

ECCHR

EUROPEAN CENTER
FOR CONSTITUTIONAL
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Critical Legal Training for lawyers and legal activists

**SHAPING THE
FUTURE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS WORK**

**INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL
INTERVENTION**

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ECCHR

**CRITICAL LEGAL
TRAINING
FOR LAWYERS AND
LEGAL ACTIVISTS**

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CONTENT

I.

Shaping the future of human rights work

p.4

II.

Training the human rights lawyers of tomorrow

p.5

III.

Co-learning & critical perspectives on the law

p.7

IV.

Scholarships & partner universities

p.13

V.

Building a global network

p.14

Contact & imprint

p.23

I.

Shaping the future of human rights work

The law is an expression of social power relations and thus an instrument of power. At the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), our approach to legal intervention goes beyond merely applying current law: we use the law's emancipatory potential to enforce, change and recreate legal norms in the spirit of global justice.

Anyone seeking to challenge power needs allies – and a lot of patience. Therefore, training future human rights lawyers and legal activists is part of ECCHR's organizational philosophy, and we are dedicated to supporting our partners of tomorrow.

The Institute for Legal Intervention, of which the Critical Legal Training is a part, focuses on critical and progressive perspectives on the law, particularly concerning power and power dynamics, using a multidisciplinary approach. We aim to contribute to long-term societal, legal and political debates through our exchange with universities and research institutions, training and co-learning activities, and collaboration with partners, artists and activists worldwide.



ECCHR TRAINEES, ALUMN* AND STAFF AT ALUMN* REUNION 2018
© MOHAMED BADARNE

II.

Training the human rights lawyers of tomorrow

The Critical Legal Training at ECCHR is geared towards the next generation of lawyers, recent graduates and students with a strong interest in human rights. We host ten to twelve international trainees and fellows at a time, and provide a co-learning, training, support and networking platform to:

- Practice transnational collaborative lawyering by supporting our cases and projects
- Challenge existing power structures that foster injustice and impunity through legal intervention
- Tackle complex political and socio-economic issues using a transdisciplinary approach
- Shape the legal discourse with a progressive and, where necessary, subversive interpretation of the law

Trainees and fellows are placed in a thematic program team – International Crimes and Accountability, Business and Human Rights or Migration – or in the Institute for Legal Intervention’s projects on postcolonial theory and colonial crimes.

Under the guidance of ECCHR staff, trainees and fellows take part in our day-to-day work, and support our cases with legal and factual research. Participants devote some of their time to preparing and attending co-learning activities, such as lunch talks or trainee meetings.

The training program was launched in 2012, thanks to the generous and continuous support of the Bertha Foundation.

“My mobile phone rings. It is Andreas [Schüller], calling me from Berlin to interview me for a traineeship at ECCHR. That day, I did not expect at all to be selected as one of the first five Kreuzberger Kinderstiftung Fellows, nor did I see myself involved whatsoever in ECCHR’s first complaint on torture in Syrian detention facilities. [...] Thank you for the package of new ideas and perspectives that continue to enrich my thinking. They turned out to be crucial for the direction of my professional life!”

**SUSANN ABOUELDAHAB, LEGAL TRAINEE (2016/17)
KREUZBERGER KINDERSTIFTUNG FELLOW**



**SUSANN ABOUELDAHAB (RIGHT) WITH RAWAN ARRAF,
LEGAL TRAINEE 2018 © MOHAMED BADARNE**

III.

Co-learning & critical perspectives on the law

The Critical Legal Training pursues a co-learning approach in which participants actively and critically contribute. Our activities aim to break hierarchies and work horizontally. All participants are encouraged to take initiative and ownership.

At the training's core is the understanding that every lawyer can advance human rights by finding creative ways to push the boundaries of law towards social justice.

“The office serves as a space for continuous learning, not just through the casework one may be involved in, but also through many stimulating debates and discussions, which form an integral part of ECCHR’s work culture.”

KALIKA MEHTA, LEGAL TRAINEE (2017)
KREUZBERGER KINDERSTIFTUNG FELLOW



KALIKA MEHTA (RIGHT) AND ALLISON WEST (LEGAL TRAINEE 2012) MODERATING A TALK WITH WOLFGANG KALECK (ECCHR GENERAL SECRETARY) DURING THE 2019 ALUMN* REUNION © ECCHR

**OUR LEARNING GOAL:
TO INTRODUCE ECCHR'S APPROACH AND EXPERIENCE**

Participants learn about the foundations of our work, deepen their understanding of relevant legal and political theories, and put them into practice in day-to-day project work.

