

Outlaw Annual Symposium: LGBTQ Rights Around the World

Friday, November 15, 2013

12:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Georgetown University Law Center
McDonough 200

12:30 – 1 p.m.

Registration and lunch

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Attitudes and Laws:

Challenges facing the LGBTQ community abroad

Moderated by

Mark Bromley, Council Chair, The Council for Global Equality

Panelists:

Fanny Gómez-Lugo, Human Rights Specialist, Unit for the Rights of LGBTI Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Wade McMullen, Staff Attorney, International Strategic Litigation Unit, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
Mindy Michels, Program Officer, Dignity for All: LGBTI Assistance Program, Freedom House
Kenneth Kero-Mentz, Foreign Policy Fellow, Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus

3:15 – 5:00 p.m.

Promoting Change:

International efforts to advance LGBTQ equality

Moderated by

Rachel Levitan, Senior Counsel for Refugees and Migration, HIAS

Panelists:

Jesse Bernstein, Program Officer, Office of Global Programs, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State
Regina Waugh, Foreign Affairs Officer, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State
Michael Sisitzky, Staff Attorney, Immigration Equality

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Reception and light refreshments

Co-sponsored by ACLU of GULC and SALS A

Rachel Levitan is Senior Counsel for Refugees and Migration at HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. She works to serve the legal, social, and medical needs of LGBTI refugees. She advocates in support of vulnerable refugee populations, including children and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. She also manages an international interfaith campaign for faith leaders to welcome refugees and stand against xenophobia, entitled “Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders.” Ms. Levitan holds an LLB from the University of British Columbia. Before joining HIAS, she worked at RefugePoint, ORAM (Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration), the Center for Immigrants’ Rights, and at the firm Steel, Bellman, Ritz & Clark, P.C. She also has lived in Turkey, working to support refugees there.

Jesse Bernstein is a Program Officer with the Office of Global Programs of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State. His programming work supports the Global Equality Fund, a collaborative effort led by the Department of State to connect government, companies, and NGOs in empowering LGBT persons everywhere to live freely. Before joining State, Mr. Bernstein worked at Human Rights First, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). He has also lived in Uganda, where he served as a Research Fellow at Makerere University’s Refugee Law Project. Mr. Bernstein holds an MSc in Human Rights from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a BA from Sarah Lawrence College.

Regina Waugh is a Foreign Affairs Officer with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State. Her policy work supports the Global Equality Fund, a collaborative effort led by the Department of State to connect government, companies, and NGOs in empowering LGBT persons everywhere to live freely. Prior to her position at State, Ms. Waugh clerked with an Immigration Court for the Executive Office of Immigration Review, Department of Justice; for the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice; and for the National Center for Youth Law. She holds a JD from University of California, Berkeley School of Law, a Master’s of Public Policy degree from the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy, and a BA from UC Berkeley.

Michael Sisitzky is a staff attorney at Immigration Equality, the national organization leading the fight for equality under U.S. immigration law for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV positive individuals. His work focuses on legal representation and advocacy in the context of family and relationship recognition. While the Defense of Marriage Act was still in force, Michael helped LGBT families explore their options for temporary visas to remain together in the U.S. and represented couples pursuing administrative and discretionary relief before the Department of Homeland Security’s immigration agencies. Michael continues to advocate with the Obama Administration and members of Congress for full implementation of the DOMA ruling in the immigration context, as well as for broader reforms to our immigration laws to better protect LGBT families, asylum-seekers, and immigrant detainees. He is a class of 2012 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center and a member of the New York bar.

Outlaw is Georgetown University Law Center's lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and ally—or LGBTQIA—student group. Its purpose is to promote LGBTQIA equality, to educate the Georgetown University Law Center community on issues affecting LGBTQIA people, and to create a welcoming social environment for LGBTQIA students and their allies at the Georgetown University Law Center.

Every year Outlaw hosts a symposium on a topic of importance to the LGBTQIA community. This year's symposium focuses on the rights of LGBTQ people around the world, the challenges LGBTQ people face abroad, and the efforts being made to advance equality for LGBTQ people everywhere.

Outlaw sincerely thanks today's panelists, who have kindly donated their time and expertise, and guests of this year's symposium.

