

# CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL

# RIGHTS



# ANNUAL REPORT '25

# VISION

**THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**  
fights for a world without oppression –  
where people use their power to achieve  
justice and guarantee the rights of  
marginalized communities.

# MISSION

**THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**  
stands with social justice movements and  
communities under threat – fusing  
litigation, advocacy, and narrative shifting  
to dismantle systems of oppression  
regardless of the risk.

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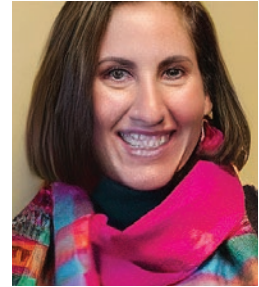
# **X** MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

**T**o our brave supporters, I am gratified to present the Center for Constitutional Rights FY25 Annual Report. Thank you for another historic year. Please take pride in what is in these pages. None of these accomplishments could have been achieved without you.

As I write this greeting, people are being abducted and disappeared from our streets by masked Federal government agents under the new Trump administration. Institutions that should serve as bulwarks against abuse are ceding ground and acquiescing to a lawless Executive branch. Meanwhile organizations like ours that protect and defend targeted people and communities are being threatened for our resistance. We know that what you are doing is not easy. Standing up to authoritarianism requires courage, stamina, and belief and history tells us that it is no match for solidarity and resistance. Thank you for your partnership and for making sure that the Center for Constitutional Rights has the resources we need to continue. The disorder and confusion created by the current administration is meant to paralyze those who fight back, but CCR has been doing this work for too long. We will not abandon our mission under pressure. Next year will mark our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary fighting for a society free of oppression.

Despite the chaos in the world right now, I am proud that our base of support continues to grow. So much was accomplished in FY25 with your help. We continued to work to abolish slavery in Alabama prisons; end death by incarceration in Pennsylvania; protect unaccompanied migrant children in detention; defend the free speech of students and professors kidnapped and detained for expressing

their solidarity with Palestinians; and uncover the intent of harmful Trump executive orders by filing Freedom of Information Act cases. And those are just some of the achievements that you made possible.



Thank you for believing in us and never abandoning the cause. Your commitment to justice and liberation powers all that we do. As you read these pages and take stock of all the good that you enable, all the lives you continue to change for the better, and all the movements gaining power, let's also focus on the work still to be done. We must continue to join together in solidarity if we are going to achieve a more just and humane existence for everyone. Thank you for always staying by our side. Thank you for not backing down in the face of tyranny. There is no better place to be right now than with you, CCR's family of social justice warriors.

In solidarity,

**Jumana Musa**  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It brings me tremendous joy to present the Center for Constitutional Rights FY25 Annual Report. This publication is a testament to your support and our joint commitment to justice and liberation. As you review it, I hope you take away a renewed sense of resolve and optimism at this pivotal moment in our nation's history.

President Donald Trump's second time in the White House, can only be considered a shameful spectacle of cruelty and chaos. Terrorizing marginalized communities, treating the Constitution as a nuisance, and breaking everything in sight, his core aim is to make us all feel afraid, intimidated, hopeless, and especially defeated. But anyone who knows CCR knows better. A lot better. We were founded six decades ago by lawyers who successfully defied the common wisdom that the deep south was where civil rights litigation went to die. And for every minute since then, we have vigorously taken on just about every major crisis from Nixon's illegal wiretapping, to Bush 1, Clinton and Bush 2's illegal Guantanamo detentions, to Obama's illegal asylum policies, to Trump's illegal Muslim ban. CCR is ready for this moment. We know how to fight. We have always taken on what seemed to be impossible because we believe that justice is possible.

So, our work continues unabated as the Trump administration aggressively tests what they can get away with. Authoritarianism is loud. It has to be loud in order to drown out dissent and any opposition that can succeed in protecting the rights of the people and movements under constant threat. What you will see in these pages is historical work — cases that we have been waging for many years that are bringing justice to our clients — as well as new cases that have been brought in response to the current emergency. This annual report does not contain the entire scope of what CCR is doing right now, but it gives a comprehensive summary of what our legal and advocacy teams accomplished in FY25 towards CCR's mission to dismantle structural racism, oppressive economic systems, gender-based oppression, and abusive state power.

Despite the lawlessness of the executive branch and the reluctance of the Supreme Court to effectively stand up to power, CCR continues to win cases on behalf of the people.

This spring, for instance, in one of our long fought environmental racism cases, a Louisiana appeals court told a billion dollar energy corporation that they could not move forward and build a massive grain elevator on top of a Black community. Our fight to stop any further proliferation of the petrochemical industry that has poisoned the land and water in Black parishes along Louisiana's Bayou, is making a difference in the lives of Black residents who have endured decades of chronic illness and disease caused by a powerful toxic industry. And we finally got relief for unhoused Transgender people in New York City. Subjected to harassment and violence at city shelters, we sued on behalf of a plaintiff group and a monetary settlement was secured in March. We moved quickly in February to block the transfer of migrants from the U.S. to Guantánamo, their indefinite detention, and denial of access to any counsel. We convinced a judge to issue an emergency order stopping the Trump administration from transferring our clients to the detention camp, the first of its kind in the country seeking to halt recent transfers of immigrants to the island prison.



Thank you for believing in and continuing to support us.

We are grateful for your courage, your grit, your refusal to allow the darkness to take root, and for staying with us and making it possible for us to do this work.

In solidarity,

**Vince Warren**  
*Executive Director*



# WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



## **Nermeen Arastu**

New York, NY

*Associate Professor of Immigration Law, Co-Director of the Immigrant & Non-Citizen Rights Clinic at the CUNY School of Law*

**N**ermeen advocates for the most marginalized immigrant populations. Through her scholarship and advocacy, she focuses on racial, religious, and disability-based disparities in immigration adjudication and enforcement. Before joining CUNY, Nermeen practiced as a litigation associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, LLP and as a staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. She co-chairs the Bellow Scholars Program, a national fellowship for clinical law professors pursuing empirical research to inform their advocacy, and her writing has been published in *UCLA Law Review*, *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, *Newsweek*, and *Slate*. Nermeen earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, which has honored her with its Rising Star Award.



## **Jennifer Hobbs**

New York, NY

*Attorney and activist*

**J**ennifer is a lifelong social justice advocate and Palestinian solidarity activist. She was one of the key organizers of the U.S. Boat to Gaza in 2012, and she works to support the LGBTQI+ community, particularly trans youth. For 17 years, Jennifer was a partner at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, where she played an integral role in the firm's Women's and Diversity Committees. She has recently been working on immigration issues and supporting the "We Will Not Be Silent" language project. We honored Jennifer and her partner with our Changemaker award in 2009. She holds a B.A. from the University of Texas, a master's from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, and a J.D. from New York University Law School, where she was an editor of the Law Review.



## **Amoretta Morris**

Washington, DC

*President of Borealis Philanthropy*

**A**moretta has spent the past three decades building power, equity, and justice by supporting community-led social change. As president of Borealis, she mobilizes resources to make liberation for all possible, always centering the voices and experiences of those most impacted by injustice. Prior to joining Borealis, Amoretta led national community change work at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and she has served as the founding director and lead organizer for the Justice 4 DC Youth! Coalition and as a member of Black Benefactors. Additionally, she has served on the boards of Black Swan Academy and the Neighborhood Funders Group. Amoretta earned a bachelor's degree in economics and African studies from Washington University in St. Louis and a master's in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

# **+ STRUCTURAL RACISM**

# **DISMANTLING WHITE SUPREMACY**





## INTRODUCTION

**T**he Center for Constitutional Rights grew out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, and in the decades since we have never stopped working to uproot systemic racism and advance liberation in the United States and around the world. We confront discriminatory policing and work to eradicate forced labor in prisons, solitary confinement, and life sentences without parole, also known as Death by Incarceration. We fight fiercely to end a cruel and abusive immigration enforcement regime that engages in mass deportations, family separation, and the torture of detained refugees. We strive to dismantle the institutionalized white supremacy endemic to law enforcement, land and resource use, and the legal, political, and carceral systems in the U.S. Our work to create a more just future centers and resources the communities most impacted by systemic inequality, while insisting on a society that repairs its historic injustices. Your dedicated partnership fuels our many successful efforts to challenge racist oppression in all its forms. We thank you for your critical investments in this important work.

# STRUCTURAL RACISM

## FEATURED CASE: VICTORY IN LOUISIANA

### Fighting Environmental Racism in the South

With your support, the Center for Constitutional Rights secured a huge victory in *Inclusive Louisiana, et al v. St. James Parish* in April when the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans ruled that our clients' landmark lawsuit could proceed. The decision means that these groups, which represent residents of majority-Black districts in the parish, can seek a moratorium on the construction and expansion of toxic petrochemical plants in this area in the heart of "Cancer Alley." Part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, this litigation showcases our ongoing fight against environmental racism and corporate capture across the South.



Along with co-counsel Tulane Law Clinic, we sued St. James Parish in March 2023 on behalf of Inclusive Louisiana, Mt. Triumph Baptist Church, and RISE St. James, charging that the parish's land use practices are unconstitutionally discriminatory because they target majority-Black areas with polluting industrial facilities. Cancer Alley is an 85-mile stretch along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans where hundreds of petrochemical facilities and other heavy industry are located. Since 1958, when the first plant was constructed in St. James Parish, at least 20 of 24 have been built in the two highest majority Black districts, the 4th and 5th. Residents in these "sacrifice zones" face increased risks of cancer, respiratory ailments, and newborn health harms. In our lawsuit, we argue that these actions violate the Thirteenth Amendment as a vestige of slavery and the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

In November 2023, the district judge ruled that most of our suit's claims were barred because a statute of limitations had expired, pegging it to a 2014 ordinance that zoned large portions of the relevant districts for industrial use. We appealed in March 2024, and the appeals court agreed with our clients' argument that the ordinance is evidence of the parish's long-standing and ongoing racial discrimination practices. The court also rejected the district judge's finding that our clients lack standing and greenlit their claim that the St. James Parish Council has made decisions that have resulted in the destruction of the graves of people once enslaved in the area. Our lawsuit seeks a moratorium on all new sightings of industrial facilities and expansions of existing facilities, protection of unmarked cemeteries of people once enslaved in the parish, and a court-monitored process that allows directly affected communities assess remediation and guide transformation.

The people living in these embattled communities have suffered environmental racism for decades, and it remains ongoing. Your committed support allows us to continue to pursue this moratorium and protect their right to safeguard their historic and cultural origins. Fighting these racial injustices is central to our mission, and together we can achieve true justice on their behalf.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### Defending Historic Black Communities Against Toxic Industry

The Center for Constitutional Rights achieved a major win in our efforts to combat environmental racism and corporate human rights abuses in the South with our case *The Descendants Project v. St. John the Baptist Parish*. This wouldn't be possible without you and supporters like you. In April, a Louisiana appellate court ruled in favor of our client The Descendants Project, an organization founded to advocate for descendants of people once enslaved in Louisiana's river parishes. The appeals court affirmed a 2023 lower court ruling that invalidated a 1990 zoning ordinance on grounds that it had been unlawfully passed. As a result, we were able to halt plans for construction of a massive grain terminal that would have endangered the historic Black community in Wallace, Louisiana. This is a significant victory for people living in the region.

