dressmaking, and embroidery.

Over time, my nonna grew to love Argentina. There was an abundance of food, growth and opportunities. The family moved to a better house, and my nonna and her sister gained recognition in the neighborhood as

talented dressmakers and embroidery teachers.

When she was 22 she met Salvatore, my nonno, also a Sicilian migrant who lived in the neighbourhood. He came from Biancavilla, a town more developed than my nonna's Maló, and had a more comfortable economic background than her. He had been living in Argentina since he was four. They got married in 1953. My nonna continued working as a dressmaker and my nonno was a foreman at a factory of storage products for agricultural use. They had three children, two boys and a girl, my mother. In 1973 their eldest son died in an accident while practicing rowing. He was 16 years old.



My mother's name is Adriana. She has the same dark hair and stoic warmth as my nonna. She is a geography and history high school teacher and loves languages. In addition to her mother tongue Spanish she speaks fluent English, French and Italian. "My mom didn't want me to speak the Sicilian dialect because she thought it was tacky. Saying 'u garuzzu' does not sound the same as saying 'il ragazzo'. That's why she was so delighted when I decided to study Italian in the Dante Alighieri Academy", she tells me. Even though she lived in Argentina her whole life, married my father Ignacio who was Argentinian, and raised me, my sister Sofia and my brother Nacho here, my mother does not feel like she belongs in this country: "I feel prouder when I say I am Italian than when I say I am Argentinian". Her friends call her Tana, a very common nickname used in Argentina to refer to people of Italian origin.

Even so, my mother tells me that she doesn't feel very connected to Italian culture, except for the songs. There was a lot of Italian music playing in the family, and that was also her first approach to learning the language before she studied it at the academy. I asked my mother whether she felt like my siblings and I had grown connected to Italy, and she says no: "I think that's also because I myself don't have a connection with Italian culture. Maybe it's something I still need to explore, which is why I would like to live for two months in Rome and two months in Sicily sometime," she elaborates.

My sister Sofia and I don't feel quite the same. For us, growing up so close to our nonna connected us to Italy. I also think that the fact that my mother continued with the lineage of the language, the tuco, the homemade pasta, the pizza, and the Italian music filling our home contributed to this. "What connected me most to my Italian roots was my nonna. Mom too, especially during our childhood and in our youth after my nonna passed away. I think a lot of it was through music. I listen to 'Il ballo del mattone' by Rita Pavone and it feels like my childhood," Sofia tells me.

Three years ago we both returned to our nonna's home region. We now live in Madrid. Unlike my nonna, my sister and I finished school, had the opportunity to choose university degrees, and also chose to emigrate to Europe.

Sofia is 32 years old – a year and a half younger than me – and she is an English translator and an education specialist. She arrived in Madrid in February 2022. She currently works in the private sector and lives in the northeast of Madrid with her Dutch boyfriend, whom she met at work.

Last year Sofia and her boyfriend went on vacation to Sardinia, an Italian island nestled in the heart of the Mediterranean. They caught a bus at the airport that took them to the beach town they would stay at. "The journey was long, and I remember the bus passing through a mountain landscape. In that view, the first thing I saw was the Mediterranean Sea and the same eroded stone mountains with little green dots that my nonna used to show me in the postcards she kept with images of Sicily. That, for me, was like an awakening. I realized that I come from here, and I felt very proud," she describes.

We often do pizza nights at my sister's apartment. Her pizza is just as delicious as my mom's. My nonna's pizza had a thicker, fluffier crust, and my mom added her own twist by switching to a thin, crispy, stone-baked dough. There's always pomodoro sauce and fresh mozzarella, topped with a variety of ingredients like arugula and bacon, tomato and garlic, or ham and peppers. Recently, my sister introduced a new

topping combination: mushrooms sautéed in olive oil and garlic, with a touch of lemon zest. That one is my favorite pizza these days.

When we emigrated, my sister and I entered Europe with our Italian passports, so in bureaucratic terms, here we are Italian. Mom comes to visit us every year, and she also enters the continent with her Italian passport. It might be that for some people from Latin America an Italian passport is just that: a document that opens the doors to a region with more development, more opportunities, and better living conditions. But for me, my mom, and my sister, Italy is rooted in our history, our heritage, and our identity.

In May of this year, Giorgia Meloni's government approved a law that limits the scope of the *ius sanguinis* principle. Now, only those who have grandparents or parents born in Italy can obtain citizenship. Additionally, these ancestors must have held exclusively Italian citizenship or have resided continuously in the country for a minimum of two years before the descendant's birth. According to a BBC article, "(...) the decision aims to set clearer limits and 'prevent abuses' such as businesses surrounding the acquisition of the passport."

This doesn't affect my sister or me. But if either of us has children in Madrid, the situation could become complicated. A child of Argentine parents born abroad is not automatically Argentine; to obtain the nationality, a process called the "nationality option" must be completed. With the new law, a child of Italians born abroad no longer automatically acquires citizenship by right of blood either. Since our connection to Italy is quite direct because it comes through our nonna and nonno, everything indicates that, for now, our next generation could continue to be Italian.

The law is very recent, so we will have to see how this policy develops when the time comes. But one thing we are sure of: our identity goes beyond what the government and the current political trend decide, and if we ever have children, they will also be raised with a nonna, pizza, tuco, and Rita Pavone.

# Never again

*By Ena Bavčić*

**W**hen I think of my grandmother, I think of her hands. Soft and rough at the same time, she had the prettiest hands in our family. I was always puzzled by how her hands kept the softness and roughness at the same time.

The velvety skin, and the soft and moist sensation I felt when touching her hands matched her lifestyle and nature. Rarely leaving the house, she has managed to leave an impression of a well-guarded lady. But my grandmother almost never used hand cream. And she never lived a life of a lady. It was like she wanted her rough skin to stay as a reminder of the cruel realness of her stories.

Her long fingers have combed my hair so many times while telling tales. Her stories were never magical, but I always listened to them like they were the most imaginative fairy tales. I grew up listening to them. Stories of life, survival, war, and resistance.

My grandmother's name was Muša, nana Muša (Musha) we called her. She always regretted her name, saying that she was first called Hasena. But her parents had no male children, and they lived in a village where a son was needed to work the land. Her mother got pregnant again while my grandmother was still a baby, so the old ladies of the village advised her to rename her last daughter, my nana. She should give her name that would sound like a word "male" (muško), as this, they believed, would give them a son.

My nana passed away last year, seven months after her last great grandchild was born, and two years after I moved away to another country. The day that she died was the first time in a couple of years since all her grandchildren were supposed to gather to see her. Three of us have moved abroad, and it was difficult to manage our schedules to meet, and the pandemic did not help. I had my travels planned for that day. The night before travelling, I had dreamt of her, she came to me to say goodbye. In the morning my mum called to say that she had

passed. I was the last one to arrive, and she was too weak to wait for me. But she made sure to say goodbye.

Her stories have stayed with me. Over time, I always joked how my trans-generational trauma is stronger than my own war trauma. Nana Muša was born in Višegrad, east Bosnia, near the border with Serbia, several dozen kilometres from Srebrenica. This part is known for brutal stories of wars.

Nana was a child when WWII started. She has lost seven siblings due to starvation and other ailments. Her father was killed for trying to defend his Serb colleague that was in line to be shot at by NDH, Nazi collaborators. The designated killer was their friend though, and apparently, he told them that he needed to shoot them, but he will aim to wound and not kill them, providing an opportunity for them to get away. My great-grandfather's friend made it alive, but my great-grandfather did not. Later, she told stories of her aunt being brutally killed in front of her eyes. Nana's uncle had been a double agent, and one of the stories says that he at some point helped Tito escape fascists by dressing him as a veiled Muslim woman. Ironically, after the war, he was put in jail for protesting Communist Party decision banning veils. In exchange for releasing her husband, the aunt threatened to expose a former chetnik, Serb Nazi collaborator who had just pretended to be a partisan. He told her to go home and not worry about it. While they were having a family lunch, the fake partisan came and killed my nana's aunt in front of the entire family. It was a warning kill.

I was never sure which aspect of her stories is true, and which one is exaggerated. Many of them missed important context details for me to actually verify them. Also, few of her relatives have survived the 1992-1995 war, and those who did became scattered all over the world.

But one thing is sure, these stories have taught me that things are not black and white. They also taught me resilience and resistance (even though I am sure it was never her intention for me to become a vocal activist, putting my safety sometimes at stake). Most importantly, they taught me empathy, understanding that it is important to help those in

need, and that it is important to value people for their individual actions. But also, that some people can change their minds, while others never do in spite of their appearances.



There is a folk belief in Bosnia that every generation needs to go through two wars. This was true for my grandmother and her mother. This perpetual cycle of violence has pushed women to develop mechanisms for teaching their descendants to be more resilient. A big part of these mechanisms were stories. Narratives that they tried to embed into younger generations of how to survive, how to resist, respect and, for girls, how avoid being raped if a military storms in.

So now, at the moment when we feel like each wrong move may lead to a global war, I start to wonder if the time for our “second war” would come. Despite all rationalisation, this fear is strongly embedded in me. I have managed to fight it off in my local context, where politics is playing with this fear of war to make people numb for corruption. Also, moving away made more preoccupied with international politics.

My mum, on the other hand, who was in her early thirties and with two small children when the war in Bosnia started, is more concerned by the local politics. She does not want to make the same mistake of naively believing that a war could never break out in Bosnia. My mum has done miracles for us during the war. But now, like for most Bosnians, her main worry is if another war is breaking up. And this is true for most of my co-patriots, one way or another.

The war in Ukraine scared us. It made us relive some memories as a group of people who were sieged. But the western reaction gave us hope, a hope that maybe if the next time comes things would be different, we would be seen.

Then another genocide started.

Scenes from Gaza completely broke us. The starvation, the abandonment, targeting of civilians under a pretext of self-preservation and security are all too familiar strategies. Just this time we can follow

them live and on a much larger scale (the population of Gaza is almost the same as the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina).

And we feel so helpless.

The reactions are different. Like with any PTSD, people deal with trauma differently. Some are ignoring and being completely silent about what is going on, some are raising awareness, exposing themselves and protesting, some collecting aid, while others are getting away from seeing the images. There are those who are trying to coordinate with international movements and raise their voices in this fora, and those who are falling into ignorant generalisations which we have seen too often to lead to hate.

Helplessness can bring out the worst in each of us. And just like my grandma's stories, second-degree trauma rubs off differently, as the perspective is different.

I am still struggling to find a meaningful way to contribute and feel less helpless. My main contribution is in training my META algorithms to show only Gaza and similar situation videos. I've managed to train it after one year. One year of baby and cooking videos popping up in my reels constantly. This algorithm is so fragile though. One baby or a dog video, and you are five steps back. Don't even think of liking or commenting on some random video, then you are twenty steps back.

Of course, I join protests and national rallies. They offer a soothing comfort of not feeling alone and of actually doing something. Protests for me are probably the most important freedom, as they provide a much-needed counterbalance to all other individualised rights. Peaceful protests require solidarity, conviction, connections and joint goals.

