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Fifteen years! It’s hard to believe. As I write these words, planning is underway for the celebration of our Center for Human Rights’ fifteen-year anniversary, and I find myself reflecting on all the changes this decade and a half has brought. In some ways, our Center still feels “new”—we’re still small, scrappy, and imbued with that same sense of urgency, squeezing as much impact as we can out of every resource we lay our hands on. (In some ways, I hope we always will be like that; if we’re truly aiming to change the world, we should never get too comfortable.)

In other ways, though, our capacity has grown immensely. Our Center began in 2009–10 with an unfunded mandate; when we were able to cobble together funds from various sources to support a single half-time student assistant it was a major victory. In this past academic year of 2022–23, we disbursed $249,541 to students across a range of disciplines, campuses, and degree programs. Some of these students worked on CHR projects—helping gather and analyze data, drafting public records requests or research reports, bolstering partner organizations’ on-the-ground work—and others received support to carry out projects of their own design, ranging from hands-on human rights work to doctoral dissertations. In the past two years, we’ve also worked to expand the campus-community collaborations that lie at the core of our UWCHR model by welcoming two new interdisciplinary projects into the fold (see projects updates about the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project on page 11 and Researching for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights on page 14).

Looking back, what’s been most transformational about the UWCHR’s work has been the advancement of this model of students research change, whereby UW graduate and undergraduate students, supervised by faculty with advanced methodological training and issue expertise, conduct research at the service of real-world organizations fighting for change. When it works, it’s a virtuous cycle: students have unparalleled learning opportunities to get involved in research with real-world relevancy; our partner organizations gain the insights of academic experts, tailored to the needs of their day-to-day efforts; and faculty relish the opportunity to contribute knowledge to real-world justice efforts. For most of us, these are among our most fulfilling professional experiences. For me, this vision captures the promise at the heart of the modern public university.

So what lies ahead in the next fifteen years? I hope that in the years to come our Center will have the opportunity to apply this model to a wider swath of pressing human rights issues, including racial, gender, and climate justice both within and beyond our borders. We will welcome new directors, community partners, methodologies, and challenges, but I hope we also hold fast to the spirit of innovation through struggle that forged our path in these early days. And I hope all of you—students, alumni, supporters, professors, and policymakers alike—will join us in 2024 to lift a glass in celebration of all that’s been won, but then, to roll up our sleeves in commitment, for all that remains to be done, together.

“I HOPE ALL OF YOU—STUDENTS, ALUMNI, SUPPORTERS, PROFESSORS, AND POLICYMAKERS ALIKE—WILL JOIN US IN 2024 TO LIFT A GLASS IN CELEBRATION OF ALL THAT’S BEEN WON, BUT THEN, TO ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES IN COMMITMENT, FOR ALL THAT REMAINS TO BE DONE, TOGETHER.”

Angelina Snodgrass Godoy
Helen H. Jackson Chair in Human Rights
Director, Center for Human Rights
Professor of International Studies and Law, Societies, and Justice
AVA CAIRNS

Ava is a junior majoring in law, societies, and justice with a minor in international studies. As a member of the Access to Information Research team for the Unfinished Sentences project, they work to write and track FOIA requests and MDR requests in hopes of receiving new documents that can be shared with descendants of victims of human rights abuses in Central America, particularly in El Salvador. In their free time, they love to read, play soccer, and learn about how human rights work intersects with the practice of science and medicine.

K. JING HENG CHEN

Jing Heng (Kimberly) is a junior double majoring in political science and gender, women, and sexuality studies with a minor in labor studies. They work with the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights project, doing research on the criminalization of unlicensed massage workers and sex workers, and grassroots outreach for migrant Asian massage workers. In their free time, they enjoy playing electric guitar and watching films.

JADE DUDOWARD

Jade Dudoward is a member of the Tsimshian Band from Lax Kw’alaams British Columbia, Canada. Currently, he is a senior at the University of Washington double majoring in American Indian studies and environmental science and terrestrial resource management. Jade joined the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project in 2022, bringing his passion for fostering loving connections with nature by engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in the outdoors.

DAVID SWAY-LA DUENAS

David Sway-la Duenas is a Puyallup Tribal member, Chief Leschi Schools Lushootseed teacher, and a student at UW Tacoma. David is part of Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project, working in partnership with students at Chief Leschi Schools and UW students to promote tribal sovereignty and environmental restoration.

GUADALUPE ALEX GONZALEZ

Alex is an undergraduate student majoring in political science as well as law, societies, and justice, and minoring in human rights and labor studies. As a research intern for the Center for Human Rights, he primarily focuses on investigating the practices of ICE and its contractors. He is the president of Liberated Voices WA, a UW student group working to uplift and protect the rights of immigrants in Washington state, and he has previously volunteered as an interpreter for La Resistencia, the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, and the UW School of Law’s Immigration Clinic.
NICOLE GRABIEL
Nicole is a senior majoring in history and global and regional studies. She joined UWCHR in fall 2022 and works with the Unfinished Sentences project to document human rights violations stemming from El Salvador’s armed conflict (1980–1992). With the Center’s support, she is also working on an undergraduate thesis about the international dimensions of conflict in Central America. For fun, Nicole loves spending time outside, reading, and playing with her pup, Indigo.