In the fall of 2021, we partnered with former Center for Constitutional Rights Legal Director Bill Quigley to file a lawsuit on the Descendants Project's behalf challenging the corruptly enacted ordinance that rezoned a large tract of rural land for heavy industrial use in 1990. The land is part of an 11-mile stretch along the Mississippi River that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has listed as one of the most endangered historic places in the country. Greenfield Louisiana LLC sought to rely on the ordinance to build a mammoth grain complex in Wallace, whose residents have long fought to protect the health and heritage of their community. Our clients sought to halt approval of the Greenfield project, which would exacerbate environmental hazards in Cancer Alley and subject Wallace residents to noise pollution, noxious fumes, and grain dust known to cause respiratory problems. Since the land designated for the grain terminal is adjacent to two former plantations, the project also threatened burial sites of people who had been enslaved on the property.

In August 2023, the court struck down the illegal ordinance, ruling it null and void. In January 2024, the same court denied Greenfield's motions for a new trial, securing our historic win, and in November 2024 the company appealed the lower court ruling only to lose again in the court of appeals. The parish is now trying to pass a new ordinance to again rezone the land as industrial, an action The Descendants Project is challenging in court.

Communities in the South have suffered from racial discrimination and environmental degradation at the hands of corrupt public leaders and rapacious corporations for generations. As the parish's actions show, the powerful



# STRUCTURAL RACISM

never cease their efforts to exploit marginalized communities regardless of the environmental harms. A key part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, this successful Descendants Project litigation demonstrates how the Center for Constitutional Rights partners with grassroots groups to protect threatened communities, often over many years. With your ongoing support, we will continue to defend Southern Black communities and their endangered historical legacies from toxic industry and racial injustice.

## **Protecting Access to Ancestral Burial Grounds in the South**

In April, the Center for Constitutional Rights, along with co-counsel Tyler Bailey, LLC, filed a lawsuit on behalf of the members of a local Gullah Geechee community on South Carolina's St. Helena Island to preserve their access to ancestral burial grounds. Around May 2024, new local property owners installed gates that prevent community members from accessing, visiting, maintaining, and holding burials at the sacred Big House Cemetery, violating long-established state law and Gullah Geechee burial practices. As a result, a family was forced to bury loved ones who died unexpectedly in a car crash in another cemetery, far away from their other deceased family members. In *The Big House Cemetery Committee, et al. v. Theresa Aigner, et al.*, we are asking the court to ensure that our clients retain their rights to access the cemetery. Local accounts indicate that Big House Cemetery was likely once part of a plantation, and St. Helena was one of the first places to welcome newly emancipated Black people after the Civil War. The Gullah Geechee descend from enslaved people from West and Central Africa. This suit is part of the larger struggle of Gullah Geechee communities to preserve their cultural heritage and autonomy over ancestral lands. Through our Southern Justice Rising initiative, we will continue to support community resistance to erasures of Black history, culture, and sites of spiritual significance.

## **Working to Abolish Slavery and Involuntary Servitude in Prisons**

In January 2025, our case *Stanley v. Ivey*, on behalf of incarcerated workers challenging involuntary servitude and slavery in Alabama prisons, was transferred to the Supreme Court of Alabama. Following a prison labor strike protesting inhumane conditions in 2022, Alabama voters approved a revised state constitution that prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude in all circumstances, including in prisons. The Governor and prison officials responded to the strike by enacting and enforcing policies that allow prison officials to punish incarcerated people who decline to work, including by depriving them of access to loved ones and placing them in solitary confinement. Our clients have all been punished or threatened with punishment for resisting forced work. As part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, we filed suit in 2024, asking the court to declare that these policies violate the state constitution. After the trial court dismissed the lawsuit in August 2024, we filed an appeal that will now move forward in the Alabama Supreme Court. This case is an important part of a national movement to remove the prison slavery exception from state constitutions and the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In connection with this case, we have represented our clients and other incarcerated workers in their state parole hearings. With your support, two people have been granted parole, a tremendous victory in front of a notoriously discriminatory parole board.



## Pushing for NYPD Transparency, Discipline, and Accountability

We continue to fight for NYPD transparency and accountability in the wake of our successful federal class action lawsuit *Floyd, et. al v. City of New York*. In that landmark 2013 decision, the court ruled that NYPD stop-and-frisk practices were unconstitutional and racially discriminatory, and an independent monitor was assigned to oversee compliance with court-mandated reforms. The monitor's recent reports have shown ongoing constitutional violations. A September 2024 report found that NYPD commissioners have repeatedly refused to discipline officers who commit stop-and-frisk abuses, and monitor's reports since have shown that officers from specialized NYPD units are still engaging in illegal stops and racial profiling amid a lack of meaningful supervisory review. Additionally, the monitor's year-end report stated that NYPD leadership remains uncommitted to ending these unconstitutional practices. We are working to revise the NYPD disciplinary system so that officers are actually held accountable for unconstitutional actions and advocating that these specialized units be severely limited or disbanded. These ongoing efforts to protect the constitutional rights of New Yorkers are central to our racial justice work and these long term commitments are possible because of your support.

## Striving to End Death by Incarceration

In October 2024, our client Derek Lee's case finally went before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in Pittsburgh challenging the constitutionality of Lee's mandatory sentence of life without parole, a punishment also known as Death by Incarceration (DBI). Lee's landmark case, *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Derek Lee*, could have national implications for the movement to reduce or end life imprisonment. In 2014, Lee was convicted of felony murder for his alleged participation in a robbery that led to a death he didn't cause, and he was sentenced to life imprisonment with no possibility of parole. Seventy percent of those serving DBI sentences for felony murder in Pennsylvania are Black. The Center for Constitutional Rights, along with the Abolitionist Law Center and Amistad Law Project, filed a petition with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in July 2023 arguing that, because Lee did not himself kill or intend to kill anyone, his extreme sentence is disproportionate and cruel under both the U.S. and the Pennsylvania constitutions. In February 2024, the court agreed to hear Lee's case, and in April 2024 we filed a direct appeal on his behalf, which resulted in oral arguments in October. We are grateful that your backing allows us to pursue these racial justice efforts that have significant impact for the movement.

# **+ PATRIARCHY**

# **FIGHTING GENDER- AND LGBTQIA+-BASED OPPRESSION**





## INTRODUCTION

**T**he Center for Constitutional Rights has long fought for gender and LGBTQIA+ self-determination, justice, and equality. As we partner with movements committed to combating sexual violence, patriarchy, transphobia, and sexism, we advocate for those fighting for sexual and reproductive freedom, those in need of access to gender-affirming health care, and those working in the sex trades. On issues ranging from employment and health care to homeless shelters and prisons, we work to protect women, girls, transfeminine, transmasculine, nonbinary, and intersex people from persecution, discrimination, violence, and denial of resources. We take an intersectional approach, centering those with multiple marginalized identities to ensure that our interventions effectively address the systemic harms they endure. We are deeply grateful for your essential partnership in advancing gender and LGBTQIA+ equity and justice.

## FEATURED CASE

### Protecting the LGBTQIA+ Community from Harmful Executive Orders

When President Trump issued a series of anti-LGBTQIA+ executive orders in the opening months of his administration, the Center for Constitutional Rights responded by submitting Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to 17 federal agencies seeking records related to the intentions, planning, and actors behind the harmful orders. With your help, we are working to establish government transparency and prevent discrimination as we try to advise the LGBTQIA+ public about how federal enforcement of these executive orders may impact their lives.

The president’s executive orders have caused widespread fear among LGBTQIA+ people concerned about their ability to access health care, use restrooms and school locker rooms, obtain accurate federal identification documents, travel abroad, play on their school sports teams, serve in the military or receive military benefits, and secure safe housing placements in federal custody or federal social services and homelessness programs. LGBTQIA+ people of color and people living with HIV/AIDS are suffering additional harms, and the health care providers, researchers, and law firms that serve LGBTQIA+ people have also been impacted. Of particular concern is an HHS report published in May that rejects the medical consensus supporting gender-affirming care for transgender youth and recommends conversion therapy as treatment instead. Leading US medical organizations and experts have rightfully condemned the report as pseudoscientific misinformation.

The Center for Constitutional Rights has a long history of representing LGBTQIA+ clients, particularly those seeking emergency shelter or in custody, and we are deeply concerned about the widespread negative effects of these executive orders and reports on an already marginalized population. The administration’s cruelty toward LGBTQIA+ people serves no legitimate governmental interest, and these orders are blatantly discriminatory in both practice and intent. Our deep commitment to protecting members of LGBTQIA+ communities from discrimination, censorship, violence, and persecution—in the United States and in countries influenced by U.S.-based extremists—remains unwavering because of your steadfast support.





## HIGHLIGHTS

### Fighting Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination and Persecution

In March, the Center for Constitutional Rights secured a significant monetary settlement on behalf of seven trans people of color who were subjected to discrimination, harassment, and violence at municipal homeless shelters in New York City. This win is a direct result of the landmark settlement we secured in 2021 with the Harvard Law School LGBTQ+ Advocacy Clinic in *Lopez v. NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS)*, which expanded access to safe housing for transgender people seeking emergency shelter in the city and mandated new anti-discrimination training and policies. We continue to advocate on behalf of trans, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) shelter residents who have faced discrimination and harm in shelters prior to the Lopez settlement and who need assistance asserting their rights under DHS's updated policies.

Additionally, the Center for Constitutional Rights is opposing the Trump Administration's efforts to criminalize people experiencing homelessness and rollback the rights of TGNCNBI people seeking emergency shelter. We advocated against Trump's discriminatory executive orders and policy directives, including the proposed rescission of the Equal Access Rule, which allows TGNCNBI to seek services from sex-segregated homeless shelters consistent with their identities.

Housing insecurity and homelessness are a continued focus of our gender justice work because they are a driver of the discrimination-to-incarceration pipeline among LGBTQIA+ people, especially trans people of color. Your support powers our efforts to dismantle this pipeline, which relies on discrimination in housing, employment, education, and health care to deprive LGBTQIA+ people of meaningful economic opportunity and thrust them into criminalized economies that result in mass incarceration.

### Defending Essential Health Care for Incarcerated Transgender People

In April, Emily Early, associate director of Center for Constitutional Rights South, testified at a state legislative committee meeting in opposition to proposed Georgia Senate Bill 185. The bill cuts off state funding for essential health care—including hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery—for incarcerated transgender people with gender dysphoria, putting their mental and physical health and lives at risk. We argued that the legislation violates federal constitutional protections under the Eighth Amendment, among other legal protections. "These blanket bans have repeatedly been found unconstitutional because they showed deliberate indifference to the needs of incarcerated people," Emily told the committee. Unfortunately, the bill passed both houses and was signed into law.

The Center for Constitutional Rights will never stop advocating for the right of transgender people to access the evidence-based, lifesaving care they need, whether incarcerated or not.

### Decriminalizing Sex Work

This year, we continued our efforts to decriminalize sex work across New York state as a member of the [DecrimNY](#) coalition. We partnered on events in March and May where supporters of Cecilia's Act for Rights in the Sex Trades lobbied state lawmakers in Albany. We are fighting against Int. 970, a New York City bill that would impose even higher penalties on massage workers, who are predominantly immigrant women of color for practicing without a license. And when Mayor Eric Adams launched "Operation Restore Roosevelt" in October 2024, DecrimNY advocated with government officials and the public to expose how workers, immigrants, and LGBTQIA+ people of color experience police entrapment, exploitation, loss of income, and immigration consequences from these types of targeted "neighborhood cleanup" policies. Your support boosts our legislative and advocacy efforts to counter labor exploitation and coercive practices such as trafficking. Decriminalization remains the best way to protect workers and prevent their exploitation.

