

# CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL

# RIGHTS

# ANNUAL REPORT '23



# 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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# THE BOARD CO-CHAIRS

**W**ith deepest gratitude we want to thank you for another groundbreaking year at the Center for Constitutional Rights. Because of you, CCR once again made a significant impact on the lives of the people and communities who are under threat every day.

We finally got our southern office in operation this year, and they have already put the region on notice. CCR South intervened in Jackson, Mississippi residents' decades-long battle for clean drinking water and fended off an assault on the privacy rights of immigrants by the state of Louisiana — and those are just two of the southern office's powerful actions in 2023.

The list of CCR's achievements this year is indeed substantial. We created a new two-year fellowship program, The Justice Fellowship, to continue fulfilling our long-held promise to create a pipeline of next generation movement lawyers. This new program builds upon the work of the longstanding Bertha Justice Fellowship, which sunsets next year.

After nearly 20 years, our lawsuit on behalf of men tortured at Abu-Ghraib prison in Iraq during the Bush administration is finally going to trial. And with our grassroots partners in the south, we stopped the construction of a massive grain elevator in Louisiana that would have overtaken Black communities in the Bayou, further polluting the air they breathe as well as destroying the burial sites of their ancestors. This is just a short list of the impact your support made this year on the lives of the people we serve and whom you care about so deeply.

The Center for Constitutional Rights' supporters are different. This is not charity for you. You are activists who live this work. CCR is not only led by the people

we serve, but we are also guided by you, our donors, whose unrelenting fight for liberation and justice inspires and fuels our work every day. You understand better than anyone how crucial it is that this organization have the resources we need to carry out our mission to defeat oppression and help communities build power. Your contribution to the fight for justice cannot be overstated.



*Lisa Crooms-Robinson*



*Jumana Musa*

This is why we are extremely excited to share with you the Center for Constitutional Rights' 2023 Annual Report.

Not every single case or project is covered here, but the contents will give you a full picture of the incredible progress we are making in dismantling structural racism, gender oppression, economic inequity, corporate human rights abuses, and government overreach. Your fierce generosity makes all of this possible. Thank you. We can never say that enough.

This Annual Report is a tribute to your dedication to justice. You are changing the world.

**Lisa Crooms-Robinson  
& Jumana Musa**

*Co-Chairs, Board of Trustees*



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In early February 2023, Center for Constitutional Rights staff spent one of our bi-weekly meetings admiring images of a former Guantánamo detainee beaming in the sunlight of Belize, his new home. Majid Khan had just arrived at the Caribbean nation after nearly two decades of imprisonment at Guantánamo. Majid was the first detainee to challenge his unconstitutional detention when our lawyers filed a habeas petition on his behalf in 2006.

Majid encapsulates 2023 for me. Time after time this year I was reminded of what it takes to do this work. Hope is what transformation requires. And we can only hope for things we believe are possible. Majid embodies that. He believed in us as much as we believed in his humanity. His and other CCR cases – decades long struggles – have helped change the way lawyers and activists hold power to account. Thank you for your unshakeable commitment to justice. We are able to do this work because of you. Your endurance in this fight for freedom and liberation allows us to be fearless.

All the violence and oppression across the world have our hopes under constant siege; the legal and political environment is beyond challenging. Those who want to maintain the status quo are pushing back harder than ever against the gains our social movements have made and the fights we are taking to those in power – whether it be the right of Black people to live on un-poisoned land as in our *Louisiana Environmental Justice Project*, or challenging the inhumane treatment of incarcerated people as in our landmark case *Ashker v. Governor of California*.

You make our work possible. I am optimistic about the year ahead, because CCR supporters can outlast

anyone when it comes to justice and freedom. I am so pleased to send you the Center for Constitutional Rights' 2023 Annual Report. Please take pride in all that we have accomplished together.

Some of the cases highlighted in the report are new like *Inclusive Louisiana, Mount Triumph Baptist Church, RISE St. James v. St. James Parish, et al.*, our landmark filing seeking a moratorium on all new heavy industrial facilities in Black communities along the Mississippi River. And some are older like *Floyd v. City of New York*, CCR's landmark 2008 lawsuit that outlawed NYPD stop-and-frisk practices in Black and Latinx communities, and in which we continue to be heavily involved by participating in the court-ordered monitoring process. Like *Floyd*, the Louisiana moratorium case will likely take time and require a commitment from all of us in order to transform the way Black and Indigenous lives are treated in Louisiana.

You are making a difference. Together we are transforming society. All of us at the Center for Constitutional Rights are heartened and grateful that you are by our side in this tough work. Justice takes a damn good fight, but I believe justice will prevail. Thank you for another groundbreaking year!

**Vince Warren**  
*Executive Director*

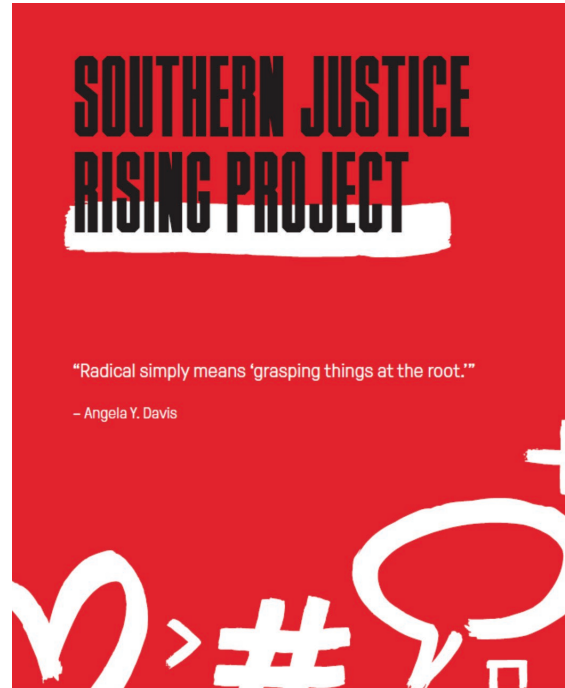


## NEW INITIATIVE IN ACTION


The Center for Constitutional Rights' Southern Justice Rising Initiative represents our deepened institutional commitment to liberatory movements in the U.S. South, a legacy that stretches back nearly 60 years to our origins in the civil rights movement. With a new strategic regional hub in Jackson, Mississippi, we partner with grassroots movements and community organizations fighting to transform material conditions, dismantle systems of oppression, and advance visions of collective liberation across the South. After months of comprehensive outreach to these movement partners, lawyers, and activists, our Southern Regional team is now in action mode assisting and amplifying their crucial social justice work.

With Associate Director Emily Early at the helm, our new Southern hub has taken powerful steps toward our ambitious long-term goals: training local lawyers and advocates to be community leaders in the fight against destructive systems of power and oppression; initiating strategic litigation and advocacy campaigns that strike at the roots of white supremacy, patriarchy, racial violence, homophobia, mass incarceration, and environmental, economic, and gender injustice; pressuring corporate, state, and private actors that relentlessly produce policies to oppress Black, Brown, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+, immigrant, and poor communities; and creating a trusted and accessible regional space that supports strategic collaboration, co-creation, and bold advocacy efforts.

We are excited to report that our Southern Regional team is already making waves in the courthouse. With co-counsel Mississippi Center for Justice, we filed a



motion in March 2023 on behalf of three Mississippi news organizations to intervene in ongoing welfare fraud litigation that arose from the largest public fraud scandal in the state's history. The goal is to oppose former governor Phil Bryant's efforts to shield from public view records relating to fundraising for the University of Southern Mississippi volleyball facility, which was built while he was in office using millions of dollars in misappropriated Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. Our intervention is a racial justice issue. Mississippi is the nation's poorest state with one of the country's largest Black populations, and the TANF program is meant to provide financial assistance to parents struggling with poverty. The lawsuit in which the media outlets are hoping to intervene (*Mississippi Department of Human Services v. Mississippi Community Education Center*) seeks to recoup tens of millions of dollars of these misappropriated welfare funds. One of the defendants has subpoenaed records from Mr. Bryant, but he has resisted, arguing for a protective order to shield him from the public and the press. We support the vital work these news organizations are doing to increase the transparency



of a state government system riddled with corruptive practices that disproportionately affect Black and low-income constituents.

As part of our Southern Justice Rising Initiative, the Center for Constitutional Rights has been working with the Promise of Justice Initiative to free the many people incarcerated in Louisiana after having been convicted by non-unanimous “Jim Crow juries,” a post-Reconstruction weapon used by white supremacists to maintain the subjugation of Black Louisianans. Unfortunately, in October 2022 the Louisiana Supreme Court in *State v. Reddick* denied retroactive application of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2020 ruling that declared non-unanimous verdicts in felony cases unconstitutional. This likely means that our petitions to overturn the convictions of clients Rufus Henry and Matthew Allen, two Black men handed life sentences after being convicted by these prejudicial juries, will be dismissed (*State v. Henry / State v. Allen*). We were able to secure Mr. Henry’s release on parole in June 2022, and we are exploring strategies to have Mr. Allen released from solitary confinement. Our focus is now on supporting a bill introduced in the state legislature that would establish a process to review the unconstitutional non-unanimous convictions of the 1,500-plus people still incarcerated in Louisiana whose appeals have run out. With your support, we continue to seek justice for those imprisoned by a racist court system while fighting to dismantle a system of mass incarceration that perpetuates enslavement.

Also, as part of this work, we:

- successfully challenged invasive and repressive Louisiana government subpoenas seeking confidential information about asylum seekers;
- counseled the historic Highlander Research and Education Center in Tennessee in their long-term struggle to reclaim their historic folk school campus that was wrongfully stolen from them by state authorities in 1959;

- filed a landmark suit against St. James Parish in Louisiana for its decades of environmental racism;
- provided legal and advocacy support to the “Stop Cop City” organizers enduring mounting state violence and repression as they seek to protect their communities and natural resources from the corporate-funded, militarized police training compound in Atlanta, Georgia through our know-your-rights training and materials, public statements, letters of support, and a Fall 2023 UN submission on behalf of movement partners;
- provided counsel on potential legal claims for organizers in North Carolina who were charged with felonies and banned from public parks for their support of the unhoused community;
- co-organized and trained movement lawyers, legal advocates, and law students to serve as legal witnesses for the Poor People’s Campaign’s “Moral March on Washington and to the Polls.”; and,
- trained organizers and activists in Georgia on how to protect themselves and their communities in interactions with, and surveillance from, law enforcement.

The U.S. South is home to some of the fiercest organizers for social change and the most inspiring justice movements of our time. Using litigation, advocacy campaigns, and strategic communications, we are proud to join our Southern allies on the front lines as we build our collective power for social transformation. By rededicating our Southern Justice Rising Initiative, we build on our legacy of working closely with generations of Black activists and Southern freedom fighters in the never-ending struggle for human rights. Your continued investment in this vital work underwrites our shared vision of a future defined by true justice, accountability, and liberation.

WELCOME

# NEW BOARD MEMBERS



**Alejandra Ancheita**

*Mexico City, MX*

*Human rights attorney, Founder and Executive Director of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Project (ProDESC)*

Alejandra is a leading Latin American voice in the human rights movement. As a lawyer and activist, she has prominently defended workers, migrants, and Indigenous communities in her native Mexico. Through ProDESC, Alejandra brings about structural change by combining community education and organizing, corporate accountability, human rights litigation, and policy advocacy to protect the economic, social, and cultural rights of Mexico's most marginalized people. She has spoken in international forums such as the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society and argued cases before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. The 2014 Laureate of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, Alejandra holds an LLB from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco and a Master of Laws and International Justice from Fordham University.



**Linda Burnham**

*Oakland, CA*

*Activist, writer, strategist, and political educator*

Linda has advocated for women's rights and racial justice since the 1960s. She was a leader in the Third World Women's Alliance, the cofounder and executive director of the Women of Color Resource Center, and the national research director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Nominated as one of 1000 Peace Women for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, Linda has led delegations of women of color to UN conferences in Nairobi, Beijing, and Durban, South Africa. She has published widely about feminist theory and African American politics, and she is co-editor of *Power Concedes Nothing: How Grassroots Organizing Wins Elections* and co-author of *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work*. Linda is currently contributing to Project2050, an inquiry into long-term strategic thinking on the left.



