

---

# Letter from the Editors

---

Over the past several decades, the international migration of people, goods, and services has touched nearly all corners of the globe, spurring economic and social development. The effects of globalization are readily apparent: the increased strength of multi-national corporations, the expansion of “free trade” economic zones, and the global movement of capital. Whether globalization can alleviate the wide disparity of wealth between developed and developing countries, however, remains to be seen. Regardless, globalization and migratory labor have had a profound, and questionably beneficial, impact on human rights.

With these issues in mind, the Spring issue of the *Human Rights Brief* is dedicated to investigating the effect of globalization on international human rights, with specific emphasis on labor rights and migration. Safeguarding human rights in this new paradigm presents novel challenges, requiring new alliances, increased corporate accountability, and a recommitment to universal labor standards. Neha Misra’s article provides an ideal introduction to these issues, documenting the push and pull factors of international migration and the role played by international trade and the WTO. Providing a more in-depth focus, Nisha Varia’s piece on the plight of migrant domestic workers in the Middle East highlights gaps in national labor laws that permit worker abuse.

In the United States, immigration remains a divisive topic, and public reaction has evoked some of the best and worst elements of American society. Although labor rights activists have traditionally avoided this debate, Jayesh Rathod documents how the AFL-CIO, the largest labor organization in the U.S., has embarked on a new partnership with day laborers, many of whom are immigrants. This marks a significant shift in the legal politics on labor and migration, and offers the possibility of increased recognition of the rights of immigrant workers in the United States.

Marta Tavares’ article on the *Secure Fence Act*, by contrast, demonstrates the extent of public and congressional opposition to undocumented migration within the U.S. As Tavares argues, the construction of an impending physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, designed to improve border security and reduce migrant access to the U.S. through unregulated channels, raises fundamental human rights concerns.

Although these articles address only a small fraction of the multitude of legal consequences of globalization, they nonetheless offer a needed human rights perspective on this important issue. If globalization is to achieve its stated goals, human rights must remain paramount. These articles represent one step toward this objective. *HRB*

The *Human Rights Brief* is a publication of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at the American University Washington College of Law. No portion of this publication may be reprinted without the express written permission of the *Human Rights Brief*. All correspondence, reprinting, and subscription requests, as well as articles submitted for publication, may be sent to: *Human Rights Brief*, Washington College of Law, American University, 4801 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016. Telephone: (202) 274-4023. Fax: (202) 274-4028. Email: [hrbrief@wcl.american.edu](mailto:hrbrief@wcl.american.edu). Website: [www.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief](http://www.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief). The views expressed in this publication are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the editors, the Center, or American University. Copyright *Human Rights Brief*, 2007. ISSN 1533-6808.

Cite as 14 No. 3 Hum. Rts. Brief.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action university.

#### CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Erin M. Scheick Mark W. Vorkink

#### SENIOR ARTICLES EDITORS

J. Patrick Burns Kate Rakoczy

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Jessica Farb

#### PUBLICATIONS EDITOR

Amy Tai

#### ARTICLES EDITORS

Marisa R. Bassett Nasseem Ramin  
Gwyneth Hesser Rosemarie Salguero  
Zeenat Iqbal Leslie Thompson  
Brian Israel

#### STAFF WRITERS

Huwaida Arraf Mihir Mankad  
Edward Babayan Courtney Nicolaisen  
Jessica Anna Cabot Elizabeth J. Rushing  
Miya Saika Chen Suzanne Shams  
Angela Edman Solomon Shinerock  
Jerald Hess Art Steele  
Natalie Huls

#### FOUNDERS BOARD

Vanessa Allen, Gillian Brady, Michelle Donme, Gabriel Eckstein, Robert Guitteau Jr., Fernando González-Martín, Claudia Martín, Mair McCafferty, Rochus Pronk, Ayasha Qayyum, Diego Rodríguez-Pinzón, and Shashikala Warrior.

#### ALUMNI COMMITTEE

Anebi Adoga, David Baluarte, Anne Briggs, Fernando González-Martín, Jennifer M. Hentz, Richard H. Kamm, Sarah Paoletti, Alejandro Ponce-Villacís, Amy Stern, Jaime Underwood, and Kristi Severance.