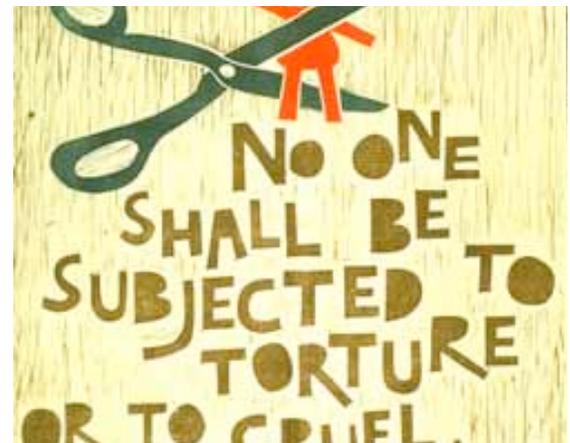
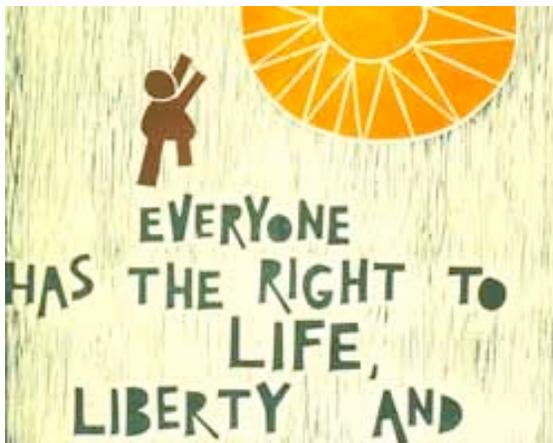
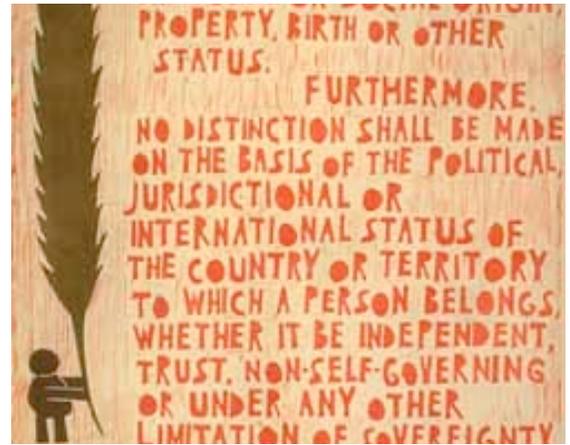


Newsletter produced by the American Association of Law Schools (AALS) Section on International Human Rights Law



A Message from the Section Chair

By Robert C. Blitt

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Declaration remains a touchstone document whose ideals and aspirations continue to underpin efforts to improve respect for and enforcement of human rights around the world. While 2008 has signaled some setbacks in this regard, a number of clear successes—local and international in nature—demonstrate the continued vitality, viability, and universality of the ideals set forth over half a century ago in 1948.

Notably, May 3, 2008 marks the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities, a new treaty designed to secure for persons with disabilities human rights on an equal basis with others. Remarkably, this treaty entered into force very rapidly, having been opened for signature only one year earlier, in March 2007.

Also in 2008, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) introduced its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reporting system, a new procedure that will scrutinize the human rights records of all 192 UN member states. While this procedure—and the HRC itself—is not without shortcomings, the long-anticipated reform at least signals a willingness within the

UN to acknowledge and attempt to repair flaws in the international human rights system.

At home, the human rights implications of key questions related to the treatment of detainees and the general relevance of treaty obligations under domestic law remain unsettled. In December 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Boumediene* concerning the *habeas corpus* rights of Guantanamo Bay detainees and the legality of the Military Commissions Act. That decision is still pending as we prepare this newsletter, though it is expected in the coming weeks.

(Continued on page 3)

Section Activities Planned for the 2009 AALS Annual Meeting in San Diego

At the previous 2008 Annual Meeting in New York, the Section on International Human Rights hosted three separate panels around the theme of “New Voices in Human Rights” that featured the work of over 20 presenters covering a wide range of cutting-edge human rights topics. In addition to this, the Section on International Human Rights Law also co-sponsored two other panels, each featuring additional substantive presentations in the field of human rights law. The first panel, organized by the Section on Aging and the Law, discussed “How International Law Advances the Rights of Older Adults.” The second panel, sponsored by the Section on Disability Law, focused on “Disability Rights as Human Rights.”