**Noura Erakat**

*New Brunswick, NJ*

*Human rights attorney, Associate Professor of Africana Studies and the Program of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University–New Brunswick*

Noura specializes in human rights law, humanitarian law, national security law, refugee law, social justice, and critical race theory. She has served as the legal advocacy coordinator for the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights and as a national organizer for the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. A frequent news commentator and video documentary producer, Noura has published work in *The New York Times*, *Ethnicities*, *The Washington Post*, and the *International Journal of Refugee Law*. She is the author of *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* and co-founding editor of the independent ezine *Jadaliyya*. Noura earned her J.D. and undergraduate degrees from the University of California at Berkeley and her LLM in national security from Georgetown University Law Center.



STRUCTURAL RACISM



OPPRESSIVE ECONOMIC  
STRUCTURES



PATRIARCHY



ABUSIVE STATE  
POWER

STRUCTURAL RACISM

# DISMANTLING WHITE SUPREMACY



*(left to right) The Watts family with CCR Client Charles Watts, CCR Legal Director Baher Azmy, CCR Staff Attorney Samah Sisay, and CCR Deputy Legal Director Maria LaHood.*

**Having entered prison as a young man, Mr. Watts leaves as a middle-aged man who endured violence and other dangers during three decades of incarceration and has become a respected mentor to young men both inside and outside prison. “I am happy to finally return home to my family and be a father to my children,” he said.**

## INTRODUCTION

The Center for Constitutional Rights was born out of the fight for racial justice embodied by the Civil Rights Movement. In the many decades since, our commitment to dismantling institutionalized white supremacy has only deepened and expanded. Through targeted litigation and fierce advocacy, we challenge all forms of racial oppression, whether woven into the DNA of law enforcement, a rigged court system, mass incarceration, or an abusive immigration, migration and asylum regime. Relentlessly, we confront discriminatory policing, press for government accountability, support Indigenous sovereignty, and spotlight racial injustices around the world. Throughout, we center and support the communities most impacted by anti-Blackness, settler colonialism, xenophobia, and systemic inequality, while advocating for the redirection of resources to these communities. A society that fails to acknowledge and atone for its historic injustices remains a failed society. We recognize that growing the legal and political framework to eradicate white supremacy must be our collective mission, and your visionary dedication to this ideal fuels our many successful efforts to uproot systemic racism and advance liberation. We thank you for partnering with us in this critical work.



## FEATURED CASE

### Winning Compassionate Release from Excessive, Discriminatory Sentences

The Center for Constitutional Rights is thrilled for our client Charles Watts, whose motion for compassionate release was granted by the court in January 2023. After 30 years of incarceration for robberies he committed as a young man that caused no physical harm to anyone, Mr. Watts has finally returned to his community and his family, which includes three children who are now adults, six grandchildren he'd never met, and his sister.

Mr. Watts was 20 years old in 1990 when he and a childhood friend committed a series of robberies in Brooklyn using unloaded guns. Two years later, he received a mandatory minimum sentence of one five-year term and four 20-year terms, on top of 87 months for the underlying crimes. The relevant criminal code contained a “stacking rule” that required the convicted person – even a first-time offender like Mr. Watts – to serve the terms consecutively. Mr. Watts’s 92-year sentence was horrifically long, especially by today’s standards; the average sentence for robbery now is approximately nine years. As part of the 2018 First Step Act, Congress amended the stacking law to exempt first-time offenders, but not for people who had already been sentenced, so Mr. Watts faced life-long incarceration.

In November 2021, we filed a motion for compassionate release in federal court in the Eastern District of New York on Mr. Watts’s behalf under the First Step Act, which was enacted to give people like Mr. Watts a second chance and to remedy the cruelty of the 1990s tough-on-crime regime that disproportionately impacted young Black men. The Act gives the sentencing court authority to reduce a sentence or grant a motion for release when there are “extraordinary and compelling reasons” to do so. After the government opposed our motion, we filed a reply brief in January 2022 supplemented by a handwritten letter from Mr. Watts making the case for his rehabilitation and release. Oral argument was held at a hearing in December 2022, after which we filed a supplemental letter in support of Mr. Watts’s motion. Along with granting his release, the court included an amended judgment reducing his excessive sentence to time served and five years of supervised release.

“I want to be a mentor and use my case as an example for young people so that they don’t make the same mistakes I did.” Your commitment to reducing the harm of the criminal legal system has had a profound impact on Mr. Watts’s life, allowing him to rejoin society and build a meaningful life. We thank you for helping to produce an outcome that will lead to compassion and redemption for others trapped in a punitive system defined by mass incarceration and racial injustice.



# HIGHLIGHTS

## Using FOIA Requests to Expose Abusive Immigration Policies

In our continuing effort to challenge abusive immigration policies, the Center for Constitutional Rights and our co-counsel released a briefing guide in February 2023 detailing findings, obtained through a pair of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, about the systematic mistreatment of Cameroonian and other Black migrants detained by the U.S. government. The internal documents we received show how U.S. government officials expressed racist attitudes toward Black migrants, treated their deportation as sport, and disregarded reports of abuse. We filed these FOIA requests with our co-counsel in April 2021 in support of the Alliance in Defense of Black Immigrants to compel federal agencies such as ICE and DHS to release information about Cameroonian asylum seekers who were abused while in custody and then deported by the Trump administration in the fall of 2020. In October 2021, along with Project South and the Southern Poverty Law Center, we filed a subsequent FOIA lawsuit demanding information about the wrongful deportations and torture of the refugees. We also joined with partners to file damages complaints under the Federal Tort Claims Act. Our additional advocacy led the Secretary of Homeland Security to belatedly grant Temporary Protected Status to the 40,000 Cameroonian refugees in the United States, an extraordinary win.




Black migrants continue to face abuse, discrimination, and disproportionate harm from anti-immigrant policies, and our use of FOIA requests – as part of our Open Records Project – is an example of how your support helps us attain key information that our movement partners can deploy successfully in their advocacy work. Together, we will never stop demanding that the government treat Black migrants and asylum seekers humanely while holding it accountable for its cruelty.

## Forging New Paths Toward Black Liberation

The Center for Constitutional Rights and co-organizer Law for Black Lives held a national conference, “Lawyering for Liberation: Defending Black Lives, Building Black Power,” in St. Louis in July 2022. Building on our path-breaking 2015 national conference, the event created urgently needed space for lawyers, paralegals, law students, advocates, and organizers to connect and collaborate, both in-person and virtually, as we forge new paths toward Black liberation. The 575 participants were exposed to diverse programmatic content such as keynotes, panels, and political education sessions; intensive movement lawyering trainings; and three-hour Liberation Labs to generate solutions in real time to issues that partner legal and community-based organizations are facing. Attendees began building a robust national network to advance the conference’s goals, which include mobilizing lawyers to support movements across the country and around the globe, engaging in collective strategizing, and creating a space that supported participants’ ability to access healing and tap into their creativity. Videos from the conference are available on YouTube.

## Mobilizing to Defend Legacies of Civil Rights and Social Justice

In August 2022, we supported our longtime partners at the Highlander Research and Education Center in persuading the National Park Service (NPS) to decline an application from the Tennessee Preservation Trust (TPT) to nominate part of Highlander’s original campus for the National Register of



Historic Places. An organization with a storied history of training civil rights and social justice leaders, the Highlander Center reached out for our legal and advocacy help in defending its property and legacy from misappropriation by the TPT, an unfit steward of Highlander’s legacy with no connection to the civil rights movement and a record of striving to preserve Civil War history. As part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, we led efforts to provide detailed investigative research on various stakeholders and facilitated the mobilization of more than 2,100 public comments to the NPS opposing the nomination. Following our interventions, the NPS declined to list the property under the TPT and referred the decision back to the state government.


### **Supporting the Collective Power of Anti-Capitalist, Anti-Racist Forces**

In September 2022, we attended the Rising Majority (RM) conference in Durham, NC, as part of the New Internationalism Thematic Group, which contributed analysis and direction to the overall 2050 vision of the RM’s members. The Rising Majority seeks to bring together a wide coalition of forces – labor, youth, and feminists; activists working toward abolition, immigrant rights, and economic and environmental justice; and activists working against climate change, war, and imperialism – to amplify collective power and inspire anti-capitalist, intersectional, anti-racist strategies in the fight against neo-fascism. We will also take part in the “mega-convergence” planned for early 2024 to launch this vision and commit to implementation.

### **Fighting for an End to Discriminatory Policing**

Your steadfast investments support our ongoing fight for an end to racially discriminatory and unconstitutional law enforcement practices. Building on our successful and groundbreaking 2008 federal class action lawsuit, *Floyd v. City of New York*, we have made recent progress in ensuring that impacted communities have meaningful input in the court-ordered monitoring of NYPD stop-and-frisk practices and mandated reforms. After we filed a motion in 2021 pushing for the inclusion of community perspectives in the federal monitor’s assessments, a community liaison was hired in December 2022 to gather information from community members and report directly to the monitor. In June 2023, the monitor filed its latest report, an audit of the NYPD’s troubling new Neighborhood Safety Teams, which exposed appalling noncompliance in terms of both police practices and oversight. The Center for Constitutional Rights and co-counsel won a landmark ruling in 2013 that found the stop-and-frisk practices of the NYPD to be racially discriminatory and unconstitutional; the court appointed a monitor to oversee reforms. Since then, we have devoted significant resources to developing and implementing the reforms mandated by the court, as well as to monitoring NYPD compliance with them. The monitor’s reports have consistently shown ongoing constitutional violations: the NYPD is still underreporting stops, and racial disparities remain prevalent. These continued efforts for transparency and accountability are a centerpiece of our racial justice work, as we collaborate with grassroots groups and directly affected communities to end NYPD practices that intentionally discriminate against and cause profound harm to Black and Brown communities across New York. Our voice and historic perspective are indispensable in this fight, and your dedicated support makes it possible.

We won an important victory against abusive law enforcement practices in the ongoing class action lawsuit *Furlow v. Belmar*, which challenges the so-called “Wanted” system used by the St. Louis County Police Department (SLCPD). The SLCPD’s Wanted system targets Black, Latinx, and poor residents by allowing officers to issue statewide electronic notices designating an individual for arrest and imprisonment for up to 24 hours without a warrant or any other judicial review. In November 2022, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a



decision that affirmed in part and reversed in part a lower court decision while suggesting that arrests based on Wanted's are unconstitutional in most cases. We joined the *Furlow* suit as co-counsel with Arch City Defenders of St. Louis in 2016 and argued our appeal of the district court's 2018 denial of class certification and summary judgment before the Eighth Circuit in April 2022. The appeals court's decision identified numerous constitutional concerns with *any* system that permits arrests to take place without judicially affirmed probable cause determinations except in limited, exigent circumstances. The ruling places the entire Wanted's system in legal jeopardy, and we are considering various litigation and advocacy strategies to end the policy once and for all.

Intensive litigation continues in our case *Black Love Resists in the Rust v. City of Buffalo*, which challenges the Buffalo Police Department's (BPD) use of unconstitutional and racially discriminatory vehicle checkpoints and traffic ticketing practices to fill the city's budget coffers. In November 2022, officers' deposition testimony revealed rampant racial abuse and a disturbing lack of racial bias training, supervision, discipline, or accountability in the department. We joined with the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and the Western New York Law Center to file the federal class action lawsuit in June 2018, charging that the BPD deployed its unconstitutional and overly aggressive tactics in primarily Black and Latinx neighborhoods. In April 2020, five Black Buffalo residents whose experiences demonstrate the severe negative impact these checkpoints and ticketing practices have had on their lives joined the case as plaintiffs. Documents and depositions show that numerous complaints were filed by Black community members who say they were wrongfully stopped, ticketed, and arrested; physically abused; dehumanized with racist language; and unconstitutionally targeted by the BPD's now-discontinued "Strike Force" program. As we move toward a potential trial, this case exemplifies how we obtain discovery and evidence to fuel critical narratives about government wrongdoing and racial injustice in law enforcement.