PRIYA HENDRY
Priya is a second-year student majoring in drama with a focus on performance. She joined the UWCHR in spring 2022 working on the Immigrant Rights Observatory project, which monitors compliance with, and efficacy of, the Keep Washington Working Act and the Courts Open to All Act. Outside of research, she enjoys reading, writing poetry, and attempting new recipes.

LUKE HISERMAN
Luke is a first-year master’s student in the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs. He assists the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability team with application and grant work for ongoing collaborations with Salish Sea Tribes to promote a greater understanding of tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and environmental restoration. In his free time, Luke enjoys playing tennis, hiking, and reading.

NANCYROSE HOUSTON
Nancyrose Houston is a concurrent student in the Master of International Studies and Master of Public Administration programs. She collaborates with a team on the Immigrant Rights Observatory project, which monitors immigrant rights and compliance with the Keep Washington Working Act. Nancyrose loves tending to her vegetable garden and showering her dog, Puppet, with adoration.

XIAOXU HELEN HUANG
Helen is a student in the Department of History at the University of Washington. Helen works with the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights project, researching how local and state laws might impact the rights and autonomy of Asian massage parlor workers in the King County area.
LUKAS ILLA
Lukas is a senior majoring in international studies with a minor in labor studies. He joined the UWCHR at the start of 2022, researching alongside the ICE Air team. His particular focus is on identifying the financial connections between collegiate sports teams and the private charter companies that facilitate ICE deportations. In his free time, Lukas enjoys attempting to perform improv comedy and crafting dioramas.

MARÍA VIGNAU LORIA
María is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology. She joined the UWCHR in summer 2020 to work with the quantitative research team on a project that seeks to understand the consequences of immigration detention capacity on enforcement patterns. She enjoys watching and playing soccer, live music, and traveling with family and friends.

DESTINY MORENO
Destiny is a rising second-year law student at the University of Washington. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of California at San Diego and a master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin. In the academic space, she has primarily worked on surveillance and criminal justice policy, drawing inspiration from her own experience as a system-impacted individual. She also has an American Dingo who loves to frequent Zoom meetings.

LANQING REN
Lanqing is a senior double majoring in communication and in education, communities, and organizations. She works on the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights project, connecting with Asian massage workers, researching local policies around licensure, and uplifting labor rights. She loves international cuisine, hip-hop music, and nature museums.

JESSICA ROSE
Jessica is a graduate student in the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs, specializing in Indigenous environmental justice. She was awarded the FLAS Fellowship for the First Nation language Nuu-chah-nulth in 2021–22 and 2022–23. She joined the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project in 2021, and has since been a lead on the digital story about resistance to the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) pipeline project.
2022-2023 STUDENT RESEARCHERS

KRISTIAAN THOMPSON
Kris is a master’s student in the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs. He graduated from the Jackson School of International Studies in 2017 and since then has been passionate about how Indigenous rights and environmentalism work hand in hand in the Salish Sea and around the world. He spends most of his spare time near the water—sailing, paddling, swimming, and surfing around the Pacific Northwest.

CHENXI RITA YANG
Chenxi is a junior who is double majoring in education, communities, and organizations and in art. She works on the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights project, managing social media, engaging community and audience, and developing and supporting team members and Asian massage workers. In her spare time, she loves drawing, dancing and making handicrafts.

JUNE YANG
June Yang is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology. Her research interests include social demography and computational methods. As part of the UWCHR’s quantitative research team, June is analyzing the relationship between immigration detention capacity and decision-making by US immigration judges. In her spare time, June enjoys spending time with her daughter, swimming, and traveling.
The National Guard of El Salvador executed Efraín Antonio Arévalo Ibarra in November 1978, one year after his disappearance. His death is one of several documented in a recently declassified document obtained from the US Central Intelligence Agency on August 29, 2022, by Angelina Godoy, director of the Center for Human Rights at the University of Washington. It is one of several documents related to enforced disappearances during the country’s armed conflict that Godoy requested in 2019, which reveal further details on atrocities perpetrated by El Salvador’s National Police and National Guard between January 1, 1975, and December 31, 1980.

At the time of his disappearance, Efraín Arévalo had been working as a teacher at a rural school in the municipality of Chinameca, in the department of San Miguel, and serving as a member of the Executive Committee of ANDES 21 de Junio, the most important teachers’ union in the country. His son, José Efraín Cuéllar Arévalo, had also been detained.
by government forces in the city of San Miguel on October 26, 1977, so days later, on November 6, Efraín went to the National Guard barracks in San Salvador, searching for his son. He had received information that José Efraín was being held there, and Efraín, who had scheduled a meeting at the Ministry of Education later that afternoon, took advantage of his trip to the capitol to search for his son.

He never made it to the meeting. “On the day of his disappearance, Efraín was wearing brown linen pants and a yellow shirt,” wrote his wife, Iris Idalia Portillo, who would go on to search for her husband at every state security agency and nearly every hospital in the country. Iris even managed to get an audience with the then-undersecretary of defense, José Eduardo Iraheta, but she never found any answers. She sought help from Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who publicly denounced Efraín’s disappearance in one of his homilies. She spoke with media outlets about her husband’s disappearance and met with Victoria de Romero, the mother of then-president general Romero.

None of her efforts yielded any answers, but Iris held out hope that her husband had escaped the country and was still alive. In September 2022, upon the release of the declassified documents, Efraín’s family received confirmation of his death: “In November 1978, General Alfredo Alvarenga, the director general of the National Guard of El Salvador, ordered the assassination of Salvadoran political prisoners Efraín Arévalo Ibarra, Manuel Alberto Rivera, and Carlos Antonio Madriz. They were killed by National Guard Lieutenant José Antonio Castillo and Sergeant Miguel Antonio Ramírez Mejicanos.” The bodies, the document continues, were deposited in an unknown location.

