

International Legal Aid Group

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The Hague: City of Justice

Roger Smith reports on the 10th International Legal Aid Group Conference

The tenth annual conference of the International Legal Aid Group was held in The Hague in June. I read all the papers; reviewed all the presentations; and attended all the sessions (except the criminal one which shared time with quality). I required nudging to keep awake only once (the consequence of chronic insomnia, no fault in the presentation). The conference's title, 'Legal Aid in Difficult Times', provides a pretty fair summary of the major theme, though here and there were rays of sunlight.

The core of this group of legal aid administrators, academics and the occasional activist have been meeting since the tireless - if sometimes harassed - Professor Alan Paterson pulled them together for the initial event in the same place back in 1992. Thus, there is a degree of shared experience and history, which provides a solid common core for experience. A tribute to the breadth of support was indicated by the fact that sponsorship came from governments or legal aid institutions in no less than seven jurisdictions. Asia was well represented - with reports from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, (which has a separate scheme), Japan and Taiwan. The countries that you would expect were present: Australia, Canada, USA, Scotland and England and Wales.

Over the years, attendance has grown and reached over 100 at this event. Even so, in terms of using the conference to gauge the temperature of legal aid round the world, there is an unavoidable element of serendipity, depending on the chance of invitations and availability. And, indeed, the ILAG conference was never conceived as a world congress on legal aid: it was supposed to be of use to

those running established schemes. Nevertheless, there were no less than 23 national reports and various thematic ones.

There are some caveats to be made about taking lessons from the papers to the conference apart from the chance of those jurisdictions in attendance. The breadth of countries was mirrored by a similarly varied cast of participants - with academics, activists, civil servants and administrators all manifesting their institutional prejudices to a greater or lesser extent. Government officials have little room but for coded messages to imply that their government's policy is little less holy than the tablets brought down by Moses from the mountain. By contrast, someone like Alan Houseman of the US's Centre for Legal Aid and Social Policy or Steve Hynes of England's Legal Action Group has a support base up for a bit of informed criticism. Academics, of course, have such freedom as may be accorded by the funders of their research.

Countries can be classed in different ways. For example, European Countries are bound by the European Convention on Human Rights. A number (including Scotland and the Netherlands) have had to scramble to comply with decisions of the associated European Court of Human Rights that requires duty lawyers during police interviews (*Salduz v Turkey*). Few emphasised the role of the European Convention as a standard setter - though its protection of legal aid has been evident in the shape of cuts in England and Wales and elsewhere. Another way of grouping states would be in relation to their history. Countries like those in Eastern Europe or China share a struggle to re-orientate their legal systems away from the legacy of communist government. As one contributor put it, the emphasis of the criminal justice system in these countries is changing from the primacy of finding facts and punishing guilt to a greater respect for the

procedural rights of the suspect. Reform in this area is variable: some states are surging ahead. China, creditably, is committed to a reform process: so too is Moldova - a country with much less resources. In other states, progress can be somewhat glacial. Poland has teetered on the edge of legal aid reform for some years but not actually done much.

Anglophone countries tend to have much in common. This results, no doubt, from a common language, an easily shareable history and a shared adversarial legal system. The USA led developments in the 1960s and 70s - putting an emphasis on civil rights as well as criminal ones. That was followed by: the countries of the UK, the provinces of Canada and the states and territories of Australia. All of these are now feeling a financial squeeze, which puts pressure on the level of services once provided. However, they all still recognise, albeit in varying and residual degrees, the value of civil coverage and, as part of that, what the Brits would call 'social welfare' law and the North Americans 'poverty' law. Australia and Canada have been particularly attracted to the need to meet public legal education and still fund elements of it. South Africa's community justice centres are a base for both criminal and civil services. The US still hankers after impact litigation. Earl Johnson gave the conference a rousing justification for such engagement - returning like a prodigal grandfather to the legal services movement of his youth when he led the Legal Services Corporation at the height of its powers. Indeed, even when funding is low and times are hard, the Americans can talk a good game. The US Congress is holding down the corporation's current budget but senior officials in the Obama administration from the President down have been willing to attend legal aid events and associate themselves with the cause.

