

2024 ICAR ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

IN-PERSON CONVENING
(VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE)

MAY 8th & 9th



DETAILS

ICAR ANNUAL MEETING |

In-person Convening and Evening Happy Hour

DATES:

DAY 1: Wednesday, May 8

DAY 2: Thursday, May 9

TIME: 9:00 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. EDT

GWYNNE SKINNER HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD CEREMONY |

DATE: Thursday, May 9

TIME: 1:30 P.M. EDT

INTRODUCTION

The International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR) is proud to host our 12th Annual Meeting in person on May 8th - 9th. Since its founding in 2010, ICAR has hosted members and partners from the Business and Human Rights and Corporate Accountability movement for an annual two-day conference in Washington, DC. We are excited to see you in person this year as we gather together to explore where the movement has been in the last year, where we are going, and to identify opportunities for collaboration. This is the perfect time to recommit to the community's values of preventing and punishing corporate harm in meaningful ways while centering rights-holders and the voices of the victims of corporate abuse. We look forward to exploring opportunities on how we can come together to best serve those most negatively affected by corporate misconduct and rein in corporate power.

This year, we will convene in person May 8th - 9th at the George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs in Washington, DC. The conference will be from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, with the doors opening at 8:30 am on both days of the event. As always, the ICAR Annual Meeting is a convening by civil society organizations for civil society organizations. We remain committed to providing a safe and secure space where you — ICAR's members and partners — can freely explore new ideas, share tactics, and strategize for the future.

This year's program will focus on major elements of Corporate Accountability work, seeking to draw lines of connection amongst those elements, and envision how to strengthen our community to achieve our shared goals. We have sought to do this by organizing the meeting into four blocks. Each block is built around a theme, and will begin with an opening plenary session to set the stage, followed by breakouts exploring topics within the theme in more depth, and ending with reporting from the breakouts and next steps. The experts and practitioners who attend ICAR's meetings have so much to offer, and this structure is designed to foster constructive conversations that can generate new ideas, identify gaps, and build connections.

In this packet you will find an agenda and session details for each day of the meeting, as well as information about the Gwynne Skinner Human Rights Award. Please plan to join us for what we hope will be an engaging and enriching two days. We're continuously amazed by the work of this community and are grateful to be in this fight with you all. We hope to see you at the ICAR Annual Meeting.

In solidarity,
The ICAR Team



ICAR Annual Meeting

DAY I: WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024

TIME	SESSION INFORMATION	IN-PERSON LOCATION
8:30 AM	Registration Opens	
9:00 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks	

BLOCK 1: ENACTING LEGAL SAFEGUARDS

9:30 AM	Exploring Best Practices in Mandatory Human Rights & Environmental Due Diligence Legislation <i>Plenary</i>	
10:45 AM	Break	
11:00 AM	Human Rights Enforcement Mechanisms: U.S. Framework for Addressing Labor Abuses in Supply Chains <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Strategic Corporate Accountability Litigation: Assessing the Impacts on Companies, Communities, Governments, and Consumers <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Rethinking Social Auditing and Certification Schemes <i>Breakout Session</i>	
12:00 PM	Break	
12:15 PM	Breakout Session Readouts	

ICAR Annual Meeting

DAY I: WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024

TIME	SESSION INFORMATION	IN-PERSON LOCATION
12:45 PM	Lunch (preview the lunch menu).	
1:00 PM	Fireside Chat with Under Secretary Robert Silvers <i>During Lunch</i>	

BLOCK 2: FIGHTING CORPORATE POWER

2:00 PM	Confronting Corporate Power: A Prerequisite for Progress <i>Plenary</i>	
3:15 PM	Break	
3:20 PM	Moving Beyond Business-as-Usual: Challenging the Dominant Corporate Model <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Rigging the Rules of the Game: Exposing and Addressing Corporate Capture <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Curbing Corporate Accumulation of Wealth and Power: Addressing Monopolies and Advancing Tax Justice <i>Breakout Session</i>	

ICAR Annual Meeting

DAY I: WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024

BLOCK 2: FIGHTING CORPORATE POWER

4:20 PM	Break	
4:30 PM	Breakout Session Readouts	

TIME	SESSION INFORMATION	IN-PERSON LOCATION
5:00 PM	Launch of The Fourth Pillar: Community Principles for Business and Human Rights	
5:30 PM	Closing Remarks	
5:30 PM	Happy Hour Event	