Seeing people mobilising around Gaza gave me hope that Palestinians are seen, that I am not the only one who feels this way. The images from the protests though show that the main strength is in the mass mobilisation. While we rejoice the images of massive protests calling for a stop to genocide, we see that similar ones with couple of hundreds

of people are being forcibly dispersed. Increasingly, protesters are violently detained and symbols of peace being treated worse than the symbols of hatred.

Somehow, we have come to live in a moment in history where resisting for peace is literally treated as terrorism. At the same time, the scale of atrocities makes us feel like nothing suffices. Whatever we do will not change the grand scheme of things.

Then we see activists like Greta Thunberg and Freedom Flotilla, a march to Gaza. And even though ultimately unsuccessful they give us hope. Hope that not all is lost. Hope that we can do something. She and her comrades showed that there is true intersectionality in all our fights, and that we cannot only choose a fight for climate and not fight for humankind.

In a moment when we feel energised again, another threat of war comes. The war becomes like a football match, and we see people cheering and watching in tension. But the truth is, that we all feel paralysed again. All the global efforts, mobilisation, resistance come at stake just by one malicious move.

This is when we realise that what is driving our mums' fears in Bosnia today, has transferred to the entire globe. The political play of constant fearmongering is becoming a new normal. My friends here start to joke that Bosnians are so politically progressive, that whatever was happening with us thirty years ago, is now happening globally. This may be funny, but it is not comforting, as we know that there is no real end to it, thirty years in.

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If you had asked me thirty years ago, I would have been sure that “true” Bosnians are incapable of hate. It was a childish belief that once you go through such targeting and trauma, you know better. This was before I became an activist and before I saw how a potential to commonly hate the weaker one, serves as a potent incentive for developing nationalism. I still believe that most people who have seen the war have

an understanding that this is not ok, whether they want to admit it or not.

Likewise, when I see how the cycle of violence develops globally, and I see pockets of ignorance, silly comments, generalisations, I realise that it is so easy to fall into this abyss of perpetual conflict. I fear for the new generation, those with a second-degree trauma, but also for me, for my child. In what kind of world will she grow up? As much as I fear for her not to have to go through war, I do not want my daughter to grow believing she has some special immunity because her mum went through it.

The lessons my grandma taught me became more important than ever. She never went out to protests but she taught me not to hate. Yes, you can know who wants you harm and who is not your friend. Yes, you should stay away from these people, you can protest them, and you can push for their accountability. But we cannot fall into the trap of perpetual hatred and violence.

Sometimes, the best resistance is to teach our kids not to hate. To teach them empathy, resilience and strength. That things are not black and white, but that there is a difference between good or bad. But also teach them that they can confront the power, that state is not the same as a group of people, and that the true strength lies within us.

I would really like to keep hope that there is another way. That my daughter and I will not need to live through our two wars. That we can make our voices heard. That pockets of resistance exist everywhere and that we will prevail. If we want to change the world, we start by changing people around us. It is up to us to share and teach people around us that never again means never again for everyone. Because if we do not, the cycle of violence will inevitably get back to us.

# Orphaned by Fate, devastated by the Taliban, and Sentenced to Life: A Story of heavy pain, wounds, and resilience of an Afghan father

*By Tamana Farewar*

Choghadak District lies quietly on the fringes of Mazar-e-Sharif city, a place neither too distant to forget, nor too close to be changed by the city's stream. According to local there, this place was named after owls that once lived among the ruins, creatures that made its home far from people. In my younger years, I often saw them in the old garden of our neighbor above the big and old Platanus tree. It is also said that first khan of the Mongol Empir, Changez Khan, during one of his great military campaigns, once paused in the Choghdak briefly to rest. People there are mainly not well-educated but are busy with livelihood, shop keeping, agriculture, and handwork. It seems the lack of education and slow pace of modernization has not reduced the district's conservative and cultural values. The district might be one of the last areas where the municipality of Balkh province allocated time and resources to concrete the streets and valleys.

Almost at the end of its longest and smallest valley, where cars cannot reach, is a big house made of mud and clay with water furrows crossing it. This peaceful house, which is the most desired place to be, especially during the 40-degree summer of Mazar, belongs to an orphan boy who lost both his father and mother in early childhood. He was too young to discover the meaning of life, left alone and lost among pain and sorrow.

His name is Jamal, which means 'beauty', a name that suits him perfectly. He grew into a tall, well-proportioned young man with a bright, flawless good looking face with appreciating his thin, high-bridged nose. Of medium height, he had full, thick, connected eyebrows and a lean, well-toned body without a trace of extra fat. He can barely remember his parents faces, voices, or any memories. He

went through many ups and downs in life to live on his own after all five of his elder sisters got married and separated. When his mother passed away, he was like a traumatized child who didn't know where to go, until his elder sister opened her arms to him.

Jamal remembers how her sister healed his pains and never took a risk that might hurt him. Even when he was a teenage boy, she would lift him up to put me on the donkey, to carry wheat to the mill for flour or to travel somewhere. A strong woman, both physically and spiritually, but this shelter didn't last long. Later, his sister was forced to immigrate to Pakistan with her family, and Jamal found himself back at the starting point, alone once again. And now after decades, he is no longer a little boy, but a retired teacher, broken by fate, punished by the system, the father of 13 children, and a grandfather in his early 80s, whose body and spirit are both severely broken after the diaspora and displacement of his children following the fall of Afghanistan in 2021.

In his time, over 80 years ago, education was a rarity for an Afghan orphan like him to pursue. But he knew that only education could save him from such a miserable life by bringing a light of identity and respect by his society. So, from the time his tiny hands could pick up objects, he worked, as a farmer, a daily wage worker, and a street vendor, while still attempt to follow school. When he was accepted into vocational training to become a schoolteacher, he took a deep breath. In the blind of eye, he felt satisfaction in life with a thought that at last, the physical labor is over, and a new chapter as a young and hopeful teacher begin.

But life didn't allow him to pause and his job required him to travel to very remote district schools. That's how he left this big house behind, filled with all his uncertainty and loneliness. His dedication to education and schoolchildren became his purpose in life. After serving many years in underprivileged schools, he eventually moved back to city schools, closer to home and his married sisters.

This time, he returned as a respected and educated man, one of the few educated people in his district. He found a woman he admired and married her, hoping to fill his home with people, love, and laughter,

things he needed most. Now life was kind to him for a while as he started a new life with his wife, building from nothing: no parents, no siblings to help, no money, no friends, no support, no high morale, and no real hope. To him, the only possible option was to keep going and not give up.

He threw himself into work to provide a good life for his family and beautiful children. When his fifth child was born, just a week later, his beloved wife, his life partner, passed away. This pushed him into trauma like never before. Providing for his children, maintaining his job, dealing with life outside, and now raising five children, especially a newborn, overwhelmed him.

But he showed that no matter how far life may push him down, he has to have the strength to stand again. For seven years, he played both mother and father, taking responsibility for both home and work. In the middle of this hardship, he had another chance to marry again, this time to an orphaned neighbor girl with beautiful soft skin and rare green-and-blue, two colored eyes.

His life, after a long struggle, entered a calmer phase. His children from the first marriage began to build their own lives. Due to restrictions on girls' education, his daughters married young, around sixteen or fifteen. His eldest child, a smart boy became a doctor, filling him with deep pride, and moved to another city. His youngest boy moved to Pakistan to avoid being recruited into domestic war of Afghanistan.



Now Jamal lived with his wife and the children from his second marriage. His wife became his main source of patience and comfort. But once again, his life was shaken, not by exhaustion or work, but by war. The conflict between the Taliban and the Afghan government, especially after the U.S. targeted the Taliban following the September 11 attacks, forced him to send his family elsewhere, including his three sons and two daughters.

Witnessing the fighting and the fall of the Taliban regime for the first time in 2001 destroyed much of what he had built. But as the head of

the family, he stayed strong. He remained hopeful. A newly elected government was in power, and international investments flowed into Afghanistan. He hoped this time thing would change.

His elder daughters didn't finish school or go to college, but now, with more freedom, he had real hope that his younger children could live a peaceful life with access to education and work. As time passed, age and illness began to weigh down his body. Years of hard physical work left him tired and sick. His children grew up and started helping with the house, the garden, and small income-generating activities.

Eventually, the time came to retire from teaching, even though he didn't want to. He didn't choose to stop, but he had no choice. After retirement, he began to feel useless staying at home. He tried to stay busy by reading books, working in his garden, and growing different vegetables and fruits. His big family rarely needed to buy from the market, they had fresh produce and fuelwood from his garden.

He fully stopped his livelihood activities, as it became hard to manage. His children didn't enjoy living in a farmhouse either. But cultivating beautiful flowers gave him great joy. He always told his daughters, "I grow them so you feel happy." Spending his entire days in the garden, even late into the night to water the trees, brought him peace. Walking through the garden and breathing its scent gave him purpose, to wake up before sunrise every day.

But as aging and constant sickness limited his work, he had to stop the heavy gardening. This deeply broke his heart. Watching the plants, he loved die and the autumn face of his garden made him feel like he was losing loved ones. Even after constant requests from his children to rest, he would still go to the garden, even when he was seriously ill. It was his joy.

As his children grew up and moved abroad in pursue of education, his sadness grew. His children from the first marriage had already moved or married when they were young. He had always hoped to see them during Eid or Nawruz (New Year). Despite all his heartbreaks, nothing

brought him to tears until life's hardest hit came when the Taliban retook Afghanistan overnight in August 2021. His children, like the collapsing government, disappeared overnight.

This crushed him completely. He felt like someone who had lost everything after decades of struggle. Saying goodbye to each child, his life's entire purpose, put him into unimaginable trauma. Since nearly four years, this pain consumes him from the inside. Being separated from his beloved children, who brought him joy and happiness, felt like living in a prison of sadness. He never stopped his children from immigrating. He knew that after years of studying, working for justice and human rights, and building dreams, they would be in danger if they stayed in the country. So he chose their safety over his own comfort and preferences. But in the meanwhile, the death of his beloved and only friend, with whom he had shared both the best and worst moments, hit him depth, leading to an unbearable period of grief.

Now, alone with his wife and youngest child, old age, white hair, a tired heart, and a weary body took him faster than expected. He felt more broken and old than normal aging process. Sometimes, he wondered if life would have been easier had he been born somewhere else. Perhaps his efforts wouldn't have been wasted. Perhaps he wouldn't have had to live apart from his children and grandchildren.



World leaders play games of power, but ordinary people like Jamal suffer across generations. Millions like him, orphans who struggled all their lives, saw everything they built fall to pieces due to regimes that care only about extremism, fascism, and authoritarianism.

Millions of parents like Jamal fight their lives to head up from misfortunate to have an extremely basic life and to raise their children properly, but is in any context unfair to lose them in war, poverty, sickness, suicide bombings, insecurity, or in the search for a better life. Why did human make the world such a miserable journey to some people like him? Why did they sentence to such trauma? Now under an authoritarian regime, they continue to pay the price. Elders endure unbearable pain, while their children suffer from injustice,

statelessness, loneliness, depression, and being last-class citizens elsewhere.