Forty-five years later and two months after learning of his death, on November 19, 2022, the Arévalo family organized a ceremony to celebrate what would have been Efraín’s 88th birthday, and to hold a funeral to bid him farewell. The gathering took place in San Salvador at the Monument to Memory and Truth, in Cuscatlán Park. “It is absurd and thoughtless to say that these events have been a ‘farce,’” said Astul...
Arévalo, Efraín’s brother, referring to comments made by Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele and his followers about events such as the signing of the 1992 Peace Accords.

“As long as Efraín is in our memory, he will always be part of history. We are doing this as a family to demand justice for all those crimes and human rights violations, so that they are not repeated here or anywhere else, because human rights must be respected,” said Mario Orellana, Efraín’s son-in-law.

“This is an act of closure and healing for our hearts,” added Roberto Castillo, Efraín’s nephew, who at only eight years old had helped search for his uncle’s body among the corpses that began appearing in the streets in the early years of the war.

Additional photos below.
More information about the project can be accessed at: TINYURL.COM/UNFINISHEDSENTENCES

Nervous and breathless, Iris Márquez (left) delivers the opening remarks for her grandfather’s memorial service: “I know that it takes a lot of effort for those of you who are accompanying us here today, but I also know that my grandfather, wherever he is, is glad to be the reason for this gathering and this movement that we have built together, as a family, to support each other.” Standing next to Iris is Fresia Monroy, another of Efraín’s granddaughters, who recited a poem in honor of her grandfather. Photo credit/ El Faro.

Renán (third from right) is Efraín Arévalo’s youngest son. He was born on December 21, 1977, one month after his father’s disappearance. He grew up in Los Planes Segundos, a canton in the municipality of Chinameca, in the department of San Miguel, the same community where his father worked as director of the Escuela Rural Mista José A. Mora. When he was fourteen years old, Renán’s teacher showed him a photograph of Efraín Arévalo that had been published in a 1977 newspaper. This was the first time Renán, who had grown up separate from the rest of the family, had seen his father’s face, and from that point on, he began developing an interest in meeting his other siblings. In 2008, he finally met his three sisters. “They say I look just like my dad. I feel proud because now I know he was an exemplary person who fought against injustice and for inequality in my country,” he says. Renán is now the same age his father was when he disappeared. He attended his father’s funeral accompanied by his wife and three children. Photo credit/ El Faro.

At the end of the ceremony, the family and loved ones of Efraín Arévalo Ibarra spoke and recited quotations one by one in his honor, and placed roses at the foot of the Monument to Memory and Truth, to celebrate his birthday and his funeral. The Arévalo family still holds out hope that they will one day find Efraín’s remains. Photo credit/ El Faro.

Next to the photograph of Efraín Arévalo Ibarra were two more portraits pasted on the wall: Alfredo Aguilar (center), another teacher disappeared during the armed conflict, and José Efraín Arévalo (right), the oldest of Efraín Arévalo’s five sons, who was captured by the National Guard on October 26, 1977, in the city of San Miguel. José Efraín reappeared on November 10, 1977, in the emergency room at Rosales Hospital in San Salvador. He had been tortured and had cigarette burns on his wrists. His family said that when they found him in the hospital, he was skin and bones. They mistook him for his father. On Wednesday, March 13, 1980, José Efraín was found dead on the outskirts of the city of San Miguel. He had been shot in the head after filing a complaint at the National Institute in response to killings that took place on March 8. José Efraín’s murder was one of several incidents denounced by Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero during his penultimate homily on Sunday, March 16, 1980, nine days before his assassination. Photo credit/ El Faro.
It is exciting to report the tremendous accomplishments achieved this past year and the foundation we have created for future collaboration between Chief Leschi Schools and the University of Washington through the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project.

In spring 2022, UW graduate and undergraduate students spent a great deal of time building relationships with administrators, teachers, and students at Chief Leschi Schools (CLS). This entailed visiting the school once a week and interacting with students beyond the classroom context—such as participating in CLS Culture Day, joining CLS excursions to environmental restoration sites and Tribal hatcheries, attending circle Friday mornings, and taking part in the canoe pull in the Salish Sea.

In the summer, UW students drew on these initial fieldwork experiences to reflect on what they had learned. The purpose of this reflection was twofold: to generate a draft of an academic article speaking to the methods literature on intercultural research/collaboration with Tribal schools and Indigenous communities, and to help them prepare for the digital story production that they were charged with producing in collaboration with the CLS students in the coming academic year.

In the fall of 2022, after UW and CLS students had begun to co-create plans for telling student stories, Colorado-based photographer and project co-lead John Weller traveled to Washington and hosted a workshop on the UW campus to shoot footage for the digital stories. There, he worked directly with CLS and UW students in best practices for video collection and editing.