# **+** OPPRESSIVE ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

# COMBATING CORPORATE CAPTURE





## INTRODUCTION

**T**he Center for Constitutional Rights has long worked to dismantle the oppressive economic systems that exploit vulnerable communities in the United States and around the world. Through litigation, advocacy, and strategic communications, we expose the collusion between corporations and lawmakers that further enriches rich people while threatening the environment, low-income people, and communities of color.

Both at home and abroad, we seek justice for those who have suffered torture, war crimes, and violations of their human rights. For years, we have fought to end the environmental racism that persists in Louisiana's Cancer Alley by preventing the construction of toxic industrial projects that harm the land, heritage, and health of the people who live there, including the graves of people once enslaved in the area. We also protect the rights of activists advocating for racial and environmental justice here and abroad, and partner with international organizations to ensure that U.S. corporations are held accountable for human rights abuses they commit in foreign countries.

Economic, environmental, and racial justice are inextricably connected. Your committed support ensures we can continue to constrain corporate influence over the government and push back against policies that prize profit over people. Thank you for helping us defend marginalized populations from these existential threats.



# OPPRESSIVE ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

## FEATURED CASE

### Securing Justice for Victims of Abuse and Torture at Abu Ghraib

The Center for Constitutional Rights is thrilled to share the news that, with your steadfast support, a jury in a federal court found a Virginia-based government contractor liable for its role in the torture of Iraqi men at Abu Ghraib prison in 2003-2004. As part of this landmark verdict in *Al Shimari, et al. v. CACI*, the private military contractor was ordered to pay each of our three clients \$3 million in compensatory damages and \$11 million in punitive damages. After 16 years of litigation, the November 2024 decision marks an important milestone in accountability for the abuse and torture of Muslims in U.S. custody.

The ruling stems from a lawsuit we filed with co-counsel in 2008, on behalf of men tortured during the early months of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Our clients, Suhail Najim Abdullah Al Shimari, a middle school principal, Salah Hasan Nusaif Al-Ejaili, a journalist, and Asa'ad Hamza Hanfoosh Zuba'e, a fruit vendor, were all held at the notorious "hard site," the part of the prison where the most severe abuses occurred. The men continue to suffer physical and mental harm from what they endured.

Their lawsuit had to overcome more than 20 attempts by CACI to have it dismissed and five trips to the court of appeals to make it to trial, which began in April 2024, almost exactly 20 years after the Abu Ghraib story broke. It featured in-person testimony by Mr. Al-Ejaili and remote testimony from Iraq by Mr. Al Shimari and by Mr. Zuba'e – the first time that survivors of U.S. post-9/11 torture testified in a U.S. courtroom. Despite our clients' compelling case, the jury was unable to reach a unanimous decision, and the judge declared a mistrial. The retrial began in October 2024, and the new jury found CACI liable for conspiracy to commit torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. A district judge subsequently denied CACI's motion for a new trial, and CACI is appealing that decision to the Fourth Circuit.

The first case of its kind to make it to trial, *Al Shimari* delivers a rare measure of justice to survivors of the U.S. government's post-9/11 torture regime, which extended from Guantánamo to Iraq and Afghanistan to secret prisons around the world. It also brings new accountability to the shadowy realm of security contractors at a time when employees of private companies have often been implicated in human rights abuses across the globe. Your ongoing support allows us to continue fighting against these Islamophobic "war on terror" policies and to demand justice for those harmed by them.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### Protecting the Protest Rights of Environmental Justice Activists

In June, in *White Hat v. Murrill*, we achieved a victory in our fight against the criminalization of dissent when the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals narrowed the scope of a dangerous Louisiana anti-protest law. In 2018, the Louisiana legislature passed an industry-initiated amendment to the state's infrastructure law designed to quash opposition to pipeline projects. Right away, our lead plaintiff, Anne White Hat, was arrested along with other Water Protectors for peacefully protesting and charged with felonies. We filed a lawsuit in May 2019 challenging the constitutionality of the anti-protest trespass law. The court dismissed our clients' claims in April 2024, and we argued our appeal before the Fifth Circuit in February 2025. While the appeals court ultimately affirmed the district court ruling to dismiss the case, it also limited application of the law to private property and property closed to the public. Similarly restrictive legislation has been pushed nationwide by oil and gas interests trying to crack down on Indigenous-led protests of fossil fuel extraction. With your help, we will keep working to thwart collusion between industry and elected officials that results in harm to vulnerable communities and the environment.



### Blocking Toxic Industrial Projects in Louisiana's Cancer Alley

In May, we won a key victory against environmental racism when a Louisiana appellate court ruled in favor of our clients Inclusive Louisiana and Mount Triumph Baptist Church in *Alexander et al. v. St. James Parish*. In August 2023, after the St. James Parish Council affirmed Koch Methanol's request to expand its industrial operations in the predominantly Black 5th District, the Center for Constitutional Rights and co-counsel filed suit on behalf of our clients. The Parish Council approval came shortly after Inclusive Louisiana filed an historic lawsuit seeking a moratorium on the siting and expansion of all such toxic facilities in the majority-Black 4th and 5th Districts. The appeals court agreed with our argument that the parish had violated its own ordinance when it approved Koch Methanol's expanded pipeline construction. We will never stop defending historic Black communities in the South from toxic industry and racial injustice.

### Fighting for an End to Discriminatory Policing

Our lawsuit, *Black Love Resists in the Rust v. City of Buffalo* challenges the racist practices of the Buffalo Police Department (BPD) on behalf of thousands of impacted Buffalonians. We originally filed the suit in 2018, along with the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and the Western New York Law Center, charging that, to feed city revenue, the BPD deployed unconstitutional, aggressive, and racially discriminatory vehicle checkpoints and traffic ticketing practices in primarily Black and Latinx neighborhoods. Subsequent deposition testimony from officers revealed rampant racism and a severe lack of accountability in the department. In October 2024, we asked a judge to certify the case as a class action, provided statistical and historical evidence of the BPD's harms to Black Buffalonians. Our suit seeks not only damages but also new accountability and oversight measures to ensure an end to these discriminatory practices. This case is part of our long-standing work to combat government wrongdoing, police impunity, and racial injustice in law enforcement.



# + ABUSIVE STATE POWER

# CHALLENGING UNJUST GOVERNMENT POLICIES





## INTRODUCTION

Since our beginning, the Center for Constitutional Rights has exposed and challenged abuses of state power in the United States and around the world. As the Trump administration increasingly embraces fascist policies and practices, we stand firm in the face of its harassment and persecution of targeted communities: immigrants and asylum seekers, anti-war activists and voices raised against genocide, and those suffering oppression and exploitation abroad. Meeting head-on Trump’s twisted ideologies of repression, racism, and cruelty, we work to protect activists, advocates, and organizers from state violence and the criminalization of dissent. We combat xenophobic and racist immigration policies, and work to end the inhumane treatment of those incarcerated. We fight against authoritarianism in all forms, making sure that we center the communities most threatened by the politics of domination. With our many partners and supporters, we strive to eradicate laws and policies that reinforce white supremacy and to hold government officials and institutions accountable for abuses. Both at home and abroad, we seek justice for those who have suffered torture, war crimes, and violations of their human rights. For more than 20 years, we have confronted the invasive surveillance and human rights violations of the so-called “war on terror,” and we continue to fight for the freedom of those imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay. We are relentless in defending the rights of Palestinians and those advocating for their liberation as we work to hold governments accountable for punishing protected political speech and supporting genocide.

We remain the sworn enemy of tyrants and take the fight every day to the anti-democracy arsonists threatening our communities and institutions. Your unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and human rights for all drives this critical work. We thank you.

# + ABUSIVE STATE POWER

## IMMIGRATION

### FEATURED CASE

## Combating the Trump Administration's Lawless Immigration Policies

In the face of President Trump's escalating attacks on due process and human rights, the Center for Constitutional Rights fought hard this year to prevent, delay, or minimize the administration's abuse of immigrants and asylum seekers. With your support, we filed a raft of rapid-response legal challenges to the president's lawless detention of immigrants at Guantánamo Bay.

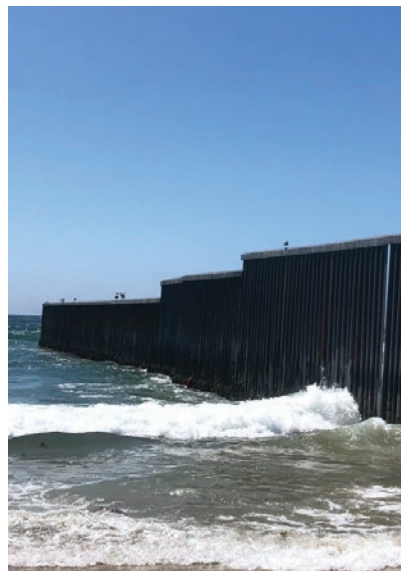
CCR's Habeas Pilot Project works to provide access to due process for asylum seekers and other vulnerable immigrants targeted for deportation by the federal government. The Great Writ of Habeas Corpus allows people who are detained to challenge the legal basis of their confinement. While these cases are being brought on behalf of individuals, the project is focusing on cases that could have a broader impact beyond relief for the individual plaintiffs. Because many detainees may not know they have this right, or may not have access to legal counsel to help them file a habeas petition, CCR partnered with the Brennan Center for Justice to develop a bilingual, English-Spanish pro se habeas petition template (i.e., a petition to represent themselves without a lawyer) for use by individuals apprehended in the U.S. This four-page, fill-in-the-blank document allows those individuals to file a habeas case on their own behalf by mail or through detention facility personnel. The document has already been distributed to partner organizations.

In early February, we submitted a FOIA request with other rights groups demanding all records and communications related to the nature, conditions, and terms of immigrants' confinement at the massive new immigration detention center at Guantánamo. With our partners, we also sued the administration on behalf of detainees' family members and legal service providers for access to immigrants transferred there so that we could provide them legal assistance. And in March, along with our partners, we sued the administration in *Espinoza Escalona v. Noem* to block the transfers of 10 noncitizens in the United States to the notorious island prison. For decades, we have fought to end the U.S. government's abuses at Guantánamo, and we will continue to oppose these unconstitutional actions.





In another powerful example of our rapid-response work, in February we filed for an emergency temporary restraining order to prevent the transfer of three Venezuelan clients in federal detention in Otero, New Mexico to Guantánamo. The judge pulled his car over and held a hearing on the side of the road to grant the injunction—the first of its kind seeking to halt recent transfers of immigrants to the island prison. The men were party to a habeas case—the first in our pilot project—that we filed on their behalf in September 2024 to challenge their unlawful, indefinite detention by ICE. The administration responded by slandering our clients and deporting them to Venezuela.