The forthcoming AALS Annual Meeting will be held from January 6-10, 2009 in San Diego, California. This year’s

conference theme focuses on the value of institutional pluralism. In keeping with the idea of pluralism, the Section on International Human Rights will repeat its popular “New Voices in Human Rights” panel, as part of its continued effort to facilitate diverse presentations from new scholars and others who previously have not had the opportunity to present a paper at an AALS annual meeting.

Should [AALS] cultivate a particular set of interests or values, and leave it to other organizations to develop opposing points of view? Or is the proper analogy something more like Congress—a single body comprising different members but representing all possible approaches?

John Garvey, AALS President

This dynamic panel is scheduled for 2-5 PM, Wednesday January 7, 2009 (see call for papers announcement below).

As part of its effort to promote membership and cross-section activities, the

Section on International Human Rights Law will also participate in a joint breakfast on Friday January 9, 2009 with other AALS sections involved in international issues, including the Sections on Africa, Comparative Law, International Law, and International Legal Exchange, among others.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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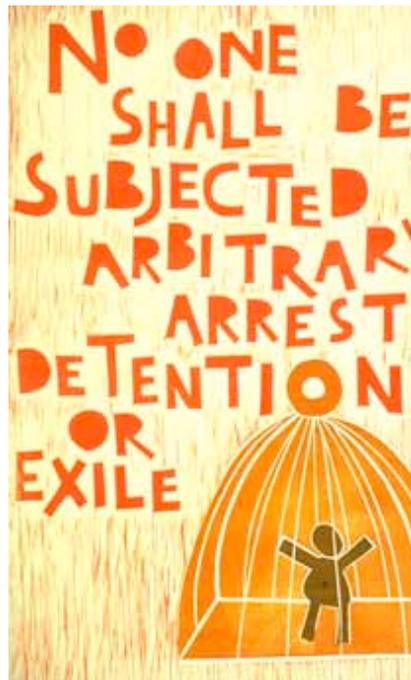
Call for Papers New Voices in Human Rights

The International Human Rights Law Section will repeat its popular “New Voices” program at the 2009 Annual Meeting. This panel provides an important opportunity for faculty members and other scholars who have not previously had an opportunity to present a scholarly paper at an AALS annual meeting to share their work.

The program will be held on **Wednesday January 7, 2009, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** This is a “prime time slot” at the AALS annual meeting, during which new scholars will summarize recent

scholarship and academic works in progress.

Individuals who are interested in being considered for the “New Voices” panel should submit an abstract of no more than two pages describing their research or scholarship. Abstracts should be submitted by August 15, 2008 to Section Chair-Elect, [Christiana Ochoa](#), at the Indiana University School of Law - Bloomington. Abstracts will be reviewed and selections made during September 2008.

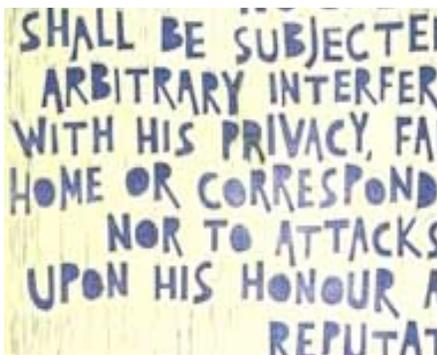


Universal
Declaration of
Human Rights
Article 5

Message from the Section Chair (Continued from page 1)

In a related vein, the Court in *Medellin v. Texas* held that the President lacked authority to direct state courts to comply with a ruling handed down by the International Court of Justice. While the full implications of this decision have yet to be discerned, they may raise challenges to the legal effect of treaties ratified by the United States and presumed to be self-executing without any other explicit act of Congress.

To be certain, human rights law continues to undergo a dramatic period of expansion and challenge. The issues raised here, and others on which you are working, will serve as fertile areas of exploration during the AALS Annual Meeting in San Diego, and specifically at the Section’s “New Voices” program. With this in mind, I encourage you—particularly if you have yet to present a paper at an AALS meeting—to consider submitting an abstract based on the call for papers presented in this newsletter.