Yet, even after all of this, Jamal's story is one of knife edge resilience. Though life broke him again and again, he stood up, again and again. He gave everything for his children and dreamed of a better future, even if he wouldn't live to see it fully realized. This world owes him a decent, happy, and peaceful life where he can hug his loved ones and have dinner gathered around a Dastarkhwan (dining table) rather suffering such extremely.

Padar Jan (Dear Dad), I need your jacket to stay warm. You always checked on me at late night to see if I was cold, placing your jacket or Patoo (Shawls) on my shoulders. I was always cold, just doesn't fall asleep to study, but I melted in your love and sacrifices. I just wish I could go back, love you more, and spend every possible minutes with you. I may be lost in exile, but I live on in you, as you are my forever home and identity.

# Enemies Within

By Loubna Reguig

## Mother: the Beginning

I scan the walls with my eyes, white, or maybe gray. My gaze pauses for a few seconds on the clock. Tick. Tock. Slow. Heavy. Our eyes meet. Behind her metallic desk, she is looking at me. Why is she looking at me? The civil servant repeats herself, articulating slowly each letter. I think she is waiting for an answer. I nod timidly. Small, my legs dandling, too short to touch the floor. She keeps talking. Keeps staring. There is something off, or is it only in my head? She speaks to me again. Why is she speaking to me?

I'm only eight.  
It's an administrative appointment.  
My mother is with me.

She is sitting beside me. Calm, dressed with care, her organised folder resting on her lap.

So why is she talking to me? Why won't she look at my mom? Why is she repeating herself, gesturing? Why does she pretend to not understand? Why is she correcting every word? *Why is she humiliating her?*

"Speaking means existing absolutely for the other," Fanon once said. My mother speaks French. She understands French. She earned her Master's degree here, in France.

But my mother has an accent. And my mother is Arab. And my mother is an immigrant. And my mother wears a headscarf.

Tick.Tock. Each second in that office landed like a slap. Sitting there on a chair too big for me. And in that small-cowardly nod — without realizing it — I became complicit. Complicit in a silent theft of dignity. Complicit in systemic humiliation. Complicit in the quiet violence aimed at my mother.

Later, I'd be the one targeted too. Karma?

Activism, for me and many of us, stems from this.

From bureaucratic humiliation.

From media hatred.

From unjust treatment.

From police violence.

From this repeated mantra: *You do not belong. Your existence does not matter.*

Fear. Anger. Sadness. Exhaustion... Hope?

Bell Hook wrote "Being oppressed means the absence of choices." Our activism is not a choice. It is an imperative. It's raw. It's primal. It's animal. A reflex. A need to protect. A constant state of alert. A high sensitivity. A precocious lucidity. The crushing weight of having to prove your humanity over and over.

*At the beginning, it was my mother who took me to my first protest.*

### **Building of the Enemy: History repeats itself**

"But what a patch of mud on your name — I was going to say on your reign — that this abominable Dreyfus affair! A council of war has just, by order, dared to acquit an Esterhazy, the supreme bellows of all truth, of all justice. And it's over. France has this stain on its cheek. History will write that it was under your presidency that such a social crime could have been committed."

— Emile Zola, *J'accuse*, 1898

Stretched out on a bench under the blazing Marseille sun, we lazed in silence, eyes lost in the vast, calming blue of the sea. Between bites of slush that numbed our brains, our conversation drifted, inevitably, back to "EMF".

Not long ago, a report was deliberately leaked by the Ministry of the Interior. It warned of "entryism," the Muslim Brotherhood, and an alleged underground plan by Muslims to infiltrate the Republic. Etudiants Musulmans de France (EMF) was named. An association that

supports students. That distributes food parcels across campuses. That organizes social and cultural events to fight isolation. That advocates for students' rights.

That was our association. Our work. Our faces. And overnight, our commitment became suspicious. Food drives? Proselytism. Public speeches? Manipulation. And our faith? a Testimony against us.

"This is like the Dreyfus affair", Kayode starts. He is wearing his signature glasses: The exact same pair as my sister's. He literally bought the same, a woman's frame, because they gave the "diva" look. That's Kayode: flashy, hilarious, unbothered, yet very modest and polite. "It's the same story... And by God's grace, it'll have the same ending." he continues.

I am not sure if it is the scene or my reflex of always downplaying, second-guessing our pain, convincing myself *it's not that serious* that made me think that he was being dramatic. But once back home, I decided to open my laptop and to read about it again. It's a required part of French school syllabus: In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French military, was arrested, tried, and convicted of treason. No solid evidence. Publicly shamed. Deported Why? Because he was Jewish. That was enough. The military knew he was innocent. Still, they chose to protect the real traitor rather than clear a Jewish man's name. In 1898, Emile Zola published his famous open letter "J'accuse...", denouncing state antisemitism, judicial manipulation, and the silent complicity of the press.

Today – and for some years now – there's a new name whispered with suspicion. Not Dreyfus. "Muslim."

Our visibility became a threat. Like Dreyfus, we aren't condemned for what we did, but for who we are.

The language has changed, but the machinery is the same: The creation of an internal enemy.

Back on that bench, I asked Kayode, who is EMF's current president, what he felt the day the report dropped.

"I think it was a Wednesday" he said "Ines\* was the one who sent it to me. It hadn't even been officially published yet, it was leaked through a government site. But honestly, the signs were there before. On Sunday or Monday, right-wing media had already dropped their 'exclusive' previews. We got an email from *Le Point* Monday morning with a series of questions. Supposedly for an article about EMF, but it was clearly about the report. So we knew we were being named. We could feel it."

"It was stressful, waiting for the hit, but also realising it had already landed."

"When the report dropped" he continued "my first instinct was CTRL+F – EMF, étudiants. Given the media frenzy, I was bracing for the worst! But weirdly... I felt some relief. Out of 70 pages, we were mentioned only three times. Two of those were factually wrong. It was sloppy work. Then my second reflex? I searched for our names. Just to make sure we weren't directly targeted. That we were, at least, still somewhat protected."

*Neither of us was named, but one of our friends, a former president of EMF, was. Others we knew were there too.*

And then came the work. Immediate, urgent.

Writing a response.

Publishing a statement.

Questioning our lawyer.

Reassuring members.

Making sure we were the ones speaking, not just being spoken about.

"But we wanted to go beyond that," Kayode told me. "We wanted to inspire. To show the image of a strong young Muslim, representing an association, speaking clearly and confidently. No fear. Beyond refuting the claims, it was about visibility and hope. Letting others know: you're not alone. That seeing someone take action can help others get

through their own frustration and despair. Making them also want to engage. For us, mental health matters, and that's part of it too."

And it worked. A few days after appearing on television, Kayode received a message on LinkedIn: Thank you. Just two words, but they meant everything.

### **Blessed is the one at the service of others**

"Slowly! Slowly!"

On the first floor, Zayn\* and I were gripping the back legs of the table, carefully inching it toward the open window. Down below, Ayman\* stood with arms outstretched, ready to receive it, directing us like an air traffic controller guiding a landing. It wasn't very high up, a floor, maybe two, but the doorway was too narrow, and this was the only way.

I know this might look like a heist. I swear it is not. In less than an hour, just a few steps away in the open courtyard of this university campus, we'd be hosting a free food distribution for students. And for that, we needed tables. So we improvised. Borrowed a handful from the quiet study hall. Just for two, maybe three hours. No one would miss them.

After a few careful back-and-forths and some tense balancing, the big truck finally pulled in. The back doors creaked open, and out came our cargo: bags of pasta, rice, oil, sugar, flour, canned goods, milk, cereals, hygiene products, even a few crates of fruit. We sorted everything, category by category, lining the tables one after the other. Students were already starting to arrive, shopping bags in hand. They began to queue. The line grew fast, so much that at the end, some could not get anything...

So many young people live in precarity in France. In 2024, over a third of them reported skipping meals regularly or from time to time due to lack of money. To respond to the crisis, we organise regular free food distributions across 25 university campuses in France. During Ramadan, our distributions – food packs and hot dinners – become daily.

Janaya Future Khan, a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Canada said once in Time “Activism is about being alive: about fighting for life. Activism is being for someone else who you needed most in your most vulnerable moment. There’s something inherently spiritual and supernatural about what happens when we tie our fate to another person: we discover who we are in service to others.”

I could not agree more...

\*\*\*

"Obviously I lost my chance to get a job in the public sector," Kayode tells me, with a faint, bitter smile. He had always wanted to be a school teacher. To work with children. To pass something on. He had the patience. That natural warmth. The humour. But after the report, he knows. "With EMF on my record, it's over. I'm blacklisted."

"Welcome to the club, I was blacklisted the day I decided to wear my headscarf" I responded trying to make things lighter.

*The slush probably froze our brains...*

"If I have kids one day, I hope they'll join EMF" I look at him surprised. "Because even with all the internal challenges, the external pressure, the sleepless nights, the police summons, the ignored partnership requests, the frozen bank accounts... EMF is still beautiful. You know what I love the most about EMF, beyond what we do? It's what we become together. It's the friendships. The people who meet here, work side by side, fall in love, get married. Some have kids now. Can you believe it? EMF builds families. It's precious. It's the most beautiful thing."

*I cringed, the slush definitely froze his. We laughed.*

Because yes — there are numbers, distributions, reports, events, motions, conferences... But more than that, there is this. This thread. This invisible string that holds us together, even when everything else

falls apart.

In our faith, we say: Whoever gives for God (their time, their energy, their wealth) will surely be rewarded. Maybe not with what they hoped for, but with what they needed. Maybe our activism won't change the world tomorrow, but this commitment? It already frees something in us.

It restores dignity. Together.

*In that office, on that stiff chair, my mother's hand held mine.*

## **Belonging**

We are second, third, even fourth generation. We don't have an accent and we know the codes. We study. We vote. We contribute. We engage and serve our society to make it better. Yet somehow, for some, we are still too much. Too visible, Too organised. The dangerous other.

On July 7th, 2025, Emmanuel Macron announced new legal measures targeting the so-called "entryism": a law is expected by the end of the summer. It includes freezing the assets of organisations – modeled after anti-terror legislation – expanding power to dissolve associations without trial, and financially punishing those who refuse to sign the Republican Commitment Contract (ECR), a pledge critics say is being used to police belief and right to dissent. .

This is not new.

This is not a rupture.

It is a continuation.

After her visit to France in 2018, The United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms warned "the conflation of Islam with terrorism in government policy and in the implementation of administrative measures unduly singles out this community, alienates the community from the State, and creates a form of political and social

disenfranchisement that is inconsistent with the State's obligations under international human rights law".

In 2021, they said we kept to ourselves. They called it "separatism". So they wrote a law that shut down our institutions, raided our mosques, interrogated our children in school. All in the name of breaking the "separatists". At the time, Amnesty International warned the bill risked reinforcing negative stereotypes and would "seriously attack rights and freedoms", disproportionately targeting Muslims.