## Advocating for Racial Justice and Human Rights on the International Stage

The Center for Constitutional Rights regularly engages with international human rights bodies to draw attention to the experiences of those most impacted by structures of oppression and to seek accountability for those harms. In August 2022, Executive Director Vince Warren, Senior Staff Attorney Pam Spees and our partners in Louisiana offered testimony before the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) during its latest review of the United States' compliance with the CERD treaty. Our advocacy team also hosted a delegation of community leaders representing our Louisiana partners who addressed the committee about the U.S. government's longstanding failure to protect their historic Black communities from toxic industry, including callous disregard for the burial grounds of their ancestors. This joint advocacy was instrumental in convincing the committee to take the rare positions in its subsequent report of explicitly citing the environmental racism in Louisiana's Cancer Alley as human rights violations and supporting the demand for reparations. The committee's report incorporated several of the Louisiana delegation's proposals, as outlined in the shadow report we'd submitted entitled "The Afterlife of Black Enslavement: Environmental Racism and the Desecration of Black History in Louisiana." The inclusion of the delegation's recommendations provides a powerful example of how local activism can have international ramifications.



*(left to right) CCR Clients Myrtle Felton, Jo Banner, and Tish Taylor*

# PATRIARCHY

# FIGHTING GENDER-BASED OPPRESSION

University of St. Thomas Law Journal Article 5

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Volume 19  
Issue 2 Prisoner Rights and Prison Conditions

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April 2023

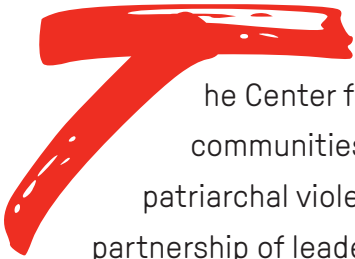
## Dismantling the Discrimination-to-Incarceration Pipeline for Trans People of Color

Chinyere Ezie

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## INTRODUCTION



The Center for Constitutional Rights has long fought for the liberation of communities under perpetual threat of gender-based oppression and patriarchal violence. Thanks to your crucial support and the committed partnership of leaders, movements, and communities dedicated to the dismantling of sexism and patriarchy, we continue to be on the front lines fighting for gender self-determination, equality, and justice. In this struggle we take an intersectional approach by following the leadership of those most impacted and centering those with multiple-marginalized identities to make sure that our efforts highlight and effectively address the systemic harms they endure daily. We join the fight wherever women, girls, and transfeminine, transmasculine, nonbinary, and intersex people (including those who embody multiple identities) suffer persecution, discrimination, violence, and denial of resources, uprooting gender injustice everywhere from employment to health care, homeless shelters, and prisons. This means advocating for those in the sex trades; those incarcerated, surveilled, and policed; those fighting for access to sexual and reproductive freedom and gender-affirming health care; those impacted by environmental inequality, poverty, and organized abandonment by government institutions and services; and those targeted by the discrimination-to-incarceration pipeline. Your devoted support means that we will always fight alongside other bold movements to eradicate gender-based violence and oppression in all its forms. We thank you for your passionate partnership in advancing gender equity and gender justice.



## FEATURED CASE

### Ending Abusive Detention Policies and Gender-Based Oppression

You played a critical role in bringing the case we brought on behalf of our client Ashley Diamond, a Black transgender woman and prisoners' rights advocate who suffered rampant sexual abuse and denial of vital health care while incarcerated, to a successful conclusion. The court had scheduled Ms. Diamond's case against the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) for an expedited jury trial starting January 17, 2023, and we were thrilled that in the meantime she was finally released on parole in August 2022. Prioritizing her recovery from the assaults and neglect she endured, Ms. Diamond ultimately decided on the eve of her trial to forgo a lengthy and adversarial proceeding that would have retraumatized her.




As part of our Southern Justice Rising project, the Center for Constitutional Rights, along with the Southern Poverty Law Center, represented Ms. Diamond in her legal battle *Diamond v. Ward* to challenge the GDC's policies regarding the safety and health care of transgender people who are incarcerated. Ms. Diamond was incarcerated in men's prisons despite her request to be housed in a women's facility, and while in custody she was sexually assaulted repeatedly and denied all but the minimum health care. In the fall of 2021, she submitted new evidence documenting her brutal treatment, and in February 2022 she renewed her federal court request for transfer or other relief in the face of the GDC's failure to protect her or investigate her claims. In March 2022, the court held an emergency status conference, ordering the GDC to adopt new safety measures and scheduling the expedited jury trial.

Ms. Diamond's cruel treatment illustrates the precarity and bias faced by trans people nationwide. This includes navigating the discrimination-to-incarceration pipeline, where trans people face discrimination in education, employment, health care, and housing that limits their options and criminalizes their survival. Ms. Diamond has fought for the rights of imprisoned transgender people for more than a decade, and though she had intended to pursue damages from the GDC during her trial, she looks forward to returning to her leadership role in this vital effort after she has spent time healing. She has expressed deep gratitude to her legal team and for the public support she has received over the years. Your commitment to fighting the injustices of LGBTQIA+ persecution, mass incarceration, and sexual and gender-based violence has had a profound impact on Ms. Diamond's life and continues to make a powerful difference in the lives of so many vulnerable people like her.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Fighting Against LGBTQIA+ Persecution

The Center for Constitutional Rights and our co-counsel secured a big win in Mississippi in April when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit confirmed that the state's "Unnatural Intercourse" law is unconstitutional. The Court also approved the more than \$350,000 in plaintiffs' legal fees awarded by the district court. The ruling officially brings Mississippi into line with the Supreme Court's landmark 2003 ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas* declaring state statutes that criminalize sodomy unconstitutional. We originally brought a class-action suit



(*Doe v. Hood*) challenging the homophobic, anti-sodomy criminal law, which requires those convicted under it to register as sex offenders, in 2016. Two years later, we settled part of our case, successfully removing 30 people from the sex offender registry, but the state appealed payment of the fees. Although Mississippi continues to enforce its “Unnatural Intercourse” law, it will be extraordinarily difficult for prosecutors to require the registration of those convicted, if individual registrants now challenge this in court. As part of our Southern Justice Rising project, the victory sends a message to other states that efforts to harass and discriminate against LGBTQIA+ people will always be met by our fierce resistance.

The Center for Constitutional Rights’ win in *Doe v. Hood* builds on other recent victories to protect LGBTQIA+ people, such as our suit with the Harvard Law School LGBTQ+ Advocacy Clinic in *Lopez v. NYC Department of Homeless Services*, which resulted in a **groundbreaking settlement** under which New York City agreed to a series of reforms to better serve and protect transgender people experiencing homelessness and seeking shelter in the city. Our work now continues through advocacy on behalf of transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) 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.

And, following the Ugandan parliament’s passage in March 2023 of the draconian Anti-Homosexuality Act, the Center for Constitutional Rights, along with our partner organizations, quickly coordinated and hosted a delegation from the nonprofit LGBTQIA+ advocacy organization Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) to come to the United States in April 2023 to meet with decision-makers, media, and civil society partners in an urgent effort to prevent the legislation from being signed by Ugandan President Museveni. Though the measure was in fact signed in May 2023, we continue our work to build collective power against the ongoing efforts of anti-gay extremists to limit the ability of LGBTQIA+ Africans to self-determine and affirm their gender identities and sexual orientations. SMUG was a client in our path-breaking case ***Sexual Minorities Uganda v. Scott Lively***, a federal lawsuit we filed in 2012 against a U.S.-based anti-gay extremist for his role in the persecution of LGBTQIA+ people in Uganda and his active participation in the conspiracy to strip away their fundamental rights. The case achieved a precedential ruling in 2013 that persecution based on sexual orientation and gender identity constitutes a crime against humanity and that the fundamental human rights of LGBTQIA+ people are protected under international law. We could not accomplish this groundbreaking progress in defending and expanding LGBTQIA+ rights without you.

## Fighting for Trans Liberation

We are doing our part to dismantle the discrimination-to-incarceration pipeline by raising awareness about it and pursuing advocacy opportunities that reduce the footprint of the criminal justice system in the lives of transgender people. In April 2023, Center for Constitutional Rights senior staff attorney **Chinyere Ezie** published the in-depth investigation **“Dismantling the Discrimination-to-Incarceration Pipeline for Trans People of Color”** in an issue of the *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* focused on prisoner rights and prisoner conditions. In the piece, Ezie details how discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion relentlessly push trans people of color into poverty and homelessness before funneling them into the system of mass incarceration for “crimes” of survival. This pipeline often has catastrophic consequences. Ezie, who represented Center for Constitutional Rights **client Ashley Diamond**, notes that dismantling this pipeline requires legal advocates to disrupt the criminalization that trans people of color face and remove the barriers to employment, housing, and education that force them into precarious circumstances. Changes such as this could lead to a world where trans people of color are not merely fighting for survival but thriving. These issues sit at the intersection of LGBTQIA+ rights, gender justice, and racial justice, and together we will never stop fighting for the liberation of all those who identify as transgender, two spirit, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and gender fluid.



OPPRESSIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

# COMBATING CORPORATE CAPTURE



*CCR at the UN in Geneva. (left to right) Executive Director Vince Warren, Digital Engagement Manager Lexi Webster, Board Member Justin Hansford, Board Member Gay McDougall, Board Member Rukia Lumumba, Advocacy Director Nadia Ben-Youssef, and Senior Staff Attorney Angelo Guisado*



## INTRODUCTION



Oppressive economic systems continue to exploit and abuse vulnerable populations in the United States and around the world. For decades, the Center for Constitutional Rights has fought to dismantle these harmful structures while supporting movements for economic, environmental, social, and racial justice. We use the legal system to force powerful corporations into alignment with the best interests of the community; fight back against plans for toxic industrial projects that will damage the land, its history, and the health of the people who live there; push to hold U.S. corporations accountable for human rights abuses committed overseas while vigorously defending those who speak out about them; and expose the ways in which lawmakers collude with corporations in secret to bolster white supremacy and exploit the environment, low-income people, and communities of color.

Your generous investment fuels our efforts to expose corporate abuses, restrict corporate influence over government policy and law making, and defend marginalized communities against continuing acts of environmental racism here and abroad. We thank you deeply for supporting this essential mission.

## FEATURED CASE

### Fighting Environmental Racism in the South

Thanks to you, the Center for Constitutional Rights has filed a landmark **lawsuit in federal district court in New Orleans on behalf of our clients Inclusive Louisiana, Mt. Triumph Baptist Church, and RISE St. James against St. James Parish for its decades of environmental racism and discriminatory siting of industrial facilities in predominantly Black communities along Cancer Alley. Filed in March 2023 with co-counsel Tulane University Environmental Law Clinic against the Parish, the Parish Council, and the Parish Planning Commission in the Eastern District of Louisiana, our case, *Inclusive Louisiana, Mount Triumph Baptist Church, RISE St. James v. St. James Parish, et al.*, seeks a moratorium on all new heavy industrial facilities and the expansion of existing facilities in the parish, the protection of unmarked cemeteries of people once enslaved there, and a court-monitored process involving directly affected communities to help assess remediation and guide transformation.**

As part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, this bold litigation epitomizes the Center for Constitutional Rights' long tradition of movement lawyering to combat corporate capture and racial injustice across the South. Our clients and other community members have been advocating vigorously for a moratorium on new and expanded industries since September 2019, only to see additional petrochemical plants get approved and packed within the majority-Black 4th and 5th districts. In our suit, which centers the lives and history of the people living on this land, we argue that the parish council's approvals of these projects are unconstitutional, enforcing a discriminatory, race-based land use system that has profoundly harmed the residents of St. James Parish.

These multigenerational harms include a dramatic increase in the risk of cancer and other illnesses; the desecration and destruction of cemeteries and burial sites of people once enslaved on the plantations in the parish; the inability of the descendants of those enslaved to recover, access, and consecrate these ancestral sites; and the systematic devaluation of property owned by Black residents, churches, and associations in the 4th and 5th Districts. Our complaint also argues that the lethal harm caused by the geographic concentration of these industrial facilities violates the community members' right to bodily safety and integrity.

