



NETHERLANDS NETWORK FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH

**Second Report**  
1 September 2019 – 31 December 2022

## From Research to Impact



[www.asser.nl/nhrr](http://www.asser.nl/nhrr) | [nhrr@asser.nl](mailto:nhrr@asser.nl) | [@NNHRRResearch](https://twitter.com/NNHRRResearch)

## **Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research**

Asser Institute for International and  
European Law  
R.J. Schimmelpenninklaan 20-22  
2517 Den Haag  
Email: [nnhrr@asser.nl](mailto:nnhrr@asser.nl)  
[www.asser.nl/nnhrr](http://www.asser.nl/nnhrr)  
[@nnhrrresearch](https://twitter.com/nnhrrresearch)

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# Foreword



Human rights research in The Netherlands has a long and strong tradition. An important part of its strength lies in the close connections between human rights researchers across different Faculties in The Netherlands, enabling inter-University as well as interdisciplinary research collaboration. The Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR) has proven to be a model platform to foster collaborations between human rights researchers from all over the country and beyond. The Network facilitates the exchange of information, provides PhD training on human rights research, and actively supports the organization of human rights research activities across The Netherlands. Three Working Groups have thus far been established, bottom-up, gathering researchers around current human rights issues, including business and human rights; human rights in the digital age; and migration and borders.

I am proud to present, on behalf of the Steering Committee, the second NNHRR report, covering the period of September 2019 to December 2022. Our activities have been consolidated and streamlined, including the annual Toogdag, which brings the whole Network together; the PhD trainings on human rights methodology, publication strategies and fundraising; and bottom-up activities like the new PhD Forum; meetings of our Working Groups; and the meet and greet sessions with international human rights scholars and practitioners. At the same time our more recent initiatives have increased their reach and impact, such as the awarding of the Max van der Stoel Prizes for PhD dissertations and Master theses; the organization of research workshops and our flagship blog *Human Rights Here*. The reporting period covers the time of the pandemic, including lockdowns. Despite these challenges, we were able to deliver all of our planned events, whether online or in person.

The NNHRR is made possible with the support of its eleven member institutions: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Leiden University, Maastricht University, Open University, Radboud University Nijmegen, Tilburg University, the T.M.C. Asser Institute, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Groningen, Utrecht University and Vrije University Amsterdam. Their support, financial as well as in kind, has provided the necessary means to establish the Network and consolidate its activities. I thank the members of the Steering Committee, representing these institutions, for their commitment and dedication to make the NNHRR work and be a truly active network. I also thank the Academic Coordinator and the Secretariat for their efforts in sustaining the Network. I finally thank the members of the Advisory Board for their guidance and input. Together with all the members of the Network let us continue our collaboration, in order to inspire each other and to maintain the tradition of excellent human rights research in The Netherlands.

**Dr Jasper Krommendijk**

Chairperson of the Steering Committee, NNHRR

## Summary

The Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research connects over 420 researchers in the field of human rights in The Netherlands. Since its establishment in 2017, it has become an important meeting point, platform and launching pad for human rights research, activities and researchers. This Report presents the Network and its activities from 1 September 2019 to 31 December 2022. Part 1 presents the activities and events undertaken by the Network during the reporting period. Part 2 offers an overview of the organizational and structural mechanisms developed by the Network to enhance research exchange. Part 3 outlines the Network's outreach & communications strategy and its role in supporting member connections and output. Part 4 provides an overview of the Network's background, governance and membership. Part 5 outlines the Network's financial situation. Finally, Part 6 presents the Network's future initiatives and forthcoming activities.

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## Introduction: From Research to Impact

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The Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (hereinafter the Network) was established in 2017 to sustain and further strengthen cooperation in the field of human rights research. The Network has become an essential platform for human rights researchers seeking to establish meaningful contacts and durable links in The Netherlands. The Network has fully lived up to the expectation of connecting researchers, academic institutions, innovative ideas and outputs, thus generating relevant societal insights. As such, it maintains and strengthens the institutionalized cooperation among human rights researchers in The Netherlands and facilitates the organization of inter-university research and training for PhD researchers. It also enhances the visibility of human rights work conducted at Dutch universities nationally and internationally and aims at becoming a focal point for non-academic organizations such as ministries, NGOs and international organisations working on applied research questions.

The theme of this report, “From Research to Impact”, aims to focus on our ability to connect and showcase the academic work of our members across a number of settings, including small and feedback-intensive settings, and larger conferences which regroup a diverse range of scholars from our eleven member-institutions. Our role as facilitators empowers our PhD members to gain confidence throughout their doctoral journey and exposes them to the work of senior colleagues and, most importantly, their peers. Moreover, the Network’s focus on methodology, interdisciplinarity and diversity enhances their impact and prepares them to face the challenges of the academic market.

More concretely, as detailed below, the Network’s successful delivery of these objectives largely rests on its strong membership numbers and on the constant engagement that these individuals have amongst each other throughout the year. With over four hundred members to date coming from a wide variety of academic backgrounds and subfields, the Network has now created a critical mass of experts that are mutually supportive. The connections underlying the Network’s membership are therefore at the heart of this Report. They enable members to learn from each other’s work, find new collaborators and harness the knowledge of a powerful collective that continues to grow each day.

Looking ahead, the Network will continue to support its members in achieving excellence in research. It will do so by continuing the research workshops in human rights programme, strengthening the blog hosted by the Network and maintaining its social media presence. These initiatives were launched three years ago on the basis of in-depth analysis of the membership’s research foci and strengths which was conducted in the first half of 2019. These elements have complemented the Network’s successful activities, such as the annual Toogdag, the PhD Trainings and regular research gatherings. The Working Groups, which have been highly active and provide a research environment that facilitates focused discussion and exchange, will continue to be supported. Taken together, these initiatives will continue consolidating the Network’s position in accordance with a bottom-up approach that cements its reputation as a point of reference for human rights research in The Netherlands and beyond over the years to come.

# 1. Connecting Institutions

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## 1.1 Background

The NNHRR was established in 2016 by Erasmus University Rotterdam, Leiden University, Maastricht University, Tilburg University, the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Groningen and Utrecht University. The Network started to function in 2017 and issued its first report, 'Connecting for Rights' in December 2019.

After a positive evaluation from the Raad van Decanen in the summer of 2019, the Network's mandate was renewed for an additional three years through August 2022. On that occasion, three new member institutions joined the Network: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Open University Netherlands and Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. The Network has since included all of the Dutch faculties of law among its institutional membership.

In the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2019, the stakeholder universities committed to contribute towards the Network's finances over a three-year period starting on 1 September 2019 and ending on 31 August 2022. This Report covers activities executed from 1 September 2019 to 31 December 2021.

This evaluation is being submitted by the Network's Academic Coordination and the Steering Committee on the basis of Article 4.7 of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the stakeholders in 2019.

### Key dates

- **2016: Established by seven Dutch universities alongside the T.M.C. Asser Instituut**
- **2019: Mandate renewed for three years with ten universities now as members**
- **2022: Steering Committee agrees to request another mandate**

## 1.2 Governance

The Network's main governing body is a Steering Committee composed of representatives of the participating institutions as well as two representatives of the PhD candidates.

The Network's Secretariat and Academic Coordination are based at the Asser Institute. Their activities are overseen by the Steering Committee and an Advisory Board. The Network has benefited from this governance structure, which enables collective decision-making through relatively quick procedures.

### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee decides on the Network's agenda, oversees the budget and provides general direction. It is composed of representatives of the stakeholder institutions. The Committee meets four

or five times a year on average in person and online, depending on the circumstances and its members' agendas.

