



***FOREWORD***

***PROFESSOR ALAN PATERSON, CHAIR, INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AID GROUP***

Dear Colleagues

News on ILAG conference is that there has been great interest in the conference and we are very close to being full. There is little room, if any, for new papers other than national reports. We will operate a waiting list for places and papers as in the past. You should be considering booking hotels and flights. Attached is information on hotels, conference venue and Ottawa itself.

Best wishes,

Alan (Paterson)  
Chair, ILAG

***INTRODUCTION OF THE LEGAL AID SYSTEM IN HONG KONG***

**LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT,  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION**

**Legal Aid**

Legal aid forms an integral part of Hong Kong's legal system and plays an important role in contributing towards upholding the rule of law and enhancing access to justice. The main objective of legal aid in Hong Kong is to ensure that no one with reasonable grounds for taking or defending proceedings would be prevented from doing so in Hong Kong courts because of lack of means.

The services provided by the Legal Aid Department (LAD) cover committal proceedings for criminal cases in the Magistrates' Courts, criminal and civil proceedings in the District Court or courts of above levels, certain proceedings in the Lands Tribunal and the Coroner's Court as well as cases handled by the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Any person who is or is likely to be involved in the above proceedings in Hong Kong, regardless of his or her nationality or residence, is eligible for legal aid provided that he or she satisfies both the statutory means test and merits test. Eligible applicants are provided with legal representation by a solicitor and, if necessary, a barrister in legal proceedings in Hong Kong courts.

In parallel, the Duty Lawyer Service, which is subvented by the Government and administered by the council of the Duty Lawyer Service that includes representatives from the Law Society of Hong

Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association, operates schemes<sup>1</sup> to provide eligible applicants with legal assistance.

### **Legal Aid Department**

As one of the government departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the LAD is responsible for the administration of the legal aid schemes in accordance with the Legal Aid Ordinance and the Legal Aid in Criminal Cases Rules.

In 2018, the LAD received a total of 18 405 legal aid applications. Among these, there were 15 091 civil cases and 3 314 criminal cases. Legal aid was granted in 8 252 cases (5 888 civil cases and 2 364 criminal cases).

### **Funding for Legal Aid Services**

The funding of the LAD is derived from the annual provision of the HKSARG while the revenue of the LAD mainly comes from the contributions paid by the aided persons and the legal costs recovered. In the financial year of 2017-2018, the revenue derived from the said sources was about HK\$324 million. However, the sum recovered was less than the amount of expenses incurred in legal aid cases which comprise cases where no monetary claim was involved or no costs could be recovered, such as criminal cases, public law cases as well as cases involving bad debts (e.g. failure of unsuccessful parties to pay costs).

### **Contributions paid by aided persons and the Director of Legal Aid's First Charge**

At present, aided persons are required to pay contribution if their financial resources are assessed to be between HK\$38,391.25 and HK\$307,130. Depending on the assessed financial resources of the aided person, the amount of contribution ranges from \$768 to \$76,783. In 2018, about 72% of the aided persons did not have to pay any contribution and about 82% of the aided persons only had to pay contribution of an amount not exceeding HK\$1,536, including those who did not have to pay any contribution.

Although a large proportion of the aided persons receive legal aid without having to pay any money, it does not mean that the services provided by the LAD are free. In cases where any property is recovered or preserved in the proceedings by the LAD for an aided person, the Director of Legal Aid (DLA) has the right to deduct from such property the legal costs paid by LAD on the aided person's behalf and the amounts to be deducted are known as the Director of Legal Aid's First Charge.

Pursuant to the Legal Aid Ordinance, the LAD is entrusted with the responsibility to administer the two legal aid schemes, namely the Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme (OLAS) and the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme (SLAS).

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<sup>1</sup> The Duty Lawyer Services operates the Duty Lawyer Scheme, the Care or Protection Proceedings Scheme, the Free Legal Advice Scheme, the Tel-Law Service and the Convention Against Torture & Non-Refoulement Claims Scheme.

## Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme

### Civil Legal Aid

To satisfy the means test, applicants must show that their financial resources do not exceed the statutory limit and the current financial eligibility limit (FEL) of the financial resources allowed under the OLAS is \$307,130. For the purpose of means test, applicants' financial resources comprising their disposable capital and annual disposable income must not exceed the FEL. For computation of the annual disposable income, there are statutory deductions available to applicants, such as rent, rates, statutory personal allowances for the living expenses of the applicant and his/her dependants, care allowance for dependants who are unable to care for themselves, and maintenance payment etc. Furthermore, property being subject matter of the dispute, capital equivalent to the FEL of OLAS if an applicant is over 60 years old, value of the only/main dwelling and the amount of mortgage are disregarded in determining the applicant's disposable capital.

