



Global
Justice Center
Human Rights Through Rule of Law

2020 ANNUAL REPORT





Letter from the President

Dear friends and allies,
2020 was a year like no other.

Together and apart, the Global Justice Center community faced immeasurable challenges, from a global pandemic to vicious attacks on democracy and human rights. We witnessed the fragility and deficiencies of our global institutions and saw the direct consequences of embedded patriarchy, misogyny, racism, and white supremacy.



How we rebuild and repair in the years ahead will define generations to come.

As COVID-19 spread around the world, we saw exponential increases in rates of gender-based violence and the deprioritization and interruption of essential health services needed by women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services. Women also continue to bear the brunt of unpaid care work, resulting in record numbers of women leaving the workforce. In many ways, COVID exposed how global efforts to end gender-based discrimination and violence have failed to address the root causes and patriarchal systems that perpetuate these injustices.

We know from our experience working in conflict and post-conflict settings that moments of crisis present an opportunity to create systemic alternatives to the status quo.

For GJC, that means ensuring that those most directly impacted by violence and oppression are at the center of global responses. It means addressing the painful reality that holistic justice is rarely granted to survivors of sexual violence and that the most marginalized voices, experiences, and perspectives are too often excluded from policy and decision-making. It means confronting the racialized history of violence against Black and brown people around the world.

Until true justice is a lived reality for everyone, GJC remains committed to having difficult and uncomfortable conversations that meaningfully address the root cause of gender-based violence and restrictions on reproductive rights—the desire to control women and their bodies.

In the face of these escalating attacks on our rights, GJC will do what we have always done: advocate for radical, systemic change so that women and girls have full access to their human rights under international law.

Thank you for your support and encouragement. By standing with us, you make us stronger.

In solidarity,

Akila

Akila



Cover design by Vy Vu

Quilting is a sacred and ancestral practice of women and femmes across the globe—a symbol of our connection to one another, to spirits, to the land, and to our ancestors. From the seas to the mountains, global feminist solidarity recognizes the beauty of the quilt that we all share, our reliance on the Earth to protect and nurture, and our need to weave together our unique and individual experiences. Learn more about Vy at www.vyvu.art.



Partners Yasmin Ullah (Research Coordinator, Free Rohingya Coalition), Wai Wai Nu (Founder, Women's Peace Network), and Razia Sultana (Founder, Rohingya Women Welfare Society) spoke at an event co-hosted by GJC on the ICJ Provisional Measures hearing (December 2019)

Letter from the Board Chair

To the GJC community,

After serving on the Global Justice Center’s Board of Directors for the past four years, it’s an honor and privilege to write this letter in my new role as Board Chair.

At GJC, the past few years have been defined by reflection, refinement, and institutional strengthening. Following our founder’s tragic passing in 2018, the Board and staff undertook a comprehensive and critical evaluation of the organization with an eye towards programmatic impact and financial sustainability. In the time since, we have developed and implemented new programmatic and decision-making frameworks, significantly improved our communications and public engagement, and invested heavily in staff development and well-being.

It’s clear that the critical investments we made to strengthen GJC’s organizational infrastructure helped us navigate the unprecedented challenges of 2020.

This year once again demonstrated GJC’s ability to respond quickly to changing circumstances and our strength as a connector, collaborator, and thought leader in the field of international law and human rights. I am particularly proud of how GJC led the fight against the Trump administration’s so-called “Commission on Unalienable Rights,” including by briefing the US Congress on the Commission’s dangerous attempt to undermine human rights.

We have come a long way since I joined the Board in 2016, but we still have work to do.

I am excited to share that GJC recently embarked on a robust strategic planning process with an eye towards focusing the organization’s perspective, methodology, and leadership to embody a more holistic, intersectional approach to gender justice.

This strategic framework will guide all of GJC’s operations for the next 5 years.

GJC’s work to achieve a global rule of law based on gender equality and human rights has never been more urgent. Having spent over 20 years litigating major consumer advocacy, environmental, and public health cases, I have seen firsthand the ways that power and the status quo can interfere with the pursuit of justice. That’s why I am especially proud of GJC’s unique ability to harness the power of international law as a catalyst for radical change, especially for women.