In April, along with co-counsel American Immigration Counsel and National Immigration Project, we filed an amended habeas petition on behalf of client Edicson David Quintero Chacón challenging the legality of his detention at the infamous Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT) in El Salvador. Mr. Quintero, a Venezuelan native and father of two, is one of more than 200 people the U.S. government paid El Salvador to confine, incommunicado, at the notorious prison known for human rights abuses and torture. We sought a court order requiring the U.S. government to release him. Mr. Quintero came to the United States in April 2024, and though an immigration judge ultimately ordered his deportation to Venezuela, he remained in ICE detention in Georgia. We filed his original habeas case in February, and instead of responding or releasing him, the U.S. government deprived him of due process by cruelly and unlawfully sending him to CECOT.

## Exposing Dangerous Immigration Enforcement Propaganda

In October 2024, we released a briefing guide on ICE’s controversial “Citizens Academy” programs, which recruit influential journalists, elected officials, law enforcement, business executives, and senior NGO staff to train and roleplay as ICE agents. On behalf of Organized Communities Against Deportations (Chicago) and the Immigrant Defense Project (NYC) and with co-counsel Beyond Legal Aid and Latino Justice we obtained internal documents about the propaganda initiative via FOIA litigation filed in 2021. The records show how Citizens Academy attendees train extensively with guns, learn deadly enforcement tactics, and launch mock raids on immigrants. Begun under President Obama and expanded under President Trump, these dangerous taxpayer-funded programs depict ICE as heroic defenders of national security while romanticizing their violent practices, dehumanizing immigrants, and cultivating vigilantism. Part of our Open Records Project, this case highlights our larger work on behalf of immigrant rights. We will keep pushing until these Citizens Academies are shut down.

# ABUSIVE STATE POWER

As part of our continued efforts to end indefinite detention in a broken asylum system, in March we submitted a habeas petition on behalf of Melika Olya, a 22-year-old Iranian woman unjustly detained by ICE for more than two years in El Paso, Texas. Filed with co-counsel Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center and the Texas A&M School of Law Civil Rights Clinic, our petition challenges the legality of Olya's indefinite detention and calls for her immediate release. Olya fled Iran and sought asylum in the United States in January 2023 after she and her family were brutally attacked by the so-called morality police for protesting mandatory hijab laws. Despite her strong case, the immigration court denied Olya's application and ordered her removal, yet she has remained in detention ever since.

The Supreme Court has made clear that indefinite detention is unlawful, and we are fighting to make sure that the constitutional protections afforded Olya—and the many like her detained around the country—are no longer ignored. With your support, the Center for Constitutional Rights remains committed to fighting for those courageous enough to seek refuge in a land far from home as we work to build an asylum system worthy of our ideals.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### **Fighting for the Safety and Human Rights of Asylum Seekers**

In October 2024, we secured a pair of important legal victories for the rights of asylum seekers. In the first case, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals largely affirmed a lower court decision that held as unlawful the U.S. government's systematic turnbacks—or “metering”—of people seeking asylum at ports of entry along the U.S.-Mexico border. Vulnerable migrants end up stranded in dangerous conditions in Mexico, where they routinely fall prey to violence and exploitation. Our 2017 lawsuit, filed with co-counsel, challenged turnbacks on behalf of *Al Otro Lado*, a nonprofit legal services organization, and individual asylum seekers harmed by the policy. In 2021, a district court judge declared the metering policy unlawful, the government appealed the decision, and the Ninth Circuit ultimately sided with our clients. In the second case, a federal judge ruled against the Biden administration's motion to dismiss our 2023 class action lawsuit challenging the government's practice of turning away vulnerable asylum seekers who have not obtained an advance appointment via a notoriously glitchy CBP app. Our lawsuit, filed with co-counsel, will now proceed, as we argue that this policy violates U.S. law and asylum seekers' due process rights. Seeking safe haven is a fundamental human right, and we won't allow a broken system to harm refugees.

### **Investigating the Abuse of Detained Immigrants by ICE Officials**

In July 2024, the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a complaint with the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) on behalf of detained individuals at the Buffalo Federal Detention Facility (BFDF), New York's largest immigrant detention center. The complaint, filed with Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Prisoners' Legal Services of New York, New York Civil Liberties Union, and Justice for Migrant



Families, details unlawful retaliation and abuse by ICE officials against detained individuals who participated in a peaceful hunger strike. The immigrants were protesting the facility's discontinuance of free phone calls and extended lock-in policy, which has severe medical consequences. Disregarding the protesters' constitutional rights, ICE officials threatened and used physical force against the strikers, placed them in solitary confinement, and denied them access to their jobs and recreational activities. We requested an immediate investigation into the incident. The recent crackdown on hunger strikers is the latest example of abuse at BDFD, which was already the subject of a CRCL investigation. Protest is a First Amendment-protected right, and with your help we will continue working to safeguard detainees from mistreatment and abuse.

## Seeking Accountability for Cruel Immigration Policies

Between May and July 2024, we secured the return to the United States of two Cameroonian asylum seekers who were abused by U.S. immigration detention officials then deported back to Cameroon, where they suffered persecution and imprisonment. Our clients were returned after we filed our lawsuit with co-counsel in August 2023 seeking damages for the harms they endured in detention and upon their deportation to Cameroon. While the returns were permitted on humanitarian grounds, in part based on U.S. asylum confidentiality violations that contributed to their harm in Cameroon, the asylum seekers had also endured abuses while in ICE custody, including the use of excessive force, painful full-body restraints, solitary confinement, racial discrimination, and medical neglect. Our clients were among 27 Cameroonians granted humanitarian parole, but thousands more are in need of protection. With your support, we will continue to hold the U.S. government accountable for the abuse and unlawful deportation of asylum seekers, especially Black immigrants who endure disproportionate cruelty at the hands of U.S. immigration enforcement.

## Protecting Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Detention

In September 2024, the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Florence Project filed a complaint in the Southern District of New York seeking a court order to compel the U.S. government to release information on the use of dental and bone x-rays to determine the age of unaccompanied migrant children. These faulty determinations are often used to place children in adult detention. We filed the complaint after the relevant federal agencies—HHS, ICE, CPB, and DHS—ignored several FOIA requests for records relating to this widely discredited “race science” practice. These x-rays are often used as the sole basis for age determinations in violation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), which requires officials to consider multiple forms of evidence. As a result, many migrant children, including a disproportionate number of Black and South Asian children, have been illegally held in prison-like adult facilities, even though the TVPRA requires the government to hold unaccompanied children in the least restrictive setting that is in their best interests. The reliance on scans is part of a broader effort by authorities to force children into adult detention, as detailed in dozens of civil rights complaints. We must end these abusive practices.

# + ABUSIVE STATE POWER

## PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

### FEATURED CASES

#### Defending Political Speech and Palestinian Advocacy

With your dedicated support, the Center for Constitutional Rights has been highly successful in our efforts to defend those targeted for their political advocacy, particularly those active in Palestine solidarity protests. President Trump has made the criminalization of dissent a primary feature of his administration, and our collective refusal to capitulate to these autocratic actions has been critical to protecting free political speech.

In June, we secured the release on bail of our client Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student unconstitutionally targeted by the Trump administration for his advocacy in support of Palestinian rights. Khalil was finally able to reunite with his wife and newborn son after more than three months in detention at a remote ICE facility in Louisiana. A lawful U.S. permanent resident, Khalil was active in Columbia's Gaza Solidarity Encampment, serving as negotiator with the university and spokesperson. On March 8, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents arrested him at his university apartment. Khalil immediately filed a habeas petition challenging his arrest and detention as unconstitutional, but he was transferred to immigration detention in Louisiana without notice to counsel.

The Center for Constitutional Rights and co-counsel CLEAR Project at CUNY School of Law filed an emergency motion seeking his return to New York. The judge transferred the case to New Jersey and in April denied the government's motion to dismiss or move it. In June, the court granted Khalil's request for a preliminary injunction after concluding that he would continue to suffer irreparable harm if he remained detained, and then ordered him released on bail a week later. We are also fighting the government's charge that Khalil failed to fill out certain immigration paperwork properly.

In May, along with our partners, we secured the release on bond of Georgetown University professor Dr. Badar Khan Suri, who had been arrested by immigration authorities in retaliation for his associations and for constitutionally protected speech in support of Palestinian rights. On March 17, Dr. Khan Suri, an Indian national and lawful visa holder married to a Palestinian American, was abducted by masked federal agents and detained in five different ICE facilities across three states, where he suffered multiple abuses. Our emergency filings in *Khan Suri v. Trump* resulted in an order from a federal judge that he could not be removed from the country while his case is being considered. In April, we filed an amended habeas corpus petition challenging his wrongful arrest and detention, and the judge ordered his release the following month.





In September 2024, we joined cooperating counsel Kathleen Peratis in representing Columbia University law professor and former Center for Constitutional Rights board chair Katherine Franke, who was investigated by Columbia for her support for Palestinians. After Franke publicly raised concerns about the harassment of Palestinian students by students who had come straight out of Israel’s military, two colleagues filed a complaint with the university’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action claiming that she had created a hostile environment for Israeli members of the Columbia community. The targeted investigation of Professor Franke is part of a broader global effort to suppress speech critical of Israel.

These cases build on our historic work challenging repression against Palestine solidarity activists, which has skyrocketed since October 2023. Along with Palestine Legal, we first issued a report documenting these censorship efforts on college campuses and at other institutions in 2015. Amid the oppression of Palestinians and their allies, we will continue fighting to defend protected political speech, uphold the rule of law, and get justice for those victimized by an abusive state.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Fighting to End U.S. Support for the Genocide in Gaza

In November 2023, the Center for Constitutional Rights, along with co-counsel Van Der Hout, LLP, filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of Palestinians charging that top U.S. officials failed to prevent and are complicit in the Israeli government’s genocide in Gaza. The complaint asked the court to enjoin their unlawful conduct and to issue an emergency order prohibiting any further U.S. military and diplomatic support for Israel while the case was being considered. Following a historic hearing in January 2024 that included testimony from our clients, the court found that Israel’s assault “plausibly” constitutes

### Holding Israeli Leadership Accountable for War Crimes and Genocide in Gaza

In February, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Washington, D.C., to meet with President Trump, we sent a submission to the Department of Justice’s Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section (HRSP) on behalf of Palestinian Americans calling on the DOJ to enforce the ICC’s arrest warrant for Netanyahu’s commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. The submission was a follow-up to a detailed 23-page letter we sent to the HRSP ahead of Netanyahu’s visit to Washington in July 2024 urging it to open a federal criminal investigation into him for his responsibility for genocide, war crimes, and torture, all federal crimes that HRSP should prosecute. We cited overwhelming evidence that, under his leadership, Israeli forces were committing grave human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and reminded HRSP that it is squarely within its statutory mandate to investigate them.

# ABUSIVE STATE POWER

## **Ending Islamophobic Anti-Terrorism Policies**

We scored an important victory in our landmark case *Tanvir v. Tanzin* in October 2024 when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit held that the FBI cannot use the No-Fly List to coerce U.S. Muslims into spying on their religious communities. The FBI approached our four clients to recruit them as informants; after refusing, they were placed on the No-Fly List and lost their jobs as a result. Our lawsuit, filed with co-counsel in 2013, made it to the U.S. Supreme Court, which unanimously ruled in 2021 that our clients could seek damages against individual FBI officers. The district court subsequently ordered our case dismissed, and we argued our appeal before the Second Circuit in June 2024. While the appeals court upheld the dismissal of our damages claims, going forward, federal agents will be on notice that using the No Fly List to coerce someone to become an informant against their religious beliefs breaks the law. In the post-9/11 environment, we will continue our efforts to end warrantless government surveillance of civilians, particularly those targeted for their Muslim identity or activism.

genocide and implored the Biden administration to rethink its “unflagging support” for Israel. However, the court dismissed our case on the dangerous grounds that courts cannot review executive branch conduct that touches on foreign policy. We appealed that ruling, and in July 2024 a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit affirmed the lower court’s dismissal. Our clients then petitioned for rehearing with the full 11-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit, citing the case’s “exceptional importance” because of the scale of the ongoing violence. They had support from constitutional law scholars, human rights organizations, and academic authorities urging the court in amicus briefs to review Palestinians’ claims. Despite the disappointing outcome, we remain determined to stop Israel’s genocide by cutting off U.S. support.