The current members of the Steering Committee are:

- Dr. Jasper Krommendijk (Radboud University Nijmegen), Chair of the Steering Committee
- Dr. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz (T.M.C. Asser Instituut), Academic Coordinator
- Dr. Andrea Broderick (Maastricht University)
- Prof. Dr. Antoine Buyse (Utrecht University)
- Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders (University of Amsterdam)
- Dr. Anja Eleveld (Vrije University Amsterdam)
- Gert Grift (T.M.C. Asser Instituut)
- Dr. Antenor Hallo de Wolf (University of Groningen alternate)
- Prof. Dr. Nicola Jägers (Tilburg University)
- Prof. Titia Loenen (Leiden University)
- Dr. Roland Moerland (Maastricht University)
- Dr. Alberto Quintavalla (Erasmus University Rotterdam alternate)
- Prof. Dr. Jan Willem Sap (Open University Netherlands)
- Prof. Dr. Jeroen Temperman (Erasmus University Rotterdam)
- Joëlle Trampert (University of Amsterdam), PhD Representative
- Stephanie Triefus (Erasmus University Rotterdam), PhD Representative
- Prof. Dr. Brigit Toebes (University of Groningen)

In line with the Network's educational vocation, two PhD candidates sit at the Steering Committee representing the interests of their peers. The PhD Representatives for 2022-2023 are Stephanie Triefus (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Joëlle Trampert (University of Amsterdam).

### Academic Coordination

The Academic Coordinator executes the programme of work and oversees the Network's day-to-day functioning. The Academic Coordinator is based at the Asser Institute and works alongside the Secretariat for the Network along with a research intern who assists the Network on day-to-day tasks. Since September 2019, the Academic Coordinator is Dr. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz (Asser Institute).

### Secretariat

The Secretariat is entrusted with the administrative aspects of the Network, including the preparation of meetings for the Steering Committee, assisting the Academic Coordinator in the Network's management and liaising with the Communications and Financial departments of the Asser Institute which also support the Network. Ms Hanna Thuránszky is currently the focal point of the Network's Secretariat and will continue supporting its activities in this capacity.

### Interns

The Network has one full-time research intern who assists in the day-to-day running of the Network's tasks and one part-time research intern who assists the editorial board of the NNHRR blog *Human Rights Here*. Interns are engaged by the Asser Institute for a minimum period of six months and a



maximum of nine months pursuant to the Asser Institute's internship policy. All NNHRR interns are directly supervised by the Academic Coordinator, and are provided with a monthly stipend of €550. In addition to being involved in the Network's communications strategy and information management through the website and circulation of a regular Newsletter, interns are also expected to develop a substantial piece of writing during their tenure under the Academic Coordinator's supervision for publication in a blog or other relevant venue.

### Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides counsel on the Network's research cooperation and new opportunities. It cooperates with the Steering Committee and the Coordinator in developing a forward-thinking vision and networking activities. Given the diversity and profile of its members, the Advisory Board has an important valorization role in linking research outputs to relevant stakeholders and the broader public.

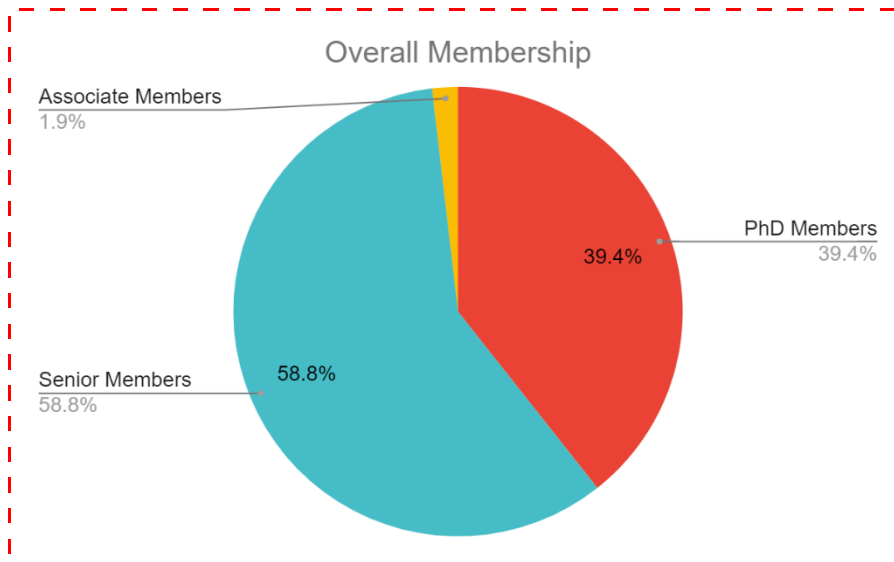
The Advisory Board meets once a year with the Steering Committee.

The current members of the Advisory Board are:

- Prof. Liesbeth Lijnzaad (Judge, International Tribunal for the Law for the Sea, Chair of the Network's Advisory Board)
- Jacobine Geel (Chair, The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights)
- Prof. Morten Kjærum (Director, Raul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law)
- Eduard Nazarski (Former Director, Amnesty International Nederland)
- Alphons Orié (Judge, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals)
- Michiel Servaes (Director Oxfam Novib)
- Prof. Christine van den Wyngaert (Judge, Kosovo Specialist Chambers)

### 1.3 Membership

Membership to the Network has increased steadily over the past four years and the Network had a total of 432 members as of December 2022. This is a substantial increase compared to 150 total Network members in September 2019. The Network distinguishes between its PhD Members, who are currently enrolled in the stakeholder institutions, and Senior Members, who are individuals with considerable experience in the field of human rights and hold a variety of professorial and research positions, or act as policy advisors. The Steering Committee decided in its meeting of 5 July 2019 that researchers in The Netherlands, in particular junior researchers, who are not affiliated to one of the stakeholder institutions are also welcome as associate members of the Network for an annual fee of €80.



As of December 2022, the Network has a total of 432 members: 170 PhD Members, 254 Senior Members and 8 Associate Members. The high rate of senior membership constitutes a significant asset that shows the importance and added value of the Network, which is recognized by the Dutch academic community.



## 2. Connecting People

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One of the Network's priorities is the creation of pathways to impact by developing spaces for our members to learn from each other through workshops and exchanges. To this end, the Network has three flagship activities: the Toogdag, PhD trainings and the bottom-up PhD Forum. As agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding, these annual activities are hosted and co-organized in turn by participating institutions. In addition, the Network organizes PhD Meet & Greets and informal gatherings for PhD researchers. Finally, thematic activities and events are organised by each working group. This section presents the major activities that anchor the Network's position as a reference point in the field of human rights research.

### 2.1 Toogdag: Annual Research Day

Three very successful Toogdagen were organized during the reporting period. The first was held in June-July 2020 at the University of Amsterdam, and the second edition was hosted by the University of Amsterdam and Vrije University in June 2021. The third Toogdag was hosted by Leiden University in June 2022. The fourth Toogdag, to take place in 2023, is currently being organised, and will be hosted by the University of Groningen on 29-30 June 2023.

#### Toogdag 2020: Human Rights and Vulnerability

The 2020 Toogdag took place at the University of Amsterdam from 29 June until 1 July. The theme was 'Human Rights and Vulnerability'. The Toogdag began with a PhD researcher workshop on implicit bias and open communication, which was led by Anne de Graaf, former Chief Diversity Officer at the UvA, and Janissa Jacobs. This was followed by introductory remarks delivered by Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders, the Chair of the NNHRR Steering Committee. Israel Butler, the Head of Advocacy at Civil Liberty Union for Europe, delivered a keynote address on 'how to talk about human rights during Covid-19'.

On the second day of the event, three panels were held. The first was a meet and greet with the NNHRR Advisory Board. The second panel, organized by the Migration and Borders Working Group, centered on migration and discussed 'Legal Pathways for Refugees to Europe: Humanitarian and University Corridors'. The third panel, titled 'Lightning Session', was organized by the Human Rights in the Digital Age Working Group and concentrated on the vulnerabilities of our populations with regards to making sense of how the coronavirus crisis and its 'techno-management' impact people's lives.