**OUR INNOVATION GOAL:
TO FURTHER ECCHR'S CRITICAL VISION**

Participants critically analyze human rights law and strategic litigation from political, economic, post-colonial and feminist perspectives, and reflect on their role as human rights lawyers.

**OUR INSTITUTIONAL GOAL:
TO NETWORK AND SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS**

ECCHR seeks to transmit its expertise, political vision and experience to the next generation of lawyers and human rights defenders. They are partners in our growing global network.

“The Critical Legal Training sets ECCHR apart as a place that engages with criticisms of human rights. Given the challenges that many human rights institutions are facing around the world, I think it is important for aspiring human rights workers to read and think about these criticisms.”

**ADAM RAY, LEGAL TRAINEE (2019)
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL
LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS FELLOW**



**DISCUSSION AT ECCHR'S 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN 2018
© MOHAMED BADARNE**

SELECT 2018/19 CO-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SKILL-LEARNING WORKSHOPS

Exposing the invisible: Gathering digital evidence securely
by Tactical Technology Collective

LUNCH TALKS

Gina Haspel: From torture in Thailand to CIA chief
by Nancy Hollander, criminal defense lawyer

Brazil: Human rights work and current political developments

by Darcy Frigo, founder of Terra de Direitos

Being a women's rights defender in Syria

by Daad Mousa, human rights lawyer

TRAINEE MEETINGS

Rescue at sea

by Michael Werner, Legal Trainee

Criminal prosecution of arms producers, historically and prospectively before the ICC

by Rosa Beets, Legal Trainee

Possible legal and non-legal measures to address the Ovaherero and Nama genocide in Germany

by Friederike Pöschl, Legal Trainee

HUMAN RIGHTS CINEMA

Of Fathers and Sons (2017)

followed by a discussion with filmmaker Talal Derki

WALKING TOURS

Germany's colonial legacies in present-day Berlin

by Berlin Postkolonial

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Human rights lawyers and legal activists must build strong links between theory and practice to work in ways that do not perpetuate existing power imbalances and unjust legacies. Exploring post-colonial, feminist and intersectional approaches to human rights, international law, critical theory and social movements is integral to achieving this goal.

The project team organizes reading debriefs and workshops engaging critical perspectives on human rights and international law. All participants receive readings that address the ambivalence of law and the limits as well as the possibilities of using human rights and international law to realize a socio-political vision.

Our Annual Alumn* Reunion traditionally highlights gender perspectives on the law.



2018 ALUMN* REUNION EVENT AT SÜDBLOCK CAFÉ IN BERLIN-KREUZBERG ON
"ALTERNATIVES TO NEOLIBERAL FEMINISM" © NA'AMA LANDAU

“CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW” READINGS

“The human rights movement is marked by a damning metaphor. The grand narrative of human rights contains a subtext that depicts an epochal contest pitting savages, on the one hand, against victims and saviors, on the other.”

**MAKAU MUTUA (2001):
SAVAGES, VICTIMS AND SAVIORS:
THE METAPHOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

“To what extent do our depictions and actions marginalise or silence these groups and mask our own complicities? What social and institutional power relationships do these representations, even those aimed at ‘empowerment’, set up or neglect?”

**TSHEPO MADLINGOZI (2010):
ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE ENTREPRENEURS
AND THE PRODUCTION OF VICTIMS**

“The law is applied selectively and is predominantly wielded against the weak, fallen and toppled autocrats and military leaders.”

**WOLFGANG KALECK (2012):
DOUBLE STANDARDS: INTERNATIONAL
CRIMINAL LAW AND THE WEST**

“To build genuine collaboration, it is necessary to reflect on the perpetuation of colonial attitudes, to construct a common framework despite different cultural understandings, and identify the inequality of those in different positions.”

**ALEJANDRA ANCHEITA AND CAROLIJN TERWINDT (2016):
“TOWARDS GENUINE TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH”,
IN: BERTHA BE JUST BLOG**

“We must never confuse law and justice. What is legal is often not just. And what is just is often not at all legal.”

