

FOREWORD

It is a privilege to introduce this issue of the UCL Journal of Law and Jurisprudence. Taking into account its predecessor publications at UCL Laws, the Journal has been publishing outstanding and cutting edge legal research by graduate students, academics and practitioners for 25 years. The editorial team is comprised of UCL graduate students in Laws, and this year it has been ably and ardently led by Joyman Lee and Andrew McLean (Academic Editors) and Luminita Olteanu (Managing Editor). This edition continues the Journal's tradition of excellence in contributing to current debates on both local and global issues of law and jurisprudence. Indeed, it is a feature of this edition that it speaks to a number of such issues of great contemporary concern.

A first issue, of particular interest in the United Kingdom but shared with a number of other states, is with the legal dimensions of the 2008 global financial crisis and the policies of austerity adopted in its wake. In this edition, Conor Duffin-Hall explores the theoretical underpinnings of financial regulation, and asks whether the lessons of the financial crisis have been learned in post-crisis regulation reforms. Particularly in light of recent headlines warning once again of the threat of global economic crisis, the article offers a timely reflection on whether financial regulation has escaped the artificiality of some economic modelling and is better positioned to respond to the realities of the financial system. Ailsa McNeil's contribution to the volume offers an equally fundamental analysis of the economic crisis and its implications, with a focus on a different issue – the impact of austerity on access to justice for women. It examines the reality of how austerity policies have affected women's rights under both UK and international law, raising serious concerns regarding fairness, equality and justice.

A second issue which is a matter of evident global concern is with the intersection (or non-intersection) of the private sector and human rights. The article by Aleydis Nissen in this volume focuses on EU efforts to enhance implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including through the adoption of corporate disclosure requirements relating to payments to governments. It identifies ways in which the EU has responded to the potential tension between its own economic interests and the global concerns of human rights. The same tension between economic and rights considerations is evidently at the heart of Mario Guido's article on private prison labour. The article notes the emergence of private prison labour schemes alongside the increased privatisation of the management of prisons, or at least of their rehabilitation functions, and examines the compatibility of this development with the requirements of the Forced

Labour Convention. Richard Tepper's contribution to the volume explores similar themes in the very different context of EU regulation of settlement agreements in patent disputes. Such agreements may well create private benefits for the parties, but they may also delay the entry into the market of generic pharmaceuticals, which may have a significant impact on public interests.

A third issue addressed in the volume, also of notable contemporary importance, is the protection of refugees in an era of increased concern with state security interests. Joseph Mahon's contribution focuses in particular on the Refugee Convention provision dealing with the exclusion of those suspected of serious crimes from its benefits. The protection of refugees and the risks of terrorism are matters of great current concern for both international law and national governments, and the article examines how the Refugee Convention can be interpreted in a way which best reconciles these competing interests.

This volume of the journal is a worthy continuation of its finest traditions – it is wide ranging, offering thoughtful and critical insight throughout, and engaging closely with points of significant current interest. It remains only to offer three congratulations. First, to the Editors and all those who have worked on this edition of the Journal for producing such a fine array of quality publications. Second, to the authors for the excellence of their contributions. And third, to you the reader for having this wealth of insightful material readily accessible at your fingertips.

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