## **Exposing U.S. Interference in ICC War Crimes Investigation**

In July 2024, we filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking all internal Biden administration communications related to the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into crimes committed by the Israeli government during its war on Gaza. In our filing with the Departments of State, Justice, and Defense, we sought information on administration efforts to block accountability at the ICC, including through pressure campaigns against the new Labour government in the U.K. As our FOIA request details, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant expressed genocidal intent even before overseeing a U.S.-enabled campaign that has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, including more than 15,000 children. On May 20, 2024, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan submitted an application for arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity. President Biden called the move “outrageous,” and the U.K. attempted to delay the action by questioning whether the ICC has jurisdiction to prosecute the Israeli officials despite this being a settled issue. In our formal inquiry, which followed the administration’s public effort to block the arrest warrants, we asserted the public’s right to know about any U.S. interference in the ICC probe.



# CHALLENGING POST-9/11 POLICIES

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Freeing Those Still Detained at Guantánamo

After nearly 23 years of detention without charge, Center for Constitutional Rights client Sharqawi Al Hajj has finally been released—he was one of 11 Yemenis transferred from Guantánamo to Oman in January. Mr. Al Hajj was subjected to physical and psychological torture in CIA sites for more than two years before his 2004 transfer to Guantánamo, where he waged prolonged hunger strikes to protest his indefinite detention and was repeatedly hospitalized. In 2018, Mr. Al Hajj joined a habeas petition on behalf of a group of detainees arguing that their indefinite detention violated the Due Process Clause of the U.S. Constitution and the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force. In June 2021, the U.S. government cleared him for release through its Periodic Review Board (PRB) process. His release came three and a half years later. Mr. Al Hajj’s self-described “nightmare” in Guantánamo is now finally over. With your support, we will keep fighting until each of our clients is freed and resettled, and Guantánamo is closed permanently.

### Exposing Abusive Detention Practices Overseas

After nearly two years of litigation, we acquired government records in January confirming that tens of thousands of Afghans evacuated by the United States are suffering inhumane conditions and human rights abuses in prison-like facilities under the control of the U.S. government in at least 36 countries. When several FOIA requests were ignored, the Center for Constitutional Rights and Muslim Advocates filed a lawsuit in August 2023 seeking records from U.S. government agencies relating to the arbitrary detention of Afghan evacuees since the U.S. government ended its 20-year war in Afghanistan in August 2021. These records show that Afghan civilians have been stuck in legal limbo at overseas “lily pad sites” while being subjected to family separation, denial of access to humanitarian groups, and other mistreatment. We partnered with Afghan rights groups on these efforts, as we continue to demand greater government accountability and an end to the warehousing of evacuees abroad.

### Advocating for Indigenous Communities Impacted by U.S. Militarization

In November 2024, we joined a complaint submitted by the Guam-based international law firm Blue Ocean Law to two UN human rights officials on behalf of a Palauan grassroots environmental organization and seven Palauan high school students alleging human rights violations by the U.S. military in Palau. The United States is militarizing many areas of Palau, and the students’ investigation revealed that the military has cleared huge swaths of pristine forest, destroyed essential community resources, and imperiled endangered species, all without conducting environmental impact assessments or attaining the required lawful consent of impacted communities. The submission builds on a joint submission to a UN treaty body in 2023 that outlined the incompatibility between respect for human rights and U.S. colonization and militarization of island territories. Your support fuels our advocacy efforts to help Indigenous peoples protect their homelands from abusive and extractive U.S. policies.

# IN THE MEDIA

**T**his year, the Center for Constitutional Rights continued to shift public narratives by boldly challenging dominant media frames and centering the voices of directly impacted communities. Whether pushing back against fear-based rhetoric on immigration, exposing the deep roots of systemic racism, or reframing national security through a human rights lens, we strategically inserted truth into the headlines. By lifting up the lived experiences of our clients and aligning with grassroots movements, we've helped move conversations—from newsrooms to courtrooms to Congress—toward justice, accountability, and collective liberation.

Using analytics from our website and social media, we identified the stories that resonate most with our communities—and used that insight to amplify our clients' voices and change hearts and minds. **With your support, we were able to increase our news coverage and press mentions by an incredible 85 percent this year.**

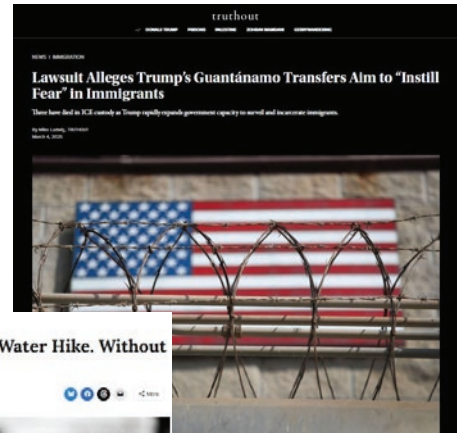
Similarly, our social media presence continues to grow in followers and engagement. **Our followers have increased by 88 percent on LinkedIn, 224 percent on Facebook, and 221 percent on Instagram. Our Twitter/X engagements and impressions have increased by 30 percent and 35 percent,** respectively.

The average **view of our press stories across various news sites was 6.4 million.**

We received **over 980,000 engagements across all of our press stories** on Twitter/X, an increase of around 42 percent from last year.

*Frontlines of Justice*, our weekly email newsletter that brings the Center for Constitutional Rights' latest news every Monday, has **grown organically in audience size by 47 percent.**

# IN THE NEWS



## Press from the year include:

- [What we know about the case of detained Georgetown professor Badar Khan Suri](#), NPR
- [US defense contractor to pay former Iraqi detainees \\$42 million for its role in torture at notorious Abu Ghraib prison](#), CNN
- [Lawyer for Columbia student detained by ICE for pro-Palestine protests speaks out](#), ABC NEWS
- [Opinion | Jackson City Council Rejects Water Hike. Without Local Control, It Won't Matter](#), MISSISSIPPI FREE PRESS
- [Groups file motion to update governing of Jackson's Water System](#), WJTV NEWS
- [The untold story of Alabama's Incarcerated workers](#), MORE PERFECT UNION
- [Lawsuit alleging racism in Louisiana's 'Cancer Alley' revived on appeal](#), REUTERS
- [Bush's 'War On Terror' Helped Create Trump's Terrifying War On Immigrants](#), HUFFPOST
- [Lawyers Face an Existential Choice](#), BOSTON REVIEW
- ['Unfolding authoritarianism': Lawyer reacts to ICE detaining Tufts student](#), CNN
- [Lawsuit Alleges Trump's Guantánamo Transfers Aim to "Instill Fear" in Immigrants](#), TRUTHOUT
- [Environmental organizations sue Formosa Plastics to gain access to slave burial site](#), THE LOUISIANA WEEKLY
- [House Dems push to 'Block the Bombs' amid Israel's widening war](#), MONDOWEISS
- [Rights groups warn Gaza Humanitarian Foundation it may be liable for international law violations](#), THE GUARDIAN



# THE JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP

The Center for Constitutional Rights' Justice Fellowship is a two-year program for emerging lawyers to gain practical experience working on Center for Constitutional Rights cases across the full range of our issue areas and a theoretical understanding of how legal advocacy can create social change. Now in their second year, the current fellows are getting firsthand experience in movement lawyering.



**D. Korbin Felder** has worked on issues relating to discriminatory policing, mass incarceration, and racial injustice. Based in Jackson, Mississippi, he focuses on advancing racial justice movements in the South and advocating on behalf of people within the criminal legal systems there as part of our team in the South. During his fellowship, Korbin has worked on our efforts to end slavery in Alabama prisons (*Stanley v. Ivey*) and support community organizations fighting for clean water (*United States v. Jackson*).



**Ayla Kadah** is working to dismantle racist policing (*Black Love Resists in the Rust v. City of Buffalo*) and abusive immigration practices (*ICE Habeas: Venezuelans at Otero*); hold government contractors accountable for torture and human rights abuses (*Al Shimari, et al. v. CACI*); challenge the unlawful detentions at Guantánamo Bay (*Duran v. Trump, Al Hajj v. Trump*); and advance Palestinian human rights and liberation. Ayla was previously an Ella Baker Intern at the Center for Constitutional Rights.



**Adina Marx-Arpadi** works on issues relating to Palestine suppression, family policing, mass incarceration, and abusive immigration practices. During her fellowship, she has challenged Customs and Border Protection's unlawful practice of depriving asylum seekers access to the U.S. asylum process (*Al Otro Lado v. Mayorkas I*), worked to end retaliatory violations of the rights of immigrants in detention (*Ortiz v. Orange County, N.Y.*), and defended the humanity of migrants by filing an FOIA lawsuit relating to CBP emergency services policies along the U.S.-Mexico border.



**Celine Zhu** specializes in challenging sexual and gender-based violence; LGBTQI+ persecution; discriminatory policing (*Floyd, et al. v. City of New York, et al.*); environmental racism and corporate human rights abuses in the South (*Inclusive Louisiana, Mount Triumph Baptist Church, RISE St. James v. St. James Parish, et al.* and *Alexander, et al. v. St. James Parish*); and abusive immigration practices (*J.K.A. and T.B.F. v. U.S.A.*). She has also worked to prevent migrant children from being placed in prison-like adult facilities via FOIA litigation.

# THE ELLA BAKER INTERNSHIP



The Center for Constitutional Rights created the Ella Baker Summer Internship Program in 1987 to honor the legacy of civil rights movement hero Ella Baker by training the next generation of movement lawyers. The “Ellas” have completed their first year or second year of law school and have a demonstrated commitment to social justice. Through our program, interns gain practical litigation experience and sharpen their theoretical understanding of the relationship between social change, organizing, and lawyering. Ella Baker interns also become connected to a global community of social justice law students and lawyers through our Ella Baker Alumni Network.

Interns work under the direct supervision of our attorneys and advocacy program managers on a wide variety of legal cases and projects challenging oppression of immigrants, environmental injustice, criminalization of dissent, discriminatory policing practices, solitary confinement, social and economic oppression, U.S. detention and targeted killing practices, international human rights abuses, gender and LGBTQI+ injustice domestically and internationally, and anti-Black racism. The interns’ responsibilities include legal research and writing for domestic and international litigation, factual investigation, client and witness interviews, and legislative policy research. They also participate in client and community meetings, attend court proceedings, and assist with Center for Constitutional Rights organizational events.

