

## Doubling Down on our Mission

*ISLP Newsletter, March 2022 Edition*



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### A Note from the ISLP Team

In this time of acute global turmoil and violence, we are reminded of the critical importance of **the rule of law** as an underpinning of democracy and **freedom of expression** as a means to hold governments accountable. We at ISLP are doubling down on our commitment to defend these pillars of democracy and development.

Ukraine is an alarming current example of violent conflict engulfing a country and its innocent people, and of course it is not the only one. The rebuilding of conflict-affected communities and economies and the strengthening of the institutions that enable democracy to flourish requires sustained effort and trust-based partnerships. We are committed to contributing to this long-term effort and we are grateful to our partners, volunteers, and supporters who make our work possible.

With gratitude and in solidarity,

The ISLP Team

Sara, Bridget, Dick, Eniye, Florencia, Katerina, Melissa, Michelle, and Pedro

### ISLP Board Leadership and Additions

ISLP is delighted to introduce our new [Board leadership](#): Chair Bruce Gilchrist and Vice-Chair Russell Smith. We also welcome new board members Luciana Aquino-Hagendorn, James Sandman, and Tom Trimble, and outside *pro bono* general counsel Richard Rosen.

Our enduring thanks to Boris Dolgonos and Christopher Cross (Co-Chairs) and Craig Owen White (Vice Chair) for their years of leadership and service to ISLP. We are so very lucky that all three continue to advise ISLP as members of our [Emeritus Board](#).

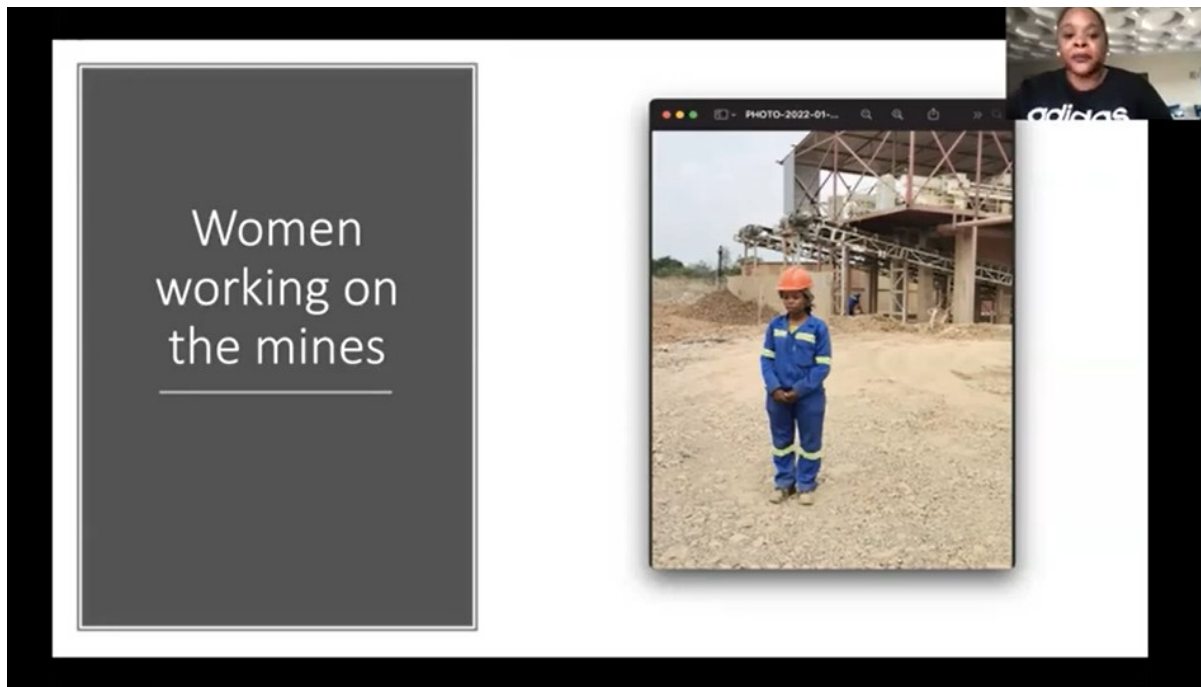
### Our Team is Growing

We are thrilled to welcome to [the ISLP team](#): Florencia Librizzi as Director of Community-Inclusive Development and Michelle Bellinger as Administrative Assistant.