Cuts and economic uncertainties have called a halt to planned reforms in a number of countries. This has been a worldwide effect, particularly in countries badly hit by the recession. Japan's expansion of legal aid has come to an abrupt halt. Ireland's funding for civil cases through its Legal Aid Board had

dropped sharply since 2008 and it has lost 16 per cent of its staff. Jurisdictions like British Columbia and those in Australia are living with the impact of even earlier major reductions in expenditure and programmes.

The vulnerability of the UK jurisdictions to comparative study was demonstrated in figures of spending per head of population. England and Wales topped the table at 44 euros with Scotland just behind at 31. The justifications for this are well rehearsed, particularly in England, Wales and Scotland. The examples of China's 0.11 euro per head or Moldova's 0.44 are probably not much of a political threat. But, Canada gets it down to just under 17 and the Netherlands to just under 30. These understandably tempt politicians. In any event, the underlying concern can be seen from the titles of some of the sessions: 'Cuts and what else?', 'Safeguarding quality in difficult times' and 'Coping with the consequences of financial retrenchment'.

There were three positive themes, which emerged. The first involved much talk of 'unbundling' services. This is the idea that a case may be broken down into its component parts and assistance given only to some, leaving the person to undertake the rest. Some jurisdictions have been forced to make the best of this form of provision because there has been nothing else. In the US, the courts of California have become a leader in assisting unrepresented litigants through the court process, keeping just shy of acting for them. This has apparently been very successful. Research on the work of the court-based Citizens Advice Bureau in London proved a bit equivocal about how effective this form of help seemed to be, at least in a British context - though California and Scotland appeared to have a happier story to tell.

The second theme was the 'hit' of the conference - the potential use of new technology. Again, some of the researchers wanted to be a bit cautious about this. Studies from the now defunct Legal Services Research Centre in England and Wales suggested that use of the internet -even

among the young - was pretty hit and miss. Nevertheless, the Dutch had the most upbeat message with their promotion of their 'rechtwijzer' website - for which they even had a snazzy video. Personally, I am an unashamedly big fan. I think it is a game changer in terms of using the potential of the internet not just to provide information on their legal position but also to take people through the process of resolving their dispute. There were also presentations on the use of new technology in the States; how best to use telephone hotlines; and how facilities like document assembly programmes might be used both in a legal aid and a private practitioner context.

Finally, there was a potentially really interesting - though somewhat muted - debate about outcomes. This emerged here and there in papers - most directly in response to the influence of a forthcoming Australian 'Productivity' review. The question is this: what are the outcomes against which we can measure the success (or failure) of legal aid? Adherence to the European Convention can provide one benchmark. Recently developed guidelines and principles from the UN provide others in relation to crime. More broadly, work in the Australian Capital Territory had had a go at developing a wider range of outputs. One difficulty is that the answer really ought to

focus on the ultimate result: for example, if there was a dispute, was it settled fairly? Put in that way, the provision of legal services becomes only part of the outcome to be measured. A full answer would require an integrated assessment both of the assistance given by legal aid and the ultimate resolution, whether by way of court, tribunal or otherwise. That requires a degree of joined up thinking for which many, particularly the Dutch, explicitly hankered but which was hard to attain.

There was enough in this conference to justify the astonishingly reasonable cost of attendance to the most cavilling of treasurers and finance officers. Enough too to justify its next meeting its hosting by Scotland in two years' time. By then, we will be in a better position to appraise what new technology can deliver. We will also see whether the Scots can meet the quality of Dutch hospitality. Bring it on.

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Research on Access to Justice, Legal and Dispute Resolution

The Working Group on Civil Justice and Dispute Resolution at the Research Committee on the Sociology of Law conference, Toulouse, September 2013

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The Working Group on Civil Justice and Disputing Behaviour held three sessions at the most recent RCSL meeting. One session was titled access to justice and legal aid. The other two sessions included papers on a more

diverse range of topics in civil justice and dispute resolution.