Guest Panelists

Mark Bromley helped launch the Council for Global Equality to encourage a clearer and stronger American voice on international lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights concerns. Mr. Bromley previously worked for more than eleven years at Global Rights, where he served in various program management positions. During his tenure at Global Rights, he coordinated donor relations and helped open field offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Morocco, Nigeria and India. In 2005, he launched an organization-wide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Initiative. Mr. Bromley has also regularly monitored developments within the U.N. human rights system. He conducted research on sexual violence in support of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia, and he reviewed international law standards in legal briefs filed by Global Rights, as amicus curiae, in human rights cases before U.S. and international courts. From 2001-2002, Mr. Bromley served as a Foreign Policy Fellow in the office of U.S. Senator Russ Feingold. During that period, he staffed Senator Feingold's work on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including the Senator's Chairmanship of the Africa Subcommittee. Mr. Bromley holds a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia School of Law and a BSFS from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He has published on human rights and international law issues, and has served as an adjunct professor for the human rights clinic at the University of Virginia School of Law and at Nova Southeastern University, Shepard Broad Law Center. He lives in Washington with his husband, David Salie and their daughter Tallulah.

Fanny Gómez-Lugo has worked as a Human Rights Specialist with the Unit for the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual and Intersex Persons (LGBTI), within the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), since its inception in February 2012. She has been working with the IACHR since 2007, initially as a fellow for the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women. Ms. Gómez-Lugo is a Venezuelan attorney and a graduate of Andrés Bello Catholic University (2003). She earned a Master of Laws degree with a concentration in international law at McGill University (2006). On a scholarship from the University of Chile, she pursued graduate studies in "Human Rights and Women: Theory and Practice" (2008). She completed the Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program (WLPPFP) at the Georgetown University Law Center (2010). Previously, she was an external consultant for Human Rights Watch and worked with the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network to draft model legislation on violence and discrimination against women in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ms. Gómez-Lugo has published articles and given lectures on women's human rights, sexual and reproductive rights and health law, and the inter-American human rights system. She is currently an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown University.

Wade McMullen is a Staff Attorney with the International Strategic Litigation Unit at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights (RFK Center). In this capacity Mr. McMullen brings high impact human rights cases before international tribunals and advises local counsel on domestic cases. Mr. McMullen currently represents clients before the Inter-American Commission on Human rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the United Nations Treaty Bodies, and other regional courts on issues ranging from the right to protest in Zimbabwe, to the right to nationality in the Dominican Republic, freedom of association and assembly in Uganda, and right to truth in Cuba. He has also advised local partners on LGBTI rights in Uganda, Nigeria, and Kenya. Mr. McMullen received his J.D. from the New York University School of Law, where he served as a researcher for the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions and helped represent two Yemeni survivors of the U.S. government's rendition and secret detention program.

Mindy Michels is a Program Officer at Freedom House for the Dignity for All: LGBTI Assistance Program. She has been an advocate on LGBTI issues in the U.S. and internationally for more than 20 years. Before working with Dignity, she lived in Albania and worked with Albanian activists to co-found an LGBT organization and develop a grassroots LGBT movement in the country. She also helped to pass a comprehensive Albanian national non-discrimination law that included both 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity.' For her contributions, she received the 2010 Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Overseas. Prior to moving to Albania, Ms. Michels was the director of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Resource Center at American University in Washington, D.C. from 1996 -- 2006. Ms. Michels holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from American University.

Kenneth Kero-Mentz is currently serving one year as a Foreign Policy Fellow on the staff of the Congressional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Equality Caucus. Ken joined the U.S. Department of State in January 2000 and did his consular tour in Rio de Janeiro before returning to Washington where he covered Greece and Turkey issues. Following the second Gulf War, Ken volunteered to serve Baghdad where he was tasked with rebuilding the Iraqi National Assembly building and laying the groundwork for the Assembly's secretariat. Upon returning to the U.S., Ken studied intensive economic theory for ten months before moving to Berlin where he spent one year as an exchange diplomat at the German Federal Foreign Office (covering German/Albanian relations) followed by three years working on political/military issues at the U.S. Embassy there. While there, Ken married his husband, David, a native of Berlin. Thereafter, they both went in Colombo, Sri Lanka for two years where Ken focused on economic, environmental, scientific and health issues. He next served as the Senior Advisor on LGBT issues (among other things) in the Department's Bureau of European Affairs, and covered those same issues globally in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Ken has been an active member of GLIFAA (Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies) since joining State, including three stints on the Board, including one as GLIFAA's President for 2012-2013. He also serves on the Governing Board of AFSA (American Foreign Service Association). Prior to joining State, Ken spent five years working on Capitol Hill, most recently as Legislative Director for then-Representative Ellen Tauscher (D-CA). Ken was raised in Vermont and received his BA in International Relations and a Master's in Public Administration from the George Washington University in Washington, DC.