



CLAIHR

**Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights
Juristes canadiens pour les droits internationaux de la personne**

ANNUAL REPORT
2024

About CLAIHR

CLAIHR is a non-governmental organization of lawyers, law students, legal academics, and other jurists, founded in 1992 to promote international human rights from a Canadian perspective through education, research, and advocacy. We are committed to advocating for and defending fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international and domestic human rights instruments.

CLAIHR's Board of Directors

James Yap (President)	Henry Off
Florence Au (Treasurer)	Vibhu Sharma
Lindsay Bailey	Andrea Sobko
Andrew Cleland	Dule Vicovac
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Acknowledgements

CLAIHR thanks counsel [Veromi Arsiradam](#), [Barbara Jackman](#), [Rebecca Jones](#), [Nabila Khan](#), [Adrienne Lei](#), [Mae Nam](#), [Henry Off](#), [Megan Phyper](#), [W. David Rankin](#), [Ankita Gupta](#), [Nicolas Rouleau](#), [Karen Segal](#), [Vibhu Sharma](#), and [James Yap](#).

CLAIHR thanks advocacy partners [Al-Haq](#) and [Amnesty International Canada](#).

CLAIHR thanks volunteers [Mariam Aly](#), [Alice Chipot](#), [Paul Fauteux](#), [Alroy Fonseca](#), [Nabila Khan](#), [Sevda Mansour](#), [Ghalia Najjar](#), [Kassandra Neranjan](#), [Stavroula Papadopoulos](#), [Sukanya Pillay](#), [Susanna Quail](#), [Karen Segal](#), [Abir Samih](#), [Aidan Simardone](#), [Amita Vuliri](#), [Joy Wahba](#), [Mariam Saleh](#), and [Geneviève Zingg](#) for their invaluable contributions this year.

Finally, CLAIHR thanks all our members and donors for their generous support!

Message from the President

As friends and allies of international human rights, I have no doubt that you are keenly aware that the international human rights system is under serious and growing threat at the moment. Not only do bad actors continue to commit grave human rights violations with alarming impunity around the world, but the international human rights system itself has come under attack from powerful global actors. However, I choose to focus instead on reasons for hope as we enter a new year.



Starting at the global level, international human rights institutions have largely held strong and done what they were designed to do, in spite of powerful headwinds. Certainly, there is also plenty to criticize in how leading institutions like the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, and many other UN and other international organizations and agencies have carried out their roles in the past year. But although they may have bent, they have not broken. For largely retaining their integrity and credibility at a time when it is most needed, they deserve credit – and our support.

Moving to the domestic level, many courageous human rights lawyers and civil society groups in Canada have resolutely continued to advocate tirelessly for human rights for all, defying powerful opponents. CLAIHR is proud of the contributions we have made to this movement – for example, we are pursuing a legal challenge against the Canadian government to stop arms exports to Israel, and we have also intervened in two cases to support human rights defenders on Canadian campuses. Other projects are still being planned.

Lastly, we have been deeply inspired (and, to be frank, at times a touch overwhelmed) by the enthusiastic response our work has received from members, stakeholders, and the general public. Over the last year we have enjoyed unprecedented levels of support, interest, and engagement. It has been truly heartening to see that there are so many people of conscience in our community who are ready to take a stand for global justice and human rights.

To all of you, we are grateful for your continued support at a time when CLAIHR's work – along with the international human rights system itself – is more critically important than ever. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together over the next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Yap'.

James Yap
President

Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee

Chair: Vibhu Sharma

Advancing international human rights law through strategic litigation and policy reform is one of CLAIHR's highest priorities as an organization. CLAIHR's Advocacy Committee coordinates our legal and policy advocacy projects. This work includes making intervener submissions in court cases, issuing public statements, and filing submissions with government agencies conducting policy consultations.

Submissions to international agencies

CLAIHR Appealed to International Bodies on Repression of Pro-Palestine Speech

In October 2024, CLAIHR submitted [reports](#) to the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression and to IACHR Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression to UN and IACHR Rapporteurs documenting systematic violations in Canada of freedom of opinion, expression, assembly and association in relation to the situation in Israel and Palestine. The reports highlight State actions that have resulted in the suppression of freedom of speech and political expression, the dangerous criminalization of human rights defenders and the Government of Canada's failure to ensure an environment within which individuals can freely exercise their fundamental rights.

Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for Canada's 10th Periodic Report

In September 2024, CLAIHR submitted a [Shadow Report](#) to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women regarding aspects of Canada's compliance with its international human rights commitments under the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW). Canada will be making its 10th periodic report to the CEDAW Committee at the 89th session, taking place from 7-25 October 2024. CLAIHR's submissions make recommendations in four priority areas: (1) Migrant Work (2) Industry-Driven Violence (3) Economic Justice, and (4) Political Participation.

CLAIHR's submission to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court concerning the investigation and prosecution of forced migrant labour under the crime against humanity of enslavement

In April 2024, CLAIHR made [submissions](#) to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court concerning the investigation and prosecution of forced migrant labour under the crime against humanity of enslavement. CLAIHR's submission draws from the unique dynamics and experiences brought on by migrant labour programs in Canada to illustrate the particular factors indicating forced migrant labour. It concludes by linking these factors to the prosecution of forced migrant labour under the crime against humanity of enslavement in the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* (ICC).

CLAIHR's submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory

CLAIHR submitted materials to support the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory's report to the United Nations General Assembly Session 79. CLAIHR focused its submissions on the specific policies and practices of particular third states in regards to ongoing arms exports to Israel, and assessing whether and when this conduct gives rise to international legal liability for complicity in Israeli violations of international humanitarian law during the reporting period.

Interventions in court cases

Canada's accountability of arms sale to Israel: *Farah et al. v the Attorney General of Canada*

Counsel: Barbara Jackman, James Yap and Veromi Arsiradam

CLAIHR is currently involved, as a party, in judicial review proceedings before the Federal Court in *Farah et al. v the Attorney General of Canada* (T-473-24). This matter concerns alleged violations of the Canadian *Charter*, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law in relation to the approval of the transfer of military items for use by Israel in its ongoing war in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Freedom of association in collective labour relations regime: *Société des casinos du Québec inc. v. Association des cadres de la Société des casinos du Québec*

Counsel: Mae J. Nam, Rebecca Jones and James Yap

The appeals to the Supreme Court of Canada addressed whether the statutory exclusion of managers from the labour relations regime of the Quebec *Labour Code* infringes the guarantee of freedom of association under s. 2(d) of the Canadian *Charter* or s. 3 of the Quebec *Charter of human rights and freedoms*. CLAIHR intervened to argue that under international laws binding on Canada, managerial employees have the right to collective bargaining. CLAIHR also argued

that an international treaty body’s decision that there has been a breach of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining under international law should be accepted by Canadian courts and give rise to a presumption that there has also been a breach of equivalent rights in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Charter Challenge of Spending Limits on Political Advertising by Third Parties: *Attorney General of Ontario v. Working Families Coalition (Canada) Inc., et al.*

Counsel: Mae Nam, Rebecca Jones, Nabila Khan, Vibhu Sharma

CLAIHR intervened to argue that the egalitarian model, accepted as a central pillar for well-functioning electoral systems in international law, should inform the Court’s interpretation of whether amendments to the *Election Finances Act* violate section 3 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in imposing spending limits and other administrative reporting requirements on political advertising by third parties.

Charter Challenge of Canada’s Electoral System: *Fair Voting BC et. al. v. Canada (Attorney General)*

Counsel: David Rankin and Ankita Gupta

CLAIHR intervened in this appeal that challenges the constitutionality of Canada’s existing First-Past-the-Post electoral system. CLAIHR argued that international law should inform the scope of the interpretation of voting and equality rights in the *Charter*, and that political opinion as an established ground of discrimination in binding international law should inform the interpretation of s. 15 of the *Charter*.

Canadian complicity in torture abroad: *Abdelrazik v. Canada et al*

Counsel: Vibhu Sharma and Henry Off

CLAIHR was granted leave to appeal to address two issues: What may constitute extraterritorial “complicity” in international law by His Majesty the King where a Canadian citizen alleges they have been subjected to torture, mistreatment, unlawful or arbitrary detention by a foreign state; and how, in light of the evidence, international law as it relates to “complicity” might inform the Court’s interpretation of sections 7 and 12 of the *Charter*.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly: *University of Toronto v. Jane Doe et al*

Counsel: Adrienne Lei and Megan Phyper

CLAIHR, together with Amnesty International Canada, was granted intervener status to deliver arguments in a court case on the future of a protest encampment against Israel’s attacks in Gaza at the University of Toronto’s St. George campus. CLAIHR and Amnesty International Canada

submitted arguments concerning the international law on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and how this informs Section 2(c) of the *Charter*.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly: *Vancouver Island University v. Sara Kishawi et al*

Counsel: Karen Segal and Adrienne Lei

CLAIHR applied to intervene in a court case on the future of a protest encampment against Israel's attacks in Gaza at Vancouver Island University. CLAIHR proposed to submit arguments concerning international human rights law as it relates to the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and how this informs Section 2(c) of the *Charter*.