In the session on access to justice and legal aid Joao Pedroso, Patricia Branco and Paula Casaleiro from Coimbra University in Portugal presented a paper titled Access to Law and Justice in 7 European Union Countries: Tendencies and Challenges to Democracy in which they presented a typology of types of legal aid systems in seven European countries. Type one includes the U.K. and Portugal with legal aid systems that are public, inclusive and focus on out-of-court services. The legal aid systems in Italy and Spain are characterized as less

comprehensive and private, having systems run by the private bar. The French and German legal aid systems are characterized having a strong tendency toward privatization, largely because of the widespread use of legal expenses insurance. The Netherlands stands in a category by itself, characterized as comprehensive and with a tendency toward privatization. Overall, the authors see a tendency in all types of legal aid systems toward an abandonment of the fundamental principles underlying legal aid; the rule of law and the crucial role of legal aid and, ultimately, access to justice as a pillar of democracy. Governments, which were the primary funders of legal aid in most jurisdictions, are limiting or reducing their funding in the current period of austerity. The general movement in legal aid is in the direction of privatization, and not in finding major donor organizations with strong poverty reduction mandates. In this context policy oriented academic research has to address the realities of the legal aid environment. This may involve a focus on issues such as the cost to individuals and to the state of not providing access to justice services.

The paper by Bernard Hubeau and Steven Gibens from the University of Antwerp titled *Socially Responsible Legal Aid and the Role of Social Work in Legal Aid: Time for a Thorough Re-think* argued that the nature of legal services must change from the traditional legal aid model of “services normally available from a lawyer” due to the holistic nature of legal problems experienced by the public and the problem clusters experienced by a substantial percentage of people with legal problems. They argue that an interdisciplinary approach combining law and social work is required. However, not all delivery models are compatible with this integrated skills approach. It is possible that clinics and staff offices are far more flexible in this respect than fee-for-service judicare delivery. Proposals for this approach to legal aid service have gained renewed strength with the results of the legal problems research based on the justiciable problems methodology. However, similar proposals have a long history, extending back to the

early days of legal aid in the United States when legal aid was a bureau of the Office of Economic Opportunity and a part of the war on poverty. Little progress has been made since then. As we think about how to advance the multidisciplinary approach, based on very good empirically-based reasons, it is worth examining this long and rich body of literature in thinking about why such a good idea has not yet been realized.

Jan Winczorek and Pawel Maranowski from The Institute of Political studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences presented a paper titled *Towards an Empirical Model of Legal Aid in Poland*. In this paper the authors present a body of data drawn from a wide range of secondary sources and skilfully assembled documenting the prevalence of legal problems experienced by the public in Poland, demographic characteristics and sources of advice currently available. In spite of the limitations of the data the researchers are able to present an account of issues such as the current gaps in the availability of advice, both geographically and in terms of problem types. In Poland there is a long history of attempts to develop a coherent national legal aid system. Research of this kind will advance that objective.

Vladimir Vitovsky from the University of Coimbra in Portugal presented a paper titled *Federal Community Justice in the Slums of Rio de Janeiro: Limitations as a Kind of Legal Aid*. In the two projects discussed in the paper, legal aid was part of a larger integrated effort to address certain legal problems experienced by the residents, both lawyers and community legal workers being involved in these projects. One overall theme evident in the paper is that bringing access to justice to people may require more than legal aid. This may require combining the integrated efforts of a number of sectors of the justice system and other social services. The paper focuses on some of the considerable difficulties encountered getting the various sectors to communicate effectively and work together in an integrated way. Another issue that should be taken into account in projects aiming to address legal problems is the

difficulty identifying the legal problems of the disadvantaged. The legal problems research is consistent in reporting that people do not recognize the legal aspects of their problems, may not know where or how to obtain assistance and often do not ask for help until the situation is desperate.

In another session focusing on various topics in civil justice and dispute resolution three papers were presented, each one based on analysis of quantitative data. Kuo-Chang Huang from the Institutum Jurisprudentiae, Taiwan presented a paper titled *Do the Rich and Poor Behave Similarly in Seeking Advice?* The analysis employed data from the 2011 Taiwan Legal Needs Study. It is not surprising that the results showed that people tend to seek advice of all kinds with increasing seriousness of the problem and that advice seeking varies with problem type. Interestingly, the analysis also revealed that income has a statistically significant positive effect on seeking legal advice but no effect on seeking non-legal advice. Education had a statistically significant and positive effect on seeking non-legal advice but no effect on seeking legal advice. This indicates that more highly educated people, regardless of income are likely to have knowledge of sources of advice and to seek free, non-legal advice.