**BILL QUIGLEY (2007):
LETTER TO A LAW STUDENT INTERESTED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE**

IV. Scholarships & partner universities

The Critical Legal Training collaborates with universities and foundations to ensure that young lawyers, students and recent graduates from a variety of backgrounds and geographies can participate in our program.

ECCHR regularly hosts trainees from the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at Oxford University, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University Law School, and Milan University. Others join with a Mercator Fellowship or support from US law schools and EU Erasmus programs.

The quest for greater diversity and representation within the human rights community, and sustainable training conditions for young professionals are part of our vision for human rights and social justice work.

The Kreuzberger Kinderstiftung, a Berlin-based educational justice foundation, has generously funded scholarships since 2016. Thanks to its support, more than 20 emerging human rights lawyers from socially or geographically underrepresented backgrounds have participated in the Critical Legal Training.

V. Building a global network

Since ECCHR was established in 2007, more than 400 young human rights lawyers and legal activists from nearly 60 countries have trained with us.



LEGAL TRAINEES

Algeria	Kyrgyzstan
Argentina	Libya
Armenia	Mexico
Australia	Namibia
Austria	Netherlands
Bolivia	New Zealand
Brazil	Nigeria
Cameroon	Norway
Canada	Pakistan
Chile	Poland
Colombia	Romania
Costa Rica	Russia
Croatia	Saudi Arabia
Cyprus	Slovakia
Egypt	South Africa
France	Spain
Germany	Sri Lanka
Guatemala	Sweden
Greece	Switzerland
India	Syria
Iran	Taiwan
Ireland	Tajikistan
Italy	Turkey
Kenya	United Kingdom
	USA
	Uzbekistan
	Venezuela

Bertha Justice
Network international

Bonavero Institute of
Human Rights, Oxford
University UK

Center for Human
Rights and
Global Justice, NYU
Law School USA

College of Law,
DePaul University USA

Emory School
of Law USA

Humboldt Law Clinic
Grund- und
Menschenrechte Germany

ifa CrossCulture
Program Germany

Kalshoven-Gieskes
Forum on International
Humanitarian Law,
Leiden University Netherlands

Kreuzberger
Kinderstiftung Germany

Milan University
Faculty of Law Italy

Tactical Technology
Collective international

Al-Haq Palestine

ANDHES Argentina

CCAJAR Colombia

CenterLaw Philippines

Democratic Jurists Switzerland

Forum for International
Humanitarian Law China

Foundation for
Fundamental Rights Pakistan

Hafiza Merkezi Turkey

Human Rights Law
Network India

Isha Khandelwal India

Mwatana for Human
Rights Yemen

Natural Justice India

Observatori DESC Spain

Palestinian Center for
Human Rights Palestine

Pesticide Action Network
Asia-Pacific Malaysia

Public Eye Switzerland

Russian LGBT Network Russia

Samari Chakma Bangladesh

Sisma Mujer Colombia

CRITICAL LEGAL TRAINING



GLOBAL NETWORK



ALUMN* NETWORK

All former trainees, research and exchange fellows are invited to become active members of ECCHR's Alumn* Network. The platform:

- Maximizes the potential to partner and collaborate long-term as alumn* continue to build their careers
- Enables alumn* to continue engaging and exchanging with ECCHR, each other and with our broader network
- Builds international solidarity and a common understanding of our role as lawyers and human rights activists in the global struggle for justice and social change

The Annual Alumn* Reunions have been a highlight for our team, alumn* and partners since 2012.

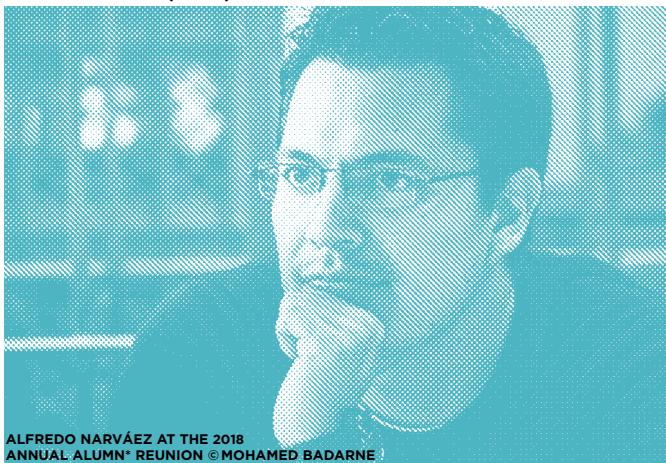
In May 2019, around 100 alumn*, trainees, fellows, and staff members met to discuss current global issues and collaborative human rights work. Participants traveled from across Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia to Berlin.