## **Chloe Bartholomew**

New York University School of Law

## **Belen de Leon**

University of California,  
Berkeley School of Law

## **Apurva Gunturu**

The University of Texas School of Law

## **Leigh Howard**

CUNY School of Law

## **Anton Kernohan**

Northeastern University School of Law

## **Joelle Miller**

Stanford Law School

## **Sunny Osment**

The University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill School of Law

## **Lesley Pagan**

CUNY School of Law

## **Marwa Sayed**

CUNY School of Law

## **Nour Soubani**

New York University School of Law

## **Byul Yoon**

New York University School of Law

# EVENTS + CONVENINGS

## Democratic Backslide, and the Crisis of the Rule of Law

### 9th Annual Shaping Justice Conference: Public Interest Lawyering in the Age of the Roberts Court

In February, Center for Constitutional Rights Executive Director Vince Warren delivered the keynote address at the University of Virginia Law School conference, aimed at inspiring students and lawyers to promote justice through public service.

### The Right to Dissent: Countering SLAPPs to Protect Climate Action in the US

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) are abusive lawsuits designed to shut down criticism or protest related to issues in the public interest. These lawsuits are filed to intimidate and harass the speaker into silence, and are frequently used by fossil fuel companies to retaliate against climate defenders, including community members and scientists. Shayana Kadidal, Center for Constitutional Rights Senior Managing Attorney, joined other leading experts on a virtual panel in May 2025 hosted by Global Climate Legal Defense to discuss how SLAPPs are impacting climate defenders in the United States and how people can engage in the movement to defend free speech.



### The Crisis of Public International Law: The Case of Palestine and Impunity for Genocide

This seminar considered what meaningful utility remains for international law and legal institutions in a time of genocide and impunity, and featured Deputy Legal Director Maria LaHood and other esteemed speakers, including Raji Sourani, Director of Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories.



The webinar was part of the People's Academy of International Law, a series of free, online continuing legal education curriculum that provides intensive lessons on different facets of international law as it relates to human rights, from civil and political rights to economic, social, and cultural rights. The People's Academy of International Law, sponsored by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and the Center for Constitutional Rights, seeks to help progressive and anti-imperialist lawyers and human rights defenders to marshal the tools of international law to support people's struggles around the world.



## **Human Rights in Practice: Transnational Litigation to Protect Human Rights, February 24, 2025**

The February program, part of the **Duke University School of Law's Human Rights in Practice** series, featured Senior Staff Attorney Katherine Gallagher in discussion with Thomas Becker, Legal and Policy Director and Senior Clinical Supervisor, University Network on Human Rights, and with Jayne Huckerby, Clinical Professor of Law and Director, International Human Rights Clinic, Duke Law, moderating. Speakers discussed the use of transnational litigation to protect human rights.

## **Defending Justice: Mobilizing the Legal Profession to Stand Up for the Rule of Law**

Vince Warren, Executive Director, spoke on one of a series of panels focused on defending the independence of the judiciary and mobilizing the legal profession in support of the rule of law. This April program was organized by the New York City Bar Association, and topics included growing threats to judicial independence, the bar's role in protecting the judiciary from political interference, and how to respond to democratic backsliding.

## **Fighting Back Against Fascism**

### **Movement Support and Scenario Planning**

In preparation for the November 2024 election, and in the immediate aftermath, Brad Parker, Associate Director of Policy, participated in various scenario planning spaces focused on policy advocacy, community defense, and movement support. This included a July 2024 workshop hosted by Muslims for Just Futures & the Building Movement Project, and the Convergence for Just Futures, a three-day meeting in September 2024 in Chicago focusing on Black, Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, South Asian (BAMEMSA), Southwest Asian, and North African (SWANA) groups.

### **Roots & Resistance: Black Organizing Against Empire**

In February, Dissenters organized a webinar to learn about the long and rich history of anti-imperialist organizing within the Black community. Political Education and Research Manager maya finoh participated in the event, along with Khury Petersen-Smith and Eugene Puryear, to highlight the ways the African diaspora has been at the front lines resisting slavery, colonialism, and exploitation historically and today.



### **Responding to Repression: Executive Orders, Resistance, and Rights**

In March, PARCERO and Haymarket Books organized an event with organizers, educators, and movement lawyers to address the current moment, which featured Senior Staff Attorney Diala Shamas.

# EVENTS + CONVENINGS

## FOIA and Fight Back! Webinar series (May 2025 through September 2025)

The Center for Constitutional Rights' webinar series from May through September, is focused on training individuals to use Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and state open records requests as tools for local and national advocacy, media, litigation, and movement organizing campaigns. The series has touched on national FOIA advocacy and requests in Alabama and Louisiana and featured Ian Head, Open Records Project Manager, Associate Director of the Southern Regional Office Emily Early, and attorneys Celine Zhu, Jessica Vosburgh, CJ Sandley, and Kayla Vinson. Staff shared key strategies for putting together a records request using examples from our own work.

## State of the South Conference at Georgia State University: Property Reparations

Emily Early, Associate Director of the Southern Regional Office, moderated a panel at Georgia State University's State of the South conference in February, which also featured Center for Constitutional Rights partners Jo and Joy Banner of The Descendants Project. The **State of the South Conference** is the sixth in a series of annual conferences focusing on different access to justice issues in the Southeastern United States. The conference focused on restorative justice efforts in the South and interdisciplinary approaches to reparative remedies.

## Arts & Culture

At the Center for Constitutional Rights we harness the power of film to educate, activate, and build community through our long running film series, Freedom Flicks, and by supporting partner screenings.

On August 14, we co-hosted a screening in New Orleans with the Promise of Justice initiative of **Plantations and Prisons: A History of Forced Labor in Louisiana**, followed by a panel discussion moderated by maya finoh, Political Education & Research manager. Panelists discussed plantation prisons and other practices of forced prison labor, advocacy to abolish these systems, including our lawsuit, *Stanley v. Ivey*, as well as anti-Black and environmental racism in the South.



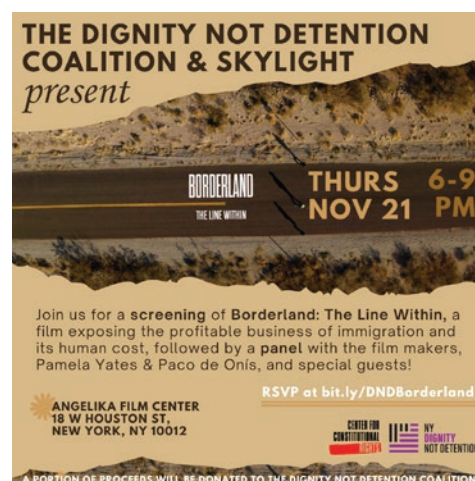


Together with the Bronx Defenders and as part of the NY Dignity Not Detention Coalition, we co-hosted a sold-out screening of ***Borderland: The Line Within*** at the Angelika Theater in NYC in November. The documentary tells the stories of immigrants resisting and organizing against the vast border industrial complex. Samah Sisay, Staff Attorney, joined the talk-back panel.

## **ABOUT TIME: Louisiana’s Jim Crow Juries and the Fight for Liberation**

This powerful exhibit in New Orleans was organized by the Center for Constitutional Rights and our partner The Promise of Justice Initiative, and curated by Flora Cabili of the Antenna collective.

ABOUT TIME is a revealing exploration of the enduring effects of Louisiana’s non-unanimous convictions also known as “Jim Crow juries.” The exhibit, which opened in February, showcased the artwork, storytelling, and vision of ten artists, formerly and currently incarcerated, who have been impacted by non-unanimous jury convictions. Artists include our client Rufus Henry, with Mondrell Wilson, Mark Cooper, Derrick Holt, Tuan Tran, Mark Stephen King, Peter Rubens, Keith Brazley Lloyd Gray, and Anthony Boulton. The works, including paintings, woodworking, and sculpture, were all produced from within the walls of Angola using found materials and supplies purchased in part with money earned from the forced labor, with wages averaging 4 cents an hour. In March, we organized **Pass It On**, an evening of poetry, music, and discussion on the power of art in social change, at which Nadia Ben-Youssef, Advocacy Director, and Vince Warren, Executive Director, spoke.



## **Transnational Movement Building**

### **Transnational Advocacy Panel at the Shaking the Foundations Conference**

Nadia Ben-Youssef, Center for Constitutional Rights Advocacy Director, spoke on the Transnational Advocacy panel at the **2025 Shaking the Foundations Conference at Stanford Law School** in April. She was joined by Sara Jaramillo from Accountability Counsel and Lina Arroyave from Dejusticia. Gulika Reddy from the Stanford International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic moderated the discussion. The theme of the conference was Inside/Outside Strategy, an approach to organizing and movement building that emphasizes learning from and coordination with resistance movements. Legal practitioners, policy advocates, and movement leaders spoke about holistic organizing and opportunities for creative collaboration between formal forces and grassroots collectives in order to advance social change.

# EVENTS + CONVENINGS

## Leveraging the UN Human Rights Council

In June, staff travelled with a delegation from US civil society to Geneva for advocacy during the 59th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The Center for Constitutional Rights joined partners in organizing a side event, **From South to North and North to South: The increasing dehumanization and criminalization of human mobility in the Americas region**. During the session, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants presented his annual reports, including his report on the visit to the Darién Gap (Colombia and Panama) in February 2025. Jessica Vosburgh, Senior Staff Attorney, joined other panelists to discuss the situation of human mobility in the Darién Gap as a starting point and, at the same time, a reflection of a broader phenomenon of dehumanization and criminalization of migration at the regional level, a trend that has intensified in recent times and is evident in various national and regional policies.

Together with the Movement Law Lab, and civil society from the U.S., El Salvador and Argentina, we organized a side-event, **From Guantánamo to CECOT: A regime of rendition and the suspension of international law**. Panelists discussed the human cost of the contract between the U.S. and El Salvador to warehouse hundreds of migrants in the notorious CECOT prison. Drawing a throughline from the sordid history of extraordinary renditions to foreign torture sites and Guantánamo, panelists reflected on decades of U.S. impunity, the erosion of international law, and the urgent path forward. The event, which also featured Margaret Satterthwaite, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, built upon a letter from civil society as well as international legal practitioners and scholars to leaders of key international bodies, demanding urgent action to denounce the unprecedented agreement between the United States and El Salvador in blatant violation of international human rights obligations.

## Accountability for State Violence

### Federal Bar Association 2025 Civil Rights Étouffée Plenary: Floyd Stop & Frisk: 10 Years Later Lessons in Remediation

Samah Sisay, Staff Attorney, joined a plenary session in New Orleans to discuss the remedial aspects of *Floyd v. City of New York*. The Center for Constitutional Rights case was tried in 2013 in federal court in the Southern District of New York (SDNY) and resulted in a historic judgment finding the NYPD liable for maintaining a policy and practice of racial profiling in street encounters such as stop and frisk. Eleven years later, the plaintiffs are still struggling to realize the benefit of that judgment and to implement effective remedial measures. The panel discussed the progress of the remedial process – and how it has only partially satisfied the judgment that was entered – and ongoing efforts to implement truly meaningful reforms in this context.





## **Best Practices to Bring Accountability and End the War: Recent Civil Society Legal Actions and Arms Embargo**

Diala Shamas, Senior Staff Attorney, spoke in a plenary session in May on the second day of the two-day convening, **“International Action Towards Ending the Nakba and Realising the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.”** This event was the first 2025 civil society consultation convened by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The convening included presentations on recent efforts and findings by civil society organizations, UN Special Procedures, as well as meaningful legal actions undertaken in various domestic courts and other legal action and measures undertaken by Member States to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The consultations also provided an opportunity to brainstorm on further coordination and cooperation between Member States and civil society in that regard, including in preparation for the High-Level Conference in June.

