

The Council's new website

The Council has launched a brand new website. The site allows searches across all the Council's published reports and related working papers. You can get information about the progress of current and new research projects. You can comment on draft reports before they are finalised, and give us feedback on the quality and relevance of our work.

The site is multi-lingual (English, French and Spanish) and also allows you to download and order our publications. Have a look!

New report

Talking about terrorism

The Council will publish *Talking about Terrorism – Risks and Choices for Human Rights Organisations* in late April/early May. The new report explains why human rights organisations have been reluctant to use the term "terrorism" and summarises relevant international law on the subject. It emphasises the great and continuing importance of monitoring governments and defending civil liberties and due process. At the same time, it suggests that human rights organisations could usefully explore new policy avenues, that might make their advocacy more effective and relevant when talking to governments and to the public. Foreword by [Martin Scheinin](#), Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism.

Staff news

The Council is delighted and honoured to report that Research Director [Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona](#) was appointed Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty by the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 26. Magdalena will be in charge of one of the independent human rights monitoring and advisory mechanisms known as [Special Procedures](#). She will continue to work at the International Council on Human Rights Policy when she takes up her new responsibilities. Click [here](#) to consult the list of appointed mandate holders.

Update on Council projects

Climate change

As the UN Human Rights Council [acknowledged](#) in late March, climate change is already undermining the fulfilment of a broad range of internationally protected human rights, and these impacts will worsen with time. The Council recently circulated a [draft report](#) on the human rights dimensions of climate change to a range of experts in both disciplines for feedback. The report provides an overview of the many human rights concerns raised by climate change. It examines in some detail the usefulness of incorporating human rights criteria into future climate change scenarios, in order better to orient policy. The report notes the urgency of swift and targeted delivery of adaptation funding to head off human rights violations and highlights the relative lack of analysis to date on the local human rights impacts locally of global mitigation strategies. Finally, the report looks at both the utility of procedural rights to policy-making processes and the options of, and obstacles to, human rights litigation in addressing climate change-related harms. Research Director [Stephen Humphreys](#) spoke about the issues at the Conference of the Parties to the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC COP\)](#) in Bali in December and at the [Aspen Environmental Conference](#) in Aspen, Colorado, in March, and he is participating in a panel at the [International Environmental House](#) in Geneva on Friday, April 18.

Plural legal orders and human rights

The Council convened a consultation of experts on February 22-23 in Geneva to launch a new research project on plural legal orders and human rights. The project will examine the constitution and nature of plural legal orders and their human rights implications. The consultation included experts from across the world spanning diverse backgrounds, including lawyers, human rights activists engaged with indigenous peoples, minorities and women's rights, and academics working in the area of law and culture. Following the consultation a draft approach paper has been prepared and a research design drawn up. Twelve case studies will be commissioned and reviewed during two research workshops, to be held later in 2008. A final report is expected by the end of the year. A formal concept paper will be ready for publication by the end of June 2008. For more information please contact Research Director [Vijay Nagaraj](#).

Privacy and technology

Our privacy has never seemed under greater threat than it is today. The sources are both public and private. The reasons are as likely to be simple commercial advantage as national security, and may include public health or merely a naïve desire for greater social connectivity. Technology is often blamed for the recession of privacy, but the problem has as much to do with inadequate public knowledge on the means and capacities of data collection and inadequate governance of its control and applications, particularly across borders. The Council is in the early stages of research into the links between privacy and technology that will aim to revive privacy as a human right. The project starts with the observations that personal privacy is a requirement underpinning the enjoyment of most or all human rights and that technological progress can and does advance, as much as undermine, individual privacy and autonomy. The project will follow three tracks, looking at the genealogical, cultural and legal dimensions of the privacy-technology relation, and attending to personal needs for secrecy, anonymity, and confidentiality. A research design will become available in coming months.

Catching the Wind – Tenth anniversary reflection

The Council's newest report, *Catching the Wind – Human Rights*, highlights recent trends of, and foreseeable dilemmas for, future challenges to human rights work. Published to mark the Council's tenth anniversary, it contains a preface by our Chair, [Hina Jilani](#) and is introduced by [Thomas Hammarberg](#), the Council's founding Chair and current Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe. *Catching the Wind* raises large issues in broad terms and should be read as a reflection, designed to stimulate discussion. In reviewing the recent past, it examines how human rights work has evolved and engaged with issues across the board – war and conflict, impunity, terrorism and security, reform of the state, governance and capacity-building, decentralisation and privatisation, development and poverty, the human rights responsibilities of business, UN reform, human rights defenders, women's rights, migrants and asylum seekers, the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, sexual rights, culture, the environment. It considers some of the large issues that lie ahead – urbanisation, climate change, technological and scientific innovation, human movement, ageing, the re-empowerment of religion, employment creation, the challenge of global governance, the influence of transnational crime, the emergence of transnational elites.