Education Committee

Chair: Isabel Dávila Pereira

CLAIHR's Education Committee is responsible for organizing and promoting educational events and discussions, as well as building CLAIHR's relationships with stakeholders to advance public education on international human rights.

Building Student Relationships

In 2023, CLAIHR's Education Committee identified a lack of established relationships with student chapters due to the variability in recruitment and stability of such chapters, as well as a break in communication and collaboration with student chapters as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2024, the Education Committee has:

1. Ensured and developed an established relationship with Osgoode Hall Law School's CLAIHR chapter, including by engaging with the student chapter to plan a career panel in January 2025.
2. Entered into discussions with law school attached programs to re-establish CLAIHR's programs in law schools, replicating a former program between CLAIHR and Osgoode Hall Law School's PBSC Chapter, through which students were able to publish supervised and edited pieces on budding issues of international human rights law in CLAIHR's blog.

EVENTS

Each year, CLAIHR typically hosts various events on international human rights topics of interest to Canadian lawyers. These events often qualify as continuing legal education programming. Previously, CLAIHR has worked with [law firms](#), the [Law Society of Ontario](#), and even [Nightwood Theatre](#) on these events.

This year, CLAIHR hosted one key event reflecting our Advocacy Committee's efforts on keeping Canada accountable for complicity in human rights abuses abroad. CLAIHR participated and co-organized a panel as part of the Law Union of Ontario (LUO) 50th annual conference.

LUO's 50th Anniversary Conference: Revolutionary Advocacy - Plenary Panel on Government Accountability: Challenging Canadian Complicity in Rights Abuses

In October, CLAIHR co-organized the Plenary Panel of the LUO's 50th annual conference. The Plenary panel focused on Canada's complicity and accountability in relation to human rights violations that are currently ongoing at home and abroad, including Canada's actions related to Israel such as the Canada-Israel arms trade, human rights violations by Canadian corporations abroad, particularly in the mining industry, and violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and migrant workers in Canada. CLAIHR's board member, James Yap participated in the panel alongside, Rachel Small, Shane Martínez, Meaghan Daniel and Hammam Farah. The panel was accredited for LSO professionalism hours.

Financial Statements

Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights

Unaudited Balance Sheet (as of March 31 2024, in Canadian Dollars)

Assets	March 31 2024	March 31 2023	March 31 2022
Cash	5,720	3,849	4,086
Holdbacks Recoverable			
Other Receivables			
Prepaid amounts			
Total Assets	5,720	3,849	4,086
Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	0	0	0
Unearned Revenue			-
GST Recoverable			
Total Liabilities	0	0	0
Retained Earnings	5,720	3,849	4,086
Total Liabilities and Retained Earnings	5,720	3,849	4,086

Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights

Unaudited Income Statement (for period ended March 31, 2024)

Revenue	March 31 2024	March 31 2023	March 31 2022
Membership donations	3,525	850	1,400
Other donations	900	963	603
Total Donations	4,425	1,813	2,003
Gross Fundraising	-	-	1,090
Less: Expenses			
Net Fundraising Income	-	-	1,090
Interest Income			
General Income			
Total Other Income	-	-	-
Total Revenue	4,425	1,813	3,093
Expenses			
Insurance	1,248	1,410	1,040
Email/Web	1,184	586	461
General Expenses	12	12	
Transaction Fees	109	42	84
Promotion Expenses			
Bank Fees			
Postage			
Program Expenses	-	-	250.00
Consulting			
Telephone			
Audit and Accounting			
Printing			
Unclassified			
Total Expenses	2,554	2,050	1,835
Net Income	1,871	(237)	1,258
Beginning Retained Earnings	3,849	4,086	2,828
Ending Retained Earnings	5,720	3,849	4,086