During January 2023, three workshop sessions helped provide space for CLS students directly involved in the story creation process to develop their ideas. Their stories covered a range of topics around the links between Indigenous culture and identities, including a focus on the school engagement in Canoe Journey in spring of 2022, powwow dancing, and Salish language acquisition at CLS. Utilizing footage shot from the previous year and a half, three digital stories by students and one video that documented the collaboration were created.
PROJECT UPDATES

In addition to the collaborative work done by CLS and UW students, project members worked on a digital story centering Indigenous resistance to the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) Pipeline. Team members took two trips to Bellingham, the San Juan Islands, and British Columbia to interview Indigenous leaders, activists, and scientists on the front line of the resistance to this pipeline. Because this expansion will increase oil tanker traffic through the Strait of Juan de Fuca seven-fold, this pipeline will likely have negative, if not devastating, impacts for salmon and orca populations, as well as fishing communities. These stories and videos were showcased at two viewing events: one on the CLS campus on the evening of February 24, 2023, and the other at the Burke Museum on April 25, 2023. In addition, the project’s collaborative methods and co-created digital stories were discussed and shown at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference and at an event hosted by a UW student organization.

Digital stories created in the past year of this project can be viewed on the Chief Leschi Schools website at: www.leschischools.org/page/790
Learn more about this project: tinyurl.com/indrightsenvsustain

USE OF FORCE AND CHEMICAL AGENTS AT THE NWDC

Photo credit/ AP Photo, Ted S. Warren.

By Angelina Godoy

In 2023, conditions at the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) came once again under scrutiny as those detained in the facility staged a series of hunger strikes to protest conditions, while legislators passed a bill mandating increased state oversight of all private detention facilities in Washington, including the NWDC. In this context, confirmed reports of the deployment of chemical agents against hunger strikers in the facility in February 2023 raised concerns about the use of force. At the request of community partners, the UW Center for Human Rights conducted an analysis of the human rights implications of the use of force...
at the Northwest Detention Center and published a report on this topic, the eighth in our series regarding human rights conditions at ICE’s Northwest Detention Center.

UWCHR researchers drew on ICE documents, including Significant Incident Reports, Disciplinary Detention Reviews, Records of Deportable/Inadmissible Aliens, and others, to construct a record of 70 use of force incidents at the Northwest Detention Center during a period of seven years and five months between 2015 and 2023. The incidents themselves ranged in nature from the spontaneous use of physical force to break up fights, to the deployment of chemical agents to oblige detained people to “follow officer orders,” to the force-feeding of a hunger striker. Use of force is particularly likely to occur during “cell extractions,” or the forced moving of a resistant person from one cell to another; this occurs most frequently in the Restricted Housing Unit.

Because UWCHR’s access to information about specific incidents was limited, the report did not focus on inquiring as to the legitimacy of individual instances of use of force, instead examining the overall pattern and its human rights implications. Researchers identified three major areas of concern: the use of force against people with mental illness; the use of force against people engaged in nonviolent protests or hunger strikes; and the facility’s failure to follow its own rules, rendering untreated mental illness and protests/hunger strikes more likely, and thus increasing the propensity for further use of force through escalating cycles of conflict and cruelty.

The use of force against individuals with mental illness who failed to follow orders is particularly troubling given the fact that such individuals may be unable to follow guards’ orders due to their illness rather than as acts of willful disruption. Tragically, in many cases individuals with mental health challenges were subjected to escalating attacks over time, in a pattern that suggests a deterioration of the individual’s mental health, likely fueling, and being fueled by, the cycle of cruelty they experienced. For example, one detained man experienced thirteen instances of use of force between June and August 2019, six of which involved the use of chemical agents. In one such incident, ICE reports indicate that he was sprayed with chemical agents and left on his solitary cell floor in restraints, from where he screamed, “I am insane.”

The internal documents reviewed also show that both physical and chemical means of force were deployed against those speaking out about conditions in detention, including those resorting to constitutionally protected free speech actions like hunger strikes. ICE internal documents routinely characterize hunger strikers as “facility security threats,” a designation that is then used to justify the use of force against them and their placement in solitary confinement. This is, indeed, permissible under ICE’s published standards, which do not distinguish between threats of interpersonal violence and the “threats” posed by those engaged in hunger strikes.

Lastly, the records reviewed reveal that ICE’s and GEO’s system of internal monitoring and oversight—its detainee grievance system, its reporting of instances of use of force up the chain for agency review, its facility inspections and its contract enforcement tools—does not work to detect and remediate abuses that occur. With so little reason to believe these mechanisms offer any meaningful protection, those detained are more likely to experience despondency and other mental health challenges, and more likely to engage in protests. Yet both of these developments too often simply trigger additional use of force. By incarcerating people in conditions of extreme deprivation, providing poor access to health care, especially for those with mental illness, and offering no meaningful mechanism by which individuals can contest ill-treatment when it happens, the NWDC creates the circumstances under which the use of violence and chemical weapons has become a regular part of facility operations.