**Our litigation has been accompanied by a media and advocacy campaign, "Imagine**



*CCR electronically files *Inclusive Louisiana, Mount Triumph Baptist Church, RISE St. James v. St. James Parish et al.* (left to right) Staff Attorney Astha Sharma Pokharel, CCR Clients Gail LeBoeuf and Barbara Washington, Senior Staff Attorney Pam Spees, Legal Director Baher Azmy, CCR Client Myrtle Felton and Bertha Justice Fellow Sadaf Doost*

**St. James Parish,” that situates the environmental racism and white supremacy targeting** these communities as a modern extension of slavery while highlighting the stories and family histories of those impacted. The campaign also rallies residents to demand and build a more inclusive and diversified parish economy that doesn't rely on polluting industry. We also hosted a delegation from our partner and client organizations in Louisiana at the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) hearing in August 2022. In its subsequent report, the Committee, clearly inspired by the testimony of our Louisiana partners, took the unusual step of specifically citing the human rights violations endured by historic Black communities in Cancer Alley and incorporating several of the delegation's proposals.

Your investment in this work is crucial to our ability to advocate for racial and environmental justice in St. James Parish and elsewhere across the South. We will continue to stand with our many partners in Louisiana as they insist that the community's right to breathe clean air, preserve the burial grounds of their ancestors, and retain their properties' value must always supersede a corporation's drive to pollute and profit.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Protecting the Free Speech of Environmental Activists

In September 2022, the Center for Constitutional Rights supported our movement partner Anne White Hat as she testified at a House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hearing about unconstitutional attacks on the free speech of environmental activists. A Sicangu Lakota Water Protector, Ms. White Hat denounced the coordinated assaults by oil and gas companies, lawmakers, and police on the Indigenous-led movement to resist fossil fuel extraction, detailing the widespread collusion of the oil and gas industry with state elected officials in their efforts to violently arrest protesters and pass industry-authored infrastructure laws designed to attack Water Protectors. Our advocacy and legal staff provided Ms. White Hat, lead plaintiff in our case *White Hat v. Landry*, with technical advice, supporting documentation, and research assistance while helping her develop her testimony on the criminalization of activism for environmental justice. As part of our Louisiana Environmental Justice Project, this advocacy effort highlights how we work to increase the access, presence, and negotiating strength of movement leaders.

Your support is invaluable in advancing this cause.

“  
**ALEC AND ITS 'BIG OIL' PARTNERS CAN TRY TO LEVERAGE AMERICA'S PAY-TO-PLAY POLITICS TO SILENCE US – BUT WE WILL FIGHT THIS ON THE FRONT LINES AND IN THE COURTS.**  
”  
Anne White Hat,  
Water Protector from L'eau Est  
La Vie camp / Plaintiff





## Defending Historic Black Communities Against Toxic Industry

We won an important victory in our case *The Descendants Project v. St. John the Baptist Parish*. The court's decision nullified an unlawful industrial zoning ordinance, halting plans for a toxic grain terminal that would threaten the lands, history, and health of a historic Black community in Wallace, Louisiana. As part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, in the fall of 2021 we partnered with our clients, The Descendants Project, who sought to halt approval of Greenfield Louisiana, LLC's mammoth grain terminal complex, which would exacerbate environmental hazards in Cancer Alley and potentially destroy burial sites of people who had been enslaved on the property. Our related advocacy work has included helping to facilitate a Congressional delegation to Wallace and other parts of Cancer Alley that took place on Juneteenth in 2022. In August 2022, CCR helped coordinate the travel of the founders of The Descendants Project to Geneva to participate in the UN's review of the U.S. government's compliance with the Convention on Elimination on All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Our staff worked with the Descendants Project to submit a video-recorded oral intervention in October 2022 in support of the UN's proposed treaty on business and human rights. We also worked with the office of Representative Raul Grijalva (AZ) to write a letter urging the Biden administration to support the positions of U.S. frontline movement organizations from diverse affected communities in treaty negotiations.







## Fighting Against Corporate Capture

In December 2022, the Arizona Supreme Court vacated a Court of Appeals decision that *would have allowed our case Puente, et al. v. Arizona State Legislature to proceed to trial*. Although this ended our lawsuit, the ruling does affirm that the case raises a nonjusticiable political question. In 2019, the Center for Constitutional Rights and co-counsel The People's Law Firm, PLC, sued on behalf of the Arizona Palestine Solidarity Alliance, Mijente Support Committee, Puente, and Black Lives Matter Phoenix Metro to establish that attendance by a majority of members of several Arizona state congressional committees at closed-door meetings of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) violated Arizona's Open Meeting Law. ALEC has notorious influence over hundreds of "model bills" that eventually become state laws, typically at the expense of marginalized communities and the environment. In February 2022, the Arizona Court of Appeals vacated the Superior Court's dismissal of our case, rejecting all the legislature's arguments. The legislature then appealed to the state Supreme Court, which vacated the Appeals Court decision and affirmed the original dismissal. While this is a disappointing outcome, our work to expose the ways in which corporations collude in secret with state lawmakers to influence government decision-making for their own outsized benefit will go on.

## Using FOIA to Challenge Systems of Oppression

In May 2023, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests we filed with co-counsel Latino Justice resulted in the Federal Aviation Administration releasing information regarding the permitting process for Elon Musk's proposed Starship/SuperHeavy Launch Vehicle Program at the Boca Chica Launch Site in Cameron County, Texas. In August 2022, the Center for Constitutional Rights supported local activists in submitting multiple FOIA and Texas records requests for information on possible collusion between government officials and Musk's SpaceX in the tech company's expansion in South Texas as well as in the arrest and harassment of Rebekah Hinojosa, one of many local environmental activists who oppose the launch site for its potential to cause environmental destruction and the displacement of people of color. The FOIA requests are part of community groups' ongoing challenge to the environmental harm and gentrification wrought by the company's expansion in one of the state's poorest counties, which is also 90% Latinx.

Your support for our Open Records Project helps us use FOIA and state open records laws as tools for ensuring that our allies have access to the information they need to fight corporate human rights abuses and expose official misconduct.



ABUSIVE STATE POWER

# CHALLENGING UNJUST GOVERNMENT POLICIES



*Freedom in Belize. (left to right) Katiya Jestin (co-counsel), CCR Client Majid Khan, and CCR Senior Staff Attorney Wells Dixon*

## INTRODUCTION



Since our beginning, the Center for Constitutional Rights has fought to expose and challenge abuses of state power. With our many partners and supporters, we defend against the criminalization of dissent, protecting activists, advocates, and organizers from harm as their calls for justice threaten the status quo. We remain vigilant in combating corporate capture, revealing how corporations collude with lawmakers to hijack government decision-making at the expense of vulnerable communities and the environment. And we seek justice for those who have endured torture, war crimes, and human rights violations here and around the world. In the face of rising authoritarian ideologies, xenophobia, and racism, we work to hold government officials and institutions accountable for their domestic and foreign policy abuses. We have confronted the invasive surveillance and human rights violations perpetrated as part of the so-called “war on terror” while defending the men illegally detained at Guantánamo Bay for more than 20 years.

Your crucial contributions and steadfast partnership are critical to this important work.



## FEATURED CASE

### Securing the Freedom of Those in Illegal Detention

The Center for Constitutional Rights is overjoyed to share the news that, with your help, our longtime Guantánamo client Majid Khan was finally resettled to Belize in February 2023, after nearly 20 years in captivity. He has since been reunited with his wife and the daughter he had never met. The transfer, arranged under a plea and cooperation agreement with U.S. authorities, took place almost one year to the day after Mr. Khan completed his ten-year, military-commission sentence in the prison. He now begins a new life.

A citizen of Pakistan with political asylum status in the United States, Mr. Khan was forcibly disappeared by U.S. officials in March 2003 and tortured at overseas CIA black sites until September 2006, when he was rendered to Guantánamo. The Center for Constitutional Rights, along with Jenner & Block LLP, represented him in four cases over the years and worked tirelessly to uncover details of his brutal torture in CIA custody. Mr. Khan fought his detention in federal court until 2012, when he was charged by a military commission, pled guilty, and agreed to be a cooperating witness for the government. In July 2021, the judge approved a revised agreement providing for Mr. Khan to receive a reduced sentence that made him eligible for release as early as February 2022.

At his sentencing trial in October 2021, Mr. Khan presented historic testimony that marked the first time a CIA torture survivor and Guantánamo detainee had spoken publicly and in such detail about his abuse. Seven of the eight military officers on the jury ultimately urged clemency, describing Mr. Khan's cruel and inhumane treatment as "a stain on the moral fiber of America."

In March 2022, the Convening Authority for Military Commissions approved a final sentence of 10 years for Mr. Khan, applying credit for time served from the date of his guilty plea. As a result, his sentence officially ended on March 1, 2022. When the Biden administration had still not safely resettled Mr. Khan by June 2022, we filed a new habeas case to pressure the government to take more substantial steps towards negotiating a transfer and ensure that Mr. Khan would receive appropriate medical and rehabilitative care as part of his resettlement.

Mr. Khan's transfer to Belize marks the culmination of a 16-year legal and political strategy devised and implemented methodically by the Center for Constitutional Rights and Mr. Khan's legal team. In a statement, he expressed deep gratitude to "all who have fought for justice and accountability at Guantánamo." "Today, I feel like I am reborn," he wrote in a powerful expression of remorse and redemption. "I have been given a second chance in life and I intend to make the most of it ... Thank you for believing in me, and I will not let you down."

At the same time, our representation continued for four other men as part of our Guantánamo Global Justice Initiative. In a once-unimaginable turn, two of these clients have also now been released, while the other two remain eligible for transfer.

With your unwavering support, we continue to fight for their release and immediate resettlement while pushing President Biden to close Guantánamo once and for all. Your resilience and persistence in this two-decade effort have been critical to our ability to hold the government accountable for abuse and torture.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### Freeing Those Still Detained at Guantánamo

We have been litigating and advocating for the Biden administration to transfer two of our remaining clients, Sharqawi Al Hajj and Guled Hassan Duran. Mr. Al Hajj, who has been detained at Guantánamo without charge since 2004, was finally cleared for transfer in June 2021. He is gravely ill and has been severely weakened by hunger strikes, harsh treatment, and multiple suicide attempts. In November 2022, the Center for Constitutional Rights, along with co-counsel, filed a motion in federal court urging the judge to act in Mr. Duran's long-stalled habeas case. Mr. Duran has been detained without charge since 2004 and at Guantánamo since 2006. Despite his clearance for transfer, announced in January 2022, Mr. Duran remains imprisoned while suffering life-threatening medical problems exacerbated by his abuse in a CIA black site. We continue to pressure the Biden Administration to facilitate his resettlement. We will never allow negligent inaction by the Biden – or any other – administration or the courts to leave men languishing at the prison.

### Protecting Immigration Activists and Sanctuary Leaders

In June 2023, we finally obtained relief for four immigrant sanctuary leaders who had been targeted and harassed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and high-level Trump administration officials. Under the settlement, the government has agreed to give our clients Vicky Chávez, María Chavalán Sut, Edith Espinal, and Hilda Ramírez deferred action status, which enables them to live freely in the United States for at least three years while pursuing their immigration cases and seeking additional protection. The women fled persecution in their home countries and sought asylum in the U.S., where they eventually became immigrants' rights activists and leaders of the sanctuary movement. In 2019, ICE issued notices saying it intended to fine each of these women as much as \$500,000. That same year, we partnered with the NYU Law Immigrant Rights Clinic in filing a FOIA request and litigation which revealed records confirming that the fines were part of a multiyear effort by the Trump administration and ICE to punish sanctuary leaders, surveil their houses of worship, and stop them from speaking out. Along with the NYU Law Immigrant Rights Clinic and Just Futures Law, we then filed suit on the women's behalf in January 2021, *Austin Sanctuary Network v. Mayorkas*. In April 2022, we helped our clients file a second amended complaint alleging intentional and reckless infliction of emotional distress.

