

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to release Special Issue 23(2) of *The Journal of Human Rights*, focusing on human rights cities. In an increasingly urbanized world, the intersections between human rights and urban spaces have become significant in shaping our understanding of justice, equality, and social change.

Our special issue opens with an insightful introduction by Jackie Smith and Michael Goodhart, exploring the dynamics of human rights globalization in an urbanized world. The issue then examines specific dimensions of human rights within different urban contexts.

Martha Davis, Manisha Desai, Jackie Smith, and Gaea Patrice Morales all separately contribute perspectives within the context of the United States. Davis explores the road to establishing a national human rights institution, which would bolster rights protections domestically within the US. Desai reflects on the "Making Global Local" campaign, with a particular focus on the Cities for CEDAW initiative, showcasing grassroots efforts to promote gender equality. Smith returns with a thought-provoking examination of human rights cities and their role in advancing decolonization and racial justice on a local level. Focusing on Los Angeles, Morales offers a case study demonstrating how cities can effectively utilize global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals through the 2030 Agenda to advance human rights on a local scale. For further exploration of human rights cities in the United States context, see work previously published in JHR, including "[Mapping perceptions of human rights and cultivating Boston as a human rights city](#)" (JHR 19(3)).

Expanding our scope beyond the United States, Anthony Chase contributes to the JHR 23.2 special issue with a case study on Colombia, highlighting trans-local lessons taken from transitional justice experiences in that country— in particular, the transformative power of truth, memory, and art. Michael Goodhart, Tina Reuter, and Jackie Smith together explore the role universities play in advancing human rights within urban settings, emphasizing the importance of academic institutions as catalysts for social change. In a similar vein, previously published work in JHR assesses the engagement of universities in human rights initiatives, including "[International human rights teachers in Myanmar universities: The individual constraints of structure on intermediaries](#)" (JHR 22(2)).

This is not the first time JHR has published work on human rights in cities — see, for example, "[Human Rights and the City: Including Marginalized Communities in Urban Development and Smart Cities](#)" (JHR 18(4)). We hope that the current special issue sparks intellectual engagement and practical action on human rights cities, encouraged by the protagonists who wrote the articles and are involved in the movements discussed in these pages.

Sincerely,
The JHR Editorial Team