Read the full “Cycles of Cruelty” report: TINYURL.COM/CYCLESOFCRUELTY
We completed year one of a two-year research effort, Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights. Collaborating with the community-based organization Massage Parlor Outreach Project (MPOP), our UWCHR-funded research project seeks to understand better the set of overlapping laws, rules, and regulations that negatively impact unlicensed massage work in the Seattle area. With massage workers shaping the investigation, our research team details the legal, policing, and private harassment and violence massage workers experience in the workplace. Diminished occupational safety and increased health risks are consistent features of unlicensed massage. Workers could not “go remote” during COVID outbreaks, labored in poorly ventilated spaces, and provided services without requirements for prior testing or masking by their clients. Additionally, much of the municipal, county, state, and federal aid that government agencies created to improve workplace safety and health for “essential workers” did not extend to unlicensed massage and its workplaces. Likewise, as highlighted by the brutal murder of Asian immigrant women and massage clients during the Atlanta spa shootings of 2021, the workforce in this sector is predominantly immigrant or migrant, female, non-English-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking, and non-citizen. These social determinations contribute significantly to the vulnerability and precarity that workers in this sector experience. Yet because we know very little about how race, gender, citizenship, migration, and language ability intersect to produce distinct vulnerabilities for workers in this sector, our research project builds on the deep relationship and trust between our community partner, MPOP, and unlicensed massage workers in the Chinatown/International District, or CID, to center workers’ perspectives on the risks, precarity, and violence that they frequently experience. This year, we conducted more than fifteen in-depth oral histories with massage workers, learning from workers how this low-wage and mostly informal economic sector was created and how it is reproduced in our region. Because of the lack of Mandarin fluency among UW faculty, our research team relied on the language abilities of MPOP organizers and UW undergraduate students to solicit and execute these oral histories. Like other universities, the UW system heavily recruits Mandarin-speaking students from mainland China. Yet undergraduate researchers are rarely valued for their Mandarin-speaking abilities and knowledge, even though they make possible new relationships and opportunities to extend the Center’s research into human rights.
A snippet of these oral histories was presented at the 2023 UWCHR spring symposium and award ceremony in May. Audiences saw how oral histories do more than create data about highly marginalized workers. Instead, they highlight how research subjects like massage workers are knowledge producers. In telling their stories, they connect sites and experiences in China and the United States, describing how “massage work” is reproduced through transnational circuits that national labor law and scholarly research rarely account for. Further, by having undergraduate student researchers and Asian immigrant community organizers conduct these oral histories, they deepen the connections and social solidarity between marginalized non-citizen workers, “international” students, and community organizers. Indeed, one student intern, Lanqing Ren, spoke eloquently at the symposium about how her connections with massage workers through the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers’ Rights project clarified for her the otherwise obscured social relations in which she found herself as an “international student” within the UW system. In working with massage workers, Ren learned about the importance of her local Tianjin dialect, which the workers spoke, for understanding the demands of intimate labor in these Seattle-area workplaces. Likewise, workers described the privileged importance of English, a language none had access to, for improving daily living and working conditions. Ren said workers taught her much about the social, historical, and legal constraints that create the massage sector in Seattle. But she learned even more from her collaboration with the workers about how to transform her felt sense of marginality as an “international student”—who was known, if at all, by her UW faculty only as a “deficient” English speaker—into a distinct critical, social and historical agency, one crucially needed in the struggle to better massage workers’ rights and workplace conditions. In these transformative encounters, our student researchers gain new lenses and frameworks for their own histories of migration, educational racialization and gendering. They come to grasp the very different roles played by transnationalized circuits of migrant labor and higher education between the United States and Asia in creating and sustaining highly unequal access to fundamental rights of shelter, safety, and voice in the Seattle region today. And most importantly, they discover distinct conjunctures between these circuits that can create the social forces necessary for just transformation.

Rosanna Sze—a core member of MPOP, community-based organizer, and lead researcher—described this transformed awareness as the call for language justice. Speaking at the symposium, she said, “Language justice allows not only for migrant workers to access basic needs such as healthcare or professional needs like licensing, it is also vital for exchanging ideas and experiences with other labor organizers such as the farmworkers’ union Familias Unidas por la Justicia. Language justice allows us to build transnationally and locally across intersections.” As we pursue next year’s research phase, we remain grounded in Sze’s acute framing of the project’s core value to advance language justice in academic research, community organizing, and human rights.

To access more information about this project: TINYURL.COM/MPOPUWCHR

HAVING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHERS AND ASIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS CONDUCT THESE ORAL HISTORIES, THEY DEEPEN THE CONNECTIONS AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY BETWEEN MARGINALIZED NON-CITIZEN WORKERS, ‘INTERNATIONAL’ STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS.
Over the past five years, the Washington state legislature has passed a landmark series of laws aimed at safeguarding immigrant rights, including the Courts Open to All Act (2019), Keep Washington Working (2020), HB 1090 (2021), and HB 1470 (2023). The result of long-term leadership by immigrant community advocates, these new laws have placed Washington state at the forefront of national efforts to protect immigrant rights through state and local initiatives, despite failures at the federal level. In keeping with UWCHR’s own legislative mandate, in 2020 we launched the Immigrant Rights Observatory to monitor and ensure the successful implementation and enforcement of these laws across our state. In August 2021, we published our first report, “Protecting Immigrant Rights: Is Washington’s Law Working?”, identifying areas of progress as well as concern.

In partnership with grassroots organizations and advocacy groups, the UWCHR has continued to track progress of and compliance with these laws. UWCHR student researchers filed dozens of public records requests to law enforcement and government agencies across the state, seeking updated department policies and documents that might reveal potentially illegal practices involving communication and collaboration with ICE and Border Patrol.

When UWCHR researchers find evidence of activities that violate the law, our team alerts partners including the ACLU of Washington, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and the Washington Defender Association. These groups engage in targeted outreach to warn local agencies that their policies or practices are in violation of the law. In many cases, this has resulted in positive change for immigrant rights, including stricter adherence to policies restricting the collection of citizenship and other information by local jails, and the cancellation of a Spokane County detention agreement with Border Patrol in January 2023. In other cases, agencies have declined to respond, reflecting the need for stronger incentives for compliance with immigrant rights legislation.
This past year, the UWCHR has expanded partnerships with groups elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. In Oregon, which in 2021 passed its own landmark immigrant rights legislation, the Sanctuary Promise Act, UWCHR student researchers are working with the Rural Organizing Project to analyze local law enforcement policies for compliance with the law.