Mauricio Padron Innamorato and Monica Gonzalez-Contra from the National Autonomous University of Mexico presented a paper titled *Perceptions and Values as Determinants of Access to Justice: a Quantitative Analysis of the Mexican Case.* The analysis was based on a 2009 national survey of perceptions and levels of satisfaction with justice services in the Mexican population. The presentation focussed on the paradox that Mexicans place a high value on justice while, at the same time, they do not frequently use justice services when they have a legal problem and they tend not to understand their legal rights. This finding mirrors the results of similar research conducted elsewhere, although some research shows that the perceived level of fairness of the formal justice system is lower if people have difficulties resolving legal

problems, whether or not the respondents actually used the formal justice system.

A paper by Iwao Sato from the University of Tokyo titled *How Users Evaluate the Labour Tribunal System in Japan* presented results from a national survey comparing user satisfaction and outcomes between litigate settlements and settlements achieved through a tribunal. Litigation of labour disputes in Japan is expensive and notoriously slow. In 2006 a labour tribunal was established allowing individuals and companies an option to litigation for settling employment disputes. The research found that workers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the speed and the outcomes at the tribunal. Workers ratings were consistently higher compared with both small and large employers.

A third session on civil justice and dispute resolution included three diverse papers all using qualitative methods. Maria Rita Bartolomei from the University of Macerata in Messina, Italy presented a paper titled *The New Frontiers of Justice in Italy: Judges and Lawyers Dealing with Civil Mediation*, documenting the recent introduction in Italy of mediation as an alternative to litigation in family matters. In this new approach, litigants in family court are automatically routed to mediation, although litigation is open as an option if mediation does not work. In this system, however, users are required to pay for the mediation service. According to the presenter, this may constrain users to remain in mediation or to accept the outcome even though it is unsatisfactory.

Yoav Dotan from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem presented a paper titled *Government Lawyers in Transformative Litigation.* In this paper he describes how government lawyers in Israel provide legal services to the government from a centralized bureau. This centralization allows the litigators to develop consistent and uniform legal positions that influence or even constitute substantive policy on various issues.

In a paper titled *Complaining to Putin: a Paradox of the Hybrid Regime*, Elena

Bogdanova from the Centre for Independent Social Research in Russia described a dispute resolution system in Russia which is national in scope, operated by Vladimir Putin's United Russia Party. Any resident of Russia is able to send a complaint to a party office, with the expectation that party workers will assist in resolving the issue. In one sense this is similar to the frequent practise in many countries of citizen's approaching the office of a senator or member of parliament with a problem and the politician is motivated to assist at least in part in order to gain voter support. However, the function of this dispute resolution system raises concerns in the context of an authoritarian state. Research is continuing to establish basic information about the number and types of complaints presented to the DR system, outcomes and, more broadly, the intersection of access to justice and political dimensions. The overall theme of the conference was the sociology of law and political action. Several speakers in the plenary sessions talked about the mobilization of law to achieve concerted political and social action, and the many forms this can take in different political contexts. The United Party of Russian DR program is an interesting variation on this theme.

The two sessions organized by the RCSL Working Group on the Comparative Study of the Legal Professions: Family Policy and the Law Group included several interesting papers. Rachael Treloar from Simon Fraser University presented a paper by her and Susan Boyd titled Family Law Reform in Neoliberal Context: British Columbia's New Family Law Act, providing a critical assessment of this legislation. The authors give the new family law legislation a positive assessment in terms of the definition of parentage and guardianship, revisions of the best interests of the child criteria, an improved definition of family violence and a statement against presumptions of preferred parenting arrangements. The legislation is praised for being firmly grounded in the best empirical evidence in the family law and policy literature. However, the analysis also concludes that on a more fundamental level the legislation reflects a neoliberal political

agenda of state withdrawal from responsibility for social welfare, an increased emphasis on individual responsibility and choice without making demands on the public purse. For example, in the view of the authors the legislation fails to recognize the gendered nature of parenting resources in provisions relating to shared parenting that would require forms of government funding to redress.

