



Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research

May 2026 Newsletter

Correction



[SIM Update] New Co-Directors of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights

With sincere apologies for the error, we would like to correct the previous version of this newsletter that incorrectly announced one of the new co-directors of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM). Please see the correct announcement below:

As of April 2026, **Professor Brianne McGonigle Leyh** and **Dr Alexandra Timmer** have officially taken on the role of co-directors of the [Netherlands Institute of Human Rights \(SIM\)](#) at Utrecht University.

In [announcing their appointment](#), Brianne and Alexandra reflected on the importance of leading SIM at a time when human rights, academic freedom, and the rule of law are under increasing pressure globally. They also expressed their gratitude to **Professor Antoine Buyse** for his more than a decade of leadership, during which SIM continued to grow as a leading centre for human rights scholarship, education, and societal engagement.

The NNHRR warmly congratulates Brianne and Alexandra on their appointment and wishes them every success in this new role.

Toogdag 2026



[Annual conference] 2026 NNHRR Toogdag: Safeguarding Human Rights in the Technological Age

- **Date and time:** Wednesday 10 June, 15:30-17:30 (PhD member event) and Thursday 11 June, 9:00-17:30 (main event)
- **Location:** Erasmus University Rotterdam

Registration for the 2026 NNHRR Toogdag, hosted by the [Erasmus School of Law](#) and the [Erasmus Center of Law and Digitalization](#) is now open, we encourage you to secure your place in advance via the [registration form](#). This year's edition will explore the complex relationship between technology, digitalisation, and human rights.

As technological developments continue to reshape societies, the conference will examine both their potential to enhance human rights protection and the risks they pose. Particular attention will be given to current challenges in the Dutch and European context, including algorithmic governance, data protection, and access to justice.

The programme includes plenary sessions and parallel panels on themes such as business and human rights, migration, climate, and economic and social rights. A PhD-focused event will take place on 10 June, followed by the main conference on 11 June.

Participation is free of charge, but registration is required.

[More information and registration](#)

Announcements



Notice about the NNHRR website

Please note that the NNHRR website is currently unavailable due to technical issues. We are working to resolve this as soon as possible and expected it to be back online shortly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

In Memoriam



Professor Brigit Toebes (1969–2026)

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Professor Brigit Toebes on 8 May 2026.

Professor Toebes was an exceptional scholar in the field of health law and human rights and a valued member of the NNHRR community. Throughout her distinguished academic career, she made pioneering contributions to the development of the right to health in international law. Furthermore, her research and engagement influenced public policy on issues such as access to medicines, public health, and the regulation of harmful products.

Her contributions to the NNHRR included dedicated service on the Steering Committee and her continued engagement and support for the Network's activities even after stepping down from that role. Moreover, Professor Toebes was involved in the early development of the Human Rights Research Series, her dissertation being its very first volume and the dissertation of one of her recent PhD candidates being published as the 100th volume in the series.

Beyond her academic achievements, Professor Toebes was an inspiring mentor and a generous colleague. We will miss Brigit greatly and our thoughts are with her family in this difficult time.



Professor Theo van Boven (1934-2026)

It is with great sadness that we mourn the passing of Professor Theo van Boven on 9 May 2026.

Professor Theo van Boven dedicated his life to the protection of human rights and who was a towering figure of human rights research in the Netherlands and internationally. A jurist and leading human rights scholar for more than five decades, he was a pioneer of victims' rights and a fearless defender of those affected by gross human rights violations.

He was also a long-time Professor of Law at Maastricht University, founding the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights and being an active member within the School of Human Rights Research, the predecessor of the NNHRR. He has furthermore acted as supervisor or member of the assessment committee of many (former) PhD researchers within the NNHRR. Every year Maastricht University pays tribute to him by organizing the Theo van Boven Lecture.

His moral clarity, courage, and commitment to accountability and States' observance of human rights obligations will continue to inspire our work. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and all who were shaped by his example.

Calls & Opportunities



[Call for Abstracts] Digital and AI Governance at a Time of Geopolitical Upheaval

- **Date:** 15–16 October 2026
- **Location:** Leiden University College The Hague
- **Call for abstracts deadline:** 12 June 2026

[Leiden University College](#) and the [Erasmus Center for Law and Digitalization \(ECLD\)](#), with the support of the [Sectorplan SSH-Breed on Digitalization](#) and the NNHRR, invite abstracts for the workshop “*Digital and AI Governance at a Time of Geopolitical Upheaval*”. The event will explore how digital technologies and AI are increasingly shaped by (and shaping) today’s changing geopolitical landscape.

The workshop welcomes contributions from researchers across law, international relations, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, technology studies, media and communication studies, and related fields. The main themes of the event include geopolitical visions, contestations, and conflicts surrounding digital and AI governance.

