The Catholic University of America’s Columbus School of Law, the Center for International Social Development, and the International Center for Civil Society Law present

Religious Freedom in the Former USSR

April 12, 2010
The Catholic University of America
Columbus School of Law
Walter A. Slowinski Courtroom
AGENDA

1 - 1:15 p.m. Welcoming Remarks and Introduction
Dean Veryl Victoria Miles
The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law

Professor Karla W. Simon
Center for International Social Development, Columbus School of Law

Dr. Leon E. Irish
International Center for Civil Society Law

1:15 – 2:45 p.m. Panel One: Central Asia
Moderator: Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love,
The Catholic University of America

Jeff Goldstein, Open Society Institute, Washington, D.C.

Lauren Homer, Homer International Law Group

Sean Roberts, The Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

Knox Thames, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

2:45 – 3 p.m. Q & A

3 – 3:15 p.m. Panel Two: Russia
Moderator: Professor Simon

Professor Robert Blitt, University of Tennessee

Catherine Cosman, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

Professor Christopher Marsh, Baylor University

Jason Stiener, CUA Law Class of 2011

4:45 – 5 p.m. Q & A

5 p.m. Reception, Atrium, Columbus School of Law

PANEL 2

Russia

Moderator
Karla W. Simon (J.D., LL.M.) is Professor of Law and Director of Faculty Development at the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America. She is co-director (with Dr. Fred Ahearn) of the Center for International Social Development at The Catholic University of America. Her scholarly interests include comparative civil society law, with focus principally on China. Her many articles have been published in the Journal of Chinese Law, the Journal of Japanese Law, the Fordham International Law Journal, the Boston University Law Review, and the Tax Law Review. Previous books include “Charity Law and Social Policy” (with O’Halloran and McGregor-Lowndes). Simon is currently working on a book entitled “Reinvigorating Civil Society in China A Socio-legal Analysis.”

Speakers
Robert C. Blitt (J.D., LL.M.) is Associate Professor of Law at the University of Tennessee College of Law. Prior to joining the UT faculty, Blitt was International Law Specialist for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent, bi-partisan agency created by Congress to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad. Blitt’s scholarship explores NGO regulation, the role of NGOs in promoting international human rights norms, and issues related to the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief. His current research projects include studying the movement of anti-constitutional ideas within the international system. Blitt has lectured widely in the United States and abroad, including at international conferences in Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, and the Russian Federation. He has been interviewed and quoted in national and international media outlets, on subjects ranging from Iraq’s constitution to freedom of religion or belief under international law, to U.S. policies relating to detention and torture.

Catherine Cosman joined the staff of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom as Senior Policy Analyst for the OSCE region in late 2003. She has also served on the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe as senior analyst on Soviet dissent (1976-1989). At Human Rights Watch (1989-1992), she wrote several studies on ethnic conflicts in Central Asia and on human rights. At the Free Trade Union Institute (1992-1996), she worked with emerging trade unions in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. In Estonia, she was the Senior Expert of the OSCE Mission (1996-1998). She managed the Central Asian and Caucasus grants program at the National Endowment for Democracy, before joining the Communications Division at RFE/RL in 1999 where she founded and edited “Media Matters” and “(Un)Civil Societies.” She received a B.A. in history from Grinnell College and an M.A. and an A.B.D. in Slavic languages and literatures from Brown University. She also has studied at the Free University of Berlin and the All-Union Institute of Cinematography in Moscow.
Moderator

Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love is a tenured Associate Professor of International Relations in the Politics Department of The Catholic University of America. She is also a fellow at the Commission on International Religious Freedom, where she is writing materials for the Foreign Service Institute, Professional Military Education schools and universities. She serves on the U.S. Catholic Bishops' International Justice and Peace Committee, the advisory board of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, and the board and Communications Committee of Jesuit Refugee Services. Her recent international relations books include Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda (4th Edition, 2010), Morality Matters: Ethics and the War on Terrorism (forthcoming at Cornell University Press), and "What Kind of Peace Do We Seek?" a book chapter on peacebuilding, to appear in Notre Dame University's volume on The Ethics and Theology of Peacebuilding.