On the final day of the Toogdag event, the Business and Human Rights Working Group organized a panel on 'The EU Due Diligence Initiative: Promises, Possibilities and Pitfalls', discussing the European Commissioner for Justice's legislation on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence in EU company supply chains.

#### Toogdag 2021: Human Rights and Vulnerability 2.0

The 2021 Toogdag also revolved around the theme of 'Human Rights and Vulnerability', and featured presentations and discussions from various angles. The event was hosted by the University of Amsterdam and Vrije University Amsterdam over the course of three days. This was because the pandemic did not allow an in-person meeting and it was decided to spread the online meetings over

several days, which proved to be very effective. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, PhD researchers participated in a workshop on ‘The Power of Terminology – the Promises and Pitfalls of “Vulnerability” in the Human Rights Context’, led by Monika Mayrhofer. Following this, an online game night took place via Zoom.



On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders welcomed everyone to the 2021 Toogdag. An interdisciplinary plenary panel followed, which addressed human rights and vulnerability. The plenary panel, moderated by Dr. Ingrid Leijten, explored the concept of vulnerability from multiple standpoints in the field of human rights, including its application in relation to migration and environmental issues. This was followed by a round table discussion on research concerning persons with disabilities, and addressed disability rights in the Netherlands and beyond. This was followed by an online coffee break. Prof. Gerard Quinn, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, closed the day with a keynote session, chaired by Dr. Karin de Vries.

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Business and Human Rights Working Group convened a panel on vulnerability and business and human rights, which discussed the experiences of children and indigenous peoples and corporate activities in conflict areas. The Migration and Borders Working Group convened a panel on migration and vulnerability, and employed a conceptual perspective to explore aspects of vulnerability within the context of migration. The Human Rights in the Digital Age Working Group closed the 2021 Toogdag with a panel on vulnerability and human rights in the digital age, exploring the different human rights ramifications of the concept of vulnerability in the digital age.



### Toogdag 2022: Human Rights in (Times Of) Crisis

The 2022 Toogdag revolved around the theme of ‘Human Rights In (Times Of) Crisis’, and featured presentations on multiple crises we face in the contemporary world. The event was hosted by Leiden University, and took place over the course of two days.

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Toogdag was opened by a PhD workshop, led by Jasmin Mioch, on the theme of research in times of crisis, and explored ways to manage a research project in times of crisis. Questions like ‘how to deal with sudden change’ and ‘how to remain committed to and motivated in your research in times of crisis’ were addressed. The first day of the Toogdag was closed with a boat trip in Leiden.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders welcomed participants to the 2022 Toogdag. This was followed by a plenary panel session on human rights in (times of) crisis, where the role of human rights and the human rights institutions in addressing several crises we face was discussed.

After the lunch break, participants could choose to attend one of the three parallel panel sessions organised by the NNHRR Working Groups. The Migration and Borders Working Group panel on the topic of ‘Crisis narratives in the context of migration and human rights’ addressed how the narrative of ‘crisis’ is invoked in popular, political, and legal discourses on migration. The Business and Human Rights Working Group panel addressed the topic of human rights in (times of) crisis through several presentations ranging from energy, to corporate responsibility and EU migrant workers in Covid-19 times. The Human Rights in the Digital Age Working Group Panel addressed the topic of ‘Information and communication rights in (times of) crisis’. After a small coffee break, participants could once again choose several different parallel sessions. The first session addressed democracy and rule of law, the second session addressed information in crisis. The third session focused on climate change, and the final session featured discussions on Covid-19. The 2022 Toogdag was then closed with a keynote speech by Dunja Mijatovic, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.



## 2.2 PhD Trainings

Every year, the Network organizes two trainings for PhD researchers – one for first- and second-year PhDs focusing on research methods in human rights, and another for third- and fourth-year PhDs, focusing on publication strategies, job applications and funding. In chronological order, the following (Follow-Up) PhD Trainings took place during the reporting period.

### PhD Follow-Up Training 2020” Preparing for Life After the PhD

On 25 September and 2 October 2020, Tilburg University hosted the Network’s Follow-Up PhD Training. Academics from around the Netherlands shared their knowledge and experience with the participants. The event addressed “Preparing for life after the PhD”, and provided participants insight into finding career options, communicating one’s value and recruitment processes for PhD graduates.

There was also a panel where experts in their field provided insight into the different career paths they have chosen after their PhD. Speakers in that panel were Dr. Laura van Waas, founder and Co-Director of the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, Dr. Lucas Roorda, former policy adviser at the College voor de Rechten van de Mens (Dutch Human Rights Institute) and Dr. Annemarie Middelburg, founder and director of Middelburg Human Rights Law Consultancy.

### PhD Training 2020

On 16-17 November 2020, the annual PhD training was organised in cooperation with Utrecht University. 26 PhD students from various universities in the Netherlands attended the online interactive workshops and lectures. The two days were divided into two themes: the first day comprised substantive lectures and workshops, focusing on different methodologies of legal research. The second day covered practical aspects of writing a PhD such as strategies to survive the PhD trajectory.

More specifically, the first day revolved around ‘methodology of legal research’, where a variety of methods were explained by legal scholars. Prof. Wibren van der Burg and Prof. Elaine Mak gave the first substantive lecture, which provided an overview and critical reflection on what methodology means in ‘legal scholarship’ and the shift towards a more interdisciplinary approach to law. The next presentation was delivered by Dr. Stephanie Rap and focused on how to conduct open-semi structured interviews. Attention was given to the design of interviews and ethical considerations that accompany interviewing. Prof. Dr. Yvonne Donders then provided a lecture titled “The human rights researcher: academic, activist or both?”, and encouraged participants to reflect on their research and their role as a human rights researcher. After the lectures, participants took part in online social activities.

The second day provided participants space to present their research and to receive valuable feedback on their research designs. This was followed several lectures on practical themes such as blogging, time management and publishing strategies. The first lecture, on “Mindfulness and surviving the PhD trajectory”, given by Jacky Limvers, discussed the importance of time management and offered guidance on how to handle stress and avoid burnouts during the process of writing a dissertation. Prof. Antoine Buyse and Dr. Katharine Fortin then provided a lecture on academic blogging, outlining the benefits of legal blogging and the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ of legal blogging. Participants then received the opportunity to meet with the editors of the NNHRR blog. The day was closed with a presentation by Dr. Brianne McGonigle Leyh on navigating the world of publishing,



### PhD Follow-Up Training 2021: Getting Heard/Getting Hired

On 21-22 October 2021, the Network Follow-Up PhD Training took place, hosted by Radboud University Nijmegen. The theme of the training was “Getting heard, getting hired”. On 21 October, focus of the training was on ‘getting heard’. Two lectures provided participants insight on how to increase their visibility and research impact. The first lecture provided information on how to publish an article in an international peer-reviewed journal, and the second lecture focused on how and where to publish one’s dissertation as a monograph. On 22 October, focus of the training was on ‘getting hired’. Here, two lectures were provided as well. The first addressed pursuing a career outside of academia, and the second on pursuing a career in academia.

### PhD Training 2021/2022

This 2021 annual PhD Training was divided into two parts. The first part took place on 5 November 2021, and the second part took place on 19-20 May 2022. Both parts of the PhD Training were hosted by Maastricht University. In the first part of the training, different research methodologies and interdisciplinary human rights research methods were introduced. Discussion then ensued on how to plan and balance one's PhD life. The second part of the training aimed at equipping participants with knowledge and skills to conduct their PhD research. The objective of the training was to introduce specific research methods and their applications in human rights research.