Universal Declaration of Human
Rights
Article 12

International Human Rights Section Business Meeting and Strategy Session

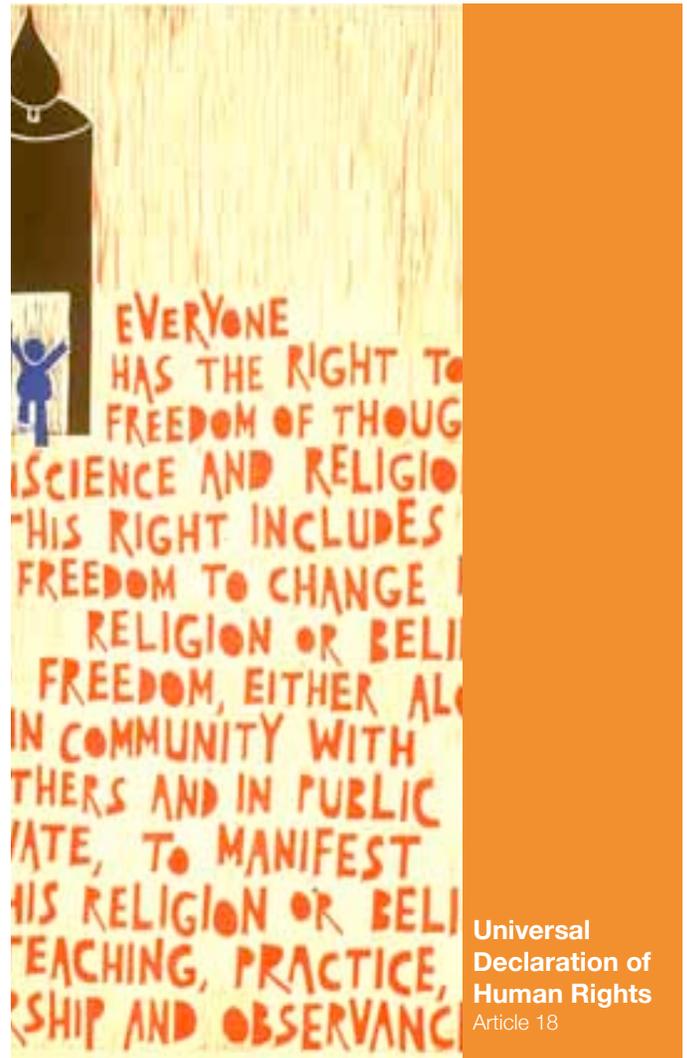
The International Human Rights Law Section will hold a separate business meeting on **Wednesday January 7, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.** This meeting is intended to allow professors who are interested in the International Human Rights Section to have sufficient time to discuss ideas and plans for future section activities, publications, and programs. Persons interested in becoming active in the section leadership are invited to contact the current chair, [Robert C. Blitt](#) at the University of Tennessee College of Law in Knoxville, TN, or the Chair-Elect, [Christiana Ochoa](#), at the Indiana University School of Law - Bloomington.

Call for Posters AALS 2009 Annual Meeting

The AALS Annual Meetings now include poster presentations intended to provide an opportunity to present research or to describe teaching innovations outside formal program presentations. Readers of posters include professors seeking insights into possible interdisciplinary links to their own work and professors who seek out a particular poster because it presents important research.

The AALS Section on International Human Rights is participating in the 2009 “call for posters.” Faculty and staff at member or fee-paid school can submit poster proposals. Section members must submit their poster abstracts and actual poster by September 30, 2008. The AALS will send an announcement to all section members explaining the procedures for submitting an abstract and poster over the summer. Posters will be displayed in the hallways of the headquarters hotel for the Annual Meeting, and will be identified as posters for the AALS Section on International Human Rights. Some good tips and examples of posters can be found at these websites:

- <http://staff.science.uva.nl/~bcate/essli03/posters.html>.
- <http://www.cis.udel.edu/~pollock/fse04/posterauthorinst.html>.



AALS SECTION ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS Leadership

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Christiana Ochoa Indiana University School of Law - Bloomington	<i>Chair-Elect</i>
William V. Dunlap Quinnipiac College School of Law	<i>Treasurer</i>
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