Our work is rarely single-issue focused. Since the recent waves of bans and limitations put on people’s access to reproductive health care, the UWCHR has taken what we’ve learned from monitoring state immigrant rights sanctuary laws and applied it to the threats to reproductive rights in our new report, “Who’s Watching Washington?: Dangers of Automated License Plate Readers to Immigrant and Reproductive Rights in Washington State.” The report surveys law enforcement agencies across Washington state on their use of automated license plate readers (ALPRs), including practices around data collection and retention, as well as sharing of collected data with entities such as private data brokers and federal law enforcement agencies including Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection.

Back in the Washington legislature, HB 1470 mandates improved conditions in private detention centers, including the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, addressing areas of longstanding concern such as food and sanitation, the use of solitary confinement, and communications and visitation rights. The law also tasks the state’s Department of Health with significant oversight responsibilities, requiring it to conduct unannounced inspections of the facility and respond to reported infractions. Significantly, HB 1470 affords detained people a private right of action, allowing them to sue for damages against private prison operators—in this case, GEO Group—if violations occur, and it grants state authorities the ability to issue civil penalties as well.

HB 1470’s oversight and accountability provisions, until now absent from Washington’s immigrant rights legislation, may prove pivotal in the years ahead. UWCHR looks forward to continuing its research on human rights conditions within the Northwest Detention Center, and to working with partner organizations to spread awareness of violations and support efforts at accountability. Our experience with collaborative KWW monitoring efforts shows that even in cases where legislation lacks “teeth,” dedicated research and advocacy efforts can help hold government officials to the requirements of our laws. We expect that the significantly stronger tools provided in HB 1470 will permit further progress toward realizing our shared goal of a state where all people’s rights are respected.

To access project updates visit: TINYURL.COM/HROBSERVATORY

“This gives us hope that our research can continue to bring about on-the-ground improvements in Washington State communities.”
ICE AIR FLIGHTS RESUME AT BOEING FIELD

King County, Port of Seattle Must Demand Humane Conditions for ICE Deportation Flights
By Angelina Snodgrass Godoy
Reprinted with permission from South Seattle Emerald

On Tuesday, May 2, 2023, ICE resumed its deportation flights out of King County’s Boeing Field. This is the shameful result of a federal judge’s ruling in April that despite known abuses on deportation flights, the county is not allowed to decline to participate in them, as it did when Dow Constantine issued an executive order in May 2019. (Since that time, deportation flights have been routed through Yakima.)

This latest decision is part of a broader trend in which the Biden administration continues Trump-era legal lawsuits against counties and states who seek to protect migrants’ rights. Last fall, a federal court struck down California’s ban on private ICE detention, a decision with implications for Washington, which passed a similar law in 2021. In both that case and the one concerning Boeing Field, the federal government stepped in to ensure that private companies can continue making money off the caging and transporting of migrants, even in states where elected majorities oppose such practices.
But residents of King County should be proud of our county executive’s 2019 response to evidence of routine human rights violations in deportations on the private charter flights known as “ICE Air” from our county-owned airport. ICE’s own records showed that hundreds had been deported through Boeing Field without due process, some of them with pending legal cases in US courts; others were returned to violence in their countries of origin, in defiance of US and international asylum law. And some reported harassment and even physical violence in the deportation process.

Since the flights ended at Boeing Field, researchers at the University of Washington have continued to document abuse throughout the ICE Air network. In one particularly disturbing example, multiple Cameroonians reported the use of a full-body restraining device called “The Wrap,” applied atop five-point shackles, on deportation flights in 2020. In another case of needless cruelty, a Haitian wheelchair user was forced to use only his arms, unassisted, to drag himself onto an aircraft and down its center aisle.

ICE also deports people on regular flights from major commercial airports—and these flights, too, have been marred by violence. In 2019, for example, ICE officers beat and tased a man in JFK Airport when he refused to board a deportation flight, asserting—correctly—that he had received a stay of removal from the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and that ICE’s attempt to forcibly deport him was therefore illegal. Closer to home, ICE pepper-sprayed a man they sought to deport on the tarmac at SeaTac International Airport in 2015.

What’s more, ICE records show that even in cases where flights out of SeaTac elapsed without physical violence, many resulted in the needless separation of families after parents apprehended crossing the northern border were separated from their children, the fathers sent to detention in Tacoma and mothers and children held in motels near the airport and then put on commercial flights from SeaTac.

The Port of Seattle posts signs around the terminals encouraging travelers “if you are assaulted, harassed, or being forced to travel against your will, say something”—but it’s unclear if this applies to those assaulted by agents of the federal government.

Despite this, Washingtonians can be proud that in 2023, our legislature passed HB 1470, a bill that insists that if—as the federal judge told us last fall—we can’t close down private detention centers, as a state we can at least demand they abide by humane standards.

That same logic should now be applied to deportation flights. If the Biden administration remains intent on forcing Trumpist policies down our throats, King County and the Port of Seattle should follow the lead of the state legislature and demand decent conditions at our airports to ensure that, at the very least, the people forced to pass through our ports are not brutalized in the process.

This article has been edited for its inclusion in the UWCHR annual report.