Now in 2025, the narrative evolves. Now, we're too integrated. Too engaged. Too confident. So it's suspicious. Because when Muslims succeed — visibly, confidently, collectively — it disturbs the narrative. So they invented a new word: "entryism."

A seventy-page report full of errors, approximations and fantasies. No proof. But there was never a need for it. It was enough to name. To shame. To blacklist. Enough to turn our mere presence into a threat and start the witch hunt.

This is not just a national debate. It is a deliberate attack of equality and human rights.

So what happens when a state demands loyalty while denying belonging?

Again... This is not new. This is not a rupture. It is a continuation. From that day in the office, and even before...

*We don't sit silently on that chair.*

We refuse erasure.

We speak up.

We organise.

We build.

Collectively.

1. Preliminary findings of the visit: UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism concludes visit to France | OHCHR

2. France: Amnesty International's concerns regarding the bill "to strengthen respect for the principles of the Republic"

\* different names were used

# Coming to terms with uncomfortable truths: The Phoenix riots

*By Josephine Vaccaro*

**I**t came as a dreadful shock to South Africans to find themselves, all of a sudden, engulfed in the devastation the looting and rioting had been causing come July 2021. Nothing but wreckage was left with buildings brought down in flames and shops and other ventures looted leaving behind towns in ashes and completely trashed. Tensions had risen high while chaos ensued. 340 lives were lost amidst the frenzy. It is alleged that the fuse that sparked these crimes and set the streets ablaze was the arrest of the country's former president Jacob Zuma for contempt of court. Was this catastrophe haphazard or was it rather orchestrated, as it may as well have been? How else could crimes so grave prolong into weeks.

The mayhem it produced in the country turned indescribably tragic, remarkably quickly, in the township known as Phoenix taking on, to make matters worse, the unsavoury trait of racial profiling which led to acts of extreme violence against Black Africans. The stories of its survivors come together speaking of a much-needed healing process for South Africans and for South Africa alike.

Phoenix has been known for being a predominantly Indian area as it had been assigned to the Indian indentured labourers during Apartheid. At present its population is mixed accounting the Indian community to be the majority in comparison to Black Africans and other groups. As of the relations of the ones with the others, these have been described "not to be bad" (SABC News), for the most part amicable though far from idyllic. So, how did these relations turn sour so fast? After all, peaceful resolutions had been reached prior 2021 or better after the massacre of Cato Manor in 1949, event which seemed to be echoing over and again during the aggressions perpetrated at the population passing through Phoenix and the neighbouring KwaMashu and Inanda in July 2021.

These onslaughts were being committed on behalf of members of the Indian community who whilst assaulting the first of the survivors, smashing his car and manhandling him, were spuing racial slurs and remarking “what Black people did in 1949, it’s their turn... they [the Indians] do it to Black people!” (SABC News) as Chris B. describes his experience. Chris B. was making his way as any other day unaware of what awaited ahead calmly approaching Phoenix. It was then that he noticed two vehicles being torched whose suffocating flames and smoke rendered the air unbreathable. One of these was a Toyota Corolla also teasingly called ‘a cockroach’. The other a small truck, possibly a bakkie. Chris B. continued on his journey only to be stopped in his tracks and for the brutal assault to commence with the assailants approaching him from the driver’s side of his car. Viciously dragged out of his car the torment was underway until the moment of his escape, as he recalls it, by a fluke.

The incident recalled in the unrest refers to the massacre of the Indian community in 1949 on behalf of some members of the Black communities of which Chris B. confesses having no prior knowledge. He even had to look it up to make sense of what they we’re vindicating. It became clear to him that he had borne the brunt of an unhealed wound that resurfaced the day he drove through Phoenix. Clippings from back then show a scenario not dissimilar to that of the unrest of 2021, that of desolation. However, reputable authors have discussed by far and large the occurrence of Cato Manor pondering a query that holds true to this day though roles have been reverted: are these “a symbol of African antagonism against Indians or an abnormal eruption symbolic of a frustrated and abnormal society” (Ramamurthi, 1994, 543).

Despite making it out alive and virtually unscathed, Chris B.’s neighbours, unfortunately, met a different fate. Lokishi, for instance, was left to fend for himself lacking the support of the local police the day of the incident and plainly told to bugger off and “go die in hospital” (SABC News). He suffered facial abrasions and lacerations. Mr Mokubung, instead, had an arm and leg broken and was bed ridden. He also mentioned how this angered his son and how, as a concerned

father, he had taken him out of school in Phoenix so as to prevent him from redirecting his anger and retaliating against his Indian classmates. There is a serious need to face racism head on or “it cannot be rooted out” (South African Human Rights Commission [SAHRC], 2024, 101), in his view.

The ideal of non-racialism and colour-blindness has not been achieved. As noted by the Collective, a group of community leaders, “we have to confront painful truths but [also] rely on the overwhelming goodness of the vast majority of the people” (SAHRC, 2024, 133). The clear need for greater social cohesion has been cast aside, it would appear, also by the government which has seemingly been leaving “the sores festering” (Ramamurthi, 1994, 546) and distrust to grow, in this specific instance, between Indian Africans and Black Africans, contrary to what had been stipulated in the interim Constitution of 1993 which, in short, advocates:

*“to transcend the divisions and strife of the past [calling for] a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimisation” (114).*

The impression drawn from Chris B.’s experience is that there is still trauma around the massacre of Cato Manor which is made even more significant when considering “the narrative around those events had been communicated either directly or indirectly across generations and this has formed a distorted view of reality of the present situation that led into a violent reaction” (SAHRC, 2024, 140); testament to the fact that it is the social process that is also the focus and that, despite classical judicial responses, a more comprehensive and holistic approach needs to be taken on.

The lacklustre approach of the national police had people forming community neighbourhood watches including community policing forums to safeguard their properties and their lives and to prevent looters and rioters from entering. Convener Maharaj also warranted against the role played by social media in aggravating the situation as it contributed to “instilling the fear of God” (SABC News) amidst the Indian communities, he exclaims. For the most part, these posts were

functional and peaceful. Sadly, though, the same cannot be said for Phoenix where the violence took on racial connotations and the end result was gruesome, to say the least.

Ntethelelo carries the scars not just on his body, but has been deeply emotionally affected. Ntethelelo was out with nine of his friends, some of which acquaintances, after having enjoyed some game they were invited to eat. That day, the 12th July, Ntethelelo with his friends decided to take a short cut on their way home through Phoenix only to be stopped at a roadblock, one of those patrol blocks set up independently from those informally formed by the community. Here his vehicle was searched: “The way they requested to search [...] was laced with insults and anger, that’s how I viewed it. There were comments like ‘Zuma’s people’, ‘monkeys’. They checked the vehicle, didn’t find anything, and told us to proceed” (SAHRC, 2024, 105). As he was making his way, a member of the patrol axed his car, and the group then started to throw stones. Some chose to fight back, but got hit on the head, instead. Armed as these groups were, Nzuzwa was then shot while Magwaza was assaulted. All of this occurred in a matter of a heartbeat. In fact, Ntethelelo tried to drive away whilst some of his friends attempted to flee on foot only to be assaulted. As he drove shots were fired against the vehicle. “There was another group approaching me as I was fleeing [...] Then the man who shot at Nsele, shot at me, two bullets. They entered the left-hand side of my back. One exited from my front [...] It was like a game, some [...] were laughing and shouting at us. They were taking photos and videos as this was happening.” (Daily Maverick, 2021). By the time Ntethelelo was able to escape, he lost consciousness only to wake up in a clinic a few hours later and to be transported to Addington hospital but by the following day. The nightmare was not over, though: “I was discharged on 24th August and went to my home in eShowe. That’s when I was told that Nzuzwa, Nsele and Jiyani, who had been in my company [...] had died” (Ibid.), and his car torched for the sake of it.

The platform provided by the South African Human Rights Commission plays a pivotal role in the healing process as it unveils horrid truths that need to be spoken and heard first in its diagnostic of a troubled

country. Thulile Ngcobo, for instance, lost her son in the most gruesome manner she recounts “He was attacked in his vehicle and his body was charred beyond recognition” (Daily Maverick, 2022). It is true that South Africa is a State, but it is also true that it is not yet a nation as it has been pointed out by professor Zulu during his statement of the unrest. (SAHRC, 2024, 138). Just as in 1949 opposing parts had come to an understanding to unify against the Apartheid regime, could this be considered as another occasion for people to unite so as to support and sustain nation-building? Is this not the will of the people? Are the people ready for change? The unrest and the brutality of Phoenix are an important example of the ungovernability of the nation, showcasing, at the same time, similar patterns arising from the country’s past illnesses that come to haunt the present again and this time under a different tune, that of ‘kill the farmer, kill the Boer’ no longer in resistance to Apartheid, but in retaliation to it. Therefore, concerns raised by the South African Human Rights Commission on the unrest being the wake up call the country needed marks the urgency and necessity of the people coming together, but also of facing the uncomfortable truths as we piece the many stories together. This is the case for all South Africans irrespective of colour, race, creed.

Past grievances still appear to manifest with bitterness. Reconciliation knows alternative avenues as those that derive from the communal life in finding ways locally to be able to cope. At the grassroot level means of healing can emerge locally, for example, in forging bonds and, in the aftermath of the riots, bonds were forged and the Phoenix Ubuntu Forum was created from the people of Phoenix and led by Convener Maharaj, to sustain and support those affected by the violence. This took on many forms of local contribution whether this meant providing food supplies or arranging sport initiatives, but one of the major concerns was for their youths fearful of going back to school and the efforts made in collaborating with the department of education to overcome this. Similar peace committees to those of Convener Maharaj began to emerge. It goes farther than that. Known by its acronym PINK (Phoenix, Inanda, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu), this agglomeration, comprised of 15 members belonging to a range of organisations, has developed into a peace and development committee, mostly

to avert the furthering of violence, but also to rebuild trust between communities. It is understandable how informal forms of relief are just as important to help healing in the comfort they provide in their quest, among things, for justice. There is, nonetheless, a general sense of dissatisfaction in the lack of meaningful assistance received by some. It runs deeper Bishop Paul Verryn asserts “I think there is a deep, deep sense of pain among the victims, pain that has not been recognised by society at large” (Daily Maverick, 2022).

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A large group of students, mostly young adults, are posed in a courtyard. They are arranged in several rows, with some standing in the front and others behind. The courtyard is surrounded by a two-story building with arched windows and doorways. In the center of the courtyard, there is a tall, ornate tower with a dome on top. The entire image has a soft, warm color gradient overlay, transitioning from a light blue/purple at the top to a bright orange/red at the bottom. The text 'News and Events' is centered in a white box with a black border.

# News and Events



The Global Campus of Human Rights is excited to announce its partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in an ambitious human rights promotion programme supported by the European Union in Pakistan.


Over the next two years, the Global Campus, alongside its regional hubs in Asia-Pacific and Central Asia, will work closely with UNDP's country mission, the EU Delegation, and a consortium of four leading Pakistani universities to further human rights higher education. This collaborative effort will focus on a wide range of activities, including providing technical support and academic guidance for the establishment of a Human Rights Education Centre in Lahore. The initiative will also involve developing innovative curricula and learning tools and creating international mobility opportunities for Pakistani students and scholars.

