

## **LRWC, the United Nations, and the International Criminal Court**

**8 July 2026**

In May and June 2026, LRWC continued to contribute to the work of the UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedures, and the UN Human Rights Council's 62<sup>st</sup> regular session. The focus of LRWC's statements was on the situation of human rights defenders in Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, and Occupied Palestinian Territories, including those affected by unlawful sanctions targeting International Criminal Court (ICC) judges, prosecutors, UN Special Procedures, and Palestinian human rights NGOs. LRWC co-sponsored statements of other NGOs on concerns about attacks against lawyers in Guatemala, Venezuela, and Belarus. In May and June 2026, LRWC contributed to the work of the ICC through cooperation with the Coalition for the ICC (CICC), of which LRWC is a longstanding member.

### **Human Rights Council, 62nd Session, 15 June to 8 July 2026 (HRC62)**

During the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, 15 June to 8 July 2026, LRWC led the drafting and delivery of two joint oral video statements, joined three oral video statements drafted by other NGOs, and joined a pre-session advocacy submission to the Council. LRWC worked closely with NGOs with UN ECOSOC consultative status, including:

- International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI);
- Law Society of England and Wales (LSEW);
- Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L); and
- Zagros Human Rights Center (Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l'Homme).

LRWC also worked with NGOs without consultative status, including:

- OVD-Info (with focus on legal representation and human rights in Russia);
- Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre (with focus on legal representation and human rights in Russia); and
- Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (UK-based NGO with focus on human rights in the Middle East, particularly Iran).

### **HRC62 Oral video statements**

LRWC was successful in obtaining two speaking slots. Many other issues and situations in other countries are of ongoing concern, including China, Myanmar, Turkey, worldwide deterioration of the rule of law, and the overall financial crisis of the UN, particularly affecting the ability of the

UN human rights system, including independent experts, to adequately fulfil their mandates. No general debates were held at the 62<sup>nd</sup> session, which significantly limited NGO participation.

LRWC worked with other human rights organizations to deliver or co-sponsor the following oral statements (in date order):

- **23 June 2026: Chilling effects of digital surveillance on human rights defenders.** LRWC led the drafting of an oral video statement on the chilling effects of digital surveillance on human rights defenders, including women defenders, in Afghanistan, Iran and Russia, as well as those affected by Israeli surveillance of Palestinian defenders and US sanctions against ICC judges and prosecutors, the UN Special Rapporteur on Occupied Palestinian Territories, and three Palestinian human rights NGOs. The video statement was joined by the IBAHRI and Zagros with endorsement by Memorial Human Rights Defense Center, OVD-Info, and the Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, NGOs without consultative status. The statement called for “urgent adoption of international and national legal frameworks to ensure protection of defenders and for a binding international instrument on digital surveillance technologies.” The statement can be viewed on [UN WebTV](#) at 01:12:27. The text is available on the [UN website](#) or [LRWC’s website](#).
- **25 June 2026: Iran: Escalating attacks on lawyers defending human rights.** LRWC led the drafting of a statement on the situation of human rights lawyers in Iran for an interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers. The statement was drafted by LRWC with important contributions by CSHR. The statement was co-sponsored by L4L, LSEW, IBAHRI, and Zagros, and endorsed by CSHR. It was delivered in person by LRWC’s delegate. See the video statement on [UN WebTV](#) at 02:27:30. See the text of the statement on the [UN Website](#) or on the [LRWC website](#). A [resolution was adopted by consensus](#) renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. The resolution also affirmed “the importance of independent and self-governing bar associations” and underscored “the importance for States of developing and implementing an effective and sustainable legal aid system.” The resolution also noted that the *Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer* “offers States a standard for the protection of lawyers, allowing for objective measurement of progress and identification of gaps.”
- **25 June 2026: Harassment of lawyers in Guatemala.** LRWC and LSEW joined a planned oral statement led by L4L seeking an end to persistent harassment and criminalization and arbitrary detention of lawyers, particularly those involved in investigating corruption or human rights violations. Over 100 lawyers and justice system operators have been forced into exile while others face surveillance, threats and intimidation. Due to a technical error, this joint video statement could not be aired. The planned statement was a planned follow-up to a fact-finding mission to Guatemala in [March 2026](#) by jurists of L4L, the International Observatory of Lawyers at Risk (OIAD), the *Asociación de Abogados, Abogadas, Jueces y Fiscales de Derechos Humanos de América Latina y el Caribe* (AJUFIDH), *Asociación de Juezas y Jueces para la Democracia* (JJpD), and *Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de España* (APDHE). LRWC plans to continue working with other legal organization to monitor the situation of lawyers and human rights defenders in Guatemala.

- **26 June 2026: Venezuela: Hostile environment for the practice of law.** LRWC joined a statement led by L4L and also joined by the IBAHRI and the ICJ concerning continued harassment, surveillance, and arbitrary detention lawyers for representing clients in politically sensitive cases, and lack of independence of bar associations from government interests. See the full statement on the [UN Website](#).
- **29 June 2026: Belarus: Sustained repression of lawyers and erosion of judicial independence.** LRWC joined a statement led by the LSEW expressing grave concern about ongoing repression of the legal profession in Belarus together with erosion of judicial independence, and arbitrary government interference with licensing and discipline of lawyers resulting in disbarment, arbitrary imprisonment or exile of lawyers for doing their job. See the full statement on the [UN Website](#).

## HRC62 pre-session joint advocacy submissions

**Eritrea: Extend the Special Rapporteur’s mandate.** LRWC was invited to join a letter coordinated by Defend Defenders ahead of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council and supported by 31 NGOs in ECOSOC consultative status. The joint letter, sponsored by 31 NGOs in UN Consultative Status, called on HRC member States to support a resolution to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea. The letter stressed that Eritrea’s human rights situation remains marked by grave violations, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and severe restrictions on civic space in a context of entrenched impunity. See the [full letter](#), published in English and French on 12 May 2026. The Council adopted such a [resolution](#) on 7 July 2026 by a recorded vote of 23 in favour, 6 against, and 17 abstentions.

## Side Event at the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council

At the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, LRWC was among over two dozen named supporters of a side-event cosponsored by the IBAHRI, L4L and the ICJ, entitled “Women in Law - Overcoming Gender-Based Barriers and Advancing Access to Justice, held 25 June 2026 at the Palais de Nations in Geneva. The event was available in person only.

### Speakers:

- Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers;
- Ivana Krstić, Vice-Chair, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls
- Sara Carnegie, Legal Projects Director, IBA (video message);
- Shabnam Moinipour, Iranian legal expert;
- Sandrine Giroud, immediate past President of the Geneva Bar Association and Vice-President of the Women Bar Leaders Association (Association des Bâtonnières du Monde);
- Judge Radmila Dragicevic-Dicic, Commissioner, ICJ;



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Moderator: Francesca Restifo, Senior Human Rights Lawyer and UN Representative, IBAHRI.

### **Upcoming sessions of the Human Rights Council**

LRWC plans to participate in upcoming [sessions](#) of the Council as follows:

- 63<sup>rd</sup> session, scheduled for 7 September – 9 October 2026;
- Dates of the 64<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>, and 66<sup>th</sup> sessions in 2027 have not yet been set.

### **International Criminal Court (ICC)**

In May and June 2026, LRWC continued to participate in the work of the Coalition for the ICC. In May 2026, the CICC issued a report entitled “[Criminalising Accountability: The US lawfare against the international justice system.](#)”