
2018 Vancouver International Humanitarian Law Conference

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Enforcing Humanity

Speaker Biographies

Phyllis Argue

Phyllis' experience in community engagement, non-profit leadership and strategic planning brings a unique perspective to her work as the Director, Community Relations and Planning for BC & Yukon. In this role, Phyllis engages in external relations with all levels of government, academic institutions, the corporate sector and community organizations. Her role encompasses exploring partnerships with a view to building community capacity and initiatives to support individuals and families. Phyllis' knowledge and experience in project and change management combined with over 11 years in leadership roles at Canadian Red Cross has led to her role as the focal point for implementing major projects in BC & Yukon. Phyllis sits on the TELUS Victoria Community Board and brings her boundless energy and sense of humour to all of her work.

Jonathan Somer

Jonathan Somer is currently the Senior Legal Advisor for the Canadian Red Cross. He is a senior expert in international law and policy, specializing in International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights and Criminal Law, counter-terrorism measures, and violence reduction. He has a BA from the University of Western Ontario, a JD from the University of British Columbia, and a LLM from the University Centre for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, Geneva. Jonathan has worked for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and has been a consultant for the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR), Harvard University as well as the International Law Department of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2011, Jonathan founded his own consultancy, Persona Grata Consulting, where he advised international organizations, states, think-tanks and NGOs on strategic and operational issues related to law and policy in armed conflict and situations of insecurity. He sits on several experts groups related to armed non-state actors, and is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies.

James Stewart

James Stewart is an Associate Professor at Allard Law School. He joined UBC in 2009 after spending two years as an Associate-in-Law at Columbia Law School in New York. Prior to his time at Columbia, he was an Appeals Counsel with the Prosecution of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. He also worked for the Legal Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Prosecution of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. James has a BA in philosophy and a LLB from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. He completed a Diplôme d'études approfondies in international humanitarian law at the Université de Genève as a Boursier d'excellence de la Confédération suisse and a JSD at Columbia Law School in New York City. He was also the Chair of Editorial Board of Journal of International Criminal Justice between 2007 and 2010. He is currently an appointed member of the Institute of International Humanitarian Law.

Ian Brasure

Ian Brasure is the ICRC's Deputy Legal Advisor in the Regional Delegation for the United States and Canada, based in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the ICRC, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 30 years and concluded his career as Deputy Legal Advisor at the White House within the National Security Council. Ian enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve and achieved the rank of sergeant before becoming a commissioned officer. Amongst his many deployments, Ian participated in the initial introduction of ground forces into Afghanistan (2001); service in Mosul, Iraq; and participation in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in Liberia. Ian holds an (L.L.M.) in International Law from the Army's Judge Advocate General's School. During his deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan, Ian

served a number of positions, including the SJA for Marine Corps Combat Development Command and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Strategic Command.

Fazineh Keita

Fazineh is the founder, director and president of Innocence Lost Foundation which is a charity aiming to rehabilitate child soldiers. He is currently an actor and musician based in Vancouver. Fazineh was born and raised in Sierra Leone, West Africa. After the civil war, he released his first political album, Paddy Dem, which focused on corruption and led to political change in the country. He migrated to Canada after facing back lash from the then Sierra Leonean government for his album. As a former child soldier, Fazineh is using his experience to bring awareness to the realities of war, and as a graduate from Vancouver Film School, he is using his skills to tell stories, educate youth, and to help people find healing through art.

Dr. Ola Dunin-Bell

Dr. Ola Dunin-Bell is a surgical aid worker with the Canadian Red Cross Emergency Response Unit (ERU). She splits her time between her hometown of Oakville, Ontario – where she is a member of the medical faculty at McMaster University in Hamilton and the University of Toronto, Mississauga – and Whistler, B.C. In 2017, she travelled to Bangladesh in response to the Myanmar refugee crisis. After the earthquake in Nepal (2015), Dr Dunin-Bell was stationed in Dhunche with her ERU team, and has also worked in Jordan helping with refugee screening. She has volunteered in Ethiopia with the Canadian Network for International Surgery, and with the Himalayan Rescue Association in Nepal. Dr. Dunin-Bell has her MD from Queen's University and completed a Surgery Fellowship at the University of Toronto. She is currently working on her Masters in Global Health Policy with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, part of the University of London, with a thesis looking at international guidelines for foreign healthcare workers responding to natural disasters in developing countries.

Samantha Jean

Samantha currently works with the Canadian Red Cross as a violence and abuse Prevention Educator and Instructor Trainer. She has worked and volunteered since 2009 with both the Canadian and American Red Cross Societies, in roles such as International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Advisor and IHL Action Campaign Regional Coordinator. Her experience includes teaching workshops and coordinating events that focus on IHL. Samantha is an active and passionate humanitarian advocate who has worked with youth for more than a decade. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of the Fraser Valley and lives with her husband, and their cat, Arista, in Langley.