This project is part of the EU's flagship programme, Human Rights Huqooq-e-Pakistan II (HeP II 2024-2028), which aims to strengthen the promotion, protection, and realization of human rights across Pakistan. HeP II is built on four strategic pillars: partnering with the government to enhance human rights implementation and reporting, collaborating with human rights institutions to strengthen their watchdog roles, promoting human rights education through universities, and engaging the private sector to support human rights protection within business practices.

With its well-established global expertise, the Global Campus of Human Rights has been selected as a key partner to help advance the third pillar of this comprehensive program. The project aims to support students, academic institutions, and civil society organizations in advancing human rights education in Pakistan.

This project is part of the GC Capacity Development programme.

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## 8th Online Global Campus of Human Rights Conversations: “The importance of education and sports to embrace peace at the local and international level”

We believe that higher education must be at the center of a sustainable future for the world and for the city of Venice. It could become one of the driving forces amidst this period of time, both for our local and global community. Now we are also exploring the links and synergies with the culture of sports that lead to concrete actions. We had invited to the eight online Global Campus of Human Rights conversations with:

### SPEAKERS

- o Andrea Tomaello, Deputy Major of the City of Venice
- o Diego Vecchiato, Specialist in Techniques for the Protection of Human Rights (UniPadova) and President of the Panathlon Club Venezia
- o Friso Roscam Abbing, EU Fundamental Rights Agency
- o Guido Battaglia, Centre for Sports and Human Rights
- o Roberto Daneo, Milano Cortina 2026 Foundation
- o Presilia Mpanu-Mpanu, Social & Environmental Sustainability Expert at UEFA
- o 2024/2025 student representatives of the European Master for Human Rights and Democratisation, EMA (Global Campus Europe)
- o Moderator: Director Elisabetta Noli

The opening welcome words were done by representatives of the local authorities and the Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights. This event was translated into Italian and English and animated with live illustrations.

### About the Conversations

The Global Campus of Human Rights wants to provide a space for exchanging views on the possible futures of Venice, and to do so is organising a series of “Global Campus of Human Rights Conversations” which are taking place as short one-hour online discussions since 2020.

These conversations provide an opportunity for local partners, the government authorities, our staff, professors, alumni and students, to actively participate in the discussion on the future development of the city of Venice, which hosts the headquarters of the Global Campus of Human Rights: the Monastery of San Nicolò (Venice Lido).

For more information, please contact: [pressoffice@gchumanrights.org](mailto:pressoffice@gchumanrights.org) or [communications@gchumanrights.org](mailto:communications@gchumanrights.org)





## New Publication: Children's Participation in Decision-Making in the Republic of Serbia

Global Campus South East Europe in partnership with the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Political Sciences, one of the GC member universities, proudly announces a new publication that explores the role of children in decision-making processes across family, school, and community levels.

Authored by Anita Burgund Isakov and Miona Gajić, and building upon the success of a previous study focusing on Bosnia and Herzegovina, this research extends the analysis to Serbia, highlighting both challenges and opportunities in fostering an environment where children's voices are actively considered. The study sheds light on how policymakers, NGOs, and institutions engage with children and work to integrate their perspectives into governance structures.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study gathers insights from 55 children through questionnaires and eight children through focus groups. Additionally, it incorporates interviews with representatives from ten key organizations, including the Council for the Rights of the Child, the Ombudsman's Office, the Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, the Youth Council of the Ministry of Youth and Tourism of the Republic of Serbia, UNICEF Youth Office, and several NGOs dedicated to child rights and participation.

The findings highlight the persistent gaps in fully recognizing children as active participants in decision-making processes. While legal frameworks, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), have paved the way for greater youth involvement, challenges remain in ensuring meaningful engagement. The publication provides recommendations for improving child participation mechanisms, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between adults and children to foster

an inclusive decision-making environment.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to mainstream children's rights across the region and advocate for the recognition of child participation as a fundamental democratic value. By supporting research and dialogue on this topic, the Global Campus of Human Rights South East Europe aims to contribute to policies that genuinely reflect the perspectives and needs of young people.

As this publication reaches policymakers, researchers, and child rights advocates, it is expected to serve as a valuable resource for improving practices related to child participation in Serbia and beyond. We look forward to seeing its impact in strengthening children's involvement in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

The research has been supported by **Right Livelihood**.

To access the full publication, visit <https://www.fpn.bg.ac.rs/87662>



## A Training of Trainers Promotes Climate Justice Education at the Moldova State University

«While the impact of academic work often goes unnoticed, **spreading the passion for climate justice education** and training others to teach it makes all the challenges of academia worthwhile. Empowering others to champion the cause of climate justice education and take climate action in academia is truly a privilege.»

- **Dr Zoi Aliozi**, Climate Justice expert and EU Climate Pact Ambassador

As part of the 2024-2025 EU-funded project “Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education at Moldova State University (MSU),” the Global Campus of Human Rights (GC) and MSU are collaborating to integrate climate justice into the curriculum, and promote it as an nascent specialization of the university.

The project fosters interdisciplinary collaboration between MSU’s Faculties of Law and Biology, empowering professors to address climate challenges through a human rights lens. A key component is the Training of Trainers (ToT) program, running from October 2024 to June 2025, which includes workshops, role plays, e-learning, and group discussions to equip faculties with the knowledge and skills to ensure faculty members can incorporate climate justice and human rights into their teaching.

In addition, the initiative will create interdisciplinary learning opportunities for MSU students, raising awareness of the climate crisis and its connection to human rights. A major outcome will be the establishment of the Climate Justice and Human Rights Education Lab at MSU, serving as a hub for research, education, and advocacy.

The second phase of the ToT, held in December 2024 in Chisinau, featured seminars and hands-on activities led by experts such as Adriano Remiddi, head of the GC Capacity Development Unit, Zoi Aliozi, GC alumna and EU Climate Pact Ambassador, Pim Martens from Maastricht University, and Samentha Goethals from University

of Seville.

At end of the training, participants have also developed a roadmap for the second edition of the newly established European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice and Human Rights, and planned follow-up activities to ensure the continued integration of climate justice at MSU. This collaborative effort represents a significant step in advancing climate justice education in Moldova and the wider region.

This project is part of the GC Capacity Development programme.

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Global Campus of Human Rights  
Annual Report 2024



# PERSISTENCE

## GC Annual Report 2024: “Persistence of Frontline Human Rights Educators”

Human rights are a testament to our deep rooted belief that dignity, equality, and justice should be the fundament of our societies. In a world marked by shifting landscapes of conflict, technological disruptions, and environmental crises, the resilience of the very concept of human rights remains a cornerstone of hope. This Annual Report 2024, “Persistence of Frontline Human Rights Educators,” captures our belief in the transformative power of rights-based approaches to create meaningful change in lives and communities.

Our vision is grounded in the understanding that human rights are not static declarations but dynamic principles that evolve with time and challenges. From digital innovation to ecological preservation, from empowering youth to amplifying the voices of the marginalised, our mission is to stand firm at the intersection of education and advocacy. It is here, on the frontline, where we support new generations to confront the barriers to justice and develop pathways for sustainable

education, storytelling, and capacity building, we continue to push boundaries and challenge the status quo. We honour the determination of individuals and communities who, in the face of adversity, continue their fight for a fairer and more equitable world.

As you explore this report, we invite you to join us in reflecting on our journey throughout the year 2024. Let it be a call to action and a reminder that defending human rights is not just a duty but an expression of our collective humanity. Together, we can ensure that human rights remain at the frontline — steadfast, unyielding, and ever more relevant in the years to come.

**«We decided to dedicate our Annual Report 2024 to the Persistence of Frontline Human Rights Educators. The recent experiences of the Global Campus of Human Rights as the world’s largest network on postgraduate human rights education give testimony to the many difficulties we are confronted with and our persistence to nevertheless continue our eight Master’s programmes and other activities.»**

– Manfred Nowak, GC Secretary General

Enjoy the reading of the Annual Report 2024 and reach us for any question you may have on our activities.

GC Repository: <https://doi.org/10.25330/2791>

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## Ensuring Lasting Impact: Co-teaching Modules at the Moldova State University

As part of our ongoing cooperation with the Moldova State University (MSU), the Global Campus of Human Rights continues supporting the consolidation of the recently established human rights education courses at the MSU Faculty of Law.

As a follow up to the 2023-24 project “Development of Human and Children Rights Education at MSU”, this month our chief trainers Dr Chiara Altafin and Dr Wiebke Lamer joined as co-lecturers in the “Master’s Program in Public Law and E-Governance.”

The activity was implemented following the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding between MSU, GC, and GC Caucasus Campus, aimed at building and strengthening internationalization, local know-how, tool and skills for the mainstreaming of human rights subjects, with a focus on children’s rights, at the country’s most established university.

Specifically, one of the key outcomes of this partnership has been a curriculum revision conducted by a pool of local lecturers in collaboration with the GC Capacity Development team. This process has led to the creation of two new disciplines added to the Master’s program at the Faculty of Law: Child Rights Protection in the International and European frameworks, designed and implemented under the supervision of Dr Altafin, and Human Rights and IT Regulation, designed and implemented under the supervision of Dr Lamer, both piloted during the 2023-24 academic year.

The creation of new and English-taught human rights education courses is a crucial step that has allowed for the integration of Moldova State University in the GC Caucasus Regional Master’s programme, as well as in the GC association as its youngest member. The Global Campus remains committed to continue the fruitful cooperation with Moldova State University in the future.

This project is part of the GC Capacity Development programme.

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## Global Gathering in Venice: Youth Leaders and Experts Working Together for Child Rights

Our long-awaited meeting of Child Rights Regional Experts and Youth Advisory Group members finally took place March 19-21 at our Global Campus HQ in Venice! Organised as an international three-day workshop, this meeting brought together child rights experts and academics, as well as representatives of the Global Campus Youth Advisory Group, from all eight regions of the Global Campus Network.

In a very collaborative atmosphere, the participants focused on exchanging experiences and best practices, identifying opportunities to further strengthen cross-regional cooperation, and reinforcing the commitment to child participation and intergenerational dialogue.

### Key Themes and Discussions

#### Day 1: Digital Safety and Children in Crisis

The workshop began with reflections on the past year's progress, following the 2nd Global Campus child rights experts meeting, hosted by Yerevan State University in April 2024. The first thematic session focused on the intersection between artificial intelligence and children's rights, children's digital safety and cyberbullying. Experts from the Balkans and Central Europe presented lessons learned from projects being implemented in their regions, sparking a very interesting exchange with participants from other regions.

Another session examined the topic of children deprived of liberty and their access to justice in the light of the recommendations of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, which was published almost 6 years ago under the lead of GC Secretary General Manfred Nowak. Experts and youth leaders discussed how little awareness there still is in many parts about the situation and needs of children deprived of liberty, and the need for concerted action to strengthen respect for the rights of this vulnerable group of children. Similarly, the urgent need for international

cooperation was underscored in the concluding session of the day, focusing on the impact of armed conflict and forced migration on children.