## **Immigration**

### **Migrants and Muslims at Guantánamo: A History of Demonization, Social Control, and Resistance**

The Center for Constitutional Rights, along with our partners Muslim Counterpublics Lab, Amnesty, and National Immigrant Justice Center, organized this virtual panel to explore Guantánamo’s cruel and evolving history. January 2025 marked 23 years since the Guantánamo Bay prison was repurposed to house hundreds of Muslim men and boys captured in the “War on Terror.” The prison serves as an emblematic example of institutionalized Islamophobia, and today is the most recent iteration of the Trump administration’s ongoing vilification and incarceration of marginalized communities. The panel explored Guantánamo’s legacy and initial use in the 1990s to house Cuban and Haitian refugees and asylum seekers, and the speakers discussed how the prison’s entrenched image – that it houses the “worst of the worst” – justifies its continued existence and evolution. Nadia Ben-Youssef, Advocacy Director, moderated the conversation.

### **Responding to Raids & Immigration Enforcement: An Introductory Training for Alabama Advocates**

In March, the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild organized a free virtual lunchtime training on how to support community members in Alabama who are targeted in worksite raids and other types of immigration enforcement actions. Jessica Vosburgh, Senior Staff Attorney, joined other speakers in providing an overview of the immigration enforcement and detention landscape in the Southeast, including recent developments and emerging trends under the current administration. The training covered basic steps lawyers and legal representatives can take to help community members prepare for and respond to incidents of immigration enforcement in their worksites, homes, and communities.

# DONOR EVENTS

## A CONVERSATION WITH VINCE WARREN

CCR’s “A Conversation with Vince Warren” virtual gatherings allow our closest supporters to hear directly from our Executive Director, Vince Warren, and members of our legal team. These exclusive conversations provide an inside look at our current cases, the challenges we’re facing on the frontlines, and the impact your support makes possible.

In November 2024, donors from around the country and abroad were invited to a conversation with members of our Southern Justice Rising team, Associate Director of CCR South Emily Early and Senior Staff Attorney Jessica Vosburgh. The discussion focused on the recent presidential elections and the fight against growing authoritarianism in the South. Topics included more rampant and threatening white nationalism, the Stop Cop City movement, forced prison labor in Alabama, and increased immigrant detention, etc.

At the April conversation Vince was joined by Senior Staff Attorney Chinyere Ezie. Key issues highlighted how the current administration’s policies have increasingly targeted women, BIPOC & LGBTQIA+ communities, and immigrants. It was a lively discussion that displayed what true liberation can look like when gender and racial justice are fully realized.

## INSIDERS

Our Insider Dinners are small gatherings – in-person or via Zoom – of CCR donors, program staff, and board members.

The December 2024 Insider, an in-person dinner, focused on “Fighting Authoritarianism and Defending Immigration”. Guests received updates on our work addressing the Cameroonian asylum deportations, Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests, and advocacy and litigation efforts in close collaboration with our partners throughout the country. Executive Director Vince Warren was joined by Staff Attorney Samah Sisay for the discussion.

The June Insider – “Defense Against Rising Authoritarianism” – was a virtual event that brought together donors from across the country to learn more about CCR’s efforts to challenge the Trump administration and rising authoritarianism. Vince highlighted that much of CCR’s current work centers on protecting the rights of the most marginalized – Black and Brown communities, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ community, and those at the intersections of these identities.

## A CONVERSATION WITH Vince Warren



## A CONVERSATION WITH Vince Warren



CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS



Vince Warren  
Executive Director

Samah Sisay  
Staff Attorney

FIGHTING AUTHORITARIANISM AND DEFENDING IMMIGRATION  
INSIDER DINNER IN NYC

December 17th at 6:00 PM EST



## THELMA NEWMAN SOCIETY BREAKFAST

In May, members of CCR's Thelma Newman Planned Giving Society were invited to a special breakfast where we celebrated their commitment to ensuring CCR's lasting impact for generations to come. The program, led by Executive Director Vince Warren and Board Member Marjorie Fine, highlighted the vital role planned giving donors play in our ongoing efforts in the fight for social justice and shared additional information about the planned giving program.



## NEXTGEN JUSTICE COLLECTIVE HAPPY HOUR

In an effort to engage emerging activists and young professionals, CCR recently created the NextGen Justice Collective! In June, their first happy hour event provided a space for individuals to connect, collaborate, and build collective power against social injustices. This network includes past Justice Fellows and Ella Baker interns, current law students, young activists, and professionals, all united by CCR's mission and commitment to the fight for justice.



# EVENTS + CONVENINGS

## A SPLENDID BODY OF TIGERISH PEOPLE

In October 2024, we hosted our annual thank you event for donors, A Splendid Body of Tigerish People. Our partners, board members, and staff gathered to show gratitude to Center for Constitutional Rights donors who make our work possible through their generous contributions.

The evening's highlight was the presentation of our Tigerish awards. At CCR, we believe that if you have an activist, a lawyer and a storyteller, you can change the world! The Activist Award was given to Center for Constitutional Rights partner Robert Saleem Holbrook, Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center and co-founder of the Human Rights Coalition. Nicole Ramos, Director of *Al Otro Lado's* Border Rights Project and civil rights attorney, received the Lawyer Award. Eun Lee, Executive Director of *The Dream Unfinished* and Associate Director of New Initiatives at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts received our Storyteller Award. We also honored CCR Board Member and Chief Strategist at Higher Ground Change Strategies, Makani Themba with a special Justice Takes a Fight Award.

Last year's event also featured a special performance by *The Dream Unfinished's* musician and composer, Josh Henderson, who played a moving rendition of Harry Burleigh's "Deep River" on the violin. Burleigh was the first African-American composer acclaimed for his concert songs and adaptations of African-American spirituals. It was great to gather and celebrate together and everyone left recharged and inspired!





# THANK YOU

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

## WOMEN DONORS NETWORK (WDN)

**“We are proud to stand with the Center for Constitutional Rights, whose fearless pursuit of justice and unmatched legal expertise safeguard freedoms that impact us all. At WDN, we see it as both an honor and a responsibility to move resources with the same urgency and courage CCR demonstrates every day.”**

**—Leena Barakat**

*President & CEO, Women Donors Network & WDN Action*



This year, the Center for Constitutional Rights was delighted to welcome Women Donors Network (WDN) to our family of supporters. WDN’s first-time grant followed a panel presentation made by CCR Senior Staff Attorney Diala Shamas at the WDN Connect event, where Diala fired up the room as she spoke about the Center’s approach to transforming oppressive systems of power.

Founded in 2002, Women Donors Network is a multigenerational, multiracial community of donor activists leveraging collective power for justice. They believe in a world where every person enjoys fundamental rights, freedom from violence and oppression, sustainable access to resources, and equal economic opportunity.

For WDN, philanthropy is not only about what they fund but how they fund. By centering those most impacted, practicing trust-based philanthropy, and acting with clarity and courage, they move resources quickly and strategically to the frontlines of gender, racial, economic, and climate justice.



Their model pairs long-term investment in movement building with rapid response funding that meets the urgency of the moment.

WDN knows dollars alone don't change the future. Their members bring vision, expertise, and connections that multiply impact and drive transformative change. Rooted in community and fueled by an audacious vision for justice, WDN has grown from a home where women worked to claim agency over their resources into a powerful hub that connects, grows, funds, and mobilizes collective power and brilliance of their network toward systemic change.

The Center for Constitutional Rights is grateful for the Women Donors Network's generous support. Thank you for standing with us in the fight for justice and liberation.





# IN MEMORIAM

## FRAN ANSLEY

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Fran Ansley, a fearless activist and educator who fought for social justice and civil rights throughout her life.

Born in Atlanta, Fran attended Radcliffe College in Cambridge and participated in the Harvard sit-in protest of the Vietnam War. Intelligent and compassionate, she spent summers community organizing in Atlanta, Cleveland, and Chicago. She went on to earn her JD from the University of Tennessee Law College and her LLM from Harvard Law School, and then taught at the UT Law College, where she became a Distinguished Professor of Law. During those years, she was active with Allies of Knoxville's Immigrant Neighbors, Jobs with Justice, United Campus Workers, and other labor organizations.



Fran consistently championed the disempowered and marginalized, pursuing social justice as an organizer, a lawyer, a professor, and a driver of community organizations. She worked for the Southern Conference Education Fund in Louisville and with youth in East Boston and Somerville, Massachusetts.

She published work on race, poverty, and gender in books and law reviews, and co-edited the 2009 book *Global Connections and Local Receptions: New Latino Immigration to the Southeastern United States*. Her many awards include the Whitney M. Young Lifetime Achievement Award from the Urban League and the Peacemaker Award from the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance.

Fran loved to hike in the Smoky Mountains, sing with her church choir, and put on plays with her children and grandchildren. She was tough but personable, a reliable collaborator and confidante, and a respected friend and teacher.

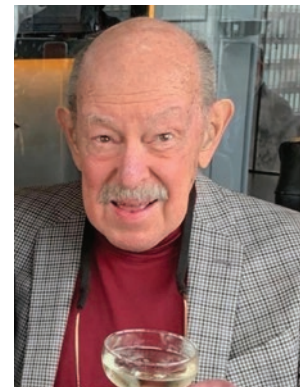
Along with her husband of 50-plus years, Jim Sessions, Fran was a longtime Center for Constitutional Rights supporter. Her courageous dedication to fighting injustice continues to inspire us.

## ROBERT BLOOM

We mourn the loss of Robert Bloom, a dedicated supporter of the Center for Constitutional Rights for many years.

A Princeton University graduate, Bob served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War and went on to earn his JD from Harvard Law School. He practiced law for more than three decades on Long Island and in Manhattan.

Bob was a passionate defender of civil liberties and litigated for the Center for





Constitutional Rights on a volunteer basis after he retired from private practice. Kind, curious, and always willing to help, he was active in serving his community in many ways along with his wife, Joan.

Bob was a supporter of the Center for Constitutional Rights for more than 15 years, including as a member of our Thelma Newman Society planned giving circle. We remain grateful for his support of our work, and we will miss him.

## **FRANK EMSPAK**

While we mourn the loss of Frank Emspak, we are deeply grateful for the inspiring example he set as a tireless anti-war activist and advocate for workers' rights.

Inspired by his labor activist parents while growing up in Yonkers, Frank began his advocacy in high school when he joined a Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy march. His activism blossomed at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees and a PhD in American history. While there, he took part in local civil rights organizing campaigns and a student strike that led to the establishment of a Black Studies program at the university. He also became chairman of the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam.



Frank learned the machinist trade and quickly became a leader of the labor movement in Massachusetts, fighting to achieve equal pay for women, among other advocacy efforts. After working for the Massachusetts Center for Applied Technology, he moved back to Madison and joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin School for Workers. He co-created Madison Labor Radio, which provided in-depth coverage of local labor issues for decades, and he regularly helped produce the Workers Independent News Service. His memoir, *Troublemaker: Saying No to Power*, was published in 2023.

Witty, generous, and intellectually curious, Frank was an avid gardener and bird watcher who always made time to offer guidance and support to young people. His dedication to helping others find their voice and make it heard was inspiring and contagious. Even at the very end of his life, he was offering strategic advice to his hospital caregivers, who were engaged in a union struggle.

