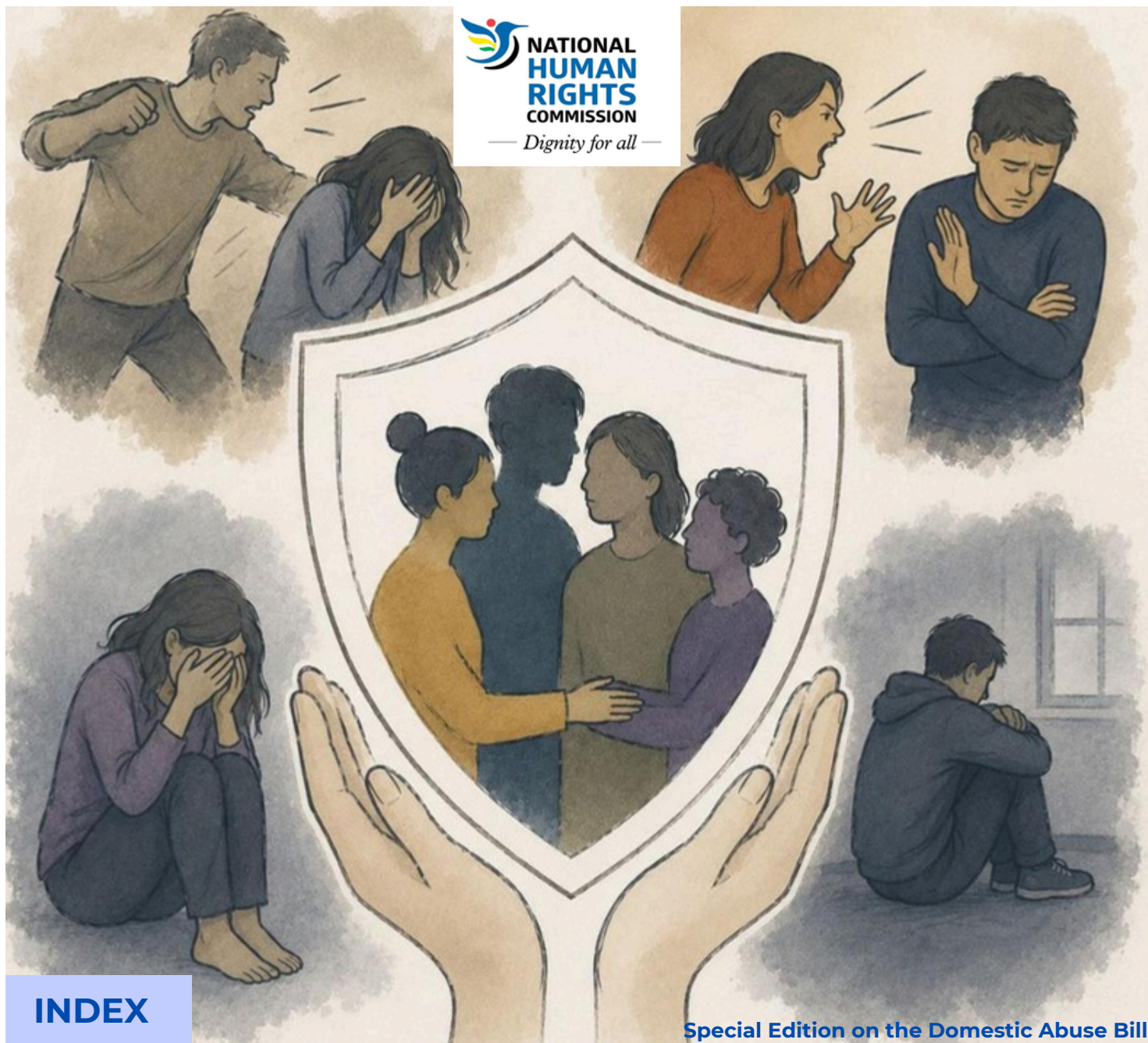




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More Equal Than Others

Reflections on Trump v. Barbara and Mauritius's Citizenship Framework

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MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

Reflections on Trump v. Barbara and Mauritius's Citizenship Framework

By Satyajit BOOLELL, SC - Chairperson NHRC

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" –
Animal Farm, George Orwell

Orwell's target was Stalinism, but the device he used – proclaiming a universal principle and then quietly carving out an exception for a favoured class – has a way of resurfacing wherever equality is announced in one breath and qualified in the next. On 30 June 2026, the Supreme Court of the United States confronted precisely that manoeuvre in **Trump v. Barbara, 609 U.S. ____ (2026)**, and declined to let it stand.