### Day 2: Child Participation and Advocacy Strategies

The second day highlighted child participation in decision-making processes. Over the past three years, the Global Campus Child Leadership has flourished and grown, to the point that the children are now actively developing and implementing projects at national and regional levels, and informing the work of academics and practitioners. Discussions explored best practices for fostering sustainable child and youth leadership structures, with a focus on engaging external stakeholders—including NGOs, governments, and academic institutions.

### Day 3 – Knowledge Exchange and Celebrating Achievements

The final day opened with a space to showcase achievements across the GC network, ranging from recent academic publications, to interesting new partnerships on children’s rights, successful initiatives led by our Child Leadership Team members, and much more. Youth Advisory Group members from the Balkans, Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus also presented on regional child rights issues, offering insights into how different communities implement child rights policies, emphasising the importance of local context in effective advocacy efforts. They also shared concrete plans to ensure the Youth Advisory Group, the Child Leadership Team, and the regional Child Rights Experts are joined in moving forward in our efforts to advance child rights across all regions of the GC network.

### Looking Ahead

From seasoned faculty members to young leaders just beginning their university journey, all participants found the workshops inspiring and insightful. The ideas and strategies developed over the three days will help shape future research, education and advocacy efforts within the Global Campus network. Participants left with a renewed commitment to collaboration—building even stronger ties between the GC hubs, as well as with policymakers, legal experts, and grassroots organizations to drive meaningful change.

A special thank you to all participants for their dedication, knowledge, and cross-regional collaboration in advancing children’s rights. This event was held as part of the Global Campus–Right Livelihood partnership on child rights, which aims to build a “network in action” to advance children’s rights across the globe.

## V World Congress on Justice With Children: Advancing Child-Centred Justice on a Global Scale

The V edition of the World Congress on Justice With Children will take place from 2 to 4 June 2025 in Madrid, Spain, under the theme “Advancing Child-centred Justice: Preventing and Responding to Violence Affecting Children in the Justice System.”

Join the 5th World Congress on Justice With Children

June 2–4, 2025 | Madrid, Spain (Hybrid & Satellite Events Worldwide)

Choose how to participate: Online, In-Person in Madrid, or Locally at Satellite Events.

The Congress is a pivotal international event that brings together policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and young people to explore innovative solutions to create justice systems that protect and empower children. The Global Campus of Human Rights and its Global Study Unit led by Manu Krishan are one of the main organizing partners and work within the consortium of the World Congress and its activities.

Thanks to Terre des Hommes, Penal Reform International, International Association of Youth and Family Judges (AIMJF), University of Comillas and core partners!

This year's Congress is held with the patronage and support of UNICEF, UNODC, OHCHR, OECD, UNESCO, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and others, highlighting its international relevance and commitment to human rights.

### Locations:

- o Day 1: Espacio Pablo VI (Paseo Juan XXIII, 3. 28040 Madrid)
- o Days 2 & 3: Comillas University – ICADE (C. de Alberto Aguilera, 23. 28015 Madrid)

### Participants can engage in three ways:

- o In person, in Madrid
- o Online, from anywhere in the world
- o Through satellite events hosted globally

Registration fees are designed to support the Congress's logistics and inclusivity, not for profit. Learn more about what's included with each ticket on the official website.

The World Congress will unfold over three dynamic days.

- o Day 1: Kick off with a half-day of conference sessions in the afternoon.
- o Day 2: Dive into a full day filled with inspiring plenary sessions and hands-on workshops.
- o Day 3: Conclude with a half-day of events in the morning.

Throughout the World Congress, participants will engage in a diverse range of activities, including thought-provoking plenaries, interactive workshops, valuable networking opportunities, and captivating performances.

All plenary sessions will be livestreamed with translations available in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic. All times are listed in Central European Time (CET).

### >> [THE FULL PROGRAMME](#) <<

The Digital Brochure of the V World Congress on Justice With Children 2025 is also available for download in: English Español Français

World Congress Concept Note is available for download in: English Español

The Global Campus of Human Rights is proud to co-organize the 5th World Congress on Justice with Children, taking place from 2 to 4 June 2025 in Madrid under the theme: “Promoting child-centred justice: preventing and responding to violence against children in child justice systems.”

Manfred Nowak, Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights and his team continue to work on global justice reform for and with children

Venice/Madrid, 21 May 2025 — The Global Campus of Human Rights is proud to co-organize the 5th World Congress on Justice with Children, taking place from 2 to 4 June 2025 in Madrid under the theme: “Promoting child-centred justice: preventing and responding to violence against children in child justice systems.”

Organised under the patronage of Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and in partnership with UNICEF, UNESCO, OECD, and other leading actors, the Congress will bring together over 1,000 in-person participants and 4,000 global attendees in a hybrid format, which includes more than 60 satellite events across all continents. Some of these events will be coordinated by the Global Campus of Human Rights regional hubs online around the world.

World Congress Presentation – 2 June (14:30-15:00)

The opening plenary session will feature Professor Manfred Nowak, Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights and former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. As independent expert leading the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, Professor Nowak will speak about the continued impact of this landmark study and its relevance to ongoing child justice reforms worldwide.

International Plenary Session on Digital Justice and Artificial Intelligence & Children’s Rights – 4 June (12:00-13:00)

Manu Krishan, Global Study Programme Coordinator at the Global Campus of Human Rights, will co-moderate this intergenerational session addressing digital justice and AI. He is responsible for coordinating the dissemination and follow-up of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, which laid the groundwork

for major initiatives in child-friendly justice worldwide.

### **About the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty**

The UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, led by Manfred Nowak, was a multi-year collaborative effort involving UN agencies, governments, civil society and academics. The study exposed the often unlawful and harmful overuse of detention and found that 7.2 million children are deprived of liberty per year worldwide in various settings such as within the administration of justice, institutions and migration detention. It provided comprehensive legal and policy recommendations aimed at reducing and ending the deprivation of liberty for children. It remains a cornerstone for advocacy, training, and reform efforts to create child-friendly justice systems.

The publication of the UN Global Study also inspired the Global Campus to develop children's rights as a major stream across its educational and research activities, in cooperation with the Swedish foundation Right Livelihood. The Children's Rights Department, led by Barbara Strasser, is coordinating and implementing children's rights projects in collaboration with all GC regional hubs, GC faculty and alumni, and children themselves. A strong focus of these projects, besides child justice, is on artificial intelligence and climate justice.

More info: **Children's Rights – Global Campus of Human Rights**

<https://nochildbehindbars.com>

### **Media & Interview Opportunities**

With the support of the Press Office of the Global Campus of Human Rights, journalists are invited to request interviews with key speakers and experts featured in the programme.

For interview requests and press inquiries, please contact:

**[pressoffice@gchumanrights.org](mailto:pressoffice@gchumanrights.org)**

Attn: Elisa Aquino (for Spanish and International Press)

Attn: Isotta Esposito (for Italian and International Press)


### **About the Congress**

Hosted by the Spanish Government through the Ministry of Youth and Children, the Congress is co-led by the Global Initiative on Justice with Children, a partnership between Terre des hommes Lausanne, Penal Reform International, the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates (IAYFJM), and the Global Campus of Human Rights.

The Congress will culminate in a joint declaration aiming to influence the 2025–2030 agenda for child-friendly justice, in line with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Throughout the World Congress, participants will engage in a diverse range of activities, including thought-provoking plenaries, interactive workshops, valuable networking opportunities, and captivating performances.

All plenary sessions will be livestreamed with translations available in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic. All times are listed in Central European Time (CET).

Click [here](#) to know more.

A portrait of Sheila Watt-Cloutier, a woman with short grey hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a dark jacket with colorful embroidery. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with a body of water and a light sky.

## Right Livelihood Laureate Sheila Watt-Cloutier teams up with Global Campus for online course “Authoring Justice”

Environmental, Cultural and Human Rights Advocate Sheila Watt-Cloutier is to share insights on writing about climate justice and indigenous rights with the students of our online course “Authoring Justice”.

*“It is not only the melting ice which is being threatened by climate change, but also the wisdom of Inuit culture”* said Sheila Watt-Cloutier in 2015 when accepting the Right Livelihood Award “for her lifelong work to protect the Inuit of the Arctic and defend their right to maintain their livelihoods and culture, which are acutely threatened by climate change.” Ten years on, her words remain urgent; her commitment inspirational. As a leader in the fight for climate justice and a renowned author, she is the ideal guest to encourage a new group of aspiring changemakers who wish to write human-centered stories for social transformation.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier knows how to speak truth to power out of her own lived experience. In her book *The Right to Be Cold: One Woman’s Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet*, a powerful award-winning memoir about her life and the devastating impact of climate change on Inuit communities, she convincingly argued that climate justice and human rights are inextricably linked and concern each and every human being.

Whether by pushing for the development of educational programs that would lift her indigenous community or by filing the world's first legal action on climate change at the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, throughout her work she has seamlessly weaved together human rights, culture and the environment to influence authorities and policies, building the foundation of the very same holistic approach that is now being advocated by many quarters. She was and still is a pioneer not only in raising awareness about current environmental challenges, in the Arctic and worldwide, but also in providing examples and human rights-based solutions, while infusing a hopeful vision for a more respectful and human future.

**«I believe the campaigns to link climate change to human rights protection—efforts that acknowledge our shared humanity and our shared future—are the [most effective way to bring about lasting change](#)»** writes Sheila.

We share the same belief and this is why, in collaboration with our longstanding partner Right Livelihood, we invited her to speak to the new cohort of Authoring Justice, our online writing course on narrative non-fiction. During a live webinar with course participants, Sheila and Andrew Leon Hanna, the main lecturer of the course, will discuss the motivation behind her decision to write a memoir as a form of human rights advocacy. Students will have the opportunity to learn from her how to honour the voices of the people they write about. They will interact with her and find out more on how to be human-centered in their writing approach. In particular, two students will be 'twinned' with Sheila and receive two scholarships to write their Capstone Projects about climate justice or youth engagement in climate justice movements.

Info: [Authoring Justice](#).



## The Future of Human Rights Education: A Strategic Exchange Between the UN and the Global Campus

On 6 May 2025, on the occasion of a convening of the Global Campus Council, Elena Ippoliti, Coordinator of the Human Rights Education Unit of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, joined us for an exchange on the future of human rights education. The event served as an opportunity to renew our long-standing partnership with the OHCHR across education, research, and engagement with students and young graduates.

The exchange began with a reference to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), which frames human rights education (HRE) as being about, through, and for human rights, a framework that has become a global standard in policymaking, academia, and civil society.

The Global Campus has adopted this comprehensive approach in its eight regional master's programmes, with regular curriculum updates to reflect the evolving landscape of human rights. Our programmes equip students with the knowledge, critical thinking, and values needed to promote human rights in the classroom, the workplace, and the community—no small task in an era where values narratives can be used against human rights.