As a safeguard to ensure that legal aid applications for proceedings involving human rights issues will not be refused on means, under LAO the DLA has discretion to waive the financial eligibility limit as imposed by the statutory means test in meritorious cases in which a breach of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap. 383) or an inconsistency with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong is in issue.

For the merits test, the applicants must have reasonable grounds for taking or defending the proceedings. If the applicants satisfy both tests, they will be granted legal aid under the OLAS.

An independent system is in place to scrutinize decisions made by the DLA. An applicant whose legal aid application is refused may appeal to the Registrar of the High Court whose decision is final.

The major types of civil legal aid applications include family/ matrimonial disputes (accounting for about 43% of total civil legal aid applications), traffic accidents claims, professional negligence claims, personal injury-related claims, employment disputes, contractual disputes and immigration matters.

### Criminal Legal Aid

Any person in Hong Kong, whether or not a Hong Kong resident, who is involved in committal proceedings in the Magistrates' Courts, criminal proceedings in the District Court or above, may apply for criminal legal aid.

The means test criteria for criminal legal aid are the same as those for civil legal aid. However, an applicant whose financial resources exceed the statutory limit may still be granted legal aid if the DLA is satisfied that it is desirable in the interests of justice to grant legal aid, subject to payment of a contribution at higher rates calculated in accordance with the financial resources of the applicant.

If an application for legal aid is refused because the case/appeal lacks merits, the judge hearing the case/appeal may still grant the applicant legal aid provided the applicant passes the means test. Applicants facing a charge of murder, treason or piracy with violence may apply to a judge

for exemption from the means test and from payment of a contribution. If applicants apply for legal aid to appeal to the Court of Final Appeal but the applications are refused by the LAD, they may apply to a Review Committee comprising the Registrar of the High Court and representatives from the two legal professional bodies to review the decision of the LAD in accordance with Section 26A of the Legal Aid Ordinance. The decision of the Review Committee is final.

### **Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme**

Apart from the OLAS, the LAD also administers the SLAS to cater for the needs of the “sandwich class”. Applicants with financial resources exceeding the statutory limit for OLAS (currently at HK\$307,130) but not exceeding the statutory limit under SLAS (currently at HK\$1,535,650) may benefit under this scheme.

The SLAS covers the following types of cases where the claim is at present likely to exceed HK\$60,000 (this amount of the claim will be adjusted upwards later on to tie in with the increased jurisdictional limit of the Small Claims Tribunal) : claims involving personal injury claims; claims involving medical, dental and legal professional negligence; professional negligence claims against certified public accountants (practising), registered architects, registered professional engineers, registered professional surveyors, registered professional planners, authorized land surveyors, registered landscape architects and estate agents; negligence claims against insurers or their intermediaries in respect of the taking out of the personal insurance products; and monetary claims against vendors in the sale of first-hand residential property. The SLAS also covers employees’ compensation claims, and representation for employees in appeals against awards made by the Labour Tribunal irrespective of the amount in dispute.

The SLAS scheme is self-financing funded by the initial contribution paid by the aided persons when legal aid is granted and in successful cases the final contribution by way of a percentage deduction of the damages or compensation recovered for the aided persons.

### **Assignment of Legal Representation for Legal Aid Cases**

In-house Legal Aid Counsel of the LAD will handle all insolvency cases involving wages claims and some of the matrimonial cases and personal injury claims. The LAD assigns most of the civil legal aid cases to private legal practitioners and their service is usually charged on an hourly basis.

Criminal legal aid cases tried in the District Court are normally assigned to private practitioners. As for trials in the High Court, some of them are handled by in-house Legal Aid Counsel as instructing solicitors while the actual defence and advocacy work in court is assigned to barristers in private practice. The assigned lawyers’ charges are determined in accordance with the Legal Aid in Criminal Cases Rules.

