Colleen Rohan

Associated Tenant

Colleen Rohan is an expert in criminal defence litigation in both domestic and international courts.

She has represented members of the military and private clients in complex cases involving charges of genocide, murder, terrorism, war crimes and crimes against humanity. In her domestic practice she specialised in death penalty cases, gang-related cases, international extradition and post-conviction remedies. She is currently serving as a member of the judicial panel for the International People's Tribunal on Iran Atrocities of November 2019 (the "Aban Tribunal") investigating charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed by Iranian security forces against civilians in that country.

She is a contributor to and editor of the first practice manual addressed to the specific needs of defense counsel in war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide cases in the international criminal courts: "Manual on International Criminal Defence: ADC-ICT Developed Practices". Most recently she is co-author and editor of the "Defense Counsel Handbook: A Guide for Ukrainian Lawyers Practicing in Domestic War Crimes Cases"

Background and Expertise

Colleen has provided advice, consultancy and training to legal teams, governments, international organisations, and NGOs. She has represented international civil servants charged with misconduct, including at the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. She has provided expert opinions on ethical standards at the Extraordinary Criminal Court for Cambodia and in the drafting of ethical codes at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

She has lectured extensively on international criminal law and ethics at universities in the United States and Europe and has provided training to lawyers and law students from around the world. Ms. Rohan is also a highly respected appellate specialist and legal writer, well-known for the excellence of her written and oral advocacy, strategic originality and creative legal analysis. She was a contributor to and the editor of the first practice-oriented manual on defending international criminal cases published for an international court ("Manual on International Criminal Defence, ADC-ICTY Developed Practices" 2011; updated 2021) and has authored numerous articles in the fields of international criminal law and ethics.

She was awarded a Presidential Commendation by the National Association of Criminal Defence Lawyers in the United States for the outstanding quality of her legal work in the international courts.

She co-edited, with Professor Gentian Zyberi, "Defense Perspectives on International Criminal Justice (Cambridge University Press 2017)and co-edited the legacy publication of the ICTY, "Legacies of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia", eds. Carsten Stahn, Carmel Agius, Serge Brammertz and Colleen Rohan (Oxford University Press 2020).

Admissions to practice

International: Rule 45 List, Defence Counsel for International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Rule 22 List, Defence Counsel for the International Criminal Court (ICC), Rule 45 List, Defence Counsel for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), List of Defence Counsel for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, (STL), List of Counsel, Kosovo Specialist Chambers.

Domestic: United States Supreme Court, Qualified before California State Supreme Court and United States Federal District Court for appointment in death penalty cases, all courts of the State of California, U.S.A., United States Federal District Court, Northern District of California, United States Federal Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, United States Federal District Court, Southern District of California.

Notable Cases

International Human Rights

A v. ICC, Judgement No. 4003, 2016

Counsel for ICC employee arrested and detained in Libya during court ordered visit with Saif Gaddafi. Obtained large monetary judgment for "A" at the International Labor Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) based on findings of negligence by ICC and mistreatment, retaliation and abuse of power by ICC Registrar.

Case No 004 (ECCC), 2013

Expert Consultant on ethical issues raised during pre-trial investigation; Khymer Rouge genocide case.

Assaf v ICC (ICC), 2012 - present

Counsel for ICC employee seeking compensation and damages arising from detention in Libya.

Prosecutor v Ruto, et al (Kenya 1 case) (ICC), 2011

Counsel for defence witnesses in first confirmation hearing in ICC Kenya case.

Prosecutor v Milorad Trbic (ICTY), 2006

Lead Counsel in multi-accused case charging genocide in Srebrenica during Balkans War. Client severed from case.

Mr. Toma Fila, ICTY Disciplinary Board Case

ADC-ICTY Representative to Appellate Board; wrote dissenting opinion defending free speech rights of defence counsel at the international courts.

International Human Rights

International Crime

Prosecutor v Sulejman Selimi (EULEX war crimes courts, Kosovo), 2014-2018

Counsel for Commander of Kosovo Liberation Army charged with war crimes in three cases. Acquitted on all but three counts after trials and appeals.

Prosecutor v Abdallah Banda Abadaer Nourian and Saleh Mohanned Jerbo Jamus, (Darfur case)

Counsel on amicus curiae brief on behalf of the Association of Defence Counsel Practising Before the ICTY (ADC-ICTY) in case involving allegations of murders of UN personnel.

Prosecutor v Haradinaj (ICTY), 2010

Counsel for Idriz Balaj; acquitted on all 37 counts charged at original trial in 2008; acquitted on all counts after prosecution appeal and retrial.

Prosecutor v Radovan Karadzic (ICTY), 2009-present

Legal Consultant for Standby Counsel Team.

People v Robert Nawi, 1997

Appellate counsel in case involving numerous substantive and procedural challenges to reliability of DNA evidence, quality of DNA testing laboratories and DNA testing techniques.

People v Oscar Gates, 1986

Counsel serving as “next friend” liaison between court, client and defence counsel in death penalty case involving first impression issue of competency of client in federal habeas corpus proceeding; resulted in suspension of death penalty sentence.

International Crime

International Terrorism

Morin v Secretary General of the United Nations (United Nations Dispute Tribunal), 2011

Counsel for U.N. employee (Department of Safety and Security) regarding allegations of misconduct arising from terrorist bombing of U.N. House in Algiers. Misconduct charges dismissed.

International Terrorism

Interpol

Regina v William Joseph Quinn, 1986

Counsel in international extradition of Provisional Irish Republican Army member accused of terrorist bombings and murder; all bombing allegations dismissed (1983).

Interpol

Achievements

Awards

Presidential Commendation for outstanding service, in the practice of international law, to the goals and objectives of liberty: awarded by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, USA, conferred July 2013, San Francisco.