To access ICE Air project updates visit: TINYURL.COM/UWCHRICEAIR
Hello, my name is Ren Lanqing. I am a senior at the University of Washington and a member of the Massage Parlor Outreach Project (MPOP) mutual aid group. I am honored to participate in this symposium as an international student from China, currently at home with my family. I want to thank the UW Center for Human Rights for allowing me to participate by using a video format in my mother tongue to share my memories of MPOP and the support it has given me in my work.

This is actually the first time I have given a speech in Chinese during my university career. As a foreign student, my mother tongue has become a second language that few people choose to learn; it is even seemingly pushed away at times. Most of my classmates and professors don’t know my Chinese name and I have chosen to use an easier-to-pronounce preferred English name in the UW system, even though it took me fifteen minutes to pick it from a list of English names.

My fellow MPOP members and I have already adapted to using a pseudonym to avoid embarrassment. It wasn’t until I joined MPOP that, for the first time, someone asked me about the tone and writing of my Chinese name. Therefore, I want to use this precious opportunity to talk about the power of language.

Last year, I learned about MPOP through its outreach program and became comfortable with the massage workers. Most of MPOP’s organizers were still learning Chinese and I occasionally acted as a translator and messenger. At that time, I was praised for my English proficiency by the workers. One worker said, “College students are different—they can speak English.” English is everything here, and if you can speak it, you have power. I stood there, realizing for the first time the privilege I had on this land.
I have been immersed in the embarrassing position of an international student—coming alone to a foreign country, leaving the comfort of home and family protection. Because my spoken English language skills were less fluent, it reduced my social interactions. I fell into a monotonous life, cut off without status or citizenship. In my struggle to find a sense of belonging and identity, I forgot about the rarity and privilege of learning a foreign language and studying abroad. For those who do not have this privilege, life is not uncomfortable, but it is inconvenient with layers of obstacles that are difficult to overcome.

Over time, massage workers have learned to survive by depending on each other. When customers insult them in English, refuse to pay, or make a fuss, they smile and send them away as long as they don’t cause physical harm. When workers could not obtain medical insurance or receive vaccinations during the pandemic, they stayed at home to avoid contact with others, saving money on masks. As acquiring a massage license becomes increasingly difficult, they study harder—even if it means completing 500 hours of online courses and passing a written test all in English; although most massage workers are Asian, they consider their real teachers to be their seniors and colleagues.

Every worker talks about making English language learning a priority because they know how important it is to know English. But because they spend all their time working and saving money, many massage parlor workers say they will learn once they have the funds. At first, we asked for these stories, and later the workers we got to know actively opened up on their own. The workers who accepted our interviews thanked us in turn. They said, “I talk too much, I don’t know if you are willing to listen.” But their stories have been buried for too long. They often expressed their gratitude, but it was their active participation and advice that made our activities and projects so successful, through means such as

A massage worker shares their experiences after Lanqing’s speech at the 2023 Spring Symposium. Photo credit/ Nate Gowdy.
oral history interviews and holiday reunions.

Being away from home I couldn’t return for every Chinese New Year; sometimes I needed to study for my exams. Every year we skimmed a bit more, and eating frozen dumplings only reminded me of the normal days I returned from the supermarket not wanting to cook. It was the workers who let me taste handmade dumplings with fresh dough and bowls filled with three fillings. This was how they spent any holiday celebration at MPOP whether it was Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, or Lantern Festival. Everyone gathered around several tables, enjoying the flavor of strong, Northern Chinese cooking. Even in the United States, I had a family.

Since joining last summer, I have been recognized by the fellow workers who frequently attend events, probably because of my more friendly northern accent and my ability to talk about family matters since I was a child. The organizers of MPOP also took care of me, perhaps due to a certain cultural connection, but more so because they understood my identity and my difficulty building my language confidence. I was encouraged to express myself, take on team responsibilities, and I even received their acknowledgment; I was able to question decisions and put forward ideas for the first time. Unlike the previous one-sided inquiries that gave me shame, we acted as each other’s Chinese-to-English dictionaries. So the first time I encountered a sentence I didn’t understand, I didn’t just brush it off, but asked them to explain it more clearly.

Of course, language barriers are not easy to overcome. When workers who don’t speak much English meet organizers with limited Chinese proficiency, communication can easily fail; the content shared by workers can make the organizers confused, and the organizers who want to add something can’t do so clearly because of the language barrier. So last fall we tried simultaneous interpretation for the first time, allowing workers to have conversations with other community organizations. Thanks to the financial support of the UW Center for Human Rights, and many others, MPOP was able to invite more interpreters to join the group discussions.

On March 16 of this year, MPOP held a memorial service for the massage workers killed in the Atlanta shooting, and for our fellows killed in the two mass shootings in California during the Lunar New Year. We invited organizers from various minority community organizations to speak and translated their speeches into Mandarin and Vietnamese for those in attendance. This year, we hosted our first event at the newly established worker center and are preparing for more exciting events in the future.

The oppression and struggle in the massage industry are inseparable from the intersections of gender, race, and class issues. We hope to invite more experienced community organizers to MPOP and break down information barriers by sharing their experiences with the workers. Eliminating language barriers is an important part of this work.

Looking back on MPOP’s last year together, we have turned countless insights into reality. My choice to join MPOP is so precious to me, not just because I met my fellow workers, but also because MPOP has brought me so much emotional support, a sense of self, companions, and even guidance for my future direction.