The case arose from Executive Order 14160, which sought to deny automatic citizenship to children born on American soil to parents who were undocumented or only temporarily present. Left in place, the order would not have abolished birthright citizenship outright; it would have done something closer to Orwell's trick – leaving the general promise of equal citizenship intact on paper while quietly declaring that a defined class of American-born children were, in substance, less equal than the rest, by an accident of their parents' immigration status rather than anything of their own doing.

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees everyone the right to a nationality and provides that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of it. The Court did not need to invoke the UDHR; it reached its result entirely through the Fourteenth Amendment's Citizenship Clause, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and the settled precedent of **United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1898)**.

Yet the outcome converges neatly with Article 15's second limb, and with Orwell's warning. A policy that would have stripped a defined class of American-born children of the only nationality available to them, on the basis of a status the children had no control over, is a textbook illustration of what *"arbitrary deprivation"* is meant to capture: a change imposed retroactively, by executive fiat, namely the Executive Order 14160, upon a settled and century-old entitlement, rather than through the ordinary constitutional or legislative processes by which such entitlements may properly evolve.



Context cannot be excluded from the interpretation of the law, and here the context cuts both ways. The Fourteenth Amendment was drafted to secure citizenship for the children of formerly enslaved persons, closing off any repeat of **Dred Scott v. Sandford**, in which the Court had held that descendants of slaves were excluded from citizenship altogether. The dissenting justices in **Barbara** argued that this remedial origin should confine the Clause's reach, so that children of temporary or undocumented migrants fall outside it. The practical difficulties, behind only giving birthright citizenship to the child, are real. Children of undocumented migrants are routinely recognised as citizens while their own parents remain deportable. Separating an established family is not a step any enforcement system takes lightly and the risk of the Fourteenth Amendment being deliberately invoked to prevent deportation is not one the Court's opinion pretends does not exist.

Mauritius offers an instructive point of comparison, precisely because its Constitution resolves the same underlying tension differently, without falling into arbitrariness. **Section 22 of the Constitution** confers citizenship at birth on persons born in Mauritius after 11 March 1968, but withholds it where neither parent is a Mauritian citizen. This is a *jus sanguinis*-inflected model, not the pure *jus soli* rule the Fourteenth Amendment has been read to guarantee and it is precisely this argument, between citizenship by soil and citizenship by descent, that lay at the heart of the American dispute.

Does this place Mauritius in breach of Article 15? Not exactly. International law leaves each State considerable liberty to define its own citizenship rules; Article 15 does not mandate *jus soli*. What it does require is that a child not be rendered stateless as a result. A child excluded from Mauritian citizenship under **section 22 of the Constitution** will ordinarily acquire the nationality of a parent, unless that other State also declines to confer it, at which point a genuine statelessness question arises, distinct from the citizenship-design question itself.

What **Trump v. Barbara** ultimately underscores, for a jurisdiction like Mauritius, is not that *jus soli* is compulsory, but that whatever rule a State adopts must be stable, non-arbitrary, and applied prospectively. The danger Orwell dramatised was never that a principle would be abolished outright because outright abolition invites resistance. The subtler danger is that it would be quietly redefined after the fact, so that some who were promised equal standing discover, only in hindsight, that they were never quite as equal as the rest. **Barbara's** real contribution is to close off that route. Predictability in the rules of belonging is itself a component of the guarantee against arbitrary deprivation and the guarantee of the respect of fundamental human rights.

Why Mauritius Must Embrace Claire's Law to prevent Domestic Abuse?

By Ms Melany NAGEN - Deputy Chairperson

Domestic abuse is rarely an isolated incident but a sustained pattern of coercion, intimidation, control and escalating violence. Behind every tragic headline lies a painful reality, there were undeniably warning signs, missed opportunities for intervention, and individuals who unknowingly entered relationships with perpetrators having a documented history of abusive behaviour.

Mauritius has taken an important step forward with the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill, which modernises our legal framework and strengthens protections for victims. It rightly recognises that domestic abuse extends beyond physical violence to encompass psychological, emotional, economic and coercive abuse. These reforms deserve commendation.