ICAR Annual Meeting

DAY II: THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024

TIME	SESSION INFORMATION	IN-PERSON LOCATION
8:30 AM	Registration Opens	
9:00 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks	

BLOCK 3: REFUSING TO BE SILENCED

9:30 AM	Refusing to be Silenced <i>Plenary</i>	
10:45 AM	Break	
11:00 AM	SLAPPs: Legal, Policy, & Movement Based Approaches to Risk-Mitigation & Fighting Back <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Protest Restrictions: Legislative Trends & Their Impacts <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Anti-SLAPP Tools & Strategies: Assessing Effectiveness & Developing New Approaches <i>Breakout Session</i>	
12:00 PM	Break	
12:15 PM	Breakout Session Readouts	

ICAR Annual Meeting

DAY II: THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024

TIME	SESSION INFORMATION	IN-PERSON LOCATION
12:45 PM	Lunch (preview the lunch menu)	
12:55 PM	Introducing The Counter: Pro-Bono Corporate Research for Civil Society <i>During Lunch</i>	
1:30 PM	Gwynne Skinner Human Rights Award Ceremony <i>During Lunch</i>	

BLOCK 4: COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIZING AND PRIORITIZING

2:00 PM	Building a Corporate Accountability Movement <i>Plenary</i>	
3:15 PM	Break	
3:20 PM	Implementing Our Legislative Agenda <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Taking Stock: Communications Strategies within the Corporate Accountability Movement <i>Breakout Session</i>	
	Coalition-Building and Inclusive Rightsholder Engagement <i>Breakout Session</i>	
4:20 PM	Break	
4:30 PM	Breakout Session Readouts	
5:00 PM	Closing Remarks	

Session Descriptions

DAY I: Session Information

Exploring Best Practices in Mandatory Human Rights & Environmental Due Diligence Legislation

What elements and provisions of mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (mHREDD) legislation are most important to bring this legislation in line with the UNGPs and global standards? As governments around the world develop mHREDD proposals, global coordination on mHREDD becomes increasingly important. This panel will explore the key elements that would be essential to strong and effective mHREDD laws. Panelists will also highlight opportunities for including and centering impacted communities in legislative development and ensuring the “E” is included in mHREDD.

Moderator:

- Noor Hamadeh, ICAR

Speakers:

- Caroline Brodeur, Oxfam America
- Karen Hamilton, Above Ground
- Elena Arengo- PODER
- Kana Kawasaki, Human Rights Now

Human Rights Enforcement Mechanisms: U.S. Framework for Addressing Labor Abuses in Supply Chain

Corporate supply chains are opaque. The U.S. has some enforcement mechanisms that regulate supply chains by ensuring they are free of forced labor. This breakout session will be a space to evaluate existing U.S. government enforcement tools to address forced labor and other labor abuses, identify gaps in enforcement, and propose solutions to strengthen U.S. government enforcement.

Facilitator(s):

- Karen Stauss, Transparentem
- Martina Vandenberg, The Human Trafficking Legal Center

Strategic Corporate Accountability Litigation: Assessing the Impacts on Companies, Communities, Governments, and Consumers

This session will explore the various impacts of strategic human rights and environmental litigation. Participants will be asked to reflect on who is impacted by such litigation, consider the range of possible outcomes, and collaboratively brainstorm strategies to maximize the intended effects while mitigating the risk of unintended consequences.

Facilitator(s):

- Marta Bylica, Freedom Fund
- Charity Ryerson, Corporate Accountability Lab

Session Descriptions

DAY I: Session Information

Rethinking Social Auditing and Certification Schemes

There is general consensus that social auditing and certification schemes fall short in effectively addressing human rights, environmental, and labor abuses in corporate supply chains. This session will discuss some of the challenges posed by these schemes, where they fall short, and recommendations on how to move forward to ensure worker-centered compliance monitoring mechanisms.

Facilitator(s):

- Anna Canning, Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Network

Fireside Chat with Under Secretary Robert Silvers

- Moderator: David McKean, ICAR

Confronting Corporate Power: A Prerequisite for Progress

Over the last century, corporations have garnered outsized power on the global stage. This corporate consolidation of power and influence sits at the root of nearly every major human rights issue of our time and touches even the most routine aspects of our lives—from what housing and medication we can afford to who is taxed and how much. The brunt of these impacts most often falls upon Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, whose agency and consent is often ignored, and whose land and resources are often least protected by the law. In order to address corporate human rights abuses and move towards a Rights-Based Economy, we need a global system where corporations are not able to structure their own rules of the game - rules that allow them to gain outsized wealth by avoiding taxes, gaining monopoly power, or cozying up to decision makers, only to then use that power to further distort governmental decision-making. Dismantling these systems of corporate power is necessary to fight against the erosion of rights led by corporate interests.

