

David Cohen

WSD-HANDA Professor of Human Rights and International Justice and Senior Fellow, by courtesy, at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Classics

Bio

BIO

David Cohen has served as founding Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Stanford University since 2013. He is a leading expert in the fields of human rights, international criminal law and transitional justice. After 35 years at UC Berkeley, Cohen moved to Stanford, where he serves as the WSD Handa Professor in Human Rights and International Justice and Professor of Classics. Cohen has led human rights projects and judicial rule of law, trial, monitoring, and training programs in Indonesia, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Philippines and Cambodia. He is currently co-directing projects on human trafficking, fair trial rights, religious freedom and freedom of expression, and environmental rights in Indonesia. He is also working with the ASEAN Council of Chief Justices to develop ASEAN judicial training programs encompassing human trafficking, environmental regulation, and mutual legal assistance. Together with Prof. Gary Darmstadt of the Gates Center for Gender Equality he is developing capacity building programs for women in government and civil society leadership positions in Ethiopia on issues such as child marriage, gender based violence, and women's economic empowerment. He has published widely on transitional justice processes and human rights issues. Recent publications include: *Justice on Appeal: Commentary on the Case 002/01 Final Judgment at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia* (co-authors Daniel Mattes and Caitlin McCaffrie), *KRT Monitor Special Report* (August 2017); *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: Law, History, and Jurisprudence* (co-author Prof. Yuma Totani, Cambridge University Press 2018); *Editor, Interpretations of Article 156A on the Indonesian Penal Code on Blasphemy and Criminal Defamation: A Legal and Human Rights Analysis* (Institute for an Independent Judiciary [LeIP] Jakarta 2018) and *Pelatihan Piloting Untuk Aparta Penegak Hukum: Penafsiran Hukum Penodaan Agama Berdasarkan Prinsip Hak Asasi Manusia* (LeIP Jakarta 2018); *Tōkyō saiban "shinwa" no kaitai: Paru, Rērinku, Uebbu san-hanji no sōkoku* [The deconstruction of the Tokyo Trial 'myths': Battles among three justices, Pal, Roeling, and Webb]. Co-author Prof. Yuma Totani. *Chikuma shobō, Tokyo* (November 2018); Co-Editor, *The Rule of Law for Human Rights in ASEAN*, (co-editor Prof. Kevin Tan; World Publishing, Singapore 2020); Co-Editor, *ASEAN Law and Regional Integration: Governance and the Rule of Law in Southeast Asia's Single Market* (co-editor Prof. Diane Desierto) Routledge 2020).

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor (Teaching), Classics
- Senior Fellow (By courtesy), Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Faculty Co-Director, Center for Human Rights and International Justice, (2013- present)

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Program in International Relations

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Current research includes book projects on World War II war crimes trials; the Tokyo and Nuremberg International Military Tribunals; analysis of blasphemy prosecutions in Indonesia; analysis of the misuse of electronic communication, criminal defamation, lese majeste, blasphemy and associated laws in Southeast Asia; international best practices on whistleblower protection and justice collaborators in corruption cases in ASEAN; the UN justice process in East Timor under the Special Panels for Serious Crimes; comparative study of strategic decision making in American, British, and Japanese policy circles in WWII; analysis of the Judgment in Case 002/2 at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Cambodia.

PROJECTS

- Justice sector reform, human rights, human trafficking, and rule of law in Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, and ASEAN - WSD Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice

Teaching

COURSES

2025-26

- Human Rights in Comparative and Historical Perspective: CLASSICS 116, CLASSICS 216, ETHICSOC 106, HUMRTS 106 (Win)
- Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and International Criminal Tribunals: ETHICSOC 280, HUMRTS 103, INTLPOL 280, INTNLREL 180A (Spr)

2024-25

- Methods and approaches for ancient historians: CLASSICS 219 (Aut)
- Slavery, human trafficking, and the moral order: ancient and modern: CLASSICS 118, CLASSICS 218, HUMRTS 109 (Spr)
- Space Law in the 21st Century: INTNLREL 41SI (Spr)
- Sustainability, Governance, and Economic Development in SE Asia: EBS 130, ETHICSOC 125H, GLOBAL 126, HUMRTS 125, INTLPOL 225A, INTNLREL 126 (Spr)
- Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and International Criminal Tribunals: ETHICSOC 280, HUMRTS 103, INTLPOL 280, INTNLREL 180A (Spr)

2023-24

- Theories of The State, Violence, Nationalism, and Social Order: CLASSICS 106, CLASSICS 306 (Spr)
- Topics in Human Rights, Development, Rule of Law in SE Asia: Challenges, Sustainability and Democracy: HUMRTS 114 (Win)
- Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and International Criminal Tribunals: ETHICSOC 280, HUMRTS 103, INTLPOL 280, INTNLREL 180A (Spr)

2022-23

- Human Rights in Comparative and Historical Perspective: CLASSICS 116, CLASSICS 216, ETHICSOC 106, HUMRTS 106 (Win)
- Human Rights in an Age of Great Power Rivalry, War, and Political Transformation: CLASSICS 129, GLOBAL 125, GLOBAL 225, HUMRTS 120 (Spr)
- Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and International Criminal Tribunals: ETHICSOC 280, HUMRTS 103, INTLPOL 280, INTNLREL 180A (Spr)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

JJ Lugardo

Orals Evaluator

Jonas Tai

Master's Program Advisor

Stephen Queener

Undergraduate Major Advisor

Megan Woo

Doctoral (Program)

JJ Lugardo