Yet, one vital preventive safeguard remains absent. The Bill does not incorporate what has become internationally known as Claire's Law, formally known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. This omission represents a missed opportunity to move beyond responding to domestic abuse after it has occurred towards preventing violence before lives are irreparably damaged.

Claire's Law emerged in the United Kingdom following the murder of Clare Wood in 2009 by a former partner with a known history of violence against women. Had that history been disclosed, many believe she may have made different decisions that could have saved her life. The doctrine underpinning Claire's Law is both simple and profound. In carefully regulated circumstances, individuals at risk should be entitled to know whether their current or potential partner has a documented history of serious domestic abuse or violent offending where disclosure is necessary to protect life or prevent serious harm.

At its heart, Claire's Law is not about punishment or public shaming but about prevention. It empowers potential victims with information that enables them to make informed decisions about their own safety and that of their children. Human rights are sometimes viewed solely through the lens of protecting those accused of wrongdoing. However, international human rights law also places positive obligations upon States to protect individuals whose lives, dignity or physical integrity are at real and immediate risks. The rights to life, security of the person and freedom from violence require States not only to prosecute offenders after tragedy, but also to establish effective preventive mechanisms capable of reducing foreseeable harm. Claire's Law reflects precisely this preventive approach.

<https://www.facebook.com/nhrc.govmu.org>



Melany Nagen

Any disclosure scheme must, of course, incorporate robust safeguards. Information should never be disclosed indiscriminately. Decisions must be evidence-based, proportionate and subject to strict oversight, ensuring that privacy and data protection rights are carefully balanced against the imperative of protecting life and preventing serious violence.

Mauritius has consistently demonstrated its commitment to strengthening its human rights framework. The Domestic Abuse Bill is evidence of that commitment. However, legislation must continue to evolve in response to the realities faced by victims. Every year, law enforcement agencies, social workers and shelters encounter individuals trapped in abusive relationships that escalate to femicide despite clear warning signs. Too often, grieving families are left asking the same heartbreaking question: *"If only we had known."*

The NHRC has consistently advocated for preventive, rights-based approaches to protecting vulnerable persons. A carefully regulated Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme would have complemented not replace the protections contained in the Domestic Abuse Bill. It would strengthen Mauritius' ability not only to respond to domestic abuse but to prevent it. Protecting victims should never begin only after blood has been shed.

The Domestic Abuse Bill marks significant progress. Incorporating the principles of Claire's Law would have made it truly transformative, sending the message that preventing violence is just as important as punishing it, and that every person has the right to make informed decisions about their own safety before it is too late.

Battered Woman Syndrome: Why Modern Domestic Abuse Laws Must Recognise Psychological Violence?

By Michel Vieillesse - Member

Mauritius is taking an important step towards strengthening the protection of victims of domestic violence through the proposed Domestic Abuse Bill, currently before the National Assembly. The Bill is intended to replace the Protection from Domestic Violence Act with a more comprehensive legal framework that reflects the evolving nature of domestic abuse. Among its notable features are the expansion of the definition of domestic abuse to include emotional, psychological and economic abuse, improved access to protection orders, enhanced coordination among public authorities, rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators, and stronger accountability mechanisms.

The Government has also announced that amendments to the Criminal Code are being prepared to introduce the offences of femicide and marital rape. These reforms demonstrate a growing recognition that domestic violence extends far beyond physical assault and requires a comprehensive, victim-centred legal response.

This broader understanding of domestic abuse has also transformed criminal justice systems around the world. One of the most influential developments has been the recognition of Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS), a psychological condition first described by psychologist Dr. Lenore E. Walker following years of research on women subjected to repeated intimate partner violence. Walker observed that victims often become trapped in a recurring cycle of abuse characterised by mounting tension, violent assault and reconciliation. Over time, many develop chronic fear, anxiety, depression and hypervigilance, profoundly affecting their perception of danger and their ability to leave abusive relationships.

The legal significance of Battered Woman Syndrome emerged through a number of landmark judicial decisions. In *R v Lavallee* (1990), the Supreme Court of Canada accepted expert evidence explaining how years of domestic abuse had shaped the accused's perception of imminent danger. The Court held that self-defence should not be assessed solely from the perspective of a person who had never experienced sustained domestic violence. The judgment remains a landmark authority for recognising the cumulative psychological effects of abuse when evaluating criminal responsibility.