Mavis Maclean from Oxford University presented a paper examining the move away from court- and lawyer-based resolution of family law problems in the UK in a paper titled Delivering Family Justice in England and Wales: the Changing Professional Landscape for Divorcing and Separating Parents. Recent changes in family legislation require a mandatory mediation assessment before a matter can proceed to courts. However, referrals to mediation have fallen by 50% due to cuts to civil legal aid. This is giving rise to a new private market for divorce and family work treating divorce work as commodities to be sold in the market at competitive prices. As a consequence, the old debate about the advantages of courts and lawyers is being overtaken by a much more complex and fundamental struggle between professional court and lawyer based justice and private ordering. The paper poses the question: Is this a threat to the rule of law or new pathways to justice and increasing empowerment? The concern raised by Professor Maclean is that because the new private market ordering is premised on private resources to pay the costs and informed choice among a plethora of available services the disadvantaged may be less well-served in this new neoliberal ordering. "The value of law depends on the quality of law" is the thought on which Professor Maclean ends her thoughtful paper.

A paper presented by Patricia Branco from the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, Portugal presented a paper on the importance of the architectural design of family courts titled Family and Child Courts in Portugal: Considering the Importance of Space. The author argues that the physical conditions, internal layouts and organization

of court buildings are key factors for the efficacy, legitimacy and accessibility of the law. This reflects the premise the emotions that are so integral to family law disputes are unavoidably affected by the physical aspects of the courts.

An Australian study by Helen Rhodes, John Dewar and Grania Sheehan from Melbourne University titled *Using Professional Practise Experience to Generate Family Law Reform* described a project in Australia to use research based on practise experience rather than “think tank” reports or government commissions of inquiry to develop consistent approaches to the “fragmented, horizontalized and dispersed” family law system that has emerged following the implementation of the new family law legislation in 2006, intended to assure that mediation and counselling services would be the main gateway to the family law system rather than the courts. In the view of the authors, this has created tensions between lawyers’ approaches based primarily on legal rights and obligations defined in legislation and a greater emphasis on child development and family dynamics by other professional service providers. The research based on professional practise has identified a number of areas in which approaches should be improved. The current legislation defines protections for the child from being exposed or subjected to abuse, neglect or family violence. The additional emphasis by non-lawyer service providers on a broader range of sources of harm to the child’s development, for example, due to conflict between parents is seen as a positive development that should be incorporated in to more general practise.

Rosemary Hunter from the University of Kent in the UK presented preliminary results from on-going research designed to 1) provide an up-to-date description of awareness and experience with three forms of family dispute resolution; solicitor negotiation, mediation and collaborative law and 2) to assess which pathways to justice are most appropriate for what cases and parties. The research methodology combines a national survey, in-person interviews with users of the three

approaches and transcript reviews. Among a small sub-sample who had recently been divorced, respondents were most satisfied with collaborative law (66%) and solicitor negotiation (65%) compared with mediation (41%). This mirrors the results from the overall survey in which respondents were equally likely to say they were either very satisfied or satisfied with collaborative law and solicitor negotiation and were more likely to say they were dissatisfied with mediation. Qualitative data from the interviews indicates that mediations is often not well-explained and people who chose the mediation option sometimes felt they were pressured to do so by partners, solicitors and, generally, by the system.

A speaker at one of the plenary sessions highlighted the decline in support in most European countries for sociology of law, often being characterized as non-productive meta-scientific discourse. There has been a failure to translate research and theory at the meta-science level into concrete policy-oriented action. Although it was not mentioned explicitly in the plenary presentation, this contrasts with the success of more concrete, empirical socio-legal research. There is no better example than the remarkable body of legal problems research based on the justiciable problems approach inspired by Hazel Genn’s paths to justice research. This body of work has influenced access to justice policy in countries around the world. The studies carried out in a number of different countries following this approach have produced an remarkably consistent body of results that now form the framework of a paradigm for access to justice that continues to guide the definitions, underlying assumptions and empirical generalizations in legal problems research. This is clear from the presentations in the three sessions in the Civil Justice and Dispute Resolution sessions of this conference, notably, the papers by Hubeau and Gibins, Winczorek and Maranowski, Innamorato and Gonzalez-Contra, Huang and Sato.

