

Editorial: Volume 8

This year's volume of the *Global Campus Human Rights Journal (GCHRJ)* reflects the shifting landscape of human rights in a world marked by turbulence, contestation, and resilience. Issues 1 and 2 together reveal how human rights discourse operates across diverse geographies and themes from courts and constitutions to prisons, classrooms, and borderlands. Human rights are always shaped by power yet continually invoked by those demanding justice.

Issue 1: Human Rights in an Age of Fragmentation and Resistance

The first issue of Volume 8 is closely tied to current developments, where human rights face profound challenges worldwide. From widening geopolitical fractures to the rise of authoritarian populism, the universality of rights is increasingly questioned, even as people across the globe continue to mobilise a rights-based language in their daily struggles.

Several contributions in this issue illustrate these dynamics. One article examines the evolving jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the right to a healthy environment, highlighting how courts adapt established legal theories to address global crises. Another assesses the difficulties faced by Kenya's Superior Courts in adjudicating the rights of sexual minorities, underscoring that judicial independence is both contextually fragile and counter-majoritarian in nature.

Other contributions reveal the denial of rights in more private or domestic contexts. An analysis of India's Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens show how law simultaneously constructs inclusion and exclusion, with grave consequences for minorities. Similarly, a study of marital rape narratives in Egypt challenges entrenched cultural norms that normalise gender-based violence.

This issue also situates rights debates within global policy frameworks. An article on refugee education in Bangladesh contrasts local failures with the promises of the Sustainable Development Goals. Another dissects EU-Pakistan treaty dynamics, exposing structural asymmetries in their implementation. Meanwhile, a contribution on suicides in Italian prisons situates this crisis within the larger security conundrum of punishment and calls for dignity centred alternatives to carceral responses.

A recurring theme across these submissions is that human rights are neither fixed nor assured. They are frequently contested and constantly renegotiated in courts, legislatures, and public spaces. Yet the emphasis on accountability, equality, and dignity demonstrates how resilient rights discourse remains – functioning both as a moral compass and a legal framework, even amid fragmentation.

Issue 2: Human Rights Amid Resistance, Memory, and Migration

The second issue explores the changing terrain of human rights, where struggles for justice are bound up with contested histories, fragile democracies, and new patterns of displacement. These contributions remind us that while rights aspire to universality, their enactment is always mediated by political, historical, and socio-economic conditions.

The opening article addresses the criminalisation of environmental defenders in Latin America, showing how they often pay with their freedom or even their lives. Framed against the Escazú Agreement, the piece evaluates both the promises and shortcomings of regional mechanisms meant to protect defenders. Similarly, an article on Brazil's "right to truth" illustrates that without reckoning with past atrocities, authoritarian wounds cannot heal, and democratic futures remain at risk.

Historical continuities are also evident in the discussion of "colonial aphasia" and U.S. policies toward Nicaraguans, where displacement and intervention reverberate across generations. This theme of forced mobility continues in an analysis of Burmese migrants, refugees, and stateless people in Mae Sot after the 2021 military coup a stark reminder of how conflict and authoritarian resurgence displace communities.

The vulnerability of minorities in entrenched democracies is examined in an article on the Korean minority in Japan, which evaluates international obligations alongside persistent exclusionary practices. Questions of belonging and self-determination also emerge in a study of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region caught in the legal and political limbo of disputed sovereignty, where fundamental rights remain constitutionally unprotected.

Further contributions highlight how transitional justice can reproduce new dilemmas. An article on compulsory military training interrogates the militarisation of youth education, raising questions about reconciliation, memory, and the purposes of justice after conflict. Another situates today's multinational corporations as the "descendants of chartered companies", linking contemporary corporate power to a deeper history of colonial exploitation and insisting on renewed responsibility for persisting global inequalities.

Taken together, these articles capture the tense balance between progress and regression in global human rights practice. Memory and truth, migration and membership, corporate responsibility and ecological justice: each reflects the dual struggle for rights, both forward-looking and backward facing. This is a call to action that demands confronting legacies while resisting contemporary encroachments on dignity and autonomy.

Overall, GCHRJ volume 8 demonstrates that the role of scholars, practitioners, and activists is to ensure that rights do not remain abstract promises but become lived realities. Such critical engagement is essential if human rights are to retain their relevance and transformative power. As Editors, we are proud and hopeful to have provided a platform for these voices and narratives, and we reaffirm our commitment to fostering this culture of human rights centred discourse.

Thank you!

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