Your unyielding support guarantees that we can continue to protect activists, immigrants, and asylum seekers from the harassment, cruelty, and abuse of the state.

### Ending the Inhumane Treatment of Incarcerated People

In May 2023, a federal appeals court heard oral arguments on the issue of whether it should maintain jurisdiction over a landmark 2015 class-action settlement that ended prolonged solitary confinement in California prisons. By challenging lower court decisions to extend the settlement's monitoring period, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) hopes to remove oversight over and end accountability for its brutal treatment of those incarcerated. The historic settlement resulted from *Ashker v. Governor of California*, a prisoner-driven case that the Center for Constitutional Rights and co-counsel joined in 2012. In February 2022, a federal judge extended the monitoring agreement for an additional one-year term, citing the CDCR's continued violations of the imprisoned men's due process rights. Then in March 2023, the district court judge in the case released a finding that for more than five years high-level CDCR officials had retaliated against lead plaintiff Todd Ashker by manipulating the housing review process so he remained in a restrictive segregated unit. This case is part of our broader efforts to challenge mass incarceration, discrimination, and abusive prison policies.



## Challenging State Authoritarianism and the Harassment of Asylum Seekers

In a successful intervention against abusive immigration practices and state authoritarianism, we forced the State of Louisiana to withdraw a set of invasive subpoenas seeking confidential and sensitive information about asylum seekers who have been supported by three small Louisiana immigrants' rights organizations. The state's right wing attorney general, Jeff Landry, issued the subpoenas in connection with *Arizona v. Garland*, a legal challenge brought by Louisiana and other states to the Biden administration's new asylum processing rule, which they say results in a flood of asylum seekers who drain state resources. In March 2023, the Center for Constitutional Rights, in partnership with local counsel and former legal



director Bill Quigley and the law firm Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, filed a motion in federal court to quash the subpoenas served to our clients Home is Here NOLA, Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy, and Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants in Detention. We argued that the burdensome subpoenas threatened freedom of association and religious freedom and were ultimately designed to harass the organizations. The State withdrew the subpoenas two months later, in May 2023. As part of our Southern Justice Rising initiative, this victory exemplifies our efforts to push back against the oppressive power of the state to protect the integrity of our partners' human rights missions.

## Pursuing Accountability for Post-9/11 Profiling, Illegal Detention, and Abuse

In a huge win for accountability, in July 2022 the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), in a rare move, finally acknowledged its abuse of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian non-citizens who were rounded up and detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn after 9/11. The BOP also compensated our clients in a settlement after several courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, denied the men judicial standing, bringing their 20-year fight for justice to a resolution. Along with co-counsel, we originally filed a class-action civil rights lawsuit on behalf of the six men in 2002 (*Turkmen v. Ashcroft/Ziglar v. Abbasi*). Based solely on their religion and ethnicity, hundreds of men were swept up under the pretext of immigration violations in connection with the 9/11 investigation, detained and severely abused for months, then cleared of any terrorism connections and deported. As part of the final agreement, the BOP director acknowledged the U.S. Department of Justice's determination that "detainees were held in excessively restrictive and unduly harsh conditions of confinement and a number of individuals were physically and verbally abused." This case exemplifies the complexity of our fight for immigrant rights and government accountability, and against illegal detentions, hysterical terrorism designations, and prisoner abuse.

## Protecting Palestinian Human Rights Advocacy

In a victory for human rights advocacy, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in May 2023 affirmed the dismissal of a lawsuit by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) charging that a U.S. Palestinian rights organization's support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement amounts to "material support" for terrorism. The 2019



suit, *Jewish National Fund v. US Campaign for Palestinian Rights*, sought to silence USCPR’s organizing for justice and criticism of Israel’s unlawful use of force against Palestinians in Gaza. In March 2021, a federal court granted our motion to dismiss the lawsuit, and the JNF appealed; in May 2023, the Federal Court of Appeals in D.C. affirmed the dismissal. The case brought by the JNF is indicative of a broader global effort to repress and silence the political activities of supporters of Palestinian freedom, and we will always rise to the defense of activists, academics, and organizations that are facing legal attacks for their advocacy.

## Defending Support for the Right to Boycott and BDS Campaigns

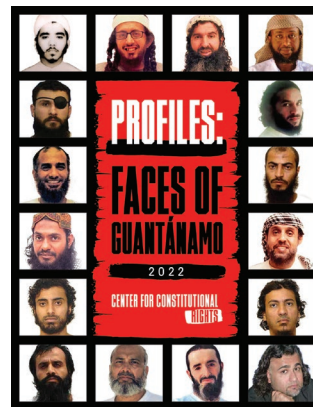
In another win for Palestinian rights advocates, the D.C. Superior Court in March dismissed a lawsuit against the American Studies Association (ASA) and some of its former leaders for a 2013 resolution they passed endorsing the call from Palestinian civil society to boycott Israeli academic institutions. The “academic boycott” is part of the BDS campaign against Israel to pressure it to cease violations of international law and the denial of Palestinian’s human rights. Those targeted by the suit, *Bronner v. Duggan*, included Dr. Steven Salaita, an advocate for Palestine represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights. We won dismissal of all the claims against him under a D.C. law to deter Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) suits, which allows for quick resolution of meritless lawsuits targeting public interest advocacy. That decision is being appealed to the D.C. Court of Appeals.

## Seeking Accountability for War Crimes Against Palestinians


As part of our continuing fight for accountability for international crimes committed in Palestine, in December 2022

## Reckoning With Guantánamo 21 Years Later

In July 2022, we collaborated on the publication of the book *Remaking the Exceptional: Tea, Torture and Reparations*, an exhibition catalog for an exhibit at the DePaul Art Museum that brought together artworks, poetry, testimony by



torture survivors, and scholarship at the intersection of aesthetics and politics. In January 2023, the exhibit, which featured artwork by some of our Guantánamo clients, was named one of the top 50 exhibitions of 2022 by *Hyperallergic*. Also in January, we released an updated “Profiles: Faces of Guantánamo” with moving portraits of the men who remain separated from their families and isolated from the world. The resource shares information about the men, the majority of whom have been cleared for release, as well as the status of their cases. In January 2023, together with our partners Amnesty International, Center for Victims of Torture, and Muslim Counterpublics Lab, we marked 21 years since the opening of the prison with the virtual rally “Building our Power to Close Guantánamo: 21st Anniversary Virtual Rally.” Lu Aya of the Peace Poets emceed the event, which included poetry and art as well as powerful video testimony from our client Sufyan Barhoumi, who was finally released in April 2022. Advocates, organizers, artists, and Guantánamo survivors gathered at the rally to renew our collective commitment to close Guantánamo forever. Also for the 21st anniversary, we helped coordinate outreach for a sign-on letter to President Biden urging him to close the prison and end indefinite detention. The letter was joined by a coalition of 159 organizations from the United States and abroad that focus on international human rights, immigrants’ rights, racial justice, and combatting anti-Muslim discrimination.



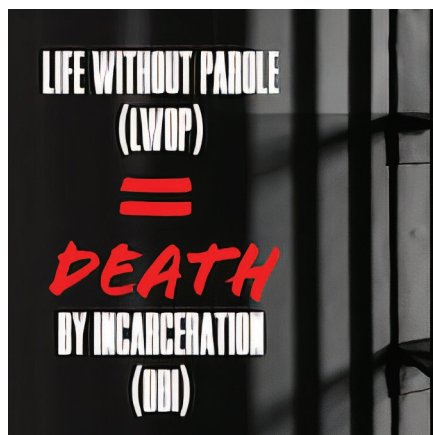
we made an urgent request to the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Karim Khan on behalf of imprisoned Palestinian human rights attorney Salah Hammouri. In our letter, we urged the ICC to take any measures to prevent the imminent unlawful deportation of Mr. Hammouri from the occupied Palestinian territory by Israeli authorities, as these actions represent “a dangerous escalation in the ongoing war crime of forcible transfer of Palestinians from occupied East Jerusalem, and constitute underlying acts in the campaign of persecution, a crime against humanity, against Palestinians.” Mr. Hammouri has suffered years of harassment by the Israeli government, including forced separation from his wife and children and arbitrary detention without charge. In May 2022, along with the International Federation for Human Rights, we filed a submission to the ICC on his behalf asking the court to accelerate its investigation of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by Israeli officials. Since 2020, we have represented other Palestinian victims before the ICC, and we will never cease advocating for the rights of Mr. Hammouri and those like him.

## Working to End Death by Incarceration

In April 2023, the U.N. Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement (EMLER) made a historic visit to examine the U.S. criminal legal system. The Center for Constitutional Rights and a coalition of civil and prisoners’ rights groups shared a submission encouraging EMLER to call for the abolition of Death by Incarceration (DBI), more commonly known as life without parole (LWOP), life with parole (LWP), and “virtual life” sentences (sentences that exceed life expectancy).

“Death by incarceration is the devastating consequence of a cruel and racially discriminatory criminal legal system that begins with violent policing and ends with the permanent abandonment of people in prisons, where lives – particularly Black lives – are cut short by the social, medical and psychological consequences of incarceration,” the submission said. “The United States’ policy and practice of DBI must be abolished, including because it amounts to torture and is racially discriminatory, an arbitrary deprivation of life, and an arbitrary deprivation of liberty, all in violation of international human rights law.”

With your help, we will keep fighting until we banish this form of torture for good.



## Supporting the People of Afghanistan

In February 2023, a federal district judge decided in favor of four Afghan civil society organizations that we supported with an amicus brief, ruling that 9/11 families and other U.S. victims cannot claim \$3.5 billion in Afghan Central Bank assets held in the United States to satisfy judgments against the Taliban in *Havlish v. Taliban*. The Afghan groups argued that these sovereign funds, which the Biden administration froze after the Taliban’s takeover in August 2021, ultimately belong to the Afghan people and should be used to alleviate the country’s humanitarian crisis rather than to pay for the Taliban’s liability in the 9/11 attacks. The various U.S. victims’ groups filed motions for reconsideration and stays of the decision, but the judge denied them while largely adopting the arguments that the Afghan organizations made in our amicus brief in April 2022.

# IN THE MEDIA

Your continued support enables the Center for Constitutional Rights to keep amplifying our clients' voices and our radical perspective through diverse media channels, shift public opinion on our critical issues, and expand our audiences. We have had an impressive year in communications, sharing our radical perspective with readers, listeners, and viewers in every kind of media. We've helped our clients be featured in stories around the world with the goal of shifting the narrative around our issues and bringing awareness to our clients and work.

- Press releases and statements on breaking news that get to reporters' inboxes first.
- Streaming press conferences that allow journalists to join in from anywhere in the world.
- Our podcast, "The Activist Files," which features the stories of people on the front lines fighting for justice, including activists, lawyers, and artists, has been downloaded approximately 42,000 times – with listeners tuning in from more than 40 countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Brazil, Egypt, and Fiji.
- Staying connected with reporters, producers, and booking agents to keep them informed on our range of issues through relationship building and media briefings.
- Op-eds from our staff offering radical thought leadership in local and national publications.
- Coverage of our clients, cases, staff, and issues in national outlets like The New York Times, The Washington Post, Associated Press, NPR, Reuters, The Guardian, The Intercept, and The Root; local outlets like AM New York and City Limits, The Louisiana Record, Mississippi Free Press, the Clarion-Ledger; progressive press like Democracy Now!, The Nation, Jacobin, The Progressive, Middle East Eye, Truthout, Mondoweiss, and Common Dreams; and legal press like Law360, Courthouse News, and Bloomberg Law.
- As our work has expanded in the South, we have received increased coverage there, including in outlets like The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Mississippi Today, Louisiana Record, and Arkansas Advocate.
- Bringing our distinctive analysis to network, cable, and radio audiences.
- Growing engagement on X (Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, and our Instagram accounts.
- Facebook Live streams to bring our supporters and allies into the conversation during and after hearings, press conferences, and advocacy actions.
- Frontlines of Justice, our weekly email newsletter that brings the Center for Constitutional Rights' latest news every Monday to over 28,000 people.
- The Center for Constitutional Rights' blog.
- Emails on breaking news, upcoming events, and more.



