



Today, ISLP joins the international community in observing International Human Rights Day to commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10th, 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It set out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

Today, we pay tribute to all human rights defenders, celebrate the recent victories of the human rights community, and recognize the challenges that still lie ahead in the global struggle to advance justice.

Today, we acknowledge that we inhabit a world where people are still not free from slavery, torture, and arbitrary arrest or detention.

Today, we focus on why human rights matter, and what those of us lucky enough to live with the expectation of liberty, equality, and justice under the law can do on behalf of those who do not.

**UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION
OF HUMAN
RIGHTS**

Recent ISLP Pro Bono Human Rights Projects:

Malawi: Activist was murdered, inquiry rules

A commission of inquiry chaired by Malawi Supreme Court of Appeal judge Andrew Nyirenda determined in October that Malawian student activist Robert Chasowa, a critic of the late President Bingu wa Mutharika, was murdered and did not kill himself as police first claimed. Chasowa, head of a youth rights group at Blantyre Polytechnic, was found dead on the campus last September. Police produced suicide notes, but the commission declared them fabrications. ISLP volunteer Robert Kinney assisted with this case at the request of the chair of the Malawi Human Rights Commission, who asked for ISLP's help in reviewing the police investigation and medical examiner's report into Chasowa's death. The Commission cited Mr. Kinney's report when it publicly called for an inquiry into the case.

"This was truly a community effort of ISLP, and I am very proud and thankful to have been a part of it. This particular project was not only challenging, but also extremely rewarding from a professional and personal standpoint. It was only through our collective effort that justice and the rule of law prevailed in this case."

- ISLP volunteer Robert Kinney

Angolan Anti-Corruption Activist Fights Charges

Rafael Marques de Morais, an Angolan journalist and human rights activist, faces legal action in response to his book *Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola*, which

alleges that diamond companies and their private security companies routinely killed and terrorized villagers deemed to have interfered in corporate mining operations. Shareholders in these companies - including high-ranking Angolan military leaders - have sued him for libel in the Portuguese courts, where Mr. Marques may have difficulty securing the presence of defense witnesses. ISLP volunteer Manuel Magalhães e Silva, a leading criminal law practitioner in Portugal, is providing pro bono assistance to Mr. Marques in the case.

Safeguarding Press Freedoms in Mongolia

In an on-going project, ISLP has been supporting the work of Globe International, an Ulaanbaatar-based NGO, to protect the rights of local media. Facing a growing number of civil and criminal defamation charges against Mongolian journalists, Globe asked ISLP for trainings for judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and policemen to promote a more just application of laws affecting journalists and the media. Volunteers Sig Sorenson and Dan Byron have together made four trips to Mongolia in 2012 to work with lawyers and judges, contribute to a draft media freedom bill and provide side-by-side mentoring to junior media law lawyers as they prepare cases for trial.

Training Human Rights Defenders in Africa

> ISLP sent volunteer Jean-Pierre Authier to Senegal in September to help facilitate a workshop organized by the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, which aimed to build the case processing and investigation skills of attorneys from francophone human rights organizations. He also offered tools to help address their overwhelming backlog of cases related to human rights monitoring, promotion, protection and advocacy.

> ISLP also joined NGO Global Rights in a project aimed at building the capacity of legal aid providers in Burundi, Nigeria and Uganda to litigate cases that will highlight systemic access to justice obstacles, including the state's failure to investigate serious human rights violations. Two ISLP volunteers, Steve Goldberg and Jean-Claude Libert, led an intensive training workshop in Burundi.

> And at the request of the African Center for International Legal and Policy Research, ISLP volunteer Andrew Scherer delivered a 3-day workshop on Social and Economic Rights for fifteen high-level members of the Kenya's judiciary. It was so well received that they asked for a similar training geared toward advocates, which was provided in late October by ISLP-UK volunteer Stephen Knafler QC.

ISLP thanks the many law firms providing invaluable pro bono research and analysis into legal issues that is used to support human rights NGOs around the world. Recent issues include grave violations of women's human rights in Sri Lanka, illegal arms smuggling in Africa, land rights violations in Cambodia, and, in various countries, the protection of sexual and indigenous minorities, illegal detention, and anti-corruption law reform and investigations.

The **International Senior Lawyers Project** provides the pro bono services of highly skilled and experienced lawyers to promote human rights, equitable and sustainable economic development and the rule of law worldwide. ISLP assists governments, nongovernmental organizations and other institutions working to build legal capacity and to advance the rights and well-being of their citizens.

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