During this session, panelists will discuss the rise of corporate power and the structures that perpetuate it, make the case for why tackling corporate power is essential to advancing business and human rights and corporate accountability, and explore ways that we can work together and link up with other spaces and movements to push back against corporate power around the globe.

Moderator:

- Nicole Vander Meulen, ICAR

Speakers:

- Irit Tamir, Oxfam
- Wesam Ahmad, Al-Haq
- Charlie Cray, Greenpeace USA
- Renee Hatcher, UIC Law

Session Descriptions

DAY I: Session Information

Moving Beyond Business-as-Usual: Challenging the Dominant Corporate Model

The corporation itself is a driver of human rights abuse and economic inequality. With its roots in white supremacy and colonialism, the dominant corporate model prioritizes shareholder interests and short term profits at the expense of people and the planet. Workers, who produce the largest value to corporations, and communities do not reap the benefits of the businesses' success and are often excluded from corporate decision-making processes that impact them, despite having the most at stake. Changing these systemic incentives and promoting alternative corporate and business structures which center workers and communities in their ownership and governance is essential to challenging corporate power and building an economy that works for the people—not just big business.

This breakout session will provide space for an in-depth and practical discussion aimed towards developing strategies for challenging the dominant corporate model, identifying actionable commitments, and finding ways to collaborate. Participants will engage in an open and interactive conversation about, among other things: (1) why challenging and changing the corporate form is a critical human rights issue and how the corporate accountability community can play a key role in these efforts; (2) alternative enterprise structures and how solutions that promote worker ownership/governance mitigate the abuses associated with the corporate form; and (3) how we can establish a network/relationships between solidarity economy actors and corporate accountability activists for future collaborations.

Facilitator(s):

- Renee Hatcher, UIC Law
- Tyler Giannini, Harvard Law School

Rigging the Rules of the Game: Exposing and Addressing Corporate Capture

Corporate capture of our public institutions is a global challenge that poses an immense barrier to addressing business-related human rights and environmental abuses. Through election-related spending, meetings behind closed doors, rampant use of the revolving door, and other strategies and tactics, businesses exert considerable influence on our public institutions and decision-makers and warp our legal systems away from the public interest. This outsized influence allows companies to limit regulation on their activities, including rules that would hold them accountable for abuses.

Recognizing this threat, many organizations within various movements are working hard to fight the rise of the corporate State around the globe. While these organizations may approach the problem differently, we are all working towards the same goal: ensuring that governments put the public interest ahead of corporate profits and hold bad actors, including corporations, accountable. This breakout session will provide space for an in-depth and practical discussion aimed towards developing strategies for combating capture, identifying actionable commitments, and finding ways to collaborate and build our power.

Facilitator(s):

- Charlie Cray, Greenpeace USA

Session Descriptions

DAY I: Session Information

Curbing Corporate Accumulation of Wealth and Power: Addressing Monopolies and Advancing Tax Justice

In politics, wealth is power. And today, because of lax antitrust and tax policies that allow companies to avoid paying their fair share, big businesses are able to accumulate vast amounts of wealth. Market power allows companies to extract excessive economic rents, which can be leveraged into broader economic and political power, including power over the regulatory environment. Meanwhile tax avoidance and evasion leaves companies with more cash to invest in shoring up their market position, sometimes in unlawful ways. Corruption of markets cycles into corruption of political processes. The resulting resource inequities provide corporations with a steep advantage in nearly every area of advocacy, allowing companies to influence our politicians to craft laws in favor of private over public interests and stymie efforts toward accountability. This comes alongside myriad other societal harms, like prohibitively priced medicine, or the past years' historic global inflation driven by corporate profits. This breakout session will provide space for an in-depth and practical discussion aimed towards developing strategies for addressing corporate monopolies and advancing tax justice, identifying actionable commitments, and finding ways to collaborate and build our power.