# IN THE NEWS

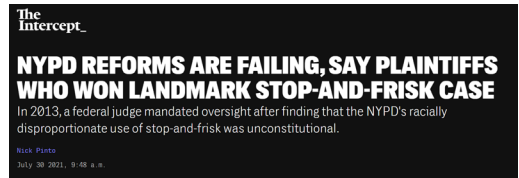


The New York Times

## Foreman Says Military Jury Was Disgusted by C.I.A. Torture

A Navy captain whose letter recommended clemency for a Qaeda terrorist drafted the damning two-page document in 20 minutes.

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## Biden administration sued over asylum appointment app that 'does not work'

CBP One requirement creates unlawful hurdle for migrants on app riddled with glitches and indecipherable error messages, suit says



A local police officer explains to a Mexican asylum seeker how to apply for asylum via the CBP One app, on the Mexican side of the San Ysidro port of entry at the US-Mexico border, on 11 May. Photograph: Guillermo Arias/AFP/Getty Images

Immigrant rights advocates and asylum seekers filed a lawsuit against

Al Jazeera: [Timeline: 20 Years of Guantánamo Bay Prison](#)

Amsterdam News: [Stop And Frisk 10 Years Later: How Many More Stops?](#)

Associated Press: [Judge Rejects Military Contractor's Effort To Toss Out Abu Ghraib Torture Lawsuit](#)

Associated Press: [Feds Settle Suit Alleging Abuse By Men Detained After 9/11](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: [Civil Rights Organizations Question 'Domestic Violent Extremism' Label](#)

Courthouse News: [Grain Elevator Operator Must Face Suit From Residents In Louisiana's Cancer Alley](#)

The Guardian: [Biden Administration Sued Over Asylum Appointment App That 'Does Not Work'](#)

The Guardian: [New York Law Aims To Stop Funding Of Illegal Israeli Settlements In West Bank](#)

The Intercept: [NYPD Reforms Are Failing, Say Plaintiffs Who Won Landmark Stop-And-Frisk Case](#)

NBC News: [Bill To Ban Solitary Confinement In Federal Prisons Introduced By House Lawmakers](#)

NBC News: [U.N. Report Finds Guantánamo Bay Conditions 'Cruel' And 'Inhuman'](#)

New York Magazine: [Reparations For Iraq](#)

The New York Times: [Freed Former C.I.A. Prisoner Has Big Dreams For A New Life In Belize](#)

The New York Times: [Foreman Says Military Jury Was Disgusted By C.I.A. Torture](#)

NPR: [A Prisoner Is Still In GITMO After He Served His Time. Now, He's Suing for Release](#)

Xtra Magazine: [This Black Trans Woman Has Been Incarcerated In A Men's Prison for Nearly a Decade. She's Finally Free](#)





# 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.



**Remy Burton** has worked on issues relating to education equity, the use of excessive force by the police, and housing equity. During his fellowship, he has focused on cases involving racial injustice, discriminatory policing (*Floyd, et al. v. City of New York, et al.*), and mass incarceration (*Ashker v. Governor of California* and *Scott v. Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole*).



**Sadaf M. Doost** specializes in Afghan and Palestinian solidarity and challenging corporate human rights abuses, government surveillance and militarism, environmental racism, and discrimination against Muslims. During her fellowship, she has worked on accountability for Israel's war crimes, challenged unlawful detentions at Guantánamo Bay (*Duran v. Trump*), discriminatory siting of industry in Black communities (*Inclusive Louisiana et. al. v. St. James Parish et. al.*), and worked on FOIA litigation focusing on Cameroonian deportations and the arbitrary detention of thousands of Afghan refugees, and further supported the Afghan people in the wake of the Taliban takeover via *Havlish v. Taliban* and seeking accountability for international crimes in Afghanistan. Sadaf was previously an Ella Baker Intern at the Center for Constitutional Rights.



**Mikaila Hernández** is working to support racial and gender justice issues; challenge discriminatory and unconstitutional policing practices (*Black Love Resists in the Rust v. City of Buffalo*); protect LGBTQ+ rights (*Lopez v. NYC Department of Homeless Services*); and defend asylum seekers from abusive immigration practices in cases including *Al Otro Lado v. Mayorkas*, and our FOIA litigation on behalf of the sanctuary movement.



**Zee Scout** focuses on corporate human rights abuses, abusive immigration practices, LGBTQ+ persecution, and mass incarceration. During the fellowship, she has worked on our efforts to expose and prevent corporate capture via *Puente, et al. v. Arizona State Legislature*, defend the sanctuary movement by making FOIA requests relating to Operation Palladium; and end LGBTQ+ persecution and sexual and gender-based violence in the criminal legal system via *Diamond v. Ward, et al.*



# THE ELLA BAKER INTERNSHIP

The Center for Constitutional Rights created the Ella Baker Summer Internship Program in 1987 to honor the legacy of Ella Baker, a hero of the civil rights movement, and to train the next generation of movement lawyers. The “Ellas” must 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 solitary confinement, discriminatory policing practices, social and economic oppression, criminalization of dissent, oppression of immigrants, U.S. detention and targeted killing practices, environmental injustice, international human rights abuses, gender and LGBTQI+ injustice domestically and internationally, and anti-Black racism. Their responsibilities include: legal research & writing for domestic and international litigation, factual investigation, client & witness interviews, policy/legislative research, and participation in client and community meetings. Ella Baker Interns also attend court proceedings and CCR’s organizational events.

## **Annie Lo**

New York University School of Law

## **Ayla Kadah**

University of Washington School of Law

## **Derrick Neves**

Rutgers Law School

## **Ezra Ritchin**

Yale Law School

## **Hilda G. Bonilla**

American University Washington  
College of Law

## **Hoda Katebi**

University of California, Berkeley,  
School of Law

## **Jacob Metz-Lerman**

New York University School of Law

## **Justin D. McCarroll**

New York University School of Law

## **Lachlan Athanasiou**

University of Pennsylvania Carey Law  
School

## **Layla June West**

University of Pennsylvania Carey Law  
School

## **Rifqa Falaneh**

University of Illinois College of Law

## **Talia Kamran**

UCLA School of Law

# EVENTS + CONVENINGS

## Guantánamo

### Remaking the Exceptional Publication Release: Poetry Reading and Stories of Resistance

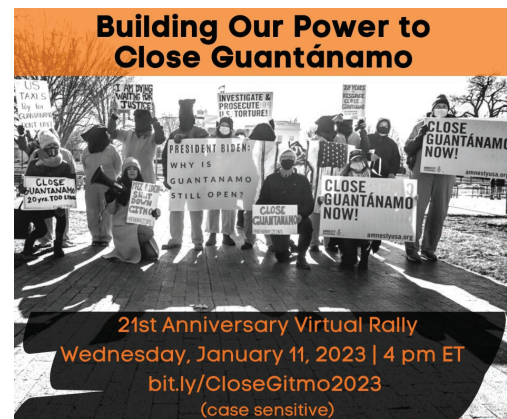
Center for Constitutional Rights Legal Director Baher Azmy joined a community celebration in Chicago to mark the publication of *Remaking the Exceptional: Tea, Torture, and Reparations*. This launch, like the book, wove together artwork, poetry, legal testimony, research, and experiences of creative resistance against systems of oppression, all the while celebrating the struggle for survival, justice, and reparations by imprisoned people, activists, and artists.

### Building our Power to Close Guantánamo: 21st Anniversary Virtual Rally

With longtime partners Amnesty International USA, Center for Victims of Torture, and Muslim Counterpublics Lab, CCR organized a virtual rally to mark 21 years since the Guantánamo Bay prison was opened as part of the so-called global “War on Terror.” CCR Advocacy Program Manager Aliya Hussain offered reflections for the rally and anniversary calling on the audience to mobilize and build our power to collectively close and abolish Guantánamo.

### “It follows you every place you go”: The Aftermath of Guantánamo

In recognition of U.N. International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, CCR, Muslim Counterpublics Lab, No More Guantánamos, and Witness Against Torture held a virtual conversation with Guantánamo survivors who shared their stories of life after detention, survival, and their quests for justice. CCR Advocacy Program Manager Aliya Hussain co-moderated the event with longtime partner Dr. Maha Hilal, and CCR client and Guantánamo survivor Sufiyian Barhoumi was one of the featured speakers.



## Racial and Environmental Justice

### **Lawyering for Liberation: Defending Black Lives, Building Black Power**

CCR, along with Law For Black Lives, convened hundreds of movement lawyers, law students and activists for the second Law for Black Lives Conference in St. Louis. CCR Executive Director Vince Warren was a member of the steering committee of the conference and CCR Advocacy Director Nadia Ben-Youssef served on the content subcommittee. CCR staff and board participated in numerous panel and workshop discussions including, Internationalism, Movement Lawyering trainings, and “How Should Movements Respond to White Supremacist Violence While Challenging the Oppressive Counter Terrorism Framework?”

### **Congressional Delegation and Public Input Forum**

Building on the June 2022 Congressional Delegation to Louisiana, CCR, Louisiana Bucket Brigade and the Descendants Project held a public input forum with community leaders and Congressional staff to discuss the fight for environmental justice in Cancer Alley and to advance The Environmental Justice for All Act.

### **Townhall with UN Expert Mechanism on Racism in Law Enforcement (UN EMLER)**

As a member of the U.N. Anti-Racism Coalition, CCR supported a community townhall with U.N. experts. UN EMLER, also known as the George Floyd Mechanism, undertook a historic visit to the United States meeting with grassroots organizations, impacted people, and organizers across the country including Atlanta, Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, and New York City. In each city, Black organizers brought together impacted people to address the U.N. experts directly as a contribution to the report they will deliver to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

## Movement Lawyering

### **The Revolution Will Not be Litigated: Book Launch and Discussion**

To celebrate the launch of “The Revolution Will Not Be Litigated,” CCR Legal Director Baher Azmy joined CCR board member Alejandra Ancheita and other authors in the collection for a public event and discussion about insightful movement lawyering stories. The book features chapters by Baher and Alejandra as well as board member Justin Hansford.

### **Deep Dive on the Right to Resist**

The Global Network of Movement Lawyers at Movement Law Lab brought together longtime partners CCR, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, Center for Legal and Social Services, and SERI to develop a series of global discussions on the right to resist. Senior Staff Attorney Diala Shamas, Deputy Legal Director Maria LaHood, and Advocacy Director Nadia Ben-Youssef represented CCR and prepared several presentations on key tactics that the state and non-state actors are using in the U.S. to silence dissent, undermine the right to resist, and shrink civic space. The partnership culminated in the submission to the Human Rights Committee, referenced above, and has created a powerful connection with movement partners from around the world.



## Global Human Rights

### **The Global Fight for Queer Liberation: Resisting Persecution & Criminalization of Homosexuality in Uganda**

As the Ugandan Parliament was considering its sweeping Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Spring 2023, and amidst escalating attacks on the LGBTQIA+ community worldwide, CCR and CUNY School of Law organized a public conversation with the Executive Director of Sexual Minorities Uganda, Frank Mugisha. The panel discussion also featured CCR Executive Director & W. Haywood Burns Chair for Human and Civil Rights, Vince Warren, CCR Senior Staff Attorney Pamela Spees, and Professor Jeena Shah.

### **Beyond Acknowledgment & Reform: The UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent as a Site of Emancipatory Struggle and Social Transformation**

On the occasion of the first U.N. Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, CCR organized a roundtable in Geneva with advocates, activists and movement lawyers for a discussion on the strategies necessary for the Permanent Forum to meaningfully contribute to a global vision of Black liberation.

### **Reparations: A Global Dialogue on Lessons-Learned**

Together with the Movement for Black Lives and The Collaborative, CCR organized a closed dinner conversation to coincide with the second session of the U.N. Permanent Forum on People of African Descent in NYC. The event attended to a request of prominent Black leaders in different contexts to further understand the framework of reparatory justice, and learn from efforts and experiences from around the globe.

### **A Special Presentation Followed by a Panel Discussion: UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese**

CCR, together with the Columbia University Center for Palestine Studies and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, hosted an in-person presentation at Columbia Law School by Francesca Albanese, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. The panel featured CCR Deputy Legal Director Maria LaHood.