A similar evolution occurred in *R v Ahluwalia* (1992), where the Court of Appeal of England and Wales recognised that prolonged domestic violence could significantly affect a victim's mental state. The case contributed to important reforms in the law relating to diminished responsibility and highlighted that courts should consider the entire history of abuse rather than viewing the fatal incident in isolation.

These judgments fundamentally changed the legal question. Rather than asking, *"Why did she not leave?"*, courts increasingly began asking, *"What effect did years of coercion, fear and violence have on her perception of danger?"* This shift reflects a more informed and compassionate understanding of domestic violence and has influenced courts across many common law jurisdictions.

International human rights law reinforces this approach. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, together with General Recommendations Nos. 19 and 35 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, recognises gender-based violence as a form of discrimination and requires States to exercise due diligence in preventing violence, protecting victims, prosecuting perpetrators and providing effective remedies.

Likewise, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women affirms every woman's right to live free from violence, while the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that children who witness domestic violence are themselves victims deserving of protection.

As Mauritius modernises its domestic abuse legislation, these developments provide an opportunity to further embed trauma-informed justice within the legal system. Effective implementation will require judges, police officers, prosecutors, social workers and healthcare professionals to understand the psychological consequences of prolonged abuse and to respond accordingly. Recognising Battered Woman Syndrome is not about excusing unlawful conduct; it is about ensuring that justice reflects the realities of coercive control, fear and cumulative violence. A legal system that understands these realities is better equipped to protect victims, uphold human dignity and fulfil Mauritius' constitutional and international human rights obligations.

Au-delà des blessures visibles: le Domestic Abuse Bill et le devoir de protéger les générations futures?

By Vijay Ramanjooloo - Member

La violence domestique ne se résume pas aux coups. Les blessures physiques sont souvent les plus visibles, mais elles ne sont pas toujours les plus profondes. Les humiliations, les menaces, le contrôle coercitif, les violences sexuelles ou économiques et les atteintes répétées à la dignité laissent des cicatrices invisibles qui peuvent marquer une personne durant toute sa vie. En reconnaissant ces différentes formes de violence, le *Domestic Abuse Bill* marque une avancée importante de notre législation. Il affirme que la violence psychologique est tout aussi destructrice que la violence physique et qu'elle constitue une atteinte aux droits fondamentaux de la personne.

En tant que psychologue clinicien, je rencontre régulièrement des personnes dont les blessures les plus douloureuses sont invisibles. L'anxiété, la dépression, le stress post-traumatique, la perte de confiance en soi et le sentiment d'impuissance figurent parmi les conséquences les plus fréquentes de la violence domestique. Judith Herman a montré que le traumatisme détruit progressivement le sentiment de sécurité et de contrôle sur sa propre existence. À l'inverse, Boris Cyrulnik rappelle que la résilience devient possible lorsque la souffrance est reconnue et que la personne retrouve un environnement protecteur.

Les effets de la violence peuvent même commencer avant la naissance. Lorsqu'une femme enceinte vit dans un climat permanent de peur, son organisme est soumis à un stress chronique. Les recherches en neurosciences montrent que ce stress peut influencer le développement cérébral du fœtus. Après la naissance, l'environnement continue de façonner l'enfant. Comme le souligne Boris Cyrulnik, le cerveau est «sculpté» par les expériences précoces. Un enfant qui grandit dans un foyer marqué par la peur ou les violences entre ses parents mobilise davantage ses mécanismes de survie que ceux nécessaires aux apprentissages et à la régulation de ses émotions. Même lorsqu'il n'est jamais directement frappé, un enfant témoin de violences domestiques est lui aussi une victime.



Cette réalité dépasse le cadre familial. Les recherches internationales montrent qu'une proportion importante de personnes privées de liberté, notamment des femmes, ont été exposées avant leur incarcération à des violences, des abus ou des ruptures affectives précoces. Cette observation ne cherche ni à justifier les infractions commises ni à diminuer la responsabilité individuelle. Elle rappelle simplement que certains comportements que notre société sanctionne à l'âge adulte trouvent parfois leurs racines dans des traumatismes jamais reconnus ni pris en charge. Les Règles de Bangkok des Nations Unies invitent d'ailleurs les États à tenir compte de ces parcours de vie afin de favoriser la réhabilitation et la réinsertion.