Thank you for standing with us and for your commitment to our organization. With your support, I know that the Global Justice Center’s brightest days are still ahead.

With gratitude and appreciation,


Gretchen 



About Us

The Global Justice Center is a team of creative feminists using the power of international law to achieve gender equality and dismantle systems of oppression.

With a proven and respected track record as principled and tenacious advocates, we use international law as a tool to dismantle patriarchal norms and power dynamics and to achieve long-term, structural change. At present we focus our unique legal expertise on expanding sexual and reproductive rights and demanding justice for sexual and gender-based violence—two priority areas we believe are critical barriers to gender equality worldwide.

GJC understands and appreciates the complex and deeply intersecting forms of discrimination that perpetuate systems of oppression and patriarchy around the world. We are building a gender-equal world through the use and promotion of inclusive, feminist approaches—from our advocacy at the UN to our partnerships with grassroots activists—and we will not stop fighting until all women and girls have full access to their human rights.

Memberships and Coalitions



Fighting For Sexual & Reproductive Rights



Demanding Justice for Sexual & Gender-Based Violence



October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020



Justice and Accountability in Myanmar

For the last decade, GJC has led the call for a gender-inclusive, rights-based, and survivor-centered approach to justice and accountability for all ethnic minorities in Myanmar, including the Rohingya.

In the last year, we doubled down on our fight to end the culture of impunity for mass atrocities, including sexual and gender-based crimes. With our unique access at the UN, we advocated for international action to provide justice for the Rohingya and hold the government of Myanmar accountable.

- At events in The Hague and New York, **we centered the voices and experiences of Rohingya community members**—highlighting their thoughts and reflections on the ICJ hearings and other complementary avenues for justice.
- **We sent a shadow report to the UN Human Rights Council** explaining how Myanmar's justice system precludes justice for gender-based violence and calling for systemic reforms.
- **We sent a letter to the UN Security Council demanding Myanmar's full compliance with all international accountability efforts** and outlining the dangerous inaccuracies and flaws of Myanmar's Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE).



True justice can never be achieved if women's experiences, expertise, and stories are ignored or excluded from global advocacy spaces. That's why our team of creative feminist lawyers fights to center ethnic women in all discourse around justice in Myanmar, and advocates for a gender lens within all international accountability efforts.

- **Our in-person and virtual events amplified the perspectives and expertise of women**—over 700 people joined one webinar featuring Yanghee Lee, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, and Wai Wai Nu, the founder and director of Women's Peace Network.
- **We supported and elevated civil society speaker and Burmese activist Khin Ohmar's statement** to the UN Security Council emphasizing the need for fundamental reform and legal accountability to end impunity for the Myanmar military's systematic targeting of ethnic women.
- **We hosted a conversation with Naw Hser Hser of the Women's League of Burma** where she discussed the value of women's participation in national peace and reconciliation processes, and how we can uplift women's experiences at every level.

The fight for justice in Myanmar is far from over, but momentum for accountability is growing.

BELOW:
Friends and partners
Phyu Phyu Sann,
Naw Hser Hser,
Mu Gloria, and
Stephanie Olszewski



The Gambia filed a case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the government of Myanmar for violating its obligations to the Genocide Convention, marking a historic moment for the Rohingya and the global rule of law.



The International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized the investigation of alleged international crimes in Myanmar's Rakhine State including sexual violence and other grave violations against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities.



Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) brought a case against Myanmar officials under universal jurisdiction laws in Argentina.



October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020

Centering Human Rights in US Foreign Policy

In July 2019, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the formation of the so-called “Commission on Unalienable Rights,” described as an attempt to “ground our discussion of human rights in America’s founding principles.” We understood this as another effort by the Trump administration to remove rights protections for minorities, and especially for women and LGBTQI people. Its final report incorporated little to no civil society input and totally misinterpreted the international human rights framework.