More information

[Summer School] Utrecht Summer School on Human Rights 2026

- **Date:** 6–10 July 2026
- **Location:** Utrecht University
- **Application deadline:** 1 May 2026



The [Netherlands Institute of Human Rights \(SIM\)](#) is pleased to announce the **Utrecht Summer School on Human Rights 2026**, offering an intensive and interdisciplinary programme on international human rights law.

The one-week course, “*International Human Rights Law: An Introduction*,” provides a comprehensive overview of the theory and practice of human rights protection. Participants will explore key legal frameworks and institutions at the international and regional levels, with particular attention to issues such as equality and non-discrimination, the right to protest, and environmental rights. The programme combines lectures, interactive sessions, and engagement with leading scholars and practitioners.

The course is open to advanced Bachelor students, graduate students, and professionals with an interest in human rights law. **Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.**

More information and registration



[Online Event] ESIL IG on International Human Rights Law – Monthly Breakfast Sessions

- **Date:** Monthly (last Wednesday of the month)
- **Time:** 08:00–09:00
- **Format:** Online

The [ESIL Interest Group on International Human Rights Law](#) launched a new initiative: **Monthly Breakfast Sessions**, starting with an inaugural session that took place on **29 April 2026**. These informal, one-hour online meetings - held on the last Wednesday of

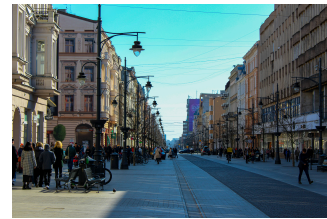
each month - aim to create a supportive space for discussing ongoing research and current developments in international human rights law.

The sessions provide an opportunity for participants to present work in progress and receive constructive feedback in a relaxed setting. Early-career researchers are particularly encouraged to present and engage with the broader community. Presentations will be followed by discussion and feedback.

Those interested in presenting can contact esilighumanrightslaw@gmail.com with a short description of their topic and availability.

[Summer Course] International Law Applicable to Peace Operations

- **Date:** 19–25 July 2026
- **Location:** University of Łódź, Poland
- **No deadline, but limited places available.**



The Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Łódź is pleased to announce its **Summer Course on the International Law Applicable to Peace Operations**, taking place from **19 to 25 July 2026**.

This English-taught programme will explore key legal frameworks governing United Nations and other peace operations. The course combines lectures by international scholars and practitioners with interactive sessions, covering topics such as human rights and humanitarian law in peace operations, use of force, protection of civilians, accountability, and emerging challenges.

Places are limited and applications are accepted on a rolling basis until capacity is reached. Apply via [the online form](#).



[Opportunity] Shine a Spotlight on your PhD Research

- **Deadline:** ongoing

Are you conducting innovative human rights research during your PhD, or know someone who is? We would love to interview you on our newest initiative for PhD members: **PhD Spotlight!** To participate, send a portrait picture and a filled out version of [the following document](#) to nnhrr@asser.nl with the subject line "PhD Spotlight - [your name]".



[Online Workshop] Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights – Tips and Tricks for Publishing Academic Articles

- **Date:** 2 June 2026
- **Time:** 14:15–15:15
- **Format:** Online

The Executive Editorial Board of the [Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights \(NQHR\)](#) is organising an online workshop for early-career researchers, PhD candidates, and scholars interested in publishing in leading academic journals.

During the session, **Katharine Fortin**, Editor-in-Chief of the NQHR, together with Executive Editorial Board members **Lorena Sosa** and **Tina Stavrinaki**, will share practical insights into the publishing process from both author and editor perspectives. Topics include selecting the right journal, preparing articles for submission, navigating peer review and revise-and-resubmit processes, and increasing the impact of published work.

The workshop will conclude with an interactive Q&A session. Participation is free of charge. To register, please email secretariaatiersbr@uu.nl before **28 May 2026** with the subject line: “NQHR – Publishing Academic Articles Workshop”.

[Event] From TAFF (Santa Marta, 2026) to Just Transition (COP31) and Beyond

- **Date:** 16 June 2026
- **Time:** 17:00–20:00
- **Location:** The Hague Humanity Hub



This event - organised by [Erasmus University Rotterdam](#), the [T.M.C. Asser Institute](#), and [The Hague Humanity Hub](#) - brings together policymakers, researchers, civil society organisations, and advocates to reflect on the outcomes of the first *Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels Conference (TAFF)*, hosted by the Governments of the Netherlands and Colombia in April 2026, and to discuss next steps towards a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels.

The programme will explore the significance of the Santa Marta conference for international climate governance, identify opportunities for engagement in emerging policy processes on fossil fuels and just transition, and contribute to preparations for COP31 in Turkey and the next TAFF conference in 2027.