When assigning cases to private practitioners, LAD adheres to the fundamental principle that the interest of the aided persons is the paramount consideration. Barristers or solicitors are selected, having regard to their level of experience and expertise, the nature and complexity of the particular case, with reference to the established guidelines and criteria, which include, amongst others, minimum experience requirements, past performance records and the limit on assignment of legal aid work. Barristers of varying seniority (including Senior Counsel or Queen’s Counsel (QC) where necessary) are engaged to maintain the necessary equality of arms between prosecution and defence in appropriate cases.

In 2018, the LAD assigned senior counsel or Queen’s Counsel in 20 criminal cases and in 51 civil cases. Further, in recent years, the LAD had also engaged London QC in a number of high profile cases in Hong Kong, for instance, in a Court of Final Appeal case of HKSAR v Chan Kam Shing (2016) 19 HKCFAR 640 which concerns the issue of applicability in Hong Kong of a UK Supreme Court decision on the doctrine of joint enterprise in criminal law, and in another Court of Final Court Appeal case of W v Registrar of Marriages (2013) 16 HKCFAR 112 which concerns the issue of whether a post-operative transsexual may celebrate marriage in his/her new gender in Hong Kong.

### **Overall Success Rates**

To ensure that assigned-out cases are litigated in a cost-effective manner, the LAD has in place an established monitoring mechanism and there has been a high overall success rate of around 90% for civil legally-aided cases in the past five years. On average, relief was obtained in about 86% of matrimonial cases. Moreover, the LAD manages to recover substantial amount of damages for the aided persons, for instance, in the financial year 2017-18, about HK\$1,304 million were recovered for the aided persons.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Under the premise of “All persons are entitled to the equal protection of the law”, legal aid services provide an important and independent avenue to ensure that no one will be denied access to justice because of a lack of means. The LAD is committed to perform its role as a cornerstone of the rule of law in Hong Kong. Since its establishment in 1970, the LAD has provided legal aid services to more than 400 000 persons and will continue to play its part in upholding the rule of law and core values of the Hong Kong society.

### **INSIGHTS INTO THE PROJECT “ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LEGAL AID: GENERAL STANDARDS FOR DIFFERENT COUNTRIES” AND THE “TOOLBOX”-APPROACH ON PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR LEGAL AID SERVICES**

**SARAH ZINK, RESEARCHER AT GOETHE UNIVERSITY FRANKFURT, GERMANY FOR THE PROJECT PARTNERS OF “QUAL-AID” (“ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LEGAL AID: GENERAL STANDARDS FOR DIFFERENT COUNTRIES”, CO-FUNDED BY THE EU UNDER THE JUSTICE PROGRAMME)**

The project “Enhancing the Quality of Legal Aid: General Standards for Different Countries (QUAL-AID)” was developed and implemented in 2016-2018 by partners from three EU Member States: Lithuania, Germany and the Netherlands. The project was led by the Law Institute of Lithuania with the main researchers being Dr. Simonas Nikartas, Dr. Agnė Limantė and Laurynas Totoraitis. The project benefited from EU co-funding which was provided under the Justice Programme (JUST/2015/JACC/AG/PROC/8632).

Besides Law Institute of Lithuania, Lithuanian team also included Lithuanian State-Guaranteed Legal Aid Service, represented by Dr. Anželika Banevičienė and Diana Jarmalė, and Lithuanian Bar Association, represented by Dr. Laurynas Biekša. The German partner was Goethe University of

Frankfurt under principle investigation of Prof. Dr. Christoph Burchard (LL.M. NYU) and Prof. Dr. Matthias Jahn (judge at the Higher Regional Court Frankfurt) with their researcher being Sarah Zink. The National Legal Aid Board of the Netherlands, institution entrusted with all matters of administration of legal aid, was team member from the Netherlands, represented by Herman Schilperoort, Dr. Susanne Peters and Dr. Lia Combrink-Kuiters.

The project was developed in the light of the recent efforts of international community to take steps towards improving legal aid quality and, in the EU context, taking into account the Directive (EU) 2016/1919 on legal aid for suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings and for requested persons in European arrest warrant proceedings<sup>2</sup>. Project partners sought to contribute to enhancing the quality of legal aid services in criminal proceedings within the EU by developing practice standards for legal aid provision, enhancement of its quality and for supervision. In this regard, the project aimed at assisting Member States in proper implementation of Directive 2016/1919. As additional target, the project partners sought to raise capacity of legal aid policy makers, administrators and providers in ensuring high quality legal aid.