## 2.3 Activities organized by the Working Groups

All working groups have been active and have organized internal exchanges, as outlined below. Two working groups also organized open activities in the reported period.

### Business and Human Rights Working Group

#### 1. NLNBHR Workshop “The Gender Dimensions of Business and Human Rights”, 9 October 2019

The Working Group on Business and Human Rights (@NLNBHR) held a workshop on the Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights, under the auspices of the Asser Institute in The Hague. This workshop brought scholars together to provide an overview of the ‘state of the art’ within business and human rights in relation to gender issues and to facilitate a constructive dialogue around potential spaces for collaboration and paths forward. The workshop was divided into three sessions, each followed by a question and answer session with the audience. The first session was an introductory presentation delivered by Professor Surya Deva (Professor at Macquire Law school, Director of the Centre for Environmental Law and former member of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (UNWG)). He discussed how we unpack ‘gender’, the UNWG report on applying a gender lens to the UNGPs, and suggestions for potential paths forward. The second session sought to provide an overview of the current debate and state of research on the gender dimension of business and human rights. The speakers were Marian Ingrams from OECD Watch/ SOMO, Nadia Bernaz from the University of Wageningen, and Elin Wrzoncki from the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The panel was moderated by Antoine Duval from the Asser Institute. The goal of the third session was to discuss existing and developing standards and instruments in the business and human rights field from a gender perspective, to understand what shortcomings and good practices are, and to analyse the potential of the new draft treaty to account for a gender perspective on business and human rights. The panel included Marian Ingrams, Kelly Groen from ActionAid, and Tara van Ho from the University of Essex.

#### 2. Panel Discussion on “The EU Due Diligence Initiative: Promises, Possibilities and Pitfalls”, 1 July 2020

In the context of the Toogdag 2020, the Business and Human Rights Working Group hosted a panel discussing the European Commissioner for Justice's commitment to legislation on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence in EU company supply chains. Working group coordinator Chiara Macchi (Wageningen University) introduced the topic and moderated the session. Lise Smit (British Institute of International and Comparative Law) introduced the background to the initiative, including her work with BIICL and the EU Commission report. Ekaterina Aristova (Oxford University) discussed the broader trend towards mandatory due diligence and what this might mean for the EU



initiative. Nicolas Bueno (University of Zurich) provided insights into parallel national initiatives and how they pertain to the EU initiative. The panel closed with a Q&A session.

### **3. Climate Change as a Business and Human Rights Issue, 15 October 2020**

On 15 October 2020, the NNHRR Business and Human Rights Working Group held an online panel discussion on the intersection between climate change and business and human rights. As climate change has only recently started to be integrated in the business and human rights debate, this event aimed to bring in the voices of scholars and practitioners who are tackling corporate and state accountability for climate change from different perspectives.

### **4. Artificial Intelligence: The New Frontier on Business and Human Rights, 7-8 September 2021**

Hosted at the Asser Institute, the Business and Human Rights Working Group organised an event on the intersection of business and human rights and artificial intelligence. This two-day event featured panel discussions and lectures on a wide array of topics, with the first day addressing topics ranging from human rights as a framework for regulating AI to standard-setting of human rights and AI governance regimes, for and by businesses. The second day featured discussions on articulating corporate responsibility in the context of AI through the application of the UNGPs, as well as critical approaches to risk management and human rights safeguards in AI. This was followed by a panel on corporate respect for human rights in practice, where experts highlighted challenges and potential solutions faced by the intersection of AI and business and human rights. The second day was closed with a session on mitigating potential harms and the use of AI in human rights due diligence.

#### **Migration & Borders Working Group**

##### **1. Lecture by Tineke Strik: “The External Dimension of EU Asylum and Migration Policy: Bridging Science, Politics and Practice”, 18 October 2019, Asser Institute**

Hosted by the Asser Institute, Tineke Strik, Associate Professor in Migration Law at Radboud University Nijmegen, and elected Member of the European Parliament (GreenLeft), gave a public lecture on the need for evidence-based policies in migration management at the Asser Institute in The Hague. The Network and the Migration & Borders Working Group organized this high-profile lecture. Participants included academics, researchers, policy makers, and members of civil society organisations. The lecture was preceded by a PhD Meet & Greet.

##### **2. Legal pathways for Refugees to Europe: Humanitarian and University Corridors – Online Webinar, 30 June 2020**

This Webinar was organised in the framework of NNHRR annual ‘Toogdag’. Its main focus was on two recent innovations in EU migration governance – privately sponsored humanitarian corridors for refugees to Europe on the one hand, and university corridors for refugees, on the other. The role of faith organisations, local communities, universities and local governments in opening safe and legal pathways to Europe was in the center of the discussion.

### **3. EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum – Online Workshop, 23 November 2020**

On the occasion of the EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the working group Migration & Borders of the NNHRR organized an online workshop together with migration scholars from Tilburg University. Several elements of the proposals were discussed, which were turned into knowledge clips. The knowledge clips, accessible via the NNHRR working group on Migration and Borders' website, are made publicly available

### **4. Unaccompanied migrant children in the Netherlands: protection, integration, and transition to adulthood – Webinar, 24 June 2021**

The event focused on migration and vulnerability, with particular attention on both the challenges that unaccompanied migrant children residing in the Netherlands face when they reach the age of legal adulthood, and the Dutch policy on return decisions and unaccompanied minors. Several key stakeholders in this field contributed to this event (i.e. judiciary, guardianship organization Nidos, Dutch Council for Refugees, Samah, Ithaka (International Transition Classes), Defence for Children Netherlands, academia).

### **5. Mock defense of Mariana Gkliati, 27 October 2021**

As an internal event of the Migration & Borders working group, Dr. Mariana Gkliati's mock defense took place on 27 October 2021. Mariana successfully defended her PhD dissertation titled 'Systemic Accountability of the European Border and Coast Guard: The legal responsibility of Frontex for human rights violations' on 11 November 2021 at Leiden University.

### **6. Interdisciplinary legal research on migration and the human rights of migrants, 19 May 2022**

On 19 May 2022, with support of the Dutch Association for Migration Research and the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR), a workshop was organized on doing interdisciplinary legal research in migration law and on the human rights of migrants. The idea for this workshop came from a meeting of members of the Migration & Borders Working Group of the NNHRR and three early career researchers from different universities took on the task of organizing this workshop. Three speakers (Jasper Krommendijk, Elif Durmus and Ellen Desmet) were invited to discuss their experience with and views on interdisciplinarity in legal research on migration and the human rights of migrants. The enthusiasm and positive feedback from the offline and online participants proved that this is a topic that resonates with many (young) scholars.

## **2.4 Activities for NNHRR Members**

### **The Legacy and Future of the Mothers of Srebrenica Case Workshop, 12 November 2020**

On 12 November 2020. Utrecht University, supported by the NNHRR, hosted a workshop on the *Mothers of Srebrenica* case, addressing the legal issues emerging from the case, with particular focus on the issue of state responsibility and accountability, immunity, human rights and tort law.

### **Children and Young Adults in Contact with the Law: Systemic Vulnerabilities and Institutional Responses Webinar, 16 April 2021**

On 16 April 2021, Radboud University, Leiden University and Maastricht University, with support from the NNHRR, organised a webinar exploring the systemic dimensions of vulnerability with regards to children and young adults. The webinar highlighted the importance of considering children's psychological development and their interactions and relations to the justice system.

### **Climate Justice and the Business of Energy Transition Workshop, 20 May 2021**

Tilburg University, supported by the NNHRR, hosted on 20 May 2021 an open forum for presentations on justice and human rights concerns in the context of the energy transition. Presentations at the event ranged from critical examinations of the integration of EU climate and energy law, to the regulation of climate finance for the energy transition, and transparency and engagement in Covid-19 times, with particular focus on the European Investment Bank. The event was closed with presentations on issues of global supply chains and the public-private partnership for decarbonisation, with particular focus on Denmark.