- Florencia joins ISLP from the United Nations, where she served as Head of Programs and Partnerships at the SDG Academy, the flagship education initiative of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. With Florencia's input and her grounding in the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), we are excited to expand upon how ISLP's work contributes to global progress toward the SDGs.
- Michelle brings to ISLP years of experience and expertise, largely developed through her work at other nonprofits in New York City. She has already become an indispensable part of our organization, and her infectious enthusiasm has permeated our team – especially our weekly meetings!

Additionally, **we are hiring a Program Associate for Government Engagements**. Please see the job listing [here](#) and feel free to share with your networks.

## ISLP and ALSF Collaborate on Gender Considerations in Mining



If you missed our session on January 27th, please watch it [here](#). Hosted by Dr. Frank Dixon Mugenyi of the African Legal Support Facility ([ALSF](#)) and moderated by Bridget Mafusire, ISLP's Regional Legal Advisor for Africa, the webinar's panelists delved into the challenges – as well as suggestions for how to address them – faced by the increasing number of women participating in the mining sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. Speakers included Nyaradzo Mutonhori of the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association ([ZELA](#)), Charlotte Kwitonda of the Minerals Africa Development Institution ([MADI](#)), and Lyapa Mandaza of the [ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme](#) for Zambia.

### Volunteer Spotlight: Lee DeHihns

Lee DeHihns has provided expert *pro bono* counsel to ISLP clients in Africa and Southeast Asia since 2014. An environmental lawyer with experience both at the Environmental



Protection Agency and as a partner with Alston & Bird's Environment and Land Development Group, Lee is currently supporting the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association ([ZELA](#)) in its advocacy efforts regarding large-scale foreign investors in the natural resources sector. Lee's support focuses on the issues of protection of land rights and the environment, which are often not aligned with efforts to bring in foreign investment and create local jobs:

"Inevitably, the clash between the economy/jobs competes with land rights and the protection of the physical environment," Lee explains. "While there are often some legal structures in place to protect the environment, they are neither complete nor is the enforcement meaningful. The foreign investors are usually better protected and treated than the Indigenous population." The challenge of balancing these interests while supporting Indigenous rights, and the opportunity to learn about another country's culture, customs, and political and legal systems are all part of the draw to the ISLP volunteer experience for Lee. To sign up to volunteer for ISLP, please visit our [website](#).

## ISLP Continues to Defend the Right to Freedom of Expression: Updates from Tunisia and Algeria

Attacks on journalists who expose corruption and other wrong-doing by government officials in their own countries continue unabated around the world. ISLP's Media Law Working Group Chair Richard "Dick" Winfield has described this worldwide crackdown on freedom of expression as a "*pandemic within a pandemic*." In response, we have accelerated our work filing *amicus curiae* briefs in support of wrongly accused and imprisoned journalists and bloggers. We contend that the weaponizing of penal codes to suppress criticism of government officials constitutes a violation of countries' treaty obligations under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). We are pleased to report that two of these defendants were recently freed: bloggers Saïd Boudour in Algeria and Wajdi Mahouechi in Tunisia. *Read more about these two cases [here](#).*

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## Ways to Get Involved



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## About ISLP

The International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 2000. Our mission is to provide pro bono legal assistance to governments, civil society organizations, and social enterprises in the Global South on matters that advance just, accountable, and inclusive economic development.



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For general questions about ISLP, send an email to: [info@islp.org](mailto:info@islp.org).

For questions about donating, contact Melissa Eustace: [meustace@islp.org](mailto:meustace@islp.org)

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