

Report from the JLC Chair 2024/25

It has been a privilege and a delight to have served as Chair of the Junior Lawyers Committee (JLC) over the past year. I am pleased to report on the exciting progress that this year's JLC has made during our tenure.

Our biggest change has been in our name. We became the Junior Lawyers Committee in July. We understand that many of those who come into law are career changers and mature students, and that the term "young" can inadvertently create the perception of a barrier to accessing the legal profession. We recognised that "junior" is more reflective of the modern-day profession, and we were pleased to make this change in an effort to increase our inclusivity.

Our first event of the year was our annual Lord Kerr Essay Competition, spearheaded by Ananya Basu, and the 2024 essay question was "Should the rights to freedom of expression and assembly protect disruptive protests?". We received an impressive number of responses and were delighted to announce Inigo Hunnable as our winner, with Sebastian Dack-Owens and Cassandra Somers-Joce as our runners-up. We celebrated our winners on 15 July at a well-attended prize-giving at CMS, where we had four fantastic panellists speak on the Public Order Act 2023. We would like to give our thanks to CMS for hosting us, and to Adam Wagner, Professor David Mead, Raj Chada and Jodie Beck for a fascinating and insightful discussion on such a pertinent issue. We are also grateful for the generosity of Patrick Kerr, without whom this competition could not go ahead.

We hosted our flagship Careers Day event in October, kindly hosted once again by Goldsmiths University, Department of Law. We organised a hybrid event to accommodate those living across the UK, and this year ran panels alongside one another to give attendees greater choice. We had an array of panels covering building a sustainable and practical career in human rights, business and human rights, climate change and indigenous peoples, and building resilience in human rights work. We had a keynote speech from Jason Pobjoy and a networking session to enable participants to meet like-minded individuals. We are proud to share that we received fantastic feedback and are pleased to have been able to strengthen this popular event. We are grateful to all of our speakers for sharing their expertise and to our sponsors: Goldsmiths University, Department of Law and Leigh Day. The JLC thanks Bianca Pătulea for her dedication and commitment to the event.

We ended our year with the Judicial Review Mooting Competition and held the final in January at the Royal Courts of Justice. The competition this year concerned an inquest and was won by Ananya Kumar-Banerjee and Colin Vanelli, with Isaac Channon and Tom Fior Harcourt as our runners-up. We are grateful to Lord Justice Singh, Philip Rule KC and Shoaib Khan for judging the final, and congratulate our finalists on their achievement. Our winning pair received a mini-pupillage with No5 Barristers' Chambers and all finalists received a signed copy of Baroness Chakrabarti's "Human Rights: The Case for the Defence". We are grateful to Philip Rule KC for writing the problem, to all of our judges across the three stages of the competition for their time and efforts, to the Royal Courts of Justice for providing a formidable venue for our

final, and to No5 Barristers' Chambers and Baroness Chakrabarti for our fantastic prizes. The JLC thanks Jemima Lovatt and Alex Kane for their work to make this competition happen.

I speak for the entire JLC when I say that we have thoroughly enjoyed our time and are pleased to have continued and strengthened the work of our predecessors over the past year. We thank the EC and, in particular, Joe Middleton KC, Shoaib Khan, Lui Asquith and Marianne Schönle for their continued and unwavering support for the JLC. I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the JLC members for their hard work, passion and tenacity, and give a special thank you to the JLC's Vice-Chair, Ananya Basu.

I am pleased to present this report to the Human Rights Lawyers Association.

Ravina Bahra
Chair, Junior Lawyers Committee
Human Rights Lawyers Association