### **The European Convention on Human Rights: Beyond a Treaty Conference, 27 May 2021**

Utrecht University, supported by the NNHRR, organised an online event exploring the European Convention on Human Rights, specifically the practice of application of the Convention by entities not party to the Convention. The event also entailed critical examination of the application of the case law of the Court on a domestic level.

### **Research Visualisation Workshop, 9 & 11 June 2021**

This two-part workshop taught researchers how to effectively communicate their research projects in a visual manner.

### **HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) in University Education - 6 July 2021**

The NNHRR partnered with the HELP project for this online event on university education and the safety of journalists. The aim of the HELP project was to strengthen the capacity of judges, lawyers and prosecutors to apply the European human rights standards. The presentation on 6 July 2021 aimed at informing participants on how the HELP project's courses can be integrated and implemented into university education.

### **The Right to Contribute to Environmental Information Workshop - 8 July 2021**

Tilburg University, supported by the NNHRR, hosted a multimedia, immersive and interactive workshop on environmental information.

### **Post-Schrems II Workshop - 11 October 2021**

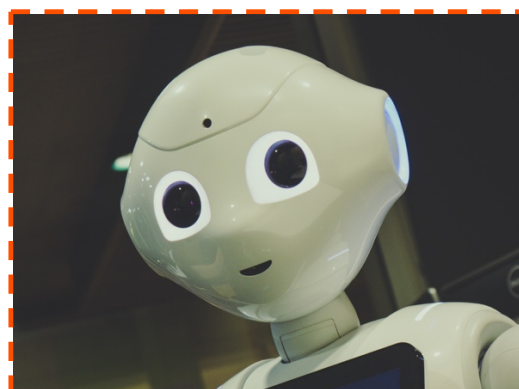
Assisted by the NNHRR, the Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology and Society and the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen organized a roundtable which aimed at discussing challenges posed to the right to an effective remedy enshrined in Art. 47 CFREU, when personal data are transferred outside the borders of the Union. The event culminated in the exploration of potential solutions to this issue.

### **Decolonisation and Human Rights in the Kingdom of the Netherlands Workshop - 14 October 2021**

Organised by the T.M.C. Asser Institute and the Amsterdam Centre for European Law and Governance, University of Amsterdam, this workshop sought to critically engage with decolonisation in the Dutch context by focussing on its specific nexus with human rights. Specifically, the event aimed to disentangle the relation between decolonisation and human rights in the context of the Kingdom of the Netherlands from different points of view and critically reflect on the legacies and contemporary implications of this interaction. The contributions presented at the event were published in a blogpost symposium on the prestigious *Verfassungsblog*.

### **Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights: Friend or Foe? Workshop - 28 October 2021**

The Erasmus School of Law, together with the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on Digital Governance and supported by the NNHRR, held a one-day workshop to create an all-encompassing discussion on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on Human Rights. The theme of the conference was 'AI and human rights: friend or foe?'



### **Workshop on the Human Rights Implications of Persuasive Design and Manipulation Via Digital Products - 19 November 2021**

Supported by the NNHRR, the Amsterdam Law & Tech Institute at the VU and the NNHRR Human Rights in the Digital Age Working Group organised a workshop which explored persuasive design with a multidisciplinary approach, putting together in one room lawyers, designers, social scientists, computer scientists, and ethicists.

### **NNHRR Online Lecture with Prof Tom Ginsburg: 'Democracies and International Law' – 6 December 2021**

On Monday, 6 December 2021, Prof Tom Ginsburg gave a lecture on his recent book titled *Democracies and International Law* followed by a discussion with introductory remarks by Dr Uladzislau Belavusau and moderated by Dr León Castellanos-Jankiewicz .

### **'Covid and the Rights of Citizens - A Conversation with Prof Kim Rubenstein on the Australian Experience' - 01 March 2022**

On 01 March 2022, Professor Kim Rubenstein (University of Canberra) and Dr Julie Fraser (University of Utrecht) discussed the importance of citizenship-related rights to the experiences of those who found themselves stranded overseas during the pandemic. The focus of the event was on the treatment of the Australian expatriate community, and how the issue of citizenship-related rights became a central political issue of the Australian federal election.

### **Expert Panel Discussion: 'Transnational civil litigation and corporate liability: *Mexico v. Smith & Wesson*' - 02 May 2022**

On 02 May, the Asser Institute and the University of Amsterdam in collaboration with the Embassy of Mexico to the Kingdom of the Netherlands organised an in-depth discussion on the transnational litigation implications of the ground-breaking case of *Mexico v. Smith & Wesson* with the support of the NNHRR and the KNVIR. The expert panel was convened by NNHRR Academic Coordinator Dr León Castellanos Jankiewicz and Prof. Dr. Thilo Marauhn (Asser Institute), and it included leading legal scholars from an array of universities as well as a keynote speech by the Legal Advisor to the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Issues of jurisdiction, admissibility and applicable law related to Mexico's seising of the U.S. court system, as well as corporate liability were discussed in depth. The panel also covered the obligations of companies in respect to damage involving their products occurring across borders, including obligations arising out of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and the law relating to the arms trade. A high-quality video recording was made of the event, which is available to the public.



### Round Table: 'When Corporations Disrespect Women's Human Rights: Access to Remediation of Good Quality' – 08 July 2022

During a round table on 8 July at Leiden University, five experts in gender, business and human rights considered what it means for justice systems to be 'of good quality' for women when corporations have disrespected their rights. The experts were Katharine Booth (SOMO), Dewi Keppy (WO=MEN), Marianna Leite (ACT Alliance), Liesbet Stevens (Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgium) and Meredith Veit. Aleydis Nissen moderated this round table. It was supported by the NNHRR, FWO, FNRS and the universities that focus on the theme Institutions for Conflict Resolution in the Dutch Legal Sector Plan (Leiden University, Utrecht University and Radboud University).

#### What do PhD Members think about the Network?

Claire Loven, PhD candidate at Utrecht University:

"The Network provides PhD's with excellent opportunities during the course of their research. As a first year PhD candidate, I really appreciated taking part in the PhD annual training as well as the Toogdag. Both events provided the opportunity to come in contact with fellow human rights researchers and share experiences and knowledge as well as taking part in interesting courses and seminars on human rights and research methodology."

Elif Erken, PhD candidate at Utrecht University:

"I greatly appreciate the opportunities offered by the NNHRR. It has not only given me the chance, as a first year PhD student, to pursue interesting and relevant courses related to human rights research but also to build and expand my own network across the country".

Everhard Tilstra, PhD candidate at Groningen University

"What I really like and appreciate in the Network is the opportunity as a young researcher to present and discuss my research, as well as developments in international human rights law. Furthermore, the Network provides a useful platform to broaden my contacts, not only with other PhDs, but also with senior researchers and people working outside academia.

## 2.5. A Bottom-Up Initiative: Doctoral Research Forum

The NNHRR Doctoral Research Forum, established in 2021, is a bottom-up initiative developed by the Network's PhD members which provides a collaborative setting that facilitates peer-to-peer exchange as well as mentorship between junior and senior members. Thus far, there have been two editions of the Doctoral Research Forum throughout the reporting period.

### First Doctoral Research Forum - 22-23 February 2021

In partnership with Erasmus University Rotterdam, the NNHRR hosted, in an online setting, the first NNHRR Doctoral Research Forum. The Forum brought together PhD candidates who engaged in human rights research, and enabled them to present their work in a collaborative setting with peer to peer exchange as well as interaction and mentorship between junior and senior members. On the first day of the event, PhD project presentations were heard regarding human rights and specific groups, and human rights and the environment, as well as procedural issues relating to human rights, and the intersection of human rights and international humanitarian law.