### Reflecting on 30 Years of Progress in Human Rights Education

Elena Ippoliti brought valuable insights as a senior practitioner in global human rights education. She reflected on the significant progress made over the past three decades, beginning with the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004), which catalysed global awareness and action. The Global Campus made an early contribution with the launch of its first European Master's in Human Rights and Democratisation in 1997—one of the first such programmes globally.

Since then, globally HRE has seen growth in standard-setting (including the adoption of UN Declaration in 2011, building on treaty commitments such as in the CRC), initiatives to encourage national implementation (such as the the World Programme for Human Rights Education), development of textbooks and resources, as well as institution building, with new organisations specifically devoted to HRE being created or strengthened.

### **Building for the Present and Future**

Echoing the recent UN’s vision on human rights, which states that “stepping up availability of human rights education is critical”, Elena Ippoliti stressed the importance of HRE as a means of empowering individuals and strengthening the human rights movement. She highlighted the focus on children and youth of the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education, which prioritises topics such as human rights and digital technologies, environmental justice and climate change, and gender equality—all of which are deeply embedded in the curricula of the Global Campus master’s programmes and training initiatives.

The discussion emphasised the need to connect non-formal human rights education—such as peer-led initiatives by youth movements like the scouts—with academic HRE. GC Europe is currently undertaking research on postgraduate human rights education with initiatives under development. In addition, leveraging its broad network, the Global Campus has the unique ability to reach students and faculty from disciplines not traditionally associated with human rights, as demonstrated by initiatives in multiple member universities. This strategy offers a meaningful way to expand the global human rights movement.

Participants agreed that while human rights education is a global project, it must be contextual and culturally grounded. Effective HRE methodologies must originate from within local cultures and be relevant to their audiences. The Global Campus, with its regional hubs, multicultural faculty, and diverse student body, is uniquely positioned to achieve this without imposing a top-down, external model of human rights education.

The conversation also highlighted the importance of providing human rights defenders with tailored educational tools. The Global Campus has a strong track record in this area, and recent efforts have focused on embedding instructional tools and pedagogical strategies into its master’s curricula. These efforts aim to better prepare students to teach human rights themselves—an area where there is clear potential to do even more.

### **A Renewed Partnership Between the UN and the Global Campus**

To strengthen and innovate this collaboration, the OHCHR and the Global Campus are finalising a new Memorandum of Understanding aimed at advancing human rights education, research, and capacity building. This renewed partnership will include joint initiatives in training, student engagement, expert exchanges, and

regional cooperation. The MoU also foresees regular coordination meetings and dedicated focal points to ensure consistent collaboration and strategic alignment. The Global Campus will further participate in a global forum co-organised by OHCHR and the Council of Europe to critically assess progress and challenges in human rights education for youth—more on this soon!

We thank Elena Ippoliti and the OHCHR for this vital exchange and look forward to continuing our shared mission to strengthen human rights education around the world.



## Interdisciplinary Climate Justice & Human Rights Spring School in Moldova marks its second edition

Jointly organized by the Global Campus of Human Rights and its youngest member, the Moldova State University (MSU), with the support of the European Union, the second edition of the European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice and Human Rights was successfully ran in Orhei on May 5–11.

The second edition of the European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice and Human Rights was successfully ran in Orhei on May 5–11, reinforcing Moldova's growing role in the regional discourse on environmental rights and sustainable development's promotion and protection.

Jointly organized by the Global Campus of Human Rights and its youngest member, the Moldova State University (MSU), with the support of the European Union, the Spring School brought together students, human rights defenders, and civil society workers from Moldova and across the EU neighbourhood and enlargement regions.

Held in the serene setting of the Codru Tourism Complex, the School gathered 22 highly motivated participants for an intensive week of interdisciplinary learning and exchange under the coordination of the GC Capacity Developments Department's team, Adriano Remiddi, Vukasin Pajovic and Larisa Barbu. This year's edition saw a notable increase in the number of Moldovan participants, as well as the growing involvement of local academics and experts, reflecting a strengthened interest and

commitment to human rights education in the country.

The programme featured a balanced blend of international and national expertise. GC affiliated lecturers such as Zoi Aliozi, Pim Martens, Samentha Goethals, Alma Midžić, Marina Shupac teamed up with MSU's scholars Rodica Iordanov, Irina Punga, Doina Cuciurca, Daniela Elenciuc, and Steliana Clapco.

While core academic sessions explored critical themes such as climate justice foundations, planetary health, ecocide, and business responsibilities in environmental governance, the School adopted a strong experiential approach, integrating simulation exercises, case-study group work, and a participatory Climate Fresh workshop involving both international and MSU faculty.

A special session co-organized with the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova focused on the country's climate policies in the context of EU accession, featuring invited guests from the Ministry of Environment, the EU Delegation, and civil society. These experts engaged in meaningful dialogue with participants, offering insights into national policy directions and challenges on the path toward a green transition.

In addition to classroom learning, participants joined a field visit to Orhei National Park, guided by MSU faculty, where they explored local biodiversity and the importance of conservation. The week also included the screening of a documentary on ecocide, followed by a reflective group discussion linking the case to broader human rights implications for the region and beyond.

All participants received a joint certificate of completion issued by the Global Campus, GC Caucasus, and Moldova State University. Several students opted to complete a final written assignment to earn ECTS credits, including those attending as part of their GC Caucasus's second semester mobility period.

Now in its second year, the Spring School is evolving into a cornerstone activity for academic and civic collaboration for the promotion of human rights and sustainable development in the region. GC, MSU and partners aim to keep developing this initiative as a unique educational incubator that aspires to build long-term impact, foster innovation, and meaningfully contribute to Moldova's sustainable green transition.

Download the programme [here](#).

This project is part of the GC Capacity Development programme.

For more information contact [capacity.development@gchumanrights.org](mailto:capacity.development@gchumanrights.org)



## Promoting Human Rights Through Education: Global Campus and University of Belize partner

The Global Campus of Human Rights (GC) is pleased to announce its collaboration with the University of Belize (UB) in the context of the human rights promotion project “Strengthening Human Rights Advocacy Among Youth in Belize Through Academic Research, Capacity Building, and Human Rights Education” funded by the European Union.

The Global Campus of Human Rights (GC) is pleased to announce its collaboration with the University of Belize (UB) in the context of the human rights promotion project “Strengthening Human Rights Advocacy Among Youth in Belize Through Academic Research, Capacity Building, and Human Rights Education” funded by the European Union.

This three-year long initiative aims to enhance awareness and engagement among young Belizeans on human rights issues through educational and outreach activities. Pillars of the projects will be activities in the field of knowledge creation and production in support of a stronger human rights-based policy dialogue, legislative processes and decision-making in the young Caribbean nation.

The GC, together with its GC Latin-America & Caribbean programme based at San Martin University (Buenos Aires) and as part of its Capacity Development programme, will act as implementing partner of the action, alongside other key stakeholders such as the local Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI)

To mark the launch of the project, GC President Verónica Gómez, also Judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and Academic Director George Ulrich travelled to Belmopan and Belize city to attend institutional meetings and events, opened by a welcoming by UB’s President Vincent Palacio, the university leadership and the Research Office headed by Joyanne De Four-Babb.

On May 17, as part of the EU Day events organized by the EU Delegation in Belize, a bilateral memorandum of understanding was officially signed at the presence of EU Ambassador Erja Askola, as well as other key national stakeholders (VIDEO).

Additionally, during their visit, Veronica Gomez hold a masterclass on Inter-American Human Rights Protection System (VIDEO) and George Ulrich hold a training seminar on human rights international standards to UB community, as well as to members of CSOs and personnel of the Ombudsperson office (VIDEO).

This project marks the beginning of a strategic partnership between the Global Campus of Human Rights and the University of Belize, with the goal of preparing its future participation within the GC and its regional network, as well as developing educational and outreach initiatives on human rights in the English-speaking Caribbean. In the following months, GC will support the organization of capacity building training courses, advise on research methodology, pedagogical innovation and awareness raising through advocacy and outreach events.

This project is part of the GC Capacity Development programme.

For more information contact [capacity.development@gchumanrights.org](mailto:capacity.development@gchumanrights.org)



## Reframing the Narrative: a Hope-Based Approach to Human Rights

The Venice School for Human Rights Defenders is a Global Campus flagship annual gathering dedicated to empowering activists, advocates, and changemakers with innovative strategies, tools, and networks. Through immersive workshops, expert lectures, and collaborative sessions, the programme fosters a dynamic environment for learning and solidarity among those working on the frontlines of human rights defence.

Hope based communication is an approach developed to help every human rights defender discover their value, their narratives, and their mission. [...]

«My message to human rights defenders: you don't need a candle in daylight, but **you do in the dark**. All the work we've done is meant for exactly these dark times. The stronger populism becomes, the more urgently we must create real alternatives.»

– **Thomas Coombes**, Global Communications Strategist

This edition of the Venice School for Human Rights Defenders (15-21 June) brings an exciting new voice to the conversation: Thomas Coombes, former GC alumnus, human rights strategist and expert in hope-based communication. Known for his transformative work in reframing narratives around human rights, Coombes offers a compelling approach that centres on optimism, solutions, and the power of storytelling.


The Venice School for Human Rights Defenders is a Global Campus flagship annual gathering dedicated to empowering activists, advocates, and changemakers with innovative strategies, tools, and networks. Through immersive workshops, expert lectures, and collaborative sessions, the programme fosters a dynamic environment for learning and solidarity among those working on the frontlines of human rights defence.

The School's cohort includes 14 Sakharov Fellows — emerging human rights defenders recognised for their courage and impact. The programme also featured a keynote speech by Lorent Saleh, 2017 European Parliament Sakharov Prize laureate and a powerful voice in the fight for democracy and justice.

Founder of the community of activists “Hope-based communications” and with a background in journalism and strategic communications, Coombes has worked globally with NGOs, activists, and media to develop messaging that uplifts and mobilises rather than divides. His pioneering methods challenge the prevailing focus on fear and outrage by demonstrating how hope can be a radical and effective tool for advocacy.

His involvement in the School's programme is more than a lecture—it's an invitation to reimagine how we advocate for justice.

As our community gathers once again in Venice, we believe Coombes' presence, alongside the inspiring Sakharov Fellows and Lorent Saleh's keynote, encouraged participants to adopt new tools and mindsets. In a time when fear and polarisation dominate headlines, hope-based communication empowers human rights defenders to shift the narrative, mobilises communities, and sparks lasting change.



## Incubating Talent, Empowering Voices: Global Campus alumni on Their Writing and Advocacy Journey

When Global Campus students graduate they become Global Campus alumni. What stays the same is the Global Campus' commitment to them and our shared commitment to human rights. The Regional Correspondents scheme is one of the ways we nurture these commitments.

Created by Thérèse Murphy, the chairperson of our European Master's, the scheme gives graduates a unique opportunity to enhance their research and advocacy abilities.

Every year, eight graduates—one from each of our regional Master's—are selected as correspondents. With training from Rosie Cowan, a former Guardian journalist who is now an academic at Queen's University Belfast, one of our partner universities, these correspondents design, deliver, edit and publish blog posts on topics that are important in their world regions.

