

Media Release

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Bingham Centre scoop prestigious 'Rule of Law Award' at Halsbury Legal Awards 2014

LONDON, 24 SEPTEMBER 2014 - London-based independent research institute, the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law has won the Special 'Rule of Law Award' at the 2014 Halsbury Legal Awards held in London on 24 September.

Established in 2013, the Halsbury Legal Awards celebrate the achievements of individuals, law firms, chambers and organisations across the legal sector. Hosted by LexisNexis UK and chaired by independent judges, these major awards are prized by the legal profession and wider community.

The award was accepted on the night by Professor Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC, Director of the Bingham Centre, at an exclusive and prestigious Awards Night held at the Grange St Paul's Hotel in Central London. The event was attended by prominent figures in the legal profession, drawn together to recognise the best that the legal world has to offer.

In receiving the award, the Bingham Centre's leading position and specific focus on understanding and promoting the rule of law was highlighted, along with the significant progress it's made since its launch in 2010.

Jan Miller, Chairman of the Halsbury Legal Awards said: *"The Special Rule of Law Award is designed to celebrate outstanding commitment to the spread of fair and ordered government, law and justice. The contribution made by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law in this field since its launch in 2010 is exceptional. It has been fearless in tackling and influencing a diverse range of projects at the forefront of current issues, both at home and abroad. With seamless flexibility and professionalism the Centre has dealt proactively with unexpected threats to the rule of law, whilst continuing its commitment to education and increased understanding in this vital area."*



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Professor Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC, Director of the Bingham Centre said: *"We are deeply grateful to LexisNexis for this recognition of the work carried out by my excellent colleagues at the Bingham Centre, and for fostering and encouraging the values of the rule of law. In the few years since the launch of the Bingham Centre it is clear that there is a real need for a body, working in this country and abroad, devoted to legality and access to rights and justice – working to promote the rule of law as an instrument of both economic development and respect for equal human dignity. At a time when it sometimes appears that the rule of law may just be an unattainable ideal, this award is a gratifying encouragement to intensify our efforts to demonstrate the rule of law as an ideal, as Tom Bingham put it, 'in the interests of good government and peace, at home and in the world at large'."*

In less than four years since its launch, the Bingham Centre has embarked on several major projects and activities in the UK as well as in a range of countries including Bahrain, Russia, Kenya, Libya, Nepal, Singapore and Burma/Myanmar. The Centre's key rule of law related achievements include:

- In Myanmar in 2013, the Centre produced a manual on constitutional reform. Bingham Centre staff travelled to a dozen cities to conduct training of lawyer-trainers, facilitating over 500 submissions, which were delivered to the parliamentary committee charged with guiding constitutional change. The UK House of Commons International Development Committee has recently cited the Centre's evidence about UK engagement with Myanmar. The Centre continues to work in Myanmar.
- The Centre's report on *"Immigration Detention and the Rule of Law"*, supported by the Nuffield Foundation and published in October 2013 has been cited in Parliamentary debate over the UK Immigration Bill and the NGO, Bail for Immigration Detainees, is using the report as a training manual for its case workers.
- Since mid-2014 the Bingham Centre and the Slynn Foundation have been jointly working on a project regarding the design, operation and balance of power across different Palestinian justice institutions. This work is supported by the UK government and the EU.
- The Centre's independent review of judicial review procedures, chaired by Michael Fordham QC, *"Streamlining Judicial Review in a Manner Consistent with the Rule of Law"* was discussed frequently in parliamentary debates and was the basis of proposed amendments to proposed law reforms relating to judicial review and legal aid. The UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) made several recommendations to take up the suggestions made by the Bingham Centre.
- In October 2014, the Centre will roll out the first stage of its pilot project teaching the rule of law in secondary schools in England. The programme provides resources and support for teachers to use rule of law concepts and case studies to teach Key Stage 3 students (aged 12-14) about democracy and rights as part of the national citizenship curriculum.

Having established a broad base of work internationally the Bingham Centre continues to enhance its impact and reach.

Further details on the Halsbury Legal Awards can be found at www.halsburylegalawards.co.uk

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

- The Bingham Centre was launched in December 2010. The Centre is named after Lord Bingham of Cornhill KG, the pre-eminent judge of his generation and a passionate advocate of the rule of law. The Bingham Centre is an independent research institute devoted to the study and promotion of the rule of law worldwide. It is distinguished in the UK and internationally by its specific focus on the rule of law. Its focus is on understanding and promoting the rule of law; considering the challenges it faces; providing an intellectual framework within which it can operate; and fashioning the practical tools to support it.
For more details please visit www.binghamcentre.biicl.org
- The Bingham Centre is a constituent part of the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL), the world leading independent legal research organisation, which was founded in 1958. (Registered Charity No. 209425, Company Registration 615025).
For more details please visit www.biicl.org
- For more details on the Halsbury Legal Awards, judges and other award categories please visit www.halsburylegalawards.co.uk
- Photos from the Awards night are available by contacting Claudia Mansaray at c.mansaray@biicl.org