On the second day of the event, PhD candidates presented presentations on various applications of the human rights-based approach, as well as on research defining human rights. The topic of business and human rights was also addressed. The first Doctoral Research Forum was closed with a training and social activity led by Dr. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz on drafting a conference abstract.

### Second Doctoral Research Forum – 14 October 2022

In partnership with the University of Groningen and Open Universiteit, the NNHRR hosted its second Doctoral Research Forum in-person on 14 October 2022 at the Van Swinderen Huys. The Forum brought together PhD candidates who engaged in research in the field of human rights. The objective of the Forum was to give participants the opportunity to present their work in a collaborative and informal setting and to facilitate interaction between junior and senior members. The Forum was opened with its first substantive lecture presented by Dr. León Castellanos-Jankiewicz on writing a blogpost. This was followed by three panels grouping together PhD projects on a similar topic. The first panel addressed regional human rights issues, the second panel business & economics and human rights issues, and the third panel procedural questions and current challenges related to human rights. The day was closed with a presentation on human rights careers outside of academic, presented by Dr. Charlotte Baarda from College voor de Rechten van de Mens. After the Forum, participants gathered for a dinner together, which was followed by a game of Pétanque.



### 3. Consolidating Research

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The Network offers a variety of platforms for researchers to share their scientific output with relevant academic partners and the broader public. These platforms are also focused on facilitating research valorisation, increasing visibility for researchers and connecting their expertise to policy-oriented stakeholders. The main opportunities for research exchange and dissemination offered by the Network include the working groups, research clusters, the Human Rights Research Series published in cooperation with Intersentia. The coordination of the Max van der Stoep Human Rights Award in cooperation with Tilburg University constitutes another major activity.

#### Aims of the Network

- **Connect researchers in The Netherlands under one organizational umbrella**
- **Enhance PhD training in the field of human rights and their research methods**
- **Disseminate findings and provide institutional outreach for researchers**

#### 3.1 Working groups

Currently, the Network has three working groups. Each working group assists members to establish contact with other researchers across the field of human rights research - connections which would be difficult to establish through bilateral inter-university cooperation. Members are free to join any of the working groups. In line with a bottom-up approach, the working groups are self-managed by the members, address their needs and ensure active participation. A focal point coordinates the group's activities in line with its research agenda. Activities include conferences, lectures, workshops and social meet-and-greets, which are financed by the Network, either partially or in full.

The Network supports the working groups in the following ways:

- Workshop & conference organization through financial and infrastructural assistance
- Dissemination of working group events and information in our monthly newsletter
- Showcasing output and increasing the visibility of research on the NNHRR website and Twitter
- Encouraging new members to join a working group

Working groups are established by members through member-led initiatives, following a formal proposal to and approval by the Steering Committee. All current working groups were established in 2018. Thus far, working groups have been created through a bottom-up approach that closely addresses members' needs and ensures their active participation.



### Human rights in the digital age working group

This working group comprises two tracks. **Track One** focuses on freedom of expression and public debate. It accounts for the growing range of actors intervening in the public sphere – including journalists, the media, NGOs, academics, bloggers, human rights defenders—and their increased exposure to violence, threats, harassment and arbitrary detention that are specific to the online environment.

**Track Two** is devoted to privacy and data protection. It engages with the growing multi-perspectival scholarship on privacy and data protection and foregrounds its human rights ramifications. Participating researchers seek to identify key, urgent challenges and examine the potential and limitations of existing regulatory instruments and technological solutions.

As of November 2022, this working group consists of 25 members.

### Business and human rights working group

This working group brings together junior and senior members of the NNHRR that conduct research within the field of business and human rights, including research on human rights and non-state actors more generally. The aim of this working group is to connect members of the network by regularly facilitating knowledge exchange activities, encourage collaboration between members, and to keep each other updated about the state of research and other developments in the field. As of November 2022, this Working Group has 26 members. It also has an active Twitter account under the handle @NLNBHR.

### Migration and borders working group

The focus and goals of this working group are to advance the exchange of knowledge in the field of international human rights standards and their relation to international migration and border practices. The focus of the group is interdisciplinary, combining insights from law and social science, aiming to build a network of migration scholars, and share theoretical, methodological and empirical insights amongst its members, as well as the broader public. As of November 2022, this working group consists of 24 members. The Migration & Borders Working Group is active on Twitter since September 2018 under the handle @MigrationBordersWG.

## 3.2 Research clusters

In the period May-August 2019, the Academic Coordinator and Secretariat, with the support of an intern, undertook an extensive assessment of individual members' competences and expertise. The study identified 70 subfields of specialization across the Network's members that were subsequently grouped into 20 research clusters. Researchers will be linked to one or more clusters in order to be better identified by their peers, and to assist the Academic Coordinator in supporting needs-based activities that are consistent with the Network's bottom-up approach.

### Research Clusters

1. Criminal Law
2. Humanitarian Law
3. Law of the Sea, Maritime Law
4. Human Rights Law
5. Public International Law
6. Private International Law
7. ECHR, European Law
8. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
9. Children, Family, Integration, Discrimination
10. Environmental Law
11. International Sports Law
12. Courts, Governance, Rule of Law, Margin of Appreciation
13. History & Philosophy
14. Data Protection, Privacy, Cyber-Security, Intellectual Property Law
15. Law, Technology, Society
16. International Investment Law & International Trade Law
17. Near and Middle Eastern Studies
18. Jewish Studies
19. Anthropology
20. Cities and Citizenship

On the basis of the Research Clusters, the Academic Coordinator and Secretariat have developed an online members database on the NNHRR website with the following features:

- Searchability of all members based on their areas of expertise and institutional affiliation.
- Links to our members' university and institutional pages to improve visibility and impact of their work.
- Constant updates that ensure a relevant list of active members who can be identified by third parties such as media and policy outlets searching for expertise.

## 3.3 Human Rights Research Series with Intersentia

Since its inception, the Network has maintained the Human Rights Research Series with Intersentia, an English language book series that enables PhD members of the Network to publish their doctoral dissertation soon after their defence. The Steering Committee established a publication procedure and functions as the Editorial Board for the Series. Since 2020, 11 volumes have been published under

the Series covering a wide variety of human rights topics and subfields. As of December 2022, the series has published 99 volumes under this collaboration.

The central research themes of the Intersentia Series are the nature and meaning of international standards in the field of human rights, their application and promotion in the national legal order, their interplay with national standards, and the international supervision of such application. In future years, the Network will continue working with Intersentia to guarantee efficient publication of our members' doctoral theses while ensuring overall quality and delivery. Moreover, the partnership will also move towards publishing an increased amount of open-access volumes in line with faculty requirements and practices in The Netherlands.

#### Intersentia Human Rights Research Series Publications 2020-2022

- *Fundamental Rights Violations by Private Actors and the Procedure Before the European Court of Human Rights, Claire Loven (2022)*
- *Nationality and Statelessness in Europe, Caia Vlieks (2022)*
- *Labour Exploitation in Human Trafficking Law, Amy Weatherburn (2021)*
- *At the Frontiers of State Responsibility, Annick Pijnenburg (2021)*
- *Blurred Lines of Responsibility and Accountability, Daniela Heerdt (2021)*
- *Looking at Law Through Children's Eyes, Marieke J. Hopman (2021)*
- *Culture in the State Reporting Procedure of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Vincent Vleugel (2020)*
- *The Transformative Potential of a Vulnerability Focus in Basic Assistance Policies, Veronika Flegel (2020)*
- *A Re-Examination of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in a Political Society in the Light of the Principle of Human Dignity, Getahun A. Mosissa (2020)*
- *Towards a Regime of Responsibility of Armed Groups in International Law, Laura Inigo Alvarz, (2020)*
- *Trapped in a Religious Marriage, Benedicta Deogratias (2020)*

### 3.4 Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award 2021

In 1995, Tilburg University decided to introduce the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award for academic publications in the area of human rights, with a view to draw more attention to this field of study in Dutch academic education and research. The Award is named after the Dutch Minister of State, first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and former UN Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iraq, Mr Max van der Stoel. In 2019, it was decided that Tilburg Law School and the Network would jointly organise the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award on a bi-annual basis starting in 2019.