- In March 2020, **we sued the Trump administration over the illegal creation of the Commission on Unalienable Rights**. While the suit was underway, we got to work countering the Commission at every step, including responding directly to the Commission’s dangerous and regressive report.
- **We published an article in the Columbia Human Rights Law Review** examining the Trump administration’s pattern of concerted attacks on abortion rights and the international human rights system.
- Facing the threat of a US veto, **we fought to prevent rollbacks of hard-won sexual and reproductive rights in UN Security Council Resolution 2493**, which called for implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- **We joined leading reproductive rights groups to promote the Blueprint for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice**, a roadmap for the incoming administration grounded in “the fundamental belief that in order for people to be free and equal they must be able to exercise complete autonomy over their bodies.”
- **We submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council** highlighting our concerns over US policies that impose blanket prohibitions on abortion services and speech in violation of international law.



This year the ICC came under unprecedented attacks from the US government. We joined the Washington Working Group on the ICC to unequivocally oppose the US sanctions and demand action from policymakers.



We were proud to have our recommendations to improve gender representation in the Office of the Prosecutor and to increase gender-sensitive training and expertise reflected in the final report of the Independent Expert Review of the ICC and Rome Statute System.

Responding to COVID-19

Gender equality and human rights around the globe came under siege as COVID-19 shone a brighter light on systemic inequalities and discrimination. Gender-based violence intensified when stay-at-home orders were issued, and access to life-saving sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including abortion, was further limited by governments around the world.

A global pandemic is no time to limit life-saving resources and care—in fact, it is just the opposite—so GJC fought back.

- **We published an op-ed for CNN** explaining how the denial of abortion as necessary medical care during a pandemic constitutes cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.
- **We called for a centralization of reproductive health services in global pandemic responses** and helped draft updated language for a new 10-step resource to safe abortion care programming.
- In a joint statement, **we called for immediate access to quality, non-discriminatory and comprehensive health services**, including abortion, for women held in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers, as well as a full investigation and accountability.
- When UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres released a report on increased violence against women in light of the pandemic, **we applauded his leadership and called for states to meaningfully address the gendered impacts of the pandemic**.
- **We condemned the Trump administration for withdrawing the US from the World Health Organization**, which increased the harm caused to marginalized groups, especially women of color and women in low-income and rural communities.

BELOW:
GJC staff at
International
Law Weekend
(October 2019)



In The News

*In a year of immense challenges for the cause of gender equality, **the global news media sought the voice and expertise of the Global Justice Center** more than ever before. From the genocide case at the International Court of Justice to the Trump administration's attacks on abortion rights, GJC promoted its feminist analysis of international justice and human rights issues nearly **100 times** in dozens of high-profile outlets around the world.*



ABOVE:
GJC President Akila Radhakrishnan briefs a reporter from DW News in the Hague (December 2019)

Demanding Justice & Accountability In Myanmar

The Global Justice Center was a consistent and incisive voice in the frenzy of international news stories surrounding the landmark genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice.

Following the historic ruling against Myanmar at the court, GJC President Akila Radhakrishnan was a guest on **BBC World News**—our first appearance on a major television network. Our reaction to the ruling could also be seen in **The New York Times** and **the Washington Post**.



Holding the Trump Administration Accountable

From the day it was created, we made sure the public knew how dangerous the Trump administration's so-called "Commission on Unalienable Rights" really was. GJC Legal Advisor Elena Sarver layed out our arguments against the Commission in **Ms. Magazine**, and a few months later, our lawsuit against the State Department was picked up by **CNN** and **Public Radio International**. When the Commission announced its final report in July 2020, our analysis could be seen in **The New York Times** and **the Washington Post**.




Defending Our Human Right to Abortion

Our uncompromising, unapologetic defense of abortion rights has always been core to our identity and in 2020, you could see it all over the news. GJC Director of Development Danielle Stouck called out Melinda Gates in **Rewire** for not including abortion in her gender equality initiative. In **Devex**, GJC Legal Director Grant Shubin condemned the omission of abortion rights in a recent UN Security Council resolution on women's rights. We were also in **The Hill**, where GJC Special Counsel Michelle Onello analyzed under-covered aspects of the Trump administration's war on reproductive rights.



Our Community

We are always grateful for our global community, and never more so than this past year. GJC would not be the thriving organization it is today without our incredible supporters, partners, staff and Board members. It will take all of us working together—at every level—to weather the storms ahead of us and build a feminist future for generations to come. By standing with us, you make us stronger.