The event will feature a plenary panel discussion followed by networking drinks. Participation is free of charge, but registration is required due to limited capacity.

More information and registration

[Book Launch & Expert Roundtable] Sustaining the Rule of Law: The Future of Judicial Independence in Europe

- **Date:** 5 June 2026
- **Time:** 14:00–17:30
- **Location:** Supreme Court of the Netherlands, The Hague



This event marks the launch of the edited volume [Sustaining the Rule of Law: The Future of Judicial Independence in Europe](#) (Bárd & Krommendijk, eds.), and brings together leading scholars, judges, and practitioners to reflect on the current challenges facing judicial independence in Europe.

In a context of democratic backsliding and growing pressure on courts, the event will explore strategies to safeguard the rule of law and strengthen judicial resilience. The programme combines a book launch with short interventions by contributing authors, followed by an interactive expert roundtable addressing key questions on judicial independence, professional resilience, and the role of judges in public debate.

Participation is free of charge, but registration is required. You can register [here](#).

Publications

Call for Contributions!

Would you like us to feature your recent or upcoming publication in the NNHRR Newsletter? Reach out to nnhrr@asser.nl.

[New Book] The Human Cost of Development - Situating Development-Induced Displacement in International Human Rights Law



Roman Girma Teshome's new book, [The Human Cost of Development – Situating Development-Induced Displacement in International Human Rights Law](#), has been published as part of the [NNHRR Human Rights Research Series](#) (T.M.C. Asser Press, 2026).

The book offers a comprehensive legal analysis of development-induced displacement (DID), examining how involuntary displacement linked to development projects can be understood and addressed through international human rights law.

Happy reading!

[New Issue] Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights – Volume 44(1)



The March 2026 issue of the Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights has been published! This issue features a column by Marieke de Hoon, “*Equality and consistency as antidotes to the board-of-peace-world,*” as well as articles addressing national security and human rights jurisprudence before the European Court of Human Rights, structural injustice in the governance of migrant fishers, and approaches to redress for colonial harm in Belgium. The issue also includes the latest *Recent Publications* section highlighting new scholarship in the field of human rights.

The newest edition is [available online](#) and is open access. Happy reading!

Human
Rights
Here 

Human Rights Here Blog

Call for Submissions!

Submissions to the Human Rights Here blog are invited from scholars and practitioners both inside and outside of the Netherlands on topics related to human rights. Members of the NNHRR and early career scholars are especially welcomed to submit blog content. Please send your contribution to humanrightshere@asser.nl and check [here](#) for the requirements.

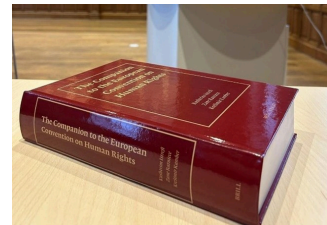


Rainy Days and Rays of Sunshine: Reflections from the 14th United Nations Business and Human Rights Forum by Silvia Ciacchi

Reflecting on the 14th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights, in her blog post [Silvia Ciacchi](#) explores what emerged from a gathering held at a challenging moment for the business and human rights field. Amid shrinking political support and mounting global crises, The Forum highlighted both the fragilities of the field and the determination of the BHR community to keep advancing the agenda.

You can read the blog post [here](#).

Book Launch: The Companion to the European Convention on Human Rights by Naz Yilancioglu and Kushtrim Istrefi



On 7 January 2026, scholars, lawyers, and judges from the [European Court of Human Rights / Cour européenne des droits de l'homme](#) gathered together at [Universiteit Utrecht](#) for the book launch of 'The Companion to the European Convention on Human Rights', edited by [Kushtrim Istrefi](#), Zane Ratniece, and [Kresimir Kamber](#).

In their blog, [Kushtrim Istrefi](#) and [Naz Yilancioglu](#) comment on the event which traced the journey of the Companion, including how the project began, and reflected on the future of the Convention system.

You can read the blog post [here](#).



Water Governance through a Human Rights Lens: Advancing Equality for Women and Girls by Tadesse Kebebew, Caroline Pellaton, Erik Schnetzler and Mara Tignino

On the occasion of World Water Day (22 March), in their blog [Tadesse Kebebew](#), [Caroline Pellaton](#), [Erik A. Schnetzler](#) and [Mara Tignino](#) reflect on persistent global water inequalities and their disproportionate impacts on women and girls. The blog argues that equitable water sharing and protection from armed conflicts are essential for peace, as unequal access often exacerbates conflict and instability.

The analysis advocates for centering women and girls in water governance across levels, adopting a human-rights-based approach to foster equity, inclusion and sustainability.

You can read the blog post [here](#).

Would you like your news item included in the next newsletter?

Email nnhrr@asser.nl with the desired text and image before the end of the month!

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Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research

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