Nominations can be submitted by all faculties linked to universities in the Netherlands and the Flemish community in Belgium, as well as by the Asser Institute.

The Award currently has two separate categories:

- Category 1: Doctoral dissertations
- Category 2: Masters theses

For the 2021 edition, the Network Secretariat received 20 nominations, a number increasing with every edition (in 2019, there were 17 submissions, and in 2017 there were 13 submissions). Nominations came from ten Dutch universities (University of Amsterdam, VU Amsterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Utrecht University, Maastricht University, Tilburg University, Leiden University, Radboud University – Faculty of Law, Radboud University – Faculty of Management, and University of Groningen) and three Belgian universities (University of Antwerp – Faculty of Law, University of Antwerp – Institute of Development Policy, and Gent University).

All manuscripts were evaluated and the award winners selected by an international jury that was assembled by Tilburg University and the Network's Steering Committee. The 2021 edition's jury members were:

- Prof. Dr. Koen Lemmers, Professor at Human Rights Law at KU Leuven (Chair)
- Prof. Dr. Jos Dute, Professor of Health Law at Radboud University, Nijmegen
- Prof. Dr. Liesbeth Lijnzaad, Professor of Practice of International Law at Maastricht University and Judge at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Hamburg
- Dr. Eva Rieter, Assistant Professor of International and European Law at Radboud University, Nijmegen

The Max van der Stoep Human Rights Award 2021 was presented at Tilburg University on Friday 10 December 2021. The ceremony included a keynote speech by Dr. Bahia Tahzib-Lie, Human Rights Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, entitled 'Education lasts a lifetime: let's give human rights a greater place in the classroom'. The winners of the 2021 edition were Yousra Benfquih (University of Antwerp) for best doctoral dissertation and Katie Pentney (Leiden University) was awarded the prize for best master thesis. The 2023 call is currently open and the next award ceremony will be held in December 2023.

### 3.5 Recent and Upcoming Events (selected)

Beyond the reporting period, the Network has continued to support the organisation of events. In the following, upcoming events supported by the NNHRR are listed.

#### Research Workshop: A Conditional Release Procedure for Life Prisoners—an International Comparative Approach, 16 September 2022

This workshop, hosted by Radboud University, with possibility to join online via Zoom, aimed to clarify, in an international comparative manner, how a conditional release procedure for life prisoners could be given form in the Netherlands. The workshop built on a previous workshop on life imprisonment

that took place in 2015 in Spain, which resulted an edited volume titled 'Life Imprisonment and Human Rights'.

**Symposium on Private-Sector Involvement in Armed Conflicts and Access to Justice for Human Rights and Environmental Harm: The Case of Colombia, 15 December 2022**

Organised by Tilburg University and supported by the NNHRR, this event will take place on the 15th of December 2022. The symposium will bring together experts on transitional justice, peacebuilding, development, and business, human rights, and the environment to discuss the involvement of business actors in human rights and environmental harm in situations of armed conflict and the barriers victims encounter in seeking effective redress. Taking Colombia as a case study, it examines the role of business actors in armed conflict and peacebuilding, as well as different legal mechanisms to address corporate human rights and environmental harm.

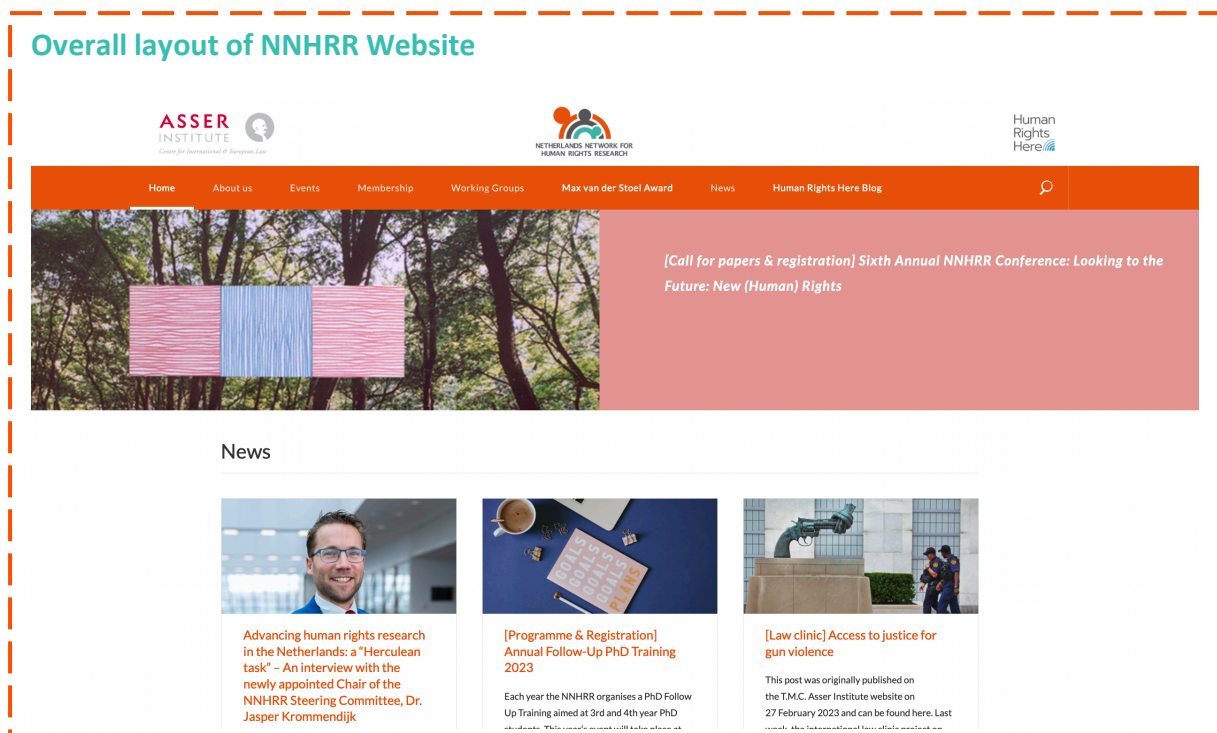
## 4. Communicating Impact

The Network's communications strategy aims at developing relevant and durable links among members by increasing their visibility, highlighting their strengths and promoting their main outputs and achievements. These objectives have been attained during the reporting period through the Network website and the regular Newsletters. Moreover, in 2019-2020, the Network launched *Human Rights Here*, a blog conceived by members based in various stakeholder institutions, and opened a Twitter account under the handle @NNHRRresearch. These initiatives have increased the visibility of our members within the Dutch academic community and beyond. These valorization initiatives have also enabled our PhD and senior members to conduct meaningful outreach beyond their immediate academic communities in order to generate increased impact.

### 4.1 Website

The Network website generated a substantial and constant amount of traffic and page views over the reporting period. With a sustained average of over 1,000 page views per month, the total number of views was 35,500. The website also had a total of 9,200 unique visitors during this time.

The website was launched in November 2017, shortly after the official inauguration of the Network. It is currently hosted within the Asser Institute's website: [www.asser.nl/nnhrr](http://www.asser.nl/nnhrr). The Asser website has since undergone considerable redesign and a similar update of the Network website is planned for 2024. It is envisaged that the technical support for this redesign will be provided by the Asser Institute.