We spoke with Thérèse, Rosie and our Regional Correspondents about the value of the scheme.

The opportunity to learn from a seasoned journalist and contribute to the Human Rights Preparedness blog was incredibly appealing... it offered a unique platform to combine my work in promoting human rights for all and my desire to write.

Visala Annamalai, GC Asia-Pacific alumna

[\*Why we built the competitive Regional Correspondents' Scheme, and Why our Alumni Apply to It\*](#)

The scheme's founder, Thérèse Murphy, asked a simple question: how do we harness and grow the talent of Global Campus graduates? Identifying the Global Campus' blog, Human Rights Preparedness, as a potential tool, Thérèse designed a paid training scheme that would allow alumni to design and publish blogposts under the expert guidance of a mentor.

Finding the right mentor was key. Thérèse reached out to Rosie Cowan, an expert in both academic writing and journalism, having spent 10 years with the Guardian newspaper. Rosie grasped the value of the scheme straightaway and signed on as mentor.

Mentoring Global Campus alumni on our regional correspondents' blog-writing scheme is a tremendously rewarding experience. I am learning a great deal about a diverse range of fascinating topics whilst helping talented and committed alumni use their knowledge and skills to highlight key issues as they champion human rights around the world.

Dr Rosie Cowan Alumni saw the scheme's value too. For many, it offered a chance to keep up their involvement in human rights advocacy and research. Some saw it as a means of elevating marginalised voices. Others saw it as a springboard for their academic and professional development, enhancing their CVs for journalism, policy work and applications for further study.

### *What Benefits Has the Scheme Brought to our Alumni?*

«Looking back over multiple rounds of the scheme, every participant highlights the ways in which their critical thinking improved, as well as their analytical and writing skills. They give credit to their mentor, Dr. Rosie Cowan. Writing about complex human rights issues helped me refine **how I express ideas clearly** and persuasively [...] and translate human rights issues into accessible, action-driven narratives.»

- Ana Funa, GC South East Europe alumna

«The global exposure and opportunity for networking was another benefit. As a journalist, I was seduced by the possibility of engaging in a fruitful dialogue with peers from different regions of the world and, at the same time, **reaching audiences that are unlikely to read my work in national media.**»

- Ezequiel Fernandez, GC Latin America alumnus

«The opportunity to investigate underreported subjects and add to the global conversation on important subjects including digital rights, forced migration and the rule of law was also welcome. I was able to **deeply explore topics in my region** that had limited available information.»

- **Salome Abulazde, GC Caucasus alumna**

Several former Regional Correspondents continue to write on human rights issues for academic journals, NGOs and media platforms in different regions and languages. Others have used the opportunity to further their careers by using their improved writing abilities in impact-driven publications. All appreciate having contributed to a platform that has increased their visibility and reputation as someone committed to researching and advocating for human rights, opening doors for further opportunities.

«The experience significantly strengthened my **strategic advocacy work**, especially in drafting policy briefs, op-eds and reports for international human rights bodies. Additionally, it has contributed to my visibility as a scholar and advocate, leading to collaborations with civil society organisations, academia and human rights institutions.»

**Lakshita Kanhiya, GC Africa alumna**

**ARE YOU AN ALUMNUS/A OF THE GLOBAL CAMPUS  
AND DO YOU HAVE A STRONG INTEREST IN HUMAN  
RIGHTS NARRATIVES? GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR  
REGIONAL PROGRAMME TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE  
NEXT DEADLINE!**

The Alumni Regional Correspondent Scheme is managed by **Dr. Chiara Altafin**, our Research Manager.

Learn more about the current **Alumni Regional Correspondents**.

# Promotion



10.05–23.11 Venezia

**Intelligens.  
Natural.  
Artificial.  
Collective.**

Giardini/Arsenale

**Biennale Architettura  
2025**

**INTELLIGENS. NATURAL. ARTIFICIAL. COLLECTIVE.**

La Biennale di Venezia  
Arte  
Architettura  
Cinema  
Danza  
Musica  
Teatro  
Archivio Storico

The 19th International Architecture Exhibition, titled *Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective.*, curated by Carlo Ratti and organised by La Biennale di Venezia, opened to the public from 10 May to 23 November 2025, 2025, at the Giardini, the Arsenale and at the Forte Marghera. The pre-opening took place on 8-9 May; the awards ceremony and inauguration were held on 10 May 2025.

Punctually, as with every edition, the Global Campus of Human Rights Press Office participated in the Opening of the Biennale Architettura and its collateral events. The 19th International Architecture Exhibition, titled *Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective.*, is curated by Carlo Ratti and organised by **La Biennale di Venezia**.

«Architecture has always been a response to a hostile climate. From the earliest “primitive hut,” human design has been led by **the need for shelter and survival**, driven by optimism: our creations have always strived to bridge the gap between a harsh environment and the safe, livable spaces we require» **Carlo Ratti** stated.

«Today, that dynamic approach is being taken to a new

level – **as climate becomes less forgiving**. In the fires of Los Angeles, in the floods of Valencia and Sherpur, in the droughts of Sicily, we have witnessed first-hand how water and fire are attacking us with unprecedented ferocity. **The year 2024 marked a grim milestone as Earth registered its hottest temperatures on record**, pushing global averages beyond the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C target. In just two years, climate change has accelerated in ways that defy even the best scientific models.»

«For decades, **architecture’s response to the climate crisis has been centered on mitigation**—designing to reduce our impact on the climate. But that approach is no longer enough. The time has come for architecture to embrace adaptation: rethinking **how we design for an altered world**.»

«Adaptation demands a **fundamental shift** in our practice. This year’s Exhibition *Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective.* invites different types of intelligence to work together to rethink the built environment. The very Latin title *Intelligens* contains the word *gens* (“people”) – inviting us to experiment beyond today’s limited focus on AI and digital technologies.»

«In the time of adaptation, **architecture is at the center and must lead with optimism**. In the time of adaptation, architecture needs to draw on all forms of intelligence – natural, artificial, collective. In the time of adaptation, architecture needs to reach out across generations and across disciplines – from the hard sciences to the arts. In the time of adaptation, **architecture must rethink authorship and become more inclusive, learning from science**.»

«Architecture must become as **flexible** and **dynamic** as the world we are now designing for».

«Intelli/Gens. **To build the world with intelligence**, listening to the intelligence of the world. This is what Carlo Ratti wishes to say in his visionary Exhibition, the very title of which announces its intention to be a foundational reflection for the near futures, the subject of study and debate for the scientific and artistic community and for the public of visitors.»

66 National Participations will organize their exhibitions in the historic Pavilions at the Giardini (26), at the Arsenale (22) and in the city centre of Venice (15). 4 are the new Participations: Republic of Azerbaijan, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, Togo.

### Italian Pavilion

The Italian Pavilion at the Tese delle Vergini in the Arsenale, sponsored and promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture, is curated by Guendalina Salimei with the project TERRÆ AQUÆ. L'Italia e l'intelligenza del mare.

### Holy See

The Holy See Pavilion, promoted by Prefetto del Dicastero per la Cultura e l'Educazione della Santa Sede, Cardinale José Tolentino de Mendonça, this year will be held in the Complesso di Santa Maria Ausiliatrice (Fondamenta S. Giocacchin, Castello 450). The exhibition is titled "Opera aperta" and curated by Marina Otero Verzier and Giovanna Zabotti.

### Venice Pavilion

The City of Venice participates with the historical Venice Pavilion at the Giardini, with the exhibition titled Biblioteche. Costruendo l'intelligenza veneziana. The Venice Pavilion will have its own emanation in other institutional spaces and in the premises of the Università IUAV di Venezia.

The Awards Ceremony of the 19th International Architecture Exhibition took place on Saturday 10 May 2025 at Ca' Giustinian, Venice.

The International Jury of the 19th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia composed of Hans Ulrich Obrist (president, Switzerland); Paola Antonelli (Italy); and Mpho Matsipa (South Africa) has decided to present the following awards, with these motivation:

Golden Lion for best National Participation to the Kingdom of Bahrain: The Pavilion offers viable proposal for extreme heat conditions. As the designers

explain, «**Architecture must address the dual challenges of environmental resilience and sustainability. The ingenious solution can be deployed in public spaces and in locations where people must live and work outdoors in conditions of extreme heat. The pavilion uses traditional methods of passive cooling typical of the region and reminiscence of wind towers and shaded courtyards.**»

Special mention as National Participation to the Holy See: Recalling a book by Umberto Eco 1962, the pavilion Opera aperta invites the visitor to participate in the production of meaning. This special mention recognizes the creation of a space for exchange, negotiation, restoration. Opera aperta will revitalize an existing deconsecrated church with repair occurring at different levels involving a big range of skills of labour. As the team calls it, “a living practice of good care and collective care.” Opera aperta creates space for cultural exchange.

Special mention as National Participation to Great Britain: A dialogue between Great Britain and Kenya about reparation and renewal. The pavilion reveals architecture as architecture that is defined by extraction that produce inequality and environmental degradation. The Jury notes attempts to imagine a new relation between architecture and geology. The jury also notes the Venice Fellowship program as a notable initiative for knowledge exchange between the three countries: Venice, Great Britain and Kenya.

Golden Lion for the best participation in the 19th Exhibition Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective. to Canal Café – Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Natural Systems Utilities, SODAI, Aaron Betsky, Davide Oldani: Canal Café is a demonstration of how the city of Venice can be a laboratory to speculate how to live on the water, while offering a contribution to the public space of Venice. It also invites future speculation about the lagoon and other lagoons. It also represents an important parallel track in the DS+R’s practice since the very start—one rich in transdisciplinary experimentation. We also acknowledge the extraordinary persistence of the Canal Café project, which started almost 20 years ago. It’s an example that Biennale can be a long duration project and go far beyond the event.

Silver Lion for a promising participation in the 19th Exhibition Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective. to Calculating Empires: A Genealogy of Technology and Power Since 1500 – Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler: The importance of Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler’s Calculating Empires: a genealogy of technology and power since 1500 is to make visible the invisible both in space and in time. This large scale visual manifesto shows the digital and social infrastructures co-evolving over centuries. Now more than ever understanding the entanglements of power and technology – colonialism, militarization, automation and enclosure. It offers a rich history of

technology today. This extraordinary diagram is a device to better understand our present and build alternative futures.

Special mentions to the participations in the 19th Exhibition Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective. to:

Tosin Oshinowo's Alternative Urbanism: The Self-Organized Markets of Lagos offers a glimpse to markets of processing waste of industrialized economy. The documentation is a promising initiative for further research and knowledge production about markets in Africa and the importance of markets as prototypes for innovation. These markets are keynotes in a robust ecosystem that merits study because of its adaptive circularity.

Elephant Chapel for the exemplary way that it shows us how to build a durable brick structure with bio material. Boonsem Premthada architecture practice uses elephant dung in order to minimize the use of materials. Their work is in communion with the environment. Premthada builds an open air sanctuary called Elephant World in a province of Thailand where humans have harmoniously coexisted with Elephants for centuries. The project celebrates the alliance and preserves its context and condition.

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