



**FREE LEGAL ADVICE AND STRATEGIC
LITIGATION SUPPORT FOR NGOS**

Pro Bono Connect is a project of the Dutch Legal Committee for Human Rights (NJCM).

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A word from Pro Bono Connect

We'd like to introduce our new colleagues, Veronika Pišorn and Nina Hadeed. Veronika is the new interim head of PBC, and Nina is our new project coordinator. Both share a legal background and experience in the field of human rights. They look forward to building bridges between our partner law firms and NGOs seeking assistance.

Have an idea or need legal assistance?

Want to know more about *pro bono*?

Know a talented lawyer looking to "give back"?

Let's discuss over a cup of coffee!

GET IN TOUCH

Big win against ethnic profiling

PBC x Houthoff x PILP

On February 14, the Court of Appeal in The Hague issued a [landmark ruling](#) that the **Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (RNLM) is no longer allowed to conduct border control inspections on the (partial) basis of a person's skin color.**

Lawyers from the **Public Interest Litigation Project (PILP)** and PBC partner firm **Houthoff** provided invaluable support and coordination of the proceedings.

"The court's ruling is historic and groundbreaking. Selecting people at border controls on the basis of, for example, (partly) their skin color is now prohibited in the Netherlands. We are proud of the group of initiators of the fight against discrimination by the Marechaussee.

It has been a privilege for Houthoff to guide this case on a pro bono basis over the past few years. It is a great example of how a cooperation established through Pro Bono Connect can make a very big social impact."

-- Lisa Oudshoorn & Thijs van Aerde, Lead Counsel *Houthoff*

The case was brought by two "non-white" citizens who have been repeatedly ethnically profiled by the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, [Amnesty International](#), [Control Alt Delete](#), the [Dutch Legal Committee for Human Rights \(NJCM\)](#) and anti-discrimination service [RADAR](#).

We commend everyone involved on their hard work and strategic effort, and celebrate PBC's role in building these relationships!



Back: Thijs van Aerde, Sjaak van der Linde, Dave Bekkering, Laura Wennekes, Rabia Alibaks,

Middle: Janne Calis, Gwen van Eijk, Tikho Ong, Gebrig Klos, Dionne Abdoelhafiezkhani, Vera Prins,

Front: Mpanzu Bamenga, Jair Schalkwijk, Dagmar Oudshoorn, Jelle Klaas, Merel Hendrickx

[Image credits](#)

"The lawsuit is a great example of strategic litigation, where the combination of litigation and campaigning, and the cooperation between various organizations, individuals and lawyers contributed to the fight against racial discrimination."

-- Jelle Klaas, Litigation Director, & Laura Wennekes, Operational Coordinator Public Interest Litigation Project

Supporting public watchdogs against SLAPPs

PBC x HVG x PILnet

We are happy to highlight another match by PBC creating social impact and supporting NGOs:

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public

Participation (SLAPPs) are lawsuits pursued by wealthy litigants, in an attempt to **silence public watchdogs**, through lengthy and expensive litigation.

PILnet and their partners are examining **existing rules, laws, and mechanisms** in jurisdictions across Europe that may be used to address concerns in relation to SLAPPs. One of our partner firms, **HVG Law**, has taken on a supporting role in

their work by providing *pro bono* legal advice in relation to **ethical standards and disciplinary law** applicable to lawyers (*advocaten*) in The Netherlands.

Want to know more?

- Follow the [CASE Coalition](#)
- See the **European Commission's** [proposed directive](#) on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings.

If your organisation is interested in knowledge-sharing activities about SLAPPs, please get in touch!

Online event: Pro Bono for the Rule of Law

A4ID's Annual Conference on Pro Bono for the Rule of Law will take place on **20 March 2023 (online)**.

This year's theme, '**Harnessing the Power of Partnerships**', will highlight the role of partnerships in tackling global crises. The Conference will convene legal professionals, development partners, and rule of law stakeholders from government and the corporate sector to engage on the **challenges, opportunities, and diversities of partnerships** that are required to promote the equitable achievement of SDG 17.

REGISTER HERE

Lawyers needed for continuing support of UA refugees

One year on, the needs of Ukrainian refugees may have changed, but are no less urgent. We are pleased to highlight two initiatives with a call to action:

UA.SUPPORT is an **international legal platform** that facilitates *pro bono* legal **assistance** for Ukrainian refugees. Since its foundation, the organisation has supported over **2100 cases**, partnered with over **280 volunteer lawyers**, and receives over **100 weekly requests**.

As the number of requests in **the Netherlands** is increasing, UA.SUPPORT is seeking additional **volunteer lawyers**.



"Alex is 13 years old and crossed the Ukrainian border on his own. In order to receive money from his parents, he needed to open a bank account. Due to his age he was not able to do so.

One of our volunteer lawyers was able to initiate the youth care for Alex and, consequently, the possibility to open a bank account with which Alex could start his life outside the Ukraine."

-- Kateryna Balaban, Managing Director UA.SUPPORT

VOLUNTEER NOW

Opora Foundation is a collective of **professionals** providing **research, policy, and operational solutions** for displaced peoples. Their team of Ukrainian expats and Dutch and international professionals acts as a bridge between **displaced communities, government, and non-governmental institutions**.

Opora Foundation is looking for **professional and student volunteers** with knowledge of Dutch law to provide **legal support** to displaced people from **Ukraine**.




VOLUNTEER NOW

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March - April 2023:** coffee with our affiliated law firms
 - **20 March 2023:** A4ID's Annual Conference on Pro Bono for the Rule of Law
 - **16-18 October 2023:** PILnet Global Forum
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