A fearless advocate for justice, Frank was a Center for Constitutional Rights supporter for 30 years; Dolores, his wife of six decades, continues that support. We thank them deeply for their belief in our work.

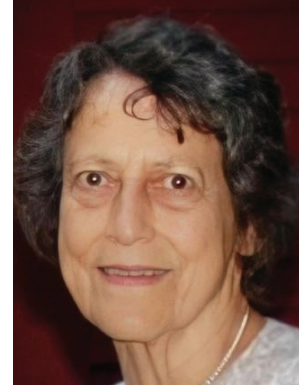


# IN MEMORIAM

## **HILDEGARDE HANNUM**

We are saddened by the passing of Hildegarde Hannum, whose commitment to social justice informed her rich life.

Born in Springfield, Massachusetts, to German immigrant parents, Hildegarde graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Connecticut College and spent a year at the University of Munich as a Fulbright scholar. She then received her master's from Middlebury College and became a teaching fellow at Harvard University while earning her PhD in German studies.



Hildegarde taught German language and literature at Hayward State University; the University of California, Berkeley; and Connecticut College. She and her husband, Hunter, who died in 2020, then worked as freelance literary translators of the works of such authors as Erich Fromm, Hans Jonas, and Alice Miller. Together, they were awarded the Lewis Galantiere Award from the American Translators Association in 1986.

Her anti-war activism stretched from the 1960s in California, where she joined protests against the Vietnam War, to 2003 in Connecticut, where she participated in vigils to prevent the invasion of Iraq. She was an active member of the Connecticut Nuclear Arms Freeze Campaign, and she cofounded the Energy Options Study Group, which promoted the reduction of our reliance on fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy resources. For decades, she served on the board of the E.F. Schumacher Society, an organization that promotes local economic revitalization and environmental sustainability. She edited the group's People, Land, and Community: The Collected E.F. Schumacher Society Lectures.

Hildegarde loved hiking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and for more than 50 years she was a devoted trustee of her husband's family foundation, The Martha and Hunter Grubb Foundation, in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

She was a supporter of the Center for Constitutional Rights for more than 30 years, including as a member of our Thelma Newman Society planned giving circle. Her generosity, compassion, and humanity will resonate in our work as we carry on the fight for justice.

## **PEARL LINDENBAUM**

We mourn the loss of Pearl Lindenbaum, a dedicated supporter of the Center for Constitutional Rights' mission of justice, equality, and human rights for all.

For nearly 50 years, Pearl was devoted to fighting for the care of her son, James, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia as a teenager. She was tirelessly committed to raising awareness about the deficiencies and failures of the health care system, particularly mental health services, as she sought policy changes that would improve treatment.



At age 60, Pearl earned a master’s degree in social work with a plan of creating a group residence for those like her son who have severe brain disorders. Throughout her life, she advocated fiercely for improvements in mental health care so that people with brain disorders are treated with dignity and respect; receive appropriate medical care, supervision, and shelter; and have their constitutional rights honored.

Pearl and her late husband, Israel, who was also a strong advocate for mental health services, began supporting the Center for Constitutional Rights in 1999 and became members of the Thelma Newman Society planned giving circle. We will miss her heartfelt advocacy for the human rights of those in need of dignified mental health care.

## **ELAINE NONNEMAN**

The Center for Constitutional Rights family mourns the loss of Elaine Nonneman, a lifelong activist and feminist philanthropist who championed peace and women’s rights around the world.

Raised in Cleveland, Elaine graduated from Duquesne University and settled in Seattle. She became involved in social justice philanthropy in the 1980s by joining A Territory Resource (now the Social Justice Fund NW) to support movements led by the people most oppressed by extractive systems. In 1998, she created the Channel Foundation to advance women’s legal equality and human rights in the United States and internationally. She was also a passionate advocate for Palestinian liberation.



Travel was key to nurturing Elaine’s worldview. She taught English in China for several years, went on eco-tourism expeditions, and later in life joined human rights field visits in different countries. Always curious and invested in the experiences of others, she regularly hosted students and other travelers in her home through programs at the Seattle World Affairs Council.

Elaine was an active member of the Center for Women & Democracy and the Women Donors Network—as co-chair of the latter’s international peace circle, she focused on lobbying for the Women, Peace & Security Act and supporting the leadership of Afghan women. She invested in green enterprises and advocated for the development of affordable housing for the unhoused in Seattle.





Elaine enjoyed gardening, attending cultural events, and taking late-night walks with her cats. Her positivity, generosity, and inquisitiveness were widely appreciated.

Elaine was an active Center for Constitutional Rights supporter for more than 10 years, including as a member of the Thelma Newman Society planned giving circle. We will carry her dedication and vision forward as we continue the fight for peace and equality.

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## REVENUE



GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS: . . . . .	\$11,738,600	
ATTORNEY FEES: . . . . .	\$588,039	
NET INVESTMENT INCOME: . . . . .	\$1,148,044	
OTHER INCOME: . . . . .	.\$18,711	
<b>TOTAL: . . . . .</b>	<b>.\$13,493,394</b>	



THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS IS A NONPROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION THAT RELIES ON INDIVIDUAL AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT.



## EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES: . . . . .	\$10,312,208	
SUPPORTING SERVICES:. . . . .	\$3,709,708	
<b>TOTAL: . . . . .</b>	<b>\$14,021,916</b>	



Lumumba Akinwole-Bandele *(term expired 6/2025)*

Amanda Alexander

Alejandra Ancheita

Nermeen Arastu, *Secretary*

Colette Pichon Battle

Linda Burnham

Rosemary Corbett *(term expired 10/2024)*

Lisa Crooms-Robinson

Noura Erakat

Marjorie Fine

Justin Hansford

Jennifer Hobbs

Meena Jagannath

Sylvester Johnson, *Treasurer*

Rukia Lumumba

Gay McDougall *(term expired 6/2025)*

Amoretta Morris

Jumana Musa, *Chair*

Vincent M. Southerland

Makani Themba

# STAFF X

## Management Team

Vince Warren, *Executive Director*  
Donita Judge, *Associate Executive Director*  
Natalie Bledman, *Chief Operating Officer*  
Sunyata Altener, *Communications Director*  
Baher Azmy, *Legal Director*  
Nadia Ben-Youssef, *Advocacy Director*  
Masha Katz Baer, *Director of Development*  
Maria LaHood, *Deputy Legal Director*

## Development

Michelle Anthony, *Senior Donor Relations Manager*  
Doug Edelson, *Foundation Relations Officer*  
Elizabeth Geertsema, *Campaign Manager*  
Karen Hill, *Donor Relations Associate*  
Olivia McIntosh, *Database and Online Giving Manager*  
Karina Murrieta, *Senior Donor Relations Officer*  
Chelsea Ogun, *Senior Donor Relations Officer*  
Charisse Waugh, *Grant Writer*

## Communications

Hafeezat Bishi, *Media Associate*  
Charles Greene, *Web Communications  
& Multimedia Manager*  
David Mizner, *Communications Associate*  
Jen Nessel, *Communications Coordinator*  
Lexi Webster, *Digital Engagement Manager*

## Operations

Melinda Butterfield, *Finance Manager*  
Danielle Demisay, *Human Resources Associate*  
Lisa Levy, *Deputy Director - Human Resources*  
Samiha Riham, *Technology Manager*  
Pearl Ryan, *Finance Associate*  
Lynette Seymour, *Executive Associate*  
Devon Smith, *Facilities and Office Services Manager*  
Anderson Taveras, *Technology Support Manager*  
Deophister Uffer, *Finance Director*

## Advocacy

maya finoh, *Political Education & Research Manager*  
Aliya Hussain, *Advocacy Program Manager*  
Brad Parker, *Associate Director of Policy*  
Amanda Paxton, *Advocacy Administrative Associate*  
Dom Renfrey, *Advocacy Program Manager*  
Alice Wang, *Advocacy Administrative Associate*

## Legal

Claire Dailey, *Senior Legal Worker*  
Wells Dixon, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Emily Early, *Associate Director of the Southern  
Regional Office*  
Sadé Evans, *Legal Worker and Coordinator  
of Ella Baker Program*  
Chinyere Ezie, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Korbin Felder, *Justice Fellow*  
Katie Gallagher, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Angelo Guisado, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Ian Head, *Open Records Project Manager*  
Aylah Kadah, *Justice Fellow*  
Shane Kadidal, *Senior Managing Attorney*  
Pardiss Kebriaei, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Adina Marx-Arpadi, *Justice Fellow*  
Ibrahim Qatabi, *Senior Legal Worker*  
CJ Sandley, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Diala Shamas, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Astha Sharma Pokharel, *Staff Attorney*  
Samah Sisay, *Staff Attorney*  
Pam Spees, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Leah Todd, *Senior Legal Worker*  
Kayla Vinson, *Staff Attorney*  
Jessica Vosburgh, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Celine Zhu, *Justice Fellow*

## Summer 2024

### Ella Baker Interns

Chloe Bartholomew  
Belen de Leon  
Apurva Gunturu  
Leigh Howard  
Anton Kernohan  
Joelle Miller  
Sunny Osment  
Lesley Pagan  
Marwa Sayed  
Nour Soubani  
Byul Yoon

## Interns

Maryam Alghafir  
Madeline Batt  
Naomi Chasek-Macfoy  
Shahana Farooqi  
Jasmine Heiss  
Sam Hernandez  
Dorna Maryam Movasseghi  
Andrea Valenzuela  
Christina Williams



# THANK YOU

## WAYS TO SUPPORT THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

***Join forces with activists, lawyers, and storytellers to fight oppression and build power.***

**Make an online gift at [www.CCRjustice.org/](http://www.CCRjustice.org/)**

**Donate.** It's fast, easy, and secure, and your gift will go to work right away. Online gifts are a quicker and greener way to give.

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**Make the Center for Constitutional Rights your birthday gift!** Ask friends and family to make gifts to the Center for Constitutional Rights in your honor as your holiday/birthday/anniversary/no-reason-at-all gift OR make gifts to us in honor of the folks on your

shopping list. These gifts will pay tribute to our shared social justice values and build our audience, while fueling our efforts to fight for the most vulnerable while building the power of social movements.

**Donate stock.** If you sell depreciated stock and give the proceeds to the Center for Constitutional Rights, you may be able to claim the loss on your taxes, as well as the charitable deduction. If you donate appreciated securities to us, you may avoid capital gains taxes and receive a charitable deduction. For stock transfer information, go to [www.CCRjustice.org/gifts-stocks-funds](http://www.CCRjustice.org/gifts-stocks-funds).

**Attend our special events – and bring a friend!**

If you are on our email list, you will receive invitations. Public events are listed on our calendar at [www.CCRjustice.org/calendar](http://www.CCRjustice.org/calendar).

**Stay up-to-date and share our news!** Follow @theCCR on X (formerly Twitter), CCRJustice on Instagram, and Center for Constitutional Rights on Facebook and LinkedIn, and bookmark our website: [www.CCRjustice.org](http://www.CCRjustice.org). Sign up for our weekly newsletter, the *Frontlines of Justice*, at [ccrjustice.org/up-to-date](http://ccrjustice.org/up-to-date). Share our newsletters, action alerts, social media posts, and appeals with your friends and family.

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**For more information on ways to support us, please contact:**

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# THANK YOU