Speakers

Jeff Goldstein is the Senior Policy Analyst for Eurasia at the Open Society Institute, where he is responsible for providing advocacy support for the organization’s programs in the former Soviet Union and Mongolia. Prior to working at OSI, Goldstein was senior program manager for Central Asia and the Caucasus at Freedom House. A 25-year veteran of the U.S. Foreign Service, Goldstein served in the American embassies in Warsaw, Seoul, Moscow, and Tallinn, and in several positions in Washington, D.C. He served as the U.S. embassy liaison to the Solidarity Movement during the latter stages of Martial Law in Poland, and as the embassy officer responsible for working with the political opposition, student and labor movements in Korea during a period of rapid democratization. Goldstein also has a background in conflict resolution, having served on U.S. teams negotiating with North Korea on nuclear and missile proliferation issues, and also as Deputy to the U.S. Special Envoy working to help resolve “frozen conflicts” in the Caucasus and Moldova. Goldstein received his master’s degree in international relations from Yale University and a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Lauren B. Homer is an international lawyer and owner of Homer International Law Group, PLLC, of Fairfax, VA. She is also President of Law and Liberty Trust International. Her scholarly interests include analysis of existing and proposed laws and comparative analysis of laws regulating freedom of conscience and religious and faith based organizations in nations that have strictly controlled such activities. She has published articles on the laws of Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, China, Ukraine, Romania, and other countries in various journals, including the Emory International Law Review and East West Church and Ministry Report, and has presented papers on similar subjects at international conferences. Homer received a J.D. from Columbia University and an M.A. from Yale University.
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Sean Roberts is an Associate Professor at The Elliott School of International Affairs and director of the International Development Studies program at The George Washington University. He is a cultural anthropologist and conducted ethnographic fieldwork among the Uyghur people of Central Asia and China during the 1990s and produced a documentary film on the community entitled Waiting for Uighurstan (1996). In 1998-2000 and 2002-2006, he worked at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Central Asia. During the 2006-07 and 2007-08 academic years, Roberts was a post-doctoral fellow in Central Asian Affairs at Georgetown University. At the same time, he continued to work on development projects for a variety of NGOs and served as a senior program officer at the Center for Civil Society and Governance at the Academy for Educational Development. He is the author of a blog on Central Asia, entitled The Roberts Report on Central Asia and Kazakhstan and frequently comments on current events in Central Asia.

Knox Thames is Director of Policy and Research at the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. Prior to joining the commission in 2009, he worked in the Office of International Religious Freedom at the U.S. Department of State, and was the lead State Department officer on religious freedom issues in multilateral fora, such as the UN and OSCE. Thames also served as counsel for six years at the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission), where he was the point-person on religious freedom matters, on issues involving refugees and internally displaced persons, and focused on democracy and human rights in Central Asia. In 2004, Thames was appointed by the State Department to serve as one of the two U.S. experts on the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Thames earned a J.D. with honors from the American University Washington College of Law. He also holds a master’s in International Affairs from the American University School of International Service. An author on a range of human rights issues, his book International Religious Freedom Advocacy was released in August 2009 by Baylor University Press.
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Christopher Marsh serves as Director of the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, as well as director of the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, & Society at Baylor University. Marsh is also Professor of Political Science and Church-State Studies at Baylor and teaches in the area of religion, politics, and society, with a geographical focus on Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and East Asia. His research and teaching interests range from religion and violence to church-state relations and religious freedom in communist and post-communist societies. Marsh speaks Russian and Chinese and has conducted field research across Eurasia, from the Gulf of Finland to the foothills of the Himalayas. Marsh serves as editor of the Journal of Church & State, as co-editor of Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization, and sits on the board of several other journals, including Religion, State, & Society. He also works closely with the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University, where he is a permanent research fellow and close collaborator of Peter Berger’s on projects dealing with Russia, Eastern Europe, and China.

Jason A. Stiener (M.S.) is a 2011 J.D. candidate at the Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America. He is assistant editor of the International Journal of Civil Society Law, and a research assistant for Professor Karla Simon. He is also legal assistant at the National Council of Urban Indian Health in Washington, D.C. His interests include international law, civil rights and developments in the states of the former Soviet Union. He earned his M.S. in international relations at the University of Massachusetts, specializing in Russian affairs. His published papers include “An Analysis of the Rule of Law in Putin’s Russia,” and “Freedom of Religion and Association in the Russian Federation: the Case of Kimlya and Others v. Russia.”