Cette réflexion nous rappelle également que la violence domestique n'est pas un phénomène statique. Lorsqu'elle n'est ni reconnue ni interrompue, elle peut évoluer vers sa forme la plus extrême : le féminicide. Celui-ci est rarement un acte soudain. Il est le plus souvent l'aboutissement d'un continuum de violences fait de menaces, d'humiliations, de contrôle coercitif et d'agressions répétées. En renforçant les mécanismes de protection et en reconnaissant ces signes précoces, le *Domestic Abuse Bill* ne vise pas uniquement à sanctionner les auteurs; il cherche surtout à empêcher que ces trajectoires de violence ne conduisent à l'irréparable.

Le *Domestic Abuse Bill* protège bien plus que les femmes victimes de violence. Il protège aussi les enfants qui grandissent dans ces foyers, les familles qui peuvent être reconstruites et les générations futures. Comme l'écrivait Khalil Gibran: «*Vos enfants ne sont pas vos enfants. Ils sont les fils et les filles de l'appel de la Vie à elle-même.*» Protéger une femme aujourd'hui, c'est protéger l'enfant qu'elle porte, l'enfant qui la regarde et l'adulte que cet enfant deviendra demain. C'est rompre le cycle de la violence avant qu'il ne se transmette à une nouvelle génération. Plus qu'une réforme législative, le *Domestic Abuse Bill* est un engagement collectif en faveur de la dignité humaine, de la protection de l'enfance et de l'avenir de notre société.

THE COMMISSION AT WORK

Human Rights Education Programme Successfully Launched in Three Secondary Schools

The HRD successfully commenced the pilot phase of its Human Rights Education Programme across three secondary schools: Simadree Veerasawmy State Secondary School, Jean Marie Frank Richard State Secondary School and G.M.D. Atchia State Secondary School.

To date, approximately 440 students from Grades 11, 12 and 13 have participated in the interactive sessions. The programme has been met with exceptional enthusiasm, thoughtful engagement and a genuine willingness among students to explore issues relating to human dignity, equality, non-discrimination and fundamental rights and responsibilities.

This pilot initiative represents an important milestone in the Commission's efforts to promote a culture of human rights, democratic values and active citizenship among young people. The overwhelmingly positive response from students and educators alike reinforces the value of integrating human rights education within the school environment to empower future generations to become informed, responsible and rights-conscious citizens.



St. Mary's College to Set Up a Human Rights Club

The iconic secondary institution of Rose Hill St Mary's College has taken up the challenge towards setting up a Human Rights club with the support and guidance of the Commission. A preliminary informative meeting was organised on 10 June 2026 where some 40 students showed interest in the initiative, under the supervision of the English department represented by Ms Kenina Ramnen and Staphane Nahadoo together with deputy rector Alan Luchman.

The third term will see the club propose an event around Nelson Mandela Day in the form of a creative drive comprising of a donation to a shelter and also a creative poem and slam contest amongst the students of the college - around the theme of Nelson Mandela Day **"It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity"**.

Engaging young people in human rights education is essential to building a culture of dignity, respect and civic responsibility.



Sharing Minds with Cadress Rungen

The latest edition of our interactive platform, Sharing Minds, was dedicated to the 40th anniversary of *Group A de Cassis* and the 20th anniversary of *Lakaz A*. On this occasion, the Commission shared with Cadress Rungen, the driving force behind these two organizations, alongside the facilitators and support staff who provide a warm and safe haven to restore the dignity of people marginalized by society and vulnerable due to their addictions, HIV status, or those undergoing detoxification treatment.

Group A de Cassis was founded following a growing awareness in the suburb of Cassis at the beginning of the 1980s: *"At the time, we thought we could solve the problem of addiction and its societal consequences within a few months... Forty years later, we're still dealing with variations on the same theme,"* says Cadress Rungen, before discussing the origins of *Lakaz A*, which was established 20 years later as an iconic day center, managed by *Groupe A de Cassis*.

Its full name embodies its motto: Love, Hospitality, Friendship, and Faith. For two hours, Cadress spoke at length about his half-century of tireless dedication, whether as a nurse in the prison system or as a facilitator and mentor for *Group A* and subsequently for *Lakaz A*.