Following on with another empirical research theme, Susan Silby, the methodologist at MIT,

made an interesting presentation about the disconnect between accounts of the more spectacular examples norm violating behaviour (ENRON and the Wall Street debacle of late 2008) and good empirically-based accounts of those events. In a presentation titled A Few Rotten Apples or a Rotten Barrel, Professor Silby characterized typical accounts of these major norm-violating events as hegemonic, emphasizing individual culpability rather than organizational failure. She traces this to a number of factors: methodological individualism, a culture of short term rewards in the corporate world, moral heterogeneity and the loss of linkage between cause and effect. Tracing her perspective back to Edwin H. Sutherland's

foundational differential association theory, which focused on the social structural conditions causing individual norm-violating behaviour, she argues that the evidence telling hegemonic tales of wrong doing in which the structure is sound and a few abhorrent individuals should be punished is wrong. According to Sibley, the evidence truly supports subversive stories in which, following the differential association model, the organization is as rotten as the individual behaviour it produces. The best empirical research thus focuses the sociology and the social science of law on the needs for important structural and policy changes that, in her words, makes the sociology of law a democratic process.

News

The news items shown below are largely compiled from articles on the internet, found on the basis of a simple search for terms such as 'legal aid', 'access to justice', and 'pro bono'. Therefore, readers must, just as buyers, beware of authenticity. The links worked at the time of writing but some will obviously fail after a period of time.

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Angola:

[Creation of Arbitration Centres to Facilitate Access to Justice](#): allAfrica

[Government to Reduce Legal Services Fees](#): allAfrica

Australia:

[Call To Improve Flawed Legal Aid System](#): Adelaide Now

[Changes to Legal Aid Allocation for Lawyers in South Australia](#): Time Base

[CLA Disappointed With Parties Response To Access To Justice Crisis](#): Community Law Australia

[Coalition Cuts To Indigenous Legal Aid Under Fire](#): Sydney Morning Herald

[DIY Justice As South Australian Legal Costs Too Much For Many](#): news.com.au
[Increase Legal Aid But Lawyers Must Better Their Game](#): Sydney Morning Herald

[Legal Aid Cuts A Worrying Sign From The Abbott Team](#): The Australian Age

[Legal Aid Service Says Alcohol Bans Will Not Work](#): ABC News

[Pay Now Or Pay Later: Why The Access To Justice Crisis Must Be Addressed Now](#): The Greens

[Think What The Justice System Would Be Like Without Legal Aid](#): Herald Sun

[Victoria Legal Aid's Budget Triples Despite Cuts](#): ABC News

Canada:

[Association of Legal Aid Plans Canada Endorses Access to Justice Report](#): Newswire Canada

[Attorney General backs legal aid lawyers' Demand For Collective Bargaining](#): The Canadian Star

[Lawyers Hold Rally as Frustration with Legal Aid Ontario Grows](#): Newswire Canada

[Legal Aid Funding 'Yet Another Band-Aid'](#): Yukon News

['Multi-Use Courthouses' Needed, Says Report On Canadian Justice](#): The Canadian Star

[New Board Chair 'Optimistic' Withdrawal Of Legal Aid Service Can Be Averted](#): Legal Aid Reformer's Network

Cayman Islands:

[Lawmakers Delve Into Legal Aid Again](#): CayCompass

China:

[Is Lack Of Legal Aid Inhibiting Delivery Of Effective Justice?](#): South China Morning Post

[Justice Minister Urges Legal Aid For Poor](#): China Daily

[Minister Calls For Additional Legal Aid Volunteers](#): China Daily

England & Wales:

[Civil Legal Aid Banned For Foreigners By Next Year To Help Stop Britain Being Seen As A Soft Touch](#): Mail Online

[Criminal Firms Will Collapse, Not Consolidate, If Legal Aid Cuts Are Too Fast, Government Warned](#): Legal Futures

[Grayling Confirms Legal Aid Concessions](#): Law Society Gazette

[Grayling Promises Second Consultation On Legal Aid – But Sets Red Lines](#): Law Society Gazette

[Grayling - We Intend To Do A Lot On Deregulation](#): Legal Futures

[Is The Ministry Of Justice Misrepresenting The Cost Of Legal Aid?](#): Full Fact