Session Pre-reading: [Reframing tax policy to reset the rules of the monopoly game](#) by Niko Lusiani. For further reading, see the full [Tax and Monopoly special edition](#) of the Tax Justice Network's newsletter.

Facilitator(s):

- Zorka Milin, The FACT Coalition
- Michelle Meagher, SOMO
- Vincent Kiezebrink, SOMO

Launch of The Fourth Pillar: Community Principles for Business and Human Rights

What if the UN Guiding Principles had had a Fourth Pillar – a community-centric pillar – all along? What if communities and rightsholders were expected to have a seat at the table in the field of business and human rights? This session looks at these questions and serves as the public launch of the Fourth Pillar – an initiative focused on transforming the field of business and human rights to be community-centric. Developed through a multi-year stakeholder engagement process, the Fourth Pillar offers a series of principles, including elevating community agency and addressing power imbalances, to help guide stakeholders in centering communities to help maximize their rights. Join us as we move the Fourth Pillar initiative forward!

Speakers:

- Tyler Giannini, Harvard Law School
- Emily Ray, Harvard Law School
- Jessie Hsia, Harvard Law School
- Yumiko Inaoka, Harvard Law School

Session Descriptions

DAY II: Session Information

Refusing to be Silenced

Panelists will speak about their experience with SLAPPs and anti-SLAPPs work, current protest restrictions and their effects, attacks on defenders, trends in tactics for suppressing space, and remedy mechanisms for these suppression tactics.

Moderator:

- Audrey Caines, ICAR

Speakers:

- Ebony Twilley Martin, Greenpeace
- Russell Chisholm, Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights
- Matt Scott, Atlanta Community Press Collective
- Susana Echavarría Medina, El Veinte

SLAPPs: Legal, Policy, & Movement Based Approaches to Risk-Mitigation & Fighting Back

Seeking accountability and remedy, whether that's through court systems or other accountability mechanisms often leads to reprisals, including SLAPPs. Are international organizations accompanying communities in the underlying legal and advocacy struggles equipped in supporting them against SLAPPs? This breakout session will explore the role that international groups can play in supporting local actors who are facing SLAPPs both in establishing a broader anti-SLAPP infrastructure as well as support in specific SLAPP cases. We will discuss defense strategies and methods for transfer of knowledge.

Facilitator(s):

- Zamira Djabarova, ABA Center for Human Rights

Protest Restrictions: Legislative Trends & Their Impacts

Legislative attacks on protesters rights have been on the rise, intensifying in the U.S. each year. In 2023 more domestic terrorism laws were passed, as well as used alongside RICO charges wielded against Defend Atlanta Forest protestors. This session will look at anti-protest bills passed in recent years, their use against protestors, and trends to be aware of in the fight to protect freedom of speech.

Facilitator(s):

- Elly Page, ICNL

Anti-SLAPP Tools & Strategies: Assessing Effectiveness & Developing New Approaches

In the effort to end the use of SLAPPs, advocates continue to explore a variety of tactics including: anti-SLAPP legislation, risk-mitigation training, ethics sanctions for lawyers, and private sector engagement. Some advocates are experimenting with alternative approaches to insurance and funding program design, while others are fine-tuning collective action movement strategies that aim to deter or sanction the SLAPPER. Finally, international human rights bodies are beginning to issue commentary identifying SLAPP as a standalone human rights issue. This session will explore available and emerging tools for fighting SLAPPs, assess their effectiveness, and reflect on other tactics that may be at our disposal.

Facilitator(s):

- Charis Kamphuis, Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW)

Session Descriptions

DAY II: Session Information

Introducing The Counter: Pro-Bono Corporate Research for Civil Society

The Counter is a global helpdesk providing pro bono corporate research support to help civil society groups worldwide investigate and hold accountable multinational companies causing societal harm. This SOMO initiative aims to support those most in need of information about companies causing environmental harm, climate collapse, social injustices, and human rights abuses. If you encounter such companies in your work, through this presentation we will explore whether The Counter can be of use to you.

The Counter researchers assist by finding information on company finances, ownership, investors, corporate and capital structures, subsidiaries, governance and supply chains to support those activists most in need. Activists, public interest journalists, NGOs, trade unions, strategic litigators, and communities advocating for their rights are all welcome to submit a request for corporate research.

Research provided by The Counter can then be used in public interest campaigns, the media, or in court, so activists are better equipped with data, evidence, and analysis when standing up to corporate giants.