In the framework of the project, two main documents have been published, which can be accessed with the links below. In the following, the focus is on the toolbox approach, which forms the basis for the findings on the practice standards. Since the quality, effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of legal aid in criminal matters can be achieved by many means, and since their assurance is contingent on many factors (just to give a simple example - on the general “legal culture” in a given jurisdiction), the QUAL-AID partners agreed to follow a toolbox concept, which allows the legal aid stakeholders to take into consideration several tools to enhance the quality of legal aid in criminal matters, thus establishing general standards for legal aid in criminal matters for different jurisdictions (see the project title). The toolbox concept allows building a coherent system, in which legal aid stakeholders (lawyers, legal aid agencies, etc.) deliver an adequate quality of legal aid services.

The toolbox concept is premised on the assumption that the legal aid system has many facets, that a legal aid scheme must in itself balance divergent interests and values (e.g. the independence of the legal profession vs. quality assurance by means of external review), and that the effectiveness of a legal aid regime rests on many influencing factors, which must not be evaluated in isolation. The toolbox concept takes to heart the European idea of “unity in diversity”, which means that there are national identities, which must be protected as a matter of EU constitutional law.

The toolbox concept does not necessarily rest on the premise that the use of many of the suggested practice standards has a positive impact on the functioning of the legal aid system, although this would seem likely and probable. Further empirical work needs to be done to verify the said premise. As of now, several legal aid experts have voiced the opinion that the use of certain individual tools can outweigh the non-use of others, a factual statement that has been disputed by other experts. For example, it is open for debate whether an excellent formation of lawyers compensates deficits in life-long-learning regimes. Therefore, further analyses are necessary to query if there exist general hierarchies in the toolbox, e.g. if a peer review system contributes to the quality of a legal aid scheme in a better way than other tools.

The list of tools presented in the final findings of the project emerged in the extensive research that the project partners have performed in their home countries, through expert and legal aid

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<sup>2</sup> OJ L 297, 4.11.2016, p. 1-8.

clients' interviews, conference, workshops, study visits, studies of national systems, good practice examples, and running the survey.

Several words should be said here as to the survey that has been conducted in the course of the project. In order to secure the adequacy of the proposed practice standards for legal aid providers, to check whether they are complete, and to guarantee that they can sufficiently take into account the particularities (including the constitutional identities, see Article 4 TEU) of the legal orders of the Member States, the project partners have conducted one of the most holistic online survey on the practice standards for adequate legal aid in criminal matters. As of 1 October 2018, the survey was completed by 90 experts, who are involved in the process of organising and providing legal aid and who come from 22 different Member States. The survey has run for eight months. The interim results were discussed in a meeting of international legal aid experts and the input has been entered into the final report. Based on the assessment of the international experts in the survey and the conference and the project partners' own research, they have developed practice standards – arranged as tools – that can be applied across jurisdictions. The tools in the report are not meant to be applied in isolation, but in combination with each other. Every tool has its own advantages and shortcomings, which need to be mutually checked and balanced.

Based on this idea, the project partners held trainings in their home countries in the last work-stream of the project and identified the existing tools together with national stakeholders, especially lawyers working in the system. In this context, they also pointed out blank spaces in the national systems where in the course of the project in an international comparison identified tools could be implemented in a practically useful manner without interfering with the national constitutional identities of the individual Member States, thus enhancing general standards for different countries.

Please find the final report on “Practice standards for legal aid providers” here:

[https://www.jura.uni-frankfurt.de/75941955/QUAL\\_AID\\_Practice\\_Standards\\_for\\_Legal\\_Aid\\_Providers.pdf](https://www.jura.uni-frankfurt.de/75941955/QUAL_AID_Practice_Standards_for_Legal_Aid_Providers.pdf).

Please also find a publication on “Tools and Criteria for Measuring Legal Aid Quality” here:

[https://www.jura.uni-frankfurt.de/75941968/QUAL\\_AID\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_Legal\\_Aid\\_Quality.pdf](https://www.jura.uni-frankfurt.de/75941968/QUAL_AID_Evaluation_of_Legal_Aid_Quality.pdf).

For further information on the project, please visit our project homepage:

<http://qualaid.vgtpt.lt/en/about-project/what-qual-aid>.