[Leading Civil Rights Lawyers Took Chambers Closes, Blaming Legal Aid Cuts](#): The Independent

[Law Society Calls On Members To Engage With Government Over Legal Aid](#): The Lawyer

[Legal Aid Agency Confirms Launch Of Online Working](#): Law Society Gazette

[Legal Aid Protests Held By UK Uncut](#): BBC News

[Lord Neuberger: Legal Aid Cuts Threaten To Deny Justice](#): BBC News

[Mediation Services Hit By Legal Aid Cuts, Ministry Of Justice Figures Reveal](#): The Guardian

[No Legal Aid For Prisoners, Says Chris Grayling](#): The Independent

[Why Breaking Up Is Getting Even Harder To Do](#): BBC News

India:

[25% Jump In Litigants Opting For Free Legal Aid Over Last 3 Years](#): DNA India

[File Report On Lapses In Providing Free Legal Aid](#): Legal Aid Reformer's Network

[Legal Aid Is A Right Of An Accused, Rules Apex Court](#): Legal India

[Middle Class Americans Reach Out To Lawyers In India Via Internet For Legal Aid](#): The Economic Times

[Palamu Legal Aid Clinic Helps Poor Get Justice](#): The Times of India

[Women's Group To Provide Legal Aid With Special Shariah Court](#): Hindustan Times

Indonesia:

[Indonesian Migrant Workers Not Able To Access Justice At Home](#): University of New South Wales

[The World Needs Justice - A Lesson From Indonesia](#): The Jakarta Post

Jamaica:

[EU Provides \\$52 Million For Justice, Human Rights Projects](#): Jamaica Observer

[Government To Provide Lawyers For Cops Brought Before INDECOM](#): The Jamaica Gleaner

[Joke Justice System Is No Laughing Matter](#): The Jamaica Gleaner

New Zealand:

[Change To Legal Aid A Concern](#): Manawatu Standard

[Changes To Legal Aid Funding In Effect](#): NZFVC

[Lawyers Critical Of Legal Aid Interest](#): Radio New Zealand

[Legal Aid 8% Penalty Rates The Final Blow To The Poor Buying Justice In NZ](#): The Daily Blog

[New Zealand Supreme Court Provides Guidance On Litigation Funding Agreements](#): Lexology

[Public Defence Service Move Results In Less Work](#): Otago Daily Times

Nigeria:

[Legal Aid Council Holds Conference To Promote Free Legal Service](#): allAfrica

Northern Ireland:

[Ford In Legal Aid Row With Lawyers](#): Belfast Telegraph

[Law Society Says Northern Ireland Legal Aid Budget Mismanaged](#): BBC News

[Lawyers Should Not Be Exempt From Budget Cutbacks, Warns Ford](#): Newsletter

[Northern Ireland's Legal Aid Bill To Exceed Budget By £40m Despite David Ford's Vow To Slash Spending](#): Belfast Telegraph

Republic of Ireland:

[Legal Aid Revoked For Defendants 'On Holiday'](#): Legal Aid Reformer's Network

[Steep Rise In Legal Aid Charges Introduced](#): Irish Times

Rwanda:

Population Wants The Faculty Of Law To Extend Its Legal Aid Services: National University of Rwanda

Scotland:

Cuts Warning As Legal Aid Faces A Funding Crisis: The Scotsman

Case For Legal Aid Contracting Yet To Be Made Says Law Society President: Law Society of Scotland

Chambers Blames 'Devastating' Cuts To Legal Aid For Closure Plans: Herald Scotland

Legal Aid Spending Down £7.4m Last Year, SLAB Reports: The Journal Online

Talking Point - It's Criminal: Holyrood Magazine

Warning More Cuts To Legal Aid Required: Herald Scotland

South Africa:

Legal Aid Must Fund Marikana Miners: allAfrica

Pressure Eased On Courts As Local Mediators Resolve 32,000 Cases: allAfrica

SA Cannot Afford Legal Aid: ENCA

Uganda:

Marginalised Workers to Get Free Legal Aid: allAfrica

For more information about the work of the *International Legal Aid Group*, please visit our website which can be found at <http://ilagnet.org/>. Please note however, that in the coming weeks, a new website will be launched. More information will be made available in due course.