Hear Lanqing’s full speech in Mandarin: TINYURL.COM/WATCH2023SPRINGSYMPOSIUM
JIHYEON BAE

Ji hyeon received the Peter Mack and Jamie Mayerfeld Award. Ji hyeon is a PhD student in political science, writing a dissertation about authoritarian governments’ use of international law. This year, Ji hyeon will use funds from UWCHR to administer a two-country survey that will enable her to compare how international laws deployed by democratic vs. autocratic regimes can shape public attitudes around the treatment of refugees.

ITZA CARBAJAL

Itza received the Lisa Sable Brown Award. Itza is a PhD student at the Information School. Funds from the Sable Brown award will allow Itza to conduct an investigation with Colombian youth on the themes of personal, communal, and institutional histories; and it will also serve as an exploratory study on the creation, use, and preservation of records by and about youth, in particular those of underrepresented populations.

JULIE FENG

Julie received the Abe Osheroff and Gunnel Clark Award. She is a PhD student in communication and has been working with a coalition that includes many labor and community organizations committed to building an unemployment program for undocumented workers in Washington state. Julie will use proceeds from the Osheroff-Clark Fund to provide stipends to compensate workers for advocacy efforts.

ALLISON GOLDBERG

Allison received the Peter Mack and Jamie Mayerfeld Award. Alison is a PhD student in sociology, studying the emergence and impact of the progressive prosecutor movement as a key tactic in the effort to dismantle mass incarceration. She will use funds from the Mack-Mayerfeld Fund to cover costs associated with acquiring county data and prosecutor documents.

NICOLE GRABIEL

Nicole received the Benjamin Linder Justice Award. She is a junior at the UW double-majoring in history and in global and regional studies. Nicole is working on an undergraduate thesis about the international dimensions of conflict in Central America.
2023 RECIPIENTS OF ENDOWED AWARDS

KEIRA HENSON
Keira received the **Abe Osheroff and Gunnel Clark Award**. She is a student majoring in law, societies, and justice who works with La Resistencia to provide support and advocacy for immigrants detained at the Northwest Detention Center.

DESTINY MORENO
Destiny received the **Jennifer Caldwell Award**. She is a first-year student at UW School of Law. Destiny joined UWCHR’s research team in late 2022 to assist with a project on surveillance, policing, and inequality in the city of Seattle. This project is an outgrowth of our Center’s previous work on automated license plate readers and the threat they pose to migrant justice and abortion rights in the state of Washington.

Fund recipients awarded at the 2023 Spring Symposium. Photo credit/ Nate Gowdy.
BUILDING A MOVEMENT LABOR INTERNSHIP COLLABORATION

SARA CURRAN IS ELECTED TO WASHINGTON STATE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Sara Curran, director of the UW Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, UWCHR associate faculty, and past member of the UWCHR steering committee, was elected to the Washington State Academy of Sciences for her groundbreaking work in demography and the sociology of migration.

DEE SONTAG IS ELECTED JUDGE IN TACOMA, WA

Human rights minor alumna Dee Sontag was elected judge in Tacoma. Dee is a graduate of both UW Tacoma and UW Seattle’s School of Law.

UWCHR RECEIVES HONORARY HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERSHIP AWARD

In December 2022, UWCHR was awarded the Honorary Human Rights Leadership Award at the Human Rights Day Celebration with the Seattle Human Rights Commission at Seattle Town Hall. Pictured above are students presenting research projects at the event.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

UWCHR COLLABORATES WITH HARRY BRIDGES CENTER FOR LABOR STUDIES ON THE BUILDING A MOVEMENT LABOR INTERNSHIP

This past year, UW Center for Human Rights entered a new collaboration with the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, supporting the ongoing Building a Movement Labor (BAM) Internship, a paid internship program that connects undergraduate students at the University of Washington with the local labor movement, through partnerships with community organizations engaged with this work on a variety of levels. Students who are invested in labor and social justice advocacy are given the opportunity to explore how organizations work to make systemic and community-level changes for the benefit of working people, and make meaningful contributions to that process.
MANY THANKS!

The UW Center for Human Rights would like to thank the individuals and organizations that made contributions to our Center. Your monetary donations and your gifts of time help make our work possible. Thank you! Please refer to the facing page for a brief report of our revenues and expenditures. To make a contribution today, please see below for more information.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Your tax-deductible donation helps support events, programs, and projects like the ones in this report. Please consider making a gift in one of the following ways:

• **Check:** Make checks payable to “University of Washington Foundation” and indicate “Center for Human Rights” in the memo line. Mail to UW Center for Human Rights, Box 353650, Seattle, WA 98195.

• **Online:** Using your credit or debit card, you can make a gift at giving.uw.edu/chr.

• **Phone:** Call the UW Foundation at 1-877-894-4387 and indicate that your gift is intended to benefit the UWCHR.

Thank you!
MISSION STATEMENT
The University of Washington Center for Human Rights is committed to interdisciplinary excellence in the education of undergraduate and graduate students in the field of human rights; promoting human rights as a core area of faculty and graduate research; and engaging productively with local, regional, national, and international organizations and policymakers to advance respect for human rights.

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Front and back cover photo credit: Nate Gowdy

Front: MPOP members respond to questions about their work at the Spring Symposium
Back: Audience members watch interviews with massage parlor workers at the Spring Symposium

What stereotypes of Asian massage workers do Americans hold? What prejudices?