Understanding Torture through United Nations Treaty Body General Comments

The NHRC, in collaboration with the Commission Against Torture DIS MOI (Droits Humains Océan Indien), recently organised a webinar entitled *“How do United Nations Treaty Bodies Understand Torture Today? The Role of General Comments in Interpreting and Preventing Torture.”* The webinar brought together legal practitioners, human rights stakeholders and public officials to deepen understanding of the international standards that guide the prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

The first presentation was delivered by Ivana Machonova Schellongova, an international human rights specialist from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). She examined the significance of the Committee against Torture’s General Comments, which provide authoritative guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the Convention against Torture. Particular emphasis was placed on General



comment No. 2, which reinforces the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture. It clarifies that no exceptional circumstance, including war, public emergency or orders from a superior, can ever justify torture. The General Comment also stresses the duty of States to adopt effective legislative, judicial and administrative measures to prevent torture and all forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The presentation also explored General Comment No. 3, which elaborates on the right of victims to obtain effective redress. Beyond financial compensation, States are required to ensure access to rehabilitation, restitution, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, recognising that accountability and comprehensive support for victims are essential components of justice.

The second session, presented by Me Prisca Perianen, Head of the Commission Against Torture at DIS MOI, focused on the interpretation of Articles 7, 9 and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) through the Human Rights Committee’s General Comments. Article 7 prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in all circumstances. Article 9 safeguards the right to liberty and security of the person by protecting individuals against arbitrary arrest or detention and requiring that deprivation of liberty follow lawful procedures. Article 10 establishes that every person deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity.

The discussions highlighted that these provisions extend beyond legal obligations to serve as practical standards for policing, prison administration, immigration detention and mental health institutions. Together, the General Comments provide valuable guidance for strengthening national legislation, informing judicial interpretation and promoting a culture of respect for human dignity, thereby contributing to more effective safeguards against torture and ill-treatment.

Engaging in the Vision 2050 Thematic Consultations

The Commission participated in the Vision 2050 Thematic Consultations, engaging with two of the process's key thematic sessions. On 20 May 2026, Ms D. Thakoor, Barrister-at-Law, moderated discussions on Public Safety and Security. On 01 June 2026, she participated as Rapporteur in discussions on Migration, held under the broader theme of Labour, Ageing and Migration.

The consultations were structured to encourage active engagement rather than passive participation. Following a brief presentation by the Chief Economist of the Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning, participants were divided into three groups, each guided by a set of structured questions across two sessions: the first a visioning exercise on the Mauritius participants aspire to see by 2050, and the second a practical exercise on the pathways to get there. The format departed markedly from conventional workshop structures, and proved a demanding but productive exercise for all involved.

Public Safety and Security

Ms Thakoor moderated the group examining Trust, Inclusion and Equity in Security. Inculcating discipline and values were seen as key to creating law-abiding citizens, a drug-free society and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Discussions centred on the premise that trust is foundational to a safe and secure system. Participants raised concerns over corruption, the absence of merit-based appointments, and a perception that the police force lacks real authority. Among the proposals advanced was the establishment of local committees of elders in each village to address community-level crime, on the basis that recourse to the courts does not always deliver the outcomes intended. There was also a need to address the drug-to-prison pipeline.

Migration

Discussions in this group centred on the proposition that Mauritius's future is closely tied to migration. Participants called for simplified and more fluid migration procedures, alongside targeted training in sectors expected to remain relevant by 2050, such as food production, energy, and elder care. The possibility of migrant recruitment into understaffed public sector services, including the police, marine force and healthcare, was also discussed. The Mauritian diaspora was identified as a valuable knowledge-sharing resource, with calls for schemes to facilitate their return and for opportunities matching their skills, rather than incentives such as duty-free vehicles.

At the same time, participants were clear that Mauritius should not become a country where migrants outnumber Mauritians. The discussion emphasised the need to redeploy and retrain Mauritian workers, including those in so-called unskilled sectors, so that talent is retained rather than exported. Ultimately, participants framed the challenge as building an inclusive society and addressing discriminatory attitudes towards migrants, who contribute meaningfully to the national economy.

