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Clooney Foundation for Justice Joins Forces with Columbia Law School and the American Bar Association to Implement Its TrialWatch® Initiative

The Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch® initiative will promote the right to a fair trial and greater transparency in courtroom proceedings worldwide.

New York, December 5, 2018 – The Clooney Foundation for Justice (CFJ) today announced new partnerships with the American Bar Association (ABA) and Columbia Law School to collaborate on its innovative TrialWatch® initiative.

Set to formally launch in 2019, TrialWatch will monitor trials around the world that pose a high risk of human rights violations, including trials that oppress vulnerable groups, silence speech, or target political opponents. The initiative will train a global cadre of trial monitors, including non-lawyers, to report on legal proceedings using specialized technology. A team of legal experts will then analyze the information collected by monitors and grade trials according to their compliance with international fair trial standards. TrialWatch will also conduct advocacy where appropriate, including to marshal support for and awareness of defendants whose rights have been violated. In addition, the initiative will ultimately contribute to the development of a 'Justice Index' that ranks states' performance.

“Today, courts all over the world are used as tools of oppression. Governments get away too easily with imprisoning opposition figures, silencing critics, and persecuting vulnerable groups through the courts. Trial monitoring will shine a light on these abuses and enable us to fight injustice when we see it,” said Amal Clooney, Co-Founder and President of the Clooney Foundation for Justice. “We are proud to partner with Columbia Law School and the American Bar Association as we work to advance justice around the world,” said Clooney, who joined the Law School faculty in 2015 as a visiting professor and a senior fellow with the Human Rights Institute.



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Through its partnership with the Law School’s Human Rights Institute and Human Rights Clinic, TrialWatch will strengthen the global community of trial monitors and advocates; engage in research on how to best leverage trial monitoring data; and pursue the creation of an innovative, data-driven ‘Justice Index’ that ranks states’ performance. With support from Microsoft, Columbia Law is also hosting a TrialWatch Legal Fellow to work with students to conduct trial monitoring and advocacy and help document trends in trial abuses as well as engage other academics to advance these goals.

“A fair and open trial is a fundamental human right that must be protected throughout the world,” said [Gillian Lester](#), Columbia Law School Dean and the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law. “We are honored to partner with the Clooney Foundation on a bold initiative designed to foster fairness and transparency around the world—and ultimately to reform the administration of justice.”

Through its collaboration with the ABA, TrialWatch will recruit a network of trial monitors who will be deployed to courtrooms all over the world.

“A fair legal process is essential to court systems that deliver justice,” said ABA President Bob Carlson. “The American Bar Association is proud to unite with the Clooney Foundation for Justice and TrialWatch to help institutionalize trial monitoring and bring more watchful eyes to the world’s courtrooms.”

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About the Clooney Foundation for Justice

The Clooney Foundation for Justice was established in late 2016 by George and Amal Clooney to advance justice in courtrooms, communities, and classrooms around the world. For more information on the Foundation and its work, please visit www.cfj.org.

About the American Bar Association

With more than 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is one of the largest voluntary professional membership organizations in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law. View our [privacy statement](#) online. Follow the latest ABA news at www.americanbar.org/news and on Twitter [@ABANews](https://twitter.com/ABANews).

About the Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute

The Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute advances international human rights through education, advocacy, fact-finding, research, scholarship, and critical reflection. It works in partnership with advocates, communities, and organizations pushing for social change to develop and strengthen the human rights legal framework and mechanisms, promote justice and accountability for human rights violations, and build and amplify collective power.