### **Growing Solidarity and Commitment: What's Next for the Palestine Movement?**

CCR worked together with Rawa Creative Palestinian Communities Fund, Adalah Justice Project, and Baladna Association for Arab Youth on a community discussion and panel to address questions such as: What is next for our collective organizing? How can we deepen the relationships we have built, learn from each other, grow our circles, and strengthen our common political visions? How can we claim power on a global scale? And how will we resource our next steps? The panel featured CCR Executive Director Vince Warren and was moderated by CCR Advocacy Director Nadia Ben-Youssef.

### **How the U.S. Is Planning to Build its Embassy on Stolen Palestinian Land in Jerusalem**

Together with Adalah—The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, the Institute for Middle East Understanding, and the Institute for Palestine Studies, CCR hosted a panel discussion on the U.S. State Department's plan to build their embassy on stolen Palestinian land in Jerusalem. The plan — a violation of international law — entails the embassy's construction on private Palestinian property that has been illegally

# EVENTS

confiscated by Israel, the owners of which include numerous U.S. citizens. Panelists, including CCR Senior Staff Attorney Diala Shamas, outlined the plan, its illegality, and what we can do to stop the U.S. government from moving forward with the plan.

## Meeting on Climate Justice and Corporate Accountability

CCR joined with the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights and Proyecto de derechos Económicos Sociales y Culturales (ProDESC) to organize a convening in Mexico City around the multiple global crises that are impacting human rights. The gathering built on a 2021 workshop, “Human Rights in Times of Crisis,” held in Berlin, that brought together progressive organizations and specialists to reflect on challenges that human rights systems are facing, both regionally and around the world. This follow-up event in Mexico City sought to move the discussions held in Berlin toward concrete actions by deepening diagnoses, rethinking existing strategies, and weaving networks of analysis and action that considered convergent political positions around proposed actions. Key areas of discussion included assessing the performance of public institutions that should monitor and guarantee human rights, and the unequal impacts of climate change on historically marginalized groups. The convening provided a productive and all-too-rare opportunity to combine theory and framing with practical movement and legal strategies.

## FREEDOM FLICKS

### *The Interview*

For the closing event of our Freedom Flicks Film Series “By Design,” CCR worked with Release Aging People in Prison on an evening reception and screening of *The Interview* – a film that tells the stories of those battling the New York parole commission. The screening was followed by a discussion with the film’s protagonists, as well as community activists and organizers. The event then opened up into a community discussion inviting the audience to join the growing movement to end the harms of the criminal legal system and to imagine a future of justice and healing.

### *Jim Crow Convictions*

CCR and The Promise of Justice Initiative hosted a community screening and talkback of Al-Jazeera Fault Lines *Jim Crow Convictions*. The documentary investigates the legacies of Jim Crow legislation and follows Brandon Jackson as he fights for his freedom. We were thrilled that Mr. Jackson, who was freed from prison in February 2022 after 25 years, was present for the event. CCR Senior Staff Attorney Angelo Guisado and CCR’s Associate Director of the Southern Regional Office Emily Early participated in the panel, which was moderated by CCR Advocacy Director Nadia Ben-Youssef.

in-person event



**October 6, 2022 | 6–9 p.m.**  
Promise of Justice Initiative  
1024 Elysian Fields Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70116

## JIM CROW CONVICTIONS: FILM SCREENING & COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Join us in New Orleans on Thursday, October 6, 2022 from 6-9 p.m., for a catered reception, community film screening talk-back discussion of *Jim Crow Convictions*, a documentary film by Al-Jazeera Fault Lines that investigates the racist legacies of Jim Crow juries and follows Brandon Jackson as he fights for his freedom.

 **PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE**  
PROMISE OF JUSTICE  
MOVEMENT

RSVP: [bit.ly/jim-crow-convictions](https://bit.ly/jim-crow-convictions)

 **THE PROMISE OF JUSTICE**  
INITIATIVE

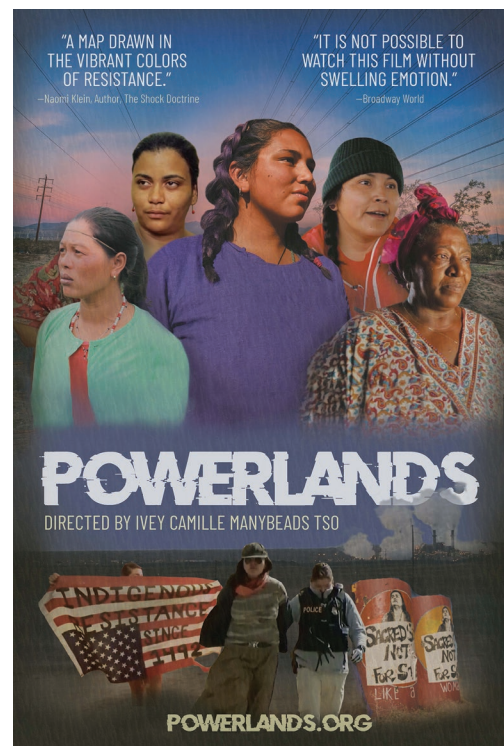
# EVENTS

## ***Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power***

CCR supported the NYC screening of ***Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power*** which tells the story of the local movement and young Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizers who fought not just for voting rights, but for Black Power in Lowndes County, Alabama. The post-screening talkback featured CCR Associate Executive Director Donita Judge.

## ***Powerlands***

The People's Forum and CCR organized a screening of the documentary ***Powerlands***, followed by a conversation with the film's director, Ivey-Camille Manybeads Tso, and Center for Constitutional Rights Advocacy Director Nadia Ben-Youssef, about Indigenous resistance to environmental extraction by chemical companies. Palestinian-American poet Suheir Hammad opened the evening. In ***Powerlands***, Ivey-Camille Manybeads Tso, a young Navajo filmmaker, follows the global trail of extractive industries that have exploited the land where she was born.

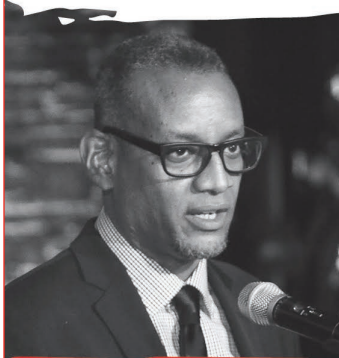
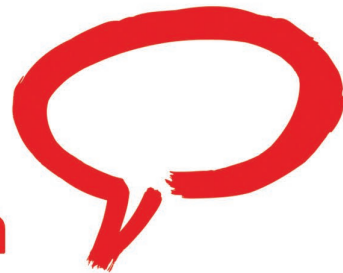


# EVENTS

## A CONVERSATION WITH VINCE WARREN

In the spring 2023, donors from around the country and abroad were invited to join Vince Warren in a Zoom conversation with our wonderful clients and co-founders of The Descendants Project, Jo and Joy Banner. Senior Staff Attorney Pam Spees also joined in a discussion about CCR's fight against environmental racism and the Banners' crucial advocacy on behalf of their family, as well as the Black, Indigenous, and poor communities who have endured decades of devastating damage to their health in this area now known as "Cancer Alley."

## A CONVERSATION WITH Vince Warren



**Vince Warren**  
*Executive Director*



**Joy & Jo Banner**  
*Co-Founders  
The Descendants Project*



**Pam Spees**  
*Senior Staff Attorney*



## INSIDERS

Our Insider dinners are small gatherings – in-person or via Zoom – of CCR donors, program staff, and board members. The April Insider via Zoom focused on “Women in Law,” during which guests reflected on how women’s experiences in social justice and movement lawyering have been marked by gender. The June Insider – “Building the Next Generation” – was in person and introduced a few of our young staff members. It was truly inspiring to be in a room filled with activists and individuals from different generations, but still all on the frontlines of justice.

### CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS



**Leila Hessini**  
CCR Board, Co-Chair;  
Global Fund for Women



**Emily Early**  
Associate Director of the  
Southern Regional Office



**Samah Sisay**  
Staff Attorney



**Astha Sharma  
Pokharel**  
Staff Attorney

### INSIDER SERIES

"WOMEN IN LAW"

**TUESDAY, APRIL 4**

6:30 PM, ET (3:30 PM, PT)



**Vince Warren**  
Executive Director

### CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS



**Mikaila Hernandez**  
Bertha Justice Fellow



**Sadé Evans**  
Legal Worker



**Samah Sisay**  
Staff Attorney



**Zee Scout**  
Bertha Justice Fellow

### INSIDER DINNER

"BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MOVEMENT  
LAWYERS, ACTIVISTS & STORYTELLERS "

**TUESDAY, JUNE 6**

6:00 PM



**Vince Warren**  
Executive Director

# EVENTS

## A SPLENDID BODY OF TIGERISH PEOPLE

In October 2022, 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 clients Jo and Dr. Joy Banner, co-founders of The Descendants Project. Marbre Stahly-Butts, former Executive Director of Law for Black Lives, received the Lawyer Award. Jeffery Robinson – writer, producer, and narrator of the award-winning documentary “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America” and Founder/CEO of the Who We Are Project – received our Storyteller Award. We also honored our incredible client Ashley Diamond with a special Justice Takes a Fight Award. It was great to gather and celebrate together and everyone left recharged and inspired!



CCR Associate Executive Director Donita Judge and Ann Marie Scalia



CCR Tigerish Activist Awardees Jo and Dr. Joy Banner, CCR Tigerish Lawyer Awardee Marbre Stahly-Butts, CCR Tigerish Storyteller Awardee Jeffery Robinson, and CCR Executive Director Vince Warren



Cooperating Attorney Beth Stevens, Sandra Coliver, and CCR Ally Almudena Bernabeu



CCR Senior Staff Attorneys Diala Shamas and Pam Spees



CCR Staff Attorney Samah Sisay, former CCR Bertha Justice Fellow Elsa Mota Uter, and guest



CCR Tigerish Storyteller Awardee Jeffery Robinson with film makers (and daughters of CCR Founder William Kunstler) Emily and Sarah Kunstler



CCR Deputy Legal Director Maria LaHood and former Board Member Peter Weiss





# EVENTS



Former CCR Board Chair Katherine Franke and CCR Executive Director Vince Warren



CCR Board Member Rosemary Corbett and CCR Ally Jamil Dakwar



CCR Finance Director Jeffrey Weinrich and CCR Capital Campaign Associate Fernando Garcia



CCR Deputy Legal Director Maria LaHood and CCR Board Member Meena Jagannath



Amy Gottlieb, CCR Executive Director Vince Warren, Oda Friedheim, and Jean Callahan

CCR Development Director Theda Jackson-Mau and Nancy Viola



CCR Tigerish Lawyer Awardee Marbre Stahly-Butts and CCR Tigerish Storyteller Awardee Jeffery Robinson

THANK YOU

# IN MEMORIAM

## ALEX J. ROSENBERG

The Center for Constitutional Rights family mourns the loss of Alex Rosenberg, though his fierce political activism will resonate in our work for decades to come.

Born in Brooklyn, Alex was introduced to art and activism early by his radical Socialist mother. After his school years, he served as a pilot during World War II and then entered the art world as a dealer and appraiser. Over a long and successful career, Alex published prints by Salvador Dali, Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, and Henry Moore, among many others. He founded the Salvador Dali Research Center and served on the International Board of Governors of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

Equally important to Alex was civic participation. During the Civil Rights Movement, he joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and supported an underfunded Black Freedom School in the South. He was a delegate to the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where he was interrogated by the police when he came to the defense of Eugene McCarthy supporters they were trying to eject.

Alex instigated a successful lawsuit against the U.S. government to permit the unrestricted importation of Cuban artwork; Cuba later awarded him its Order of Culture.

Alex was steadfast in his support of the Center for Constitutional Rights for more than two decades, serving as a board member and as vice president, while nurturing a 20-year friendship with Executive Director Vince Warren. We will still be thriving 50 years from now because of the passion, ferocity, and love that Alex brought to our organization. We are forever grateful.