ECCHR ALUMN* AT OUR 10 YEAR
ANNIVERSARY IN 2018 © MOHAMED BADARNE

“Visits to [ECCCHR] make me look back in time and realize how much I have learned. It was as motivating an experience as it was humbling. On the other hand, apart from saying hi and catching up with old friends and colleagues, which is always nice, coming back to [ECCCHR] has meant constantly meeting new, interesting people from all over the world, whose passion and talent makes you want to be better.”

**ALFREDO NARVAEZ,
LEGAL TRAINEE (2008)**



ALFREDO NARVÁEZ AT THE 2018
ANNUAL ALUMN* REUNION © MOHAMED BADARNE

Along their career paths, many alumn* have cooperated with ECCHR as partner lawyers, academics, filmmakers, or colleagues in state institutions, international organizations and NGOs.

Some alumn* have stayed involved in “their” cases over the years. The KiK case, the first civil lawsuit in Germany addressing transnational retailers’ responsibility for working conditions at the bottom of the supply chain, took five years. Several trainee cohorts worked on it. Some joined field trips to Pakistan to visit the site of the factory fire that killed 258 workers.

When ECCHR and its partners organized the “Week of Justice,” a series of events around the first (and final) court hearing in Dortmund, Germany, in November 2018, a number of alumn* and trainees joined the team in solidarity with the Pakistani plaintiffs. They also contributed to the legal and political debates (for example, Michaela Streibelt’s “Flucht in der Verjährung” (“Hiding behind the statute of limitations”) in the German online platform *Legal Tribune Online*, and Osama Shahid’s “The fault in our factories” in the Pakistani newspaper *The Nation*).



ECCHR CONNECT IS A MEMBERSHIP-BASED ONLINE
PLATFORM FOR ALUMN* AND ECCHR STAFF TO
NETWORK, DEVELOP IDEAS, SHARE EXPERTISE, AND
STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH EACH OTHER AND ECCHR.

BERTHA GLOBAL EXCHANGE

In order to foster partnerships and develop transnational casework, ECCHR invites partner lawyers or delegates from partner organizations to work in ECCHR's offices in Berlin for up to three months. This Global Exchange program is generously supported by the Bertha Foundation.

Bertha Global Exchange Fellows are actively involved in ECCHR's day-to-day work and contribute to issues and cases that they or their organizations are working on. Global exchanges often mark the beginning of joint casework, or they help to develop concrete projects with long-term institutional partners. Fellows take an active role in the Critical Legal Training activities and become members of our Alumn* Network.



GLOBAL EXCHANGES WITH COLLEAGUES FROM OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATION MWATANA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FROM YEMEN, HERE REPRESENTED BY BONYAN GAMAL, ENABLED US TO FILE A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT AGAINST ITALIAN ARMS EXPORTER RWM ITALIA, A SUBSIDIARY OF GERMAN ARMS FIRM RHEINMETALL ©ECCHR

BERTHA JUSTICE INITIATIVE

ECCHR is part of the Bertha Justice Initiative, which is made up of 20 human rights and public interest law organizations around the world who host Bertha Justice Fellows.

“The Bertha Foundation envisions a society in which activists build collective power, stories come from many different voices, and law is used as a tool for justice.

The Bertha Justice Fellowship Program is training the next generation of human rights and movement lawyers in pursuit of social justice and human rights for all. Funded by the Bertha Foundation, which fights for a more just world by supporting activists, storytellers, and lawyers, the Program provides two-year fellowships to emerging lawyers.”

BERTHA FOUNDATION

Bertha Justice Fellows at ECCHR are Critical Legal Training alumn* who join our staff on a two-year fellowship.

Current and former fellows have made outstanding contributions to our cases and organization. They explore groundbreaking topics, develop casework and pursue innovative legal interventions on issues like migrant push-backs at Europe’s borders, inadequate regulation of harmful pesticides and the responsibility of arms manufacturers for crimes against humanity.



APPLICATION

Critical Legal Training
Visit our website for how to apply,
www.ecchr.eu/critical-legal-training

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NOTES

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