HRD Participates in ECO-SUD's Environmental Tribunal Simulation

The HRD was honoured to participate in the Fictitious Environment Tribunal organised by ECO-SUD at the Caudan Arts Centre on 13 June 2026. The HRD was represented by Deputy Chairperson Ms Melany Nagen and Member Mr Jean-Marie Richard, who, together with Mr Christophe Demarais, formed the panel of judges presiding over the simulated tribunal.

The innovative exercise brought together participants representing key stakeholders, including affected villagers, an environmental non-governmental organisation, a private factory and the Ministry of Environment. Through compelling submissions and evidence-based arguments, participants explored complex issues surrounding environmental protection, sustainable development, accountability and the human rights implications of environmental degradation.

The event was highly successful and intellectually enriching, fostering meaningful dialogue on environmental justice. The HRD commends ECO-SUD for this exemplary initiative, which strengthened public awareness of environmental governance while encouraging constructive engagement among diverse stakeholders.



NPM Mauritius at the Fourth African NPM Network Conference in Kigali

The NPMD was represented at the Fourth Annual Conference of the African National Preventive Mechanisms Network, held in Kigali from 24 to 26 June 2026 and hosted by the National Commission for Human Rights of Rwanda. This year's theme addressed women and children in detention, and the gender-responsive, child-sensitive approaches that effective monitoring demands.

Mrs Najah Ahmed, Deputy Chairperson of the Division, sat on the panel on advancing detention monitoring in Africa, alongside representatives of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Association for the Prevention of Torture and national institutions across the continent. She shared the Division's monitoring methodology and findings on the conditions of women deprived of liberty.

The conference, which closed on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, offered rich exchange of practice and reinforced the regional partnerships on which the Commission's work continues to build.



UNODC National Interagency Workshop on Maritime Crime

From 30 June to 2 July 2026, officers of the Commission participated in the National Interagency Workshop on Maritime Crime, organised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The workshop brought together representatives from various national institutions to strengthen cooperation in combating maritime crime through a coordinated criminal justice approach.

The three-day programme covered trends in maritime crime, the roles of national institutions within the criminal justice chain, and the legal framework governing the law of the sea. Participants also explored counter-piracy operations, human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants at sea, mutual legal assistance, extradition, maritime investigations, drug trafficking, maritime jurisdiction, ship-rider agreements, and strategies to enhance national and international cooperation.

The workshop underscored the importance of safeguarding human rights throughout maritime law enforcement, particularly during interception, investigation, detention and prosecution. It reinforced the need for due process, interagency collaboration and adherence to international legal standards in addressing maritime crime.



UNODC Professor Odote Consultant for prison reform visits the National Human Rights Commission

On 9 July 2026, the Commission welcomed Professor Collins Odote, UNODC Consultant, as part of a mission to assess national capacities and identify priority areas for technical assistance and cooperation in support of prison reform in Mauritius.

During the meeting, the NPMD presented its mandate, key achievements, principal challenges, and a summary of its observations and recommendations issued in 2025 and 2026. The discussions focused on prison oversight, legislative reform, the proposed SADC Model Law, and the development of regional guidelines to strengthen correctional systems.

Particular attention was given to practical reforms that could be implemented without significant financial implications. The meeting also highlighted the importance of improving the working conditions of prison officers, recognising that adequate staffing, decent working environments and effective oversight are essential to ensuring safe, humane and rights-based detention conditions.



Meeting with Dr. Tammy Ayres

Prison, Drugs and Mental Health: An Interdisciplinary global study

The NHRC met with Dr Tammy Ayres, Associate Professor of Criminology in the School of Criminology, Sociology, and Social Policy at the University of Leicester on Monday 13 July at Ebene. She was accompanied by Dr Lucy Evans, Associate Professor in Postcolonial Literature in the School of Arts, Media, and Communications at the University of Leicester, Dr Vijaya Teelock, Mrs Elodie Laurent and Joel Valery both researchers.

The visit forms part of the framework of the ongoing global interdisciplinary study on prison, drugs and mental health in Guyana, the Caribbean islands of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and Mauritius and Seychelles.

Dr Tammy Ayres started by describing the difficulties met by the prison sector in the UK with the impact of drugs and mental health issues and how the response needed a multiagency approach. Dr Lucy Evans talked on the use of art therapy as a coping mechanism which is already being taught by Angele Angoh in the women prison in Mauritius. The researchers wanted to hear about the recommendations made and initiatives taken by the NHRC following the visits made by the NPMD and investigations ensuing incidents and complaints from detainees.