The Network's website is regularly updated and improved by the Academic Coordinator and the Secretariat. Its current layout provides a quick and easy-to-access interface presenting the Network's main features: Network news, recent events, information about the working groups, a thesis

publication guide in connection to the Intersentia partnership and a dedicated page for the Max van der Stoel Award.

## 4.2 Newsletters

The Secretariat regularly creates and sends a Newsletter to Network members with information about conferences, members' forthcoming activities, courses, members' events, calls for papers and activities organised within and by the Network. Since 2020, the Network's Newsletters have been issued monthly. The Newsletters represent one of the core ways in which the human rights research community disseminates events and other news.

## 4.3 Research Workshops in Human Rights

In the fall of 2019, the Network began issuing a biannual call for Research Workshops in Human Rights. Pursuant to this initiative, members are eligible to receive €1,000 euros to convene a workshop that includes researchers from within the Network. This fulfils one of the strategic aims of the Network is to support research exchange among its Members by sponsoring academic workshops and lectures. These activities are tailored to specific research interests and focus on methodological and other contemporary debates. The present initiative has rationalized the existing resources available for academic workshops through a single call that is open to all members. It has also streamlined the procedural support offered to members by the Secretariat and Academic Coordination. Since the initiative began in 2019, over 20 such workshops have taken place.

Network members have the opportunity to organize one-day or half-day workshops and mini-conferences involving members from other universities, possibly one or two external speakers and members of their own faculty. Most workshops will involve members from more than one sub-discipline, or persons from other disciplines. All participating institutions were heavily involved in the organisation of several workshops, and have greatly benefitted from them, especially in terms of communicating the research of their Faculty members and PhD candidates to the broad network of the NNHRR.

### Target Audience

The biannual call for multidisciplinary research workshops is be open to all members with a special orientation towards PhD members. To be eligible, workshops must be co-convened by at least two members of the Network, each of whom should be based in a different stakeholder institution, and at least one co-convenor should be a PhD Member. This broadens the scope of academic exchange across themes, fields, seniority levels and institutions.

### Procedure

The Network issues the call for Research Workshops in Human Rights Research twice a year: once in the spring and once in the fall. All members are invited to submit proposals that contribute to the development of innovative ideas and strengthen cooperation. Submitted proposals are evaluated by the Academic Coordinator in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Committee.

### Format

Conveners will be responsible for the academic formulation, content and organization of the workshop, in accordance with the bottom-up approach that has thus far been implemented with the Working Groups. The workshops will ideally be held in one of the convener's home institution and the Asser Institute will remain available as a fallback option. The rationale behind this policy is to incentivize the conveners to maximize the resources within their immediate research environment for the benefit of other participating Network members. The Network Academic Coordination and Secretariat will assist in publicizing and disseminating the activity.

#### 4.4 Blog: *Human Rights Here*

In Spring 2019, a group of our PhD and Senior members submitted a formal proposal for the creation of *Human Rights Here*, an online blog that would centralize discussion on human rights issues within the Network and effectively function as its flagship online publication. The blog supports the critical exchange of research, analysis and ideas between scholars and practitioners, as well as other relevant stakeholders including students and the media.

The aims of *Human Rights Here* were formulated as follows:

- To highlight the societal relevance of human rights and its research by bringing academic work and the human rights interests of society closer.
- To inform about the Network's connecting functions by acquainting members and their work with each other, thereby strengthening their ownership of the Network.
- To valorize the work of Network members by making cutting-edge research accessible to the wider Dutch and international human rights academia.
- To bridge the gap between academia and other relevant stakeholders, making the Network a point of reference for public officials, journalists, NGOs, practitioners and PhD students.

This blog has served as a permanent digital environment for discussion, analysis and critical exchange, which will increase the ownership of the members over the Network. The blog has also created a sense of community among members by bridging differences in geographical location, academic institutions, seniority and specializations.

#### 4.5 Twitter account: @NNHRRResearch

The Network started a Twitter account in September 2019. Over the years, Twitter has become an important environment for outreach and information exchange. Furthermore, a sizeable number of human rights institutes and organizations maintain active Twitter accounts. This has been an important venue to showcase and valorize the work of our members in addition to providing information about our events and those of our partner institutions. An assessment conducted by the Academic Coordinator revealed that many relevant stakeholders have used the @NNHRRResearch hashtag on Twitter to identify Network members, events and activities.

The Twitter account for the Network complements existing accounts of the working groups, stakeholder Universities and individual members. The account offers an up-to-date dissemination



environment that can be exploited as the Network’s online presence increases through its website improvements and blog. It will also provide social media validation to members’ work, which is an essential component of online real-time networking. It is important to note that validation does not imply endorsement in this context.

Maintaining a Twitter account for the Network has had the following impact:

- Increased visibility of the Network on social media
- Validation and cross-referencing of members’ work & output via retweets
- Real-time online engagement with scholars and stakeholders outside the Network
- Rationalizing the Network’s online presence and identity alongside the website & blog



The Twitter landing page of @NNHRRResearch featuring the Network logo is shown above. The background image is the detail of a painting by American artist Clyfford Still titled PH-972 (1959). This artwork was chosen because its color palette is similar to that of the Network logo. It also subtly underlines the Network’s Dutch identity through the color orange.

## 5. Budget

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The Network's budget<sup>1</sup> is composed of annual cash contributions from participating universities amounting to €70,917 per year (line 0.1 of the attached Excel spreadsheet). The Network also receives annual contributions in kind from the Asser Institute and the University of Amsterdam amounting to €15,759 per year (lines 0.2, 0.3 and 0.4 of the spreadsheet). The Network's total annual budget is therefore €86,677 (line 0.4, including cash and in-kind contributions).

The budget is used to cover the following expenditures: 1) the annual Toogdag, 2) the PhD Training, 3) the PhD Follow-Up Training, 4) the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award, 5) research activities, including activities of Working Groups, 6) communications, including the website and new blog, and 7) the Network's staff.

In 2022-2023, the Network has focused on ensuring a fair distribution of its financial resources, while further investing in successful initiatives such as the Toogdag and in member-led bottom-up activities such as the working groups and the PhD Forum. It is also seeking to develop a strong and coherent communications strategy through the refurbishment of the Network website, maintenance of its blog and the upkeep of the Twitter account.

The Network's flagship event, the Toogdag, continues to draw significant participation and will continue to be a prominent element of the 2023-2024 annual budget. The budget incorporates an additional contribution for universities hosting the Toogdag to further increase the event's profile. Moreover, as reflected in the current budget, the Max van der Stoel prize will be presented for the third time in cooperation with Tilburg University.

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<sup>1</sup> References are made throughout this section to the Excel spreadsheet provided alongside this Report containing the overall Budget, as well as the 2022-2023 Budget.

## 6. Looking Ahead

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The Network is developing new activities and outreach strategies to further enhance the interactions among members. Several opportunities for further growth have also been identified, such as:

- Enhance the visibility of members' work by using existing resources more often: network website, Twitter account, and HRH blog.
- Enhance Network visibility towards NGOs and non-academic actors.
- Improving scientific content of events.
- Strengthen and further showcase the working relationship with Intersentia.
- Increase the quality of *Human Rights Here* individual posts, as well as the look and feel of the blog website.
- Sharpen the focus of interdisciplinary research and research methods in our activities.
- Provide additional funding for successful initiatives such as the Biannual Call for Research Workshops in Human Rights.
- Strengthen individual membership in new stakeholder universities by increasing the membership.
- Harness new postdoc members and assistant professors by developing events and initiatives that are more scientifically rigorous.
- Aligning with the Sector Plan for Law and -more recently- Social Sciences and Humanities.