“How can you own other things when you don’t even have the autonomy to own your own body and your own future?”

DR. SENAIT FISSEHA

2020 FEMINIST CHANGEMAKER AWARD RECIPIENT

Director of Global Programs, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and chief advisor to the WHO Director General



Marilou McPhedran • Senator, Senate of Canada

My feminist future is intersectional. We can get there if we build our feminism to be inclusive of all feminist identities including: POC, Indigenous, non-binary, 2 spirit and all other members of the LGBTQIP2SAA community. [#FeministFuture](#)



Dr. Drew Altman • President & CEO of Kaiser Family Foundation

My feminist inspiration was the youngest Commissioner of Insurance in U.S. history when she was appointed in by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. She was then elected chair of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' Health Committee by her colleagues in the states. The Commissioner is a fierce advocate for consumers, low-income and working people, and a national leader in health policy. I know her fairly well: Jessica Altman. [#FeministFuture](#)



“Simone de Beauvoir was my feminist icon. She was introduced to me by the role model in my life—my father who, when I turned 16, gifted me with her book *The Second Sex*.” [#FeministFuture](#)

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL
PRAMILA PATTEN**

**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT**



NYC Bar International Women's Conference

At the NYC Bar's International Law Conference on the Status of Women, GJC was given the EPIQ Women's Advocacy award. [Akila](#) was joined by [Pramila Patten](#), UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and [Stephanie Johanssen](#), Associate Director of Advocacy and UN Representative, Women's Refugee Commission and former GJC staff member. (March 2020)

International Law Weekend

GJC President [Akila Radhakrishnan](#) joined incredible feminists [Agnès Callamard](#), Former UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; [Dr. Anne Marie Goetz](#), former Chief Advisor on Peace & Security, UN Women; and [Melissa Upreti](#), Expert on the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women on a panel for International Law Weekend on gendered approaches to international law. (October 2019)





Myra Dahgypaw (Director, US Campaign for Burma) with GJC's Akila Radhakrishnan and Grant Shubin in front of the International Court of Justice (December 2019)-



"How do we ensure that women set agendas, and are not merely on the agenda?"

PATRICIA VISEUR SELLERS
2019 JANET BENSHOOF
GLOBAL JUSTICE AWARD RECIPIENT
Special Advisor on Gender to the International Criminal Court



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Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinical Instructor, and Fellow in Maternal Fetal Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine

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Statement of Financial Position
September 30, 2020 (Audited)

Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 527,605
Unconditional promises to give	
Unrestricted	164,682
Restricted	651,972
Prepaid expenses and other assets	39,248
Security deposits	21,366
Investments	452,464
Property and equipment	<u>13,750</u>
Total Assets:	<u><u>\$1,718,433</u></u>

BELOW: GJC Legal Advisor
Danielle Hites and Legal
Director Grant Shubin
at the United Nations.



Statement of Activities
September 30, 2020 (Audited)

Changes in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions

Revenue and Other Support	
Grants and contributions	\$ 814,478
Special event revenue	70,313
Net investment income	(2,433)
Miscellaneous income	5,000
Net assets released from restrictions	
Satisfaction of time and program restrictions	<u>252,082</u>
Total revenue and other support	<u>1,141,217</u>

Expenses	
Program Services	816,547
Management and general	142,866
Fundraising	<u>233,411</u>
Total Expenses	<u>1,192,824</u>
Increase (Decrease) in	
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	<u>(51,607)</u>

Changes in Net Assets with Donor Restrictions

Contributions	653,015
Net assets released from restrictions	(252,082)
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	
with Donor Restrictions	<u>400,933</u>
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	349,326
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	<u>1,156,638</u>
Net Assets, End of Year	<u><u>\$1,505,964</u></u>



Our Supporters

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our donors. We are proud to recognize members of our community who made gifts between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020.

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Pfizer

Plankton Energy

If we inadvertently left off your name, please contact Danielle Stouck at dstouck@globaljusticecenter.net



**Global
Justice Center**
Human Rights Through Rule of Law



www.globaljusticecenter.net
info@globaljusticecenter.net
212-725-6530