“Sharing Minds” Session with NGO Pedostop

The NHRC was pleased to host a new edition of "Sharing Minds", an interaction with NGOs, activists and civil society, with the aim of future collaboration. The Commission attaches great importance to remaining close to those who work on the ground. We cannot claim to protect human rights from a distance, nor on our own.

This month, we hosted Mrs Virginie Bissessur and Ms Nudhar Bundhoo, from Pedostop, an NGO dedicated to the fight against child sexual abuse in Mauritius. During the thought-provoking interactions avenues of collaboration between the two organisations were discussed with a view of promoting, enhancing and protecting the rights of the children by way of legal reforms, to strengthening the protection of children's rights in Mauritius. Another topic addressed was the necessary support to the Judiciary, particularly through capacity-building initiatives for magistrates serving in the Children's Court and the Family Division.



Finally, and not the least opportunities for collaboration with the Commission to strengthen child sexual abuse prevention efforts within schools and communities were also evoked.



Moot Competition at the University of Mauritius

On 14 July 2026, the Chairperson of the Commission, Mr S Boolell, SC and Ms D Thakoor, barrister-at-law served as judges at the University of Mauritius Law Society Association Inter-University Moot competition.

The Chairman commended participants for the depth of legal research reflected in their written submissions and their engagement with Mauritian case law. He praised the organisers for designing a moot problem that sharpened students' analytical and advocacy skills, while encouraging participants to think beyond the black letter of the law and to value the craft of persuasive language and public speaking. He also urged greater involvement of legal practitioners in problem-setting and student mentorship, and cautioned that AI tools, while useful, must be used judiciously and every submission carefully proof-read. The competition ended with a prize-giving ceremony.



Book Launch - Tapaz Silans

Prezidan Komision drwa imin, Misye Satyajit Boolell SC, ti linvite doner lansman *Tapaz Silans*, enn liv lor tem drwa imin fondamantal ki finn ekrire ek prodwir par bann zelev SSS Quatre Bornes.

Tapaz Silans evok bann topik kouma marzinalizasyon bann zenn LGBT ek diskriminasyon an zeneral. Liv la sarye ek transmet enn lemosyon profon; li enn zouti leksyon bien for.

Tapaz Silans ekrire an kreol morisien. So langaz direk san kas kontour li enn temwanyaz ki nou lang maternel li osi adapte pou evok bann size serye.

Prezidan, Misye Boolell, inn felisit bann zelev ek zot profeser pou sa linisiativ la ek finn ankuraz lezot lekol swiv sa leksyon la pou permet ban zelev dekuver zot prop mwayen leksyon pou evok zot drwa.



Commemoration of Nelson Mandela Day

The NHRC, in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture commemorated the Nelson Mandela Day with a gathering that carried the weights of Mandela's enduring moral force. Guided by the theme *"It is still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality"* the commemoration placed Mandela's legacy at the centre of reflection, not as a distant chapter of history, but as a living call to confront injustice wherever it persists.

Addressing the audience were Stephan Karghoo, director of the Centre, the Chairperson of the NHRC, Mr Satyajit Boolell, SC, Mr Matlhaba Mogadingwane, first secretary of the High Commission of South African and Hon Mehendra Goodeea, Minister of Arts and Culture. The Keynote address was delivered by Hon Mrs Arianne Navarre Marie, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare.

A symbolic gesture marked the occasion whereby books were donated to the prison's library, honoring Mandela's conviction that knowledge is an essential tool of liberation. The act reflected his belief that every person, regardless of circumstance, deserves the chance to rise.

Speakers emphasised that Mandela's message remains urgently relevant. His conviction that change is achieved *"by human beings working together"* echoed through the hall, reminding all present that the pursuit of justice demands courage, unity and unwavering moral clarity. Mandela's legacy was portrayed not as ceremonial remembrance, but as a mandate to act.

The commemoration reaffirmed the NHRC's commitment to carrying Mandela's torch forward, defending dignity, confronting injustice, and working towards a Mauritius where equality becomes a lived reality for all.

Article written by Intern Leeladhara Devi Chunen

Photo Credit: Joey Nicles Modeste





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