## JOHN CREW

The Center for Constitutional Rights suffered a great loss when John Crew passed away. He was a lifelong warrior for criminal justice reform and police accountability, and a generous supporter of our work.

Born in Los Angeles, John graduated from Northwestern University and attended law school at UC Hastings before interning for the ACLU of Northern California, where he later spent many years as director of its Police Practices Project. During his four decades as a relentless advocate for police reform and oversight in San Francisco and beyond, he was responsible for many changes to police practices.

John helped pass a San Francisco Police Department policy restricting investigative detentions. He was instrumental in reshaping the SFPD's use-of-force policy and curbing police surveillance of protected First Amendment activities such as protesting. He helped pressure the SFPD to withdraw from an agreement with the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force. Even after retirement, he consistently offered constructive criticisms, consulted for advocate groups and continued to be a local activist.

John was known for his unwavering ethics, persistence, kindness, and deep knowledge of local political history. He was a mentor for the next generation of criminal justice reformers, and in 2001 the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement bestowed him with its first-ever award in police oversight. In 2017, John received the Promoting Justice award from the Council on American- Islamic Relations.

We are so grateful for all John did to push for progress and change. His dedication to higher ideals will always inspire us as we carry on the fight.





# THANK YOU

## KATHERINE MOORE

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Katherine Moore. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the Center for Constitutional Rights for more than 20 years along with her late husband, David E. Moore.

Born in New York City, Katherine graduated from the Brearley School and Manhattanville College with degrees in studio art and art history. After living abroad, she and David settled in Rye, New York, and pursued painting, sculpting, and print making, eventually cofounding the Rye Arts Center. Katherine went on to work as project director for several exhibitions at the Katonah Museum of Art, ultimately serving as president of the museum's board.

Her commitment to the arts was matched by her passion for social, racial, and economic justice. Warm and compassionate, Katherine made time and financial investments in several worthy institutions. She worked for nonprofit boards, including the Pulitzer Center, where she supported their work to champion journalism, storytelling and in-depth investigation to inspire diverse audiences to change the world.

Katherine's legacy of support for the Center for Constitutional Rights unquestionably made our organization better. We are in her debt as we continue our critical work for equality and justice.



## LOWELL E. SACHNOFF

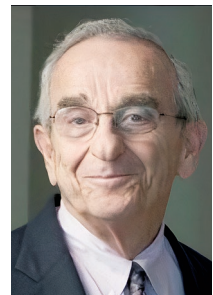
We mourn the loss of Lowell Sachnoff. He was a lifelong warrior for civil rights and a dedicated supporter of the Center for Constitutional Rights for many years.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Lowell served as a naval officer during the Korean War before cofounding the firm Sachnoff & Weaver. He said he always felt he had an obligation to use the law to make society more just and equitable.

Lowell worked to end the policy that allowed Chicago police to routinely strip search women, helped win a nationwide injunction against forcible blockades of women's health clinics, and protected the civil rights of patients confined in state mental hospitals. As co-counsel to the Center for Constitutional Rights, he represented detainees in Guantánamo Bay prison.

Lowell actively supported the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, and the Chicago Foundation for Women, and he served on the boards of the National Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. He helped found the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to protect the city's poor, disenfranchised, and vulnerable, and later served as chairman of the board. The organization ultimately honored him with its Edwin A. Rothschild Award for Lifetime Achievement in Civil Rights.

Known for his strong leadership, sharp intellect, impeccable judgment, and good humor, Lowell was a mentor to a host of young lawyers. His passion for creating a better, safer world never faltered, and his inspiring legacy lives on in all our work.



# THANK YOU

## CAROL SMITH

While we mourn the loss of Carol Smith, we are grateful for the shining example she set as an advocate for social and racial justice.

As a counselor for students in SEEK programs at Baruch College and the City College of New York, Carol worked hard to make college opportunities real for underprivileged students. While on the CCNY faculty, she curated a traveling exhibit, "Protest and Repression: The Struggle for Free Speech at CCNY, 1931-42," focused on the teachers' and students' suppression and firing for their political beliefs and affiliations. Carol researched and documented resistance to the Rapp-Coudert investigation at CCNY in 1940-41 that culminated in the dismissal of 50 faculty and staff.



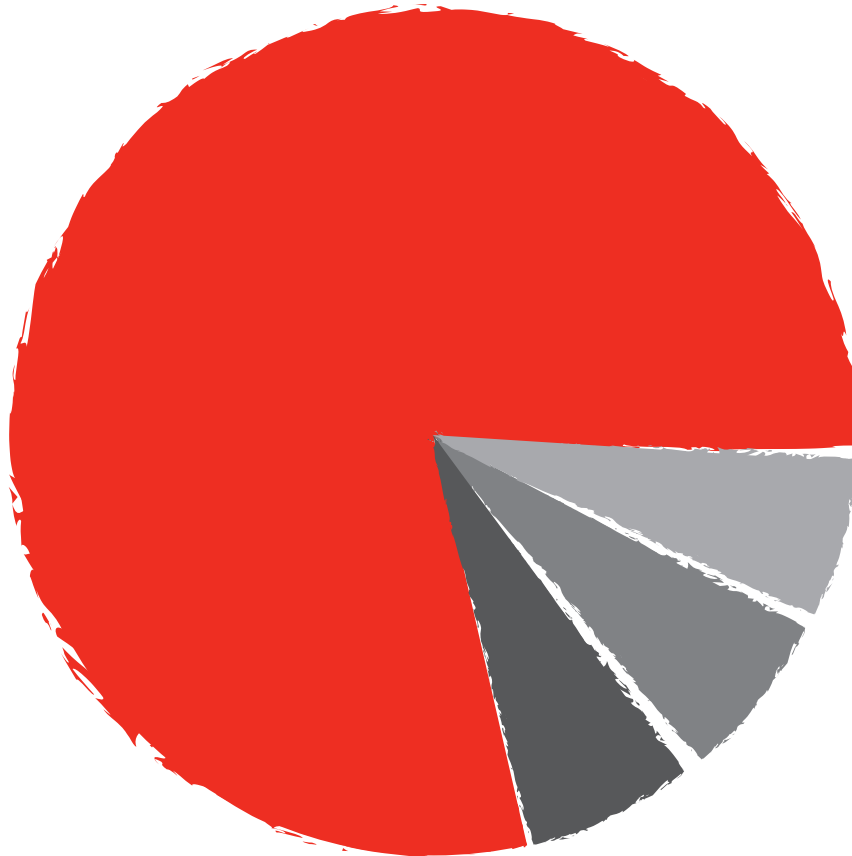
In her activism, Carol fought for school policies that kept college accessible and affordable for underprivileged students, joined students of color in their fight for equitable treatment within the university system, and protested South African apartheid and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. She played a key role in organizing many antiwar, anti-imperialist teach-ins and lectures on campus that were widely attended.

She traveled widely in Latin America and supported the struggles of the indigenous Mapuche people of Chile and Argentina. She was living in Chile when the US-backed coup against the Popular Unity government erupted, and she never forgot the horror of that event. At home she relentlessly fought for justice and equality for all. After retirement, she became a member of both the International Committee of the Professional Staff Congress and the Jewish Voice for Peace.





Carol supported the Center for Constitutional Rights for more than 20 years and made a generous bequest to the organization. Her vision of a just future for the oppressed people of the world lives on in our commitment to justice and dignity for everyone.



# FINANCIAL REPORT





## REVENUE

GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS: . . . . .	\$8,492,901	
ATTORNEY FEES: . . . . .	\$481,169	
INVESTMENT INCOME: . . . . .	\$400,000	
OTHER INCOME: . . . . .	\$500,000	
<b>TOTAL: . . . . .</b>	<b>\$9,874,071</b>	

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



## EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES: . . . . .	\$8,561,825	
SUPPORTING SERVICES: . . . . .	\$2,436,677	
<b>TOTAL: . . . . .</b>	<b>\$10,998,502</b>	

(PRE-AUDIT)



# BOARD

Katherine Acey

Amna Akbar

Laila Al-Arian

Amanda Alexander

Lumumba Bandele

Colette Pichon Battle

Linda Burnham

Rosemary Corbett, Secretary

Lisa Crooms-Robinson, *Co-Chair*

Marjorie Fine

Catherine Flowers

Justin Hansford

Leila Hessini, *Co-Chair*

Meena Jagannath

Sylvester Johnson, *Treasurer*

Rukia Lumumba

Gay McDougall

Jumana Musa

Priscilla Ocen

Vincent Southerland

Makani Themba

# STAFF

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

Vince Warren, *Executive Director*  
Donita Judge, *Associate Executive Director*  
Baher Azmy, *Legal Director*  
Nadia Ben-Youssef, *Advocacy Director*  
Theda Jackson-Mau, *Director of Development*  
Maria LaHood, *Deputy Legal Director*  
Weishin Huang, *Interim Director of Operations*

## DEVELOPMENT

Michelle Anthony, *Donor Relations Associate*  
Mimi Clara, *Senior Donor Relations Officer*  
Doug Edelson, *Foundation Relations Officer*  
Fernando Garcia, *Capital Campaign Associate*  
Masha Katz Baer, *Deputy Director of Development*  
Olivia McIntosh, *Database and Online Giving Manager*  
Charisse Waugh, *Grant Writer*

## COMMUNICATIONS

Hafeezat Bishi, *Digital Engagement Manager (part-time)*  
Anastasia Daniels, *Graphic Design Associate (part-time)*  
Rog Drew, *Communications Assistant (part-time)*  
Charles Greene, *Web Communications and 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*  
Ken Montenegro, *Technology Director*  
Samiha Riham, *Technology Manager*  
Pearl Ryan, *Finance Associate*  
Lynette Seymour, *Executive Associate*  
Devon Smith, *Facilities and Office Services Manager*  
Anderson Taveras, *Technology Manager*  
Jeffrey Weinrich, *Finance Director*

## ADVOCACY

maya finoh, *Political Education & Research Manager*  
Aliya Hussain, *Advocacy Program Manager*  
Obiajulu Nwabuzor, *Strategic Events Manager*  
Amanda Paxton, *Advocacy Administrative Associate*  
Dom Renfrey, *Advocacy Program Manager*

## LEGAL


Remy Burton, *Bertha Justice Fellow*  
Claire Dailey, *Senior Legal Worker*  
Wells Dixon, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Sadaf Doost, *Bertha Justice Fellow*  
Emily Early, *Associate Director - Southern Regional Office*  
Sadé Evans, *Legal Worker*  
Chinyere Ezie, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Omar Farah, *Senior Staff Attorney & Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives*  
Katie Gallagher, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Angelo Guisado, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Ian Head, *Senior Legal Worker & Coordinator for the Open Records Project*  
Mikaila Hernández, *Bertha Justice Fellow*  
Shane Kadidal, *Senior Managing Attorney*  
Pardiss Kebriaei, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Rachel Meeropol, *Senior Staff Attorney & Associate Director of Legal Training and Education*  
Ibrahim Qatabi, *Senior Legal Worker*  
CJ Sandley, *Staff Attorney*  
Zee Scout, *Bertha Justice Fellow*  
Diala Shamas, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Astha Sharma Pokharel, *Staff Attorney*  
Samah Sisay, *Staff Attorney*  
Pam Spees, *Senior Staff Attorney*  
Leah Todd, *Senior Legal Worker*  
Jess Vosburgh, *Staff Attorney*

## 2023 ELLA BAKER INTERNS

Lachlan Athanasiou  
Hilda Bonilla  
Rifqa Falaneh  
Ayla Kadah  
Talia Kamran  
Hoda Katebi  
Annie Lo  
Justin McCarroll  
Jacob Metz-Lerman  
Derrick Neves  
Ezra Ritchin  
Layla June West

## INTERNS

Ari Dworkin-Cantor  
Al Nadeau-Rifkind  
Titus Levy  
Jannine Masoud  
Karem Herrera Aguilar  
Swapnil Agrawal  
Charlie Jiang  
Julia Van Horn  
Ramin Zareian  
Pedro Sepúlveda  
Erin Quinn  
Chai Jindasurat-Yasui



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