Visit <https://www.somo.nl/the-counter/>

Speaker:

- Vincent Kiezebrink, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)

Building a Corporate Accountability Movement

To fight corporate power, protect civic space, and enact legal safeguards against abuse, we need a coordinated effort across a broad coalition that strategically advocates for the issues that the corporate accountability community cares about most. In other words, we need to build a corporate accountability movement. This plenary session will discuss the strategies and tools needed to build a corporate accountability movement where we can work together in coalition across multiple issue areas to effectively push for meaningful change.

Moderator:

- Jacqueline Lewis, ICAR

Speakers:

- Ayesha Barenblat, Remake
- Allison Gill, GLJ-ILRF
- Ben Vanpeperstraete, ECCHR

Session Descriptions

DAY II: Session Information

Implementing Our Legislative Agenda

Corporate power poses steep barriers to efforts toward corporate accountability. So how, practically, do we fight back and effectively implement our legislative agenda? To bring corporate accountability to the forefront of U.S. politics, our community needs a strong presence on the hill. This session will be a collaborative discussion of what tools we need to build a corporate accountability movement and push our legislative priorities forward facilitated by ICAR Executive Director David McKean.

Facilitator(s):

- David McKean, ICAR

Taking Stock: Communications Strategies within the Corporate Accountability Movement

To harness our collective strength and make the case for a rights-based economy that works for everyone, we need cohesive narratives and effective communications strategies that resonate with our target audiences. This breakout session will discuss the current landscape of communications in the corporate accountability space, identify common challenges, and explore the strategies and tools needed to build compelling narratives, better amplify our messaging, and ultimately make an impact reining in corporate power together.

Facilitator(s):

- Emily Porro, Bliss Group
- Natalie Shutts, Bliss Group

Coalition Building and Inclusive Rightsholder Engagement

As corporate accountability movements have advanced worldwide, coalitions among civil society have developed around various types of corporate accountability legislation, the need for binding instruments, and the UN Business and Human Rights Treaty. The development of such coalitions has highlighted the gap that has existed between policy-making civil society in the Global North and groups representing rights holders in the Global South.

Coalitions are essential in ensuring that the design and implementation of corporate accountability efforts are guided by rights-holders, particularly environmental and climate defenders. These coalitions bring together diverse stakeholders, including affected communities, defenders, civil society organizations, and experts, connecting the frontlines with advocacy efforts at the global level.

By creating avenues for knowledge-sharing and collaboration, and incorporating the voices of those on the frontlines, civil society coalitions provide valuable insights into which measures are most effective in holding corporations accountable and how to achieve consistency between accountability efforts and the protection of rights holders. Through achieving this, coalitions have helped to strengthen the effectiveness of corporate accountability efforts.

Facilitator(s):

- Mariana Montoya, ALLIED



Centre d'Aide Juridico-Judiciaire (CAJJ)

GWYNNE SKINNER HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

ICAR and the Gwynne Skinner Human Rights Award Selection Committee are pleased to congratulate this year's recipient of the Gwynne Skinner Human Rights Award, Centre d'Aide Juridico-Judiciaire (CAJJ), based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This award is given in recognition of CAJJ's precedent-setting litigation to defend labor rights in industrial cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Founded in 2007, CAJJ provides free or reduced cost legal support, representation and capacity building to local communities affected by natural resource exploitation, and is one of the few NGOs based in Kolwezi, where cobalt mining is concentrated.

To read more about CAJJ, please visit <http://www.cajj-rdc.org/public/home>.

The Gwynne Skinner Human Rights Award recognizes the work of an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to corporate accountability that year. Gwynne Skinner was a multifaceted leader who worked both as an agent of change, and with agents of change.

To read more about ICAR's Gwynne Skinner Human Rights Award, please visit <https://icar.ngo/about/gwynne-skinner-award/>.

This year we received 8 strong applications from individuals and organizations advancing the field of corporate accountability, and would like to take a moment to recognize the full list of nominees: Amb Splendour Joe King; Centre d'Aide Juridico-Judiciaire (CAJJ); Marwa Fatafta; Natalia Krapiva; David Schilling; Comités de Cuenca Río Sonora (CCRS); Lefxaru Nahuel; and Transparentem.

ICAR and the Selection Committee would like to thank all of the nominees and are once again thrilled to honor Gwynne's legacy by recognizing Centre d'Aide Juridico-Judiciaire. We look forward to celebrating our winner at this year's Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 9th!