## ***POLAND REFORMS OUT-OF COURT LEGAL ADVICE***

**JAN WINCZOREK, JANWIN@JANWIN.INFO**

**RESEARCHER AT UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW, EXPERT WITH INPRIS FOUNDATION, WARSAW.**

On 1st January 2019, major reform of Polish system of out-of-court legal advice has become effective. Law on Free Legal Aid and Legal Education of Society, enacted in 2015 by the then ruling liberal-conservative coalition, was amended by Parliament on the initiative of president of Poland. The most important changes include expanding availability and scope of legal aid services, but the development is worthy of notice also for other reasons.

Until 2019, only few categories of individuals could use the advice system. For unclear reasons, and against expert advice, eligibility was limited to persons below the age of 26 or above the age of 65, war veterans, recipients of social intervention aid, holders of „big family” cards (persons having custody over 3 or more children), casualties of natural disasters, and pregnant women. Altogether, approximately 10 million people (of 30 million adult inhabitants of Poland) could obtain aid. After the reform, access to the system is open to anyone who declares that they are unable to cover the costs of legal aid by themselves. Neither merits tests nor income tests are used.

Substantial expansion pertains to scope of aid. Also in this respect hitherto system was designed against experts’ opinions to provide only traditional legal advice, delivered on site in legal aid bureaux. Under new law, apart from legal advice, also citizens’ advice, basic legal drafting and mediation are to be delivered. Under some circumstances, outreach legal service may be provided, but no forms of distance delivery exist, such as hotlines or unbundled services. Apart from that, basic referral system has been established, aiming to help persons in contact with aid bureaux better navigate in the welfare system and the legal system.

Funding and basic infrastructure of legal aid remain mostly unchanged. Advice is provided in 1524 legal advice bureaux across the country. These are operated by *powiats* (urban and rural entities of local self-government) and financed from government grants. Providers of service are recruited among members of the two Polish bar associations (advocates and legal advisers) as well as among NGOs (persons working for such organizations may be advocates, legal advisers or paralegals). In the latter case, competitive tenders are organized. In the former, lawyers are selected by bar associations on random basis from among those, who had volunteered to work with the system. Providers of aid are remunerated according to a fixed-fee hourly scheme (amounts paid are not related to number of clients served or case type). Total budget of the system, including indirect costs and funding reserved for *powiats*’ legal education initiatives, comes to approximately 22 mln EUR.

These developments are to be evaluated in the light of the fact that previous system, operational from 2016, has proven to be grossly ineffective. In line with early expert predictions, in 2017, 388783 persons were provided advice in 456355 episodes of advice, which translates to roughly 1 person per day per advice bureau<sup>3</sup>. Spatial distribution of demand is of course uneven, but still far below system’s overall capacity. By some estimates, system’s low utilization translates into 75% of funding being spent on remunerating service providers’ idle time instead of advice. Moreover, due to limited eligibility, in multiple cases such individuals as persons with disabilities, the unemployed, and the homeless, who should be eligible for advice by any rational and humane standard, had been prevented from using it.

The reform therefore rightly addresses injustices and inefficiencies of the hitherto scheme by increasing demand for free legal advice and introducing new types of service. Whilst it is too early to evaluate the effects, it must not go unnoticed that a number of structural issues persist. The first-line system remains largely detached from other institutions of access to justice. It is not coordinated with system of free legal advice in court cases (which is managed by courts themselves). As a result, persons who have obtained legal aid in the out-of-court system may or may not be eligible for legal aid in the court phase of their disputes. Furthermore, no mechanism

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Justice Report „Funkcjonowanie nieodpłatnej pomocy prawnej w 2017 roku”.

exists to provide advice at police station level in criminal cases, nor is the issue of full representation before criminal courts addressed with systematic measures. Lastly, a number of alternative public and private providers of free legal and quasi-legal aid still operates (such as the Labour Inspection and Consumer Ombudsmen), without any connection to the legal aid system.

Another drawback of the Polish system is that only limited possibilities of managing it exist without instigating legislative action. Similarly, mechanisms of advice quality control and financial control, as well as and obtaining information on system's operation are insufficient. This is due to structural limitations, complex financing scheme and division of labour between central government and local self-government. Legal Aid Board, established in 2015, only has an advisory mandate and plays no practical role in how the system operates.

Polish reforms thus illustrate the obvious truth that running a legal aid system not based on knowledge-based policy indications and expert advice leads to gross inefficiencies. They also demonstrate, that designing an effective advice scheme requires a comprehensive approach: introducing wide access to the primary system and coordinating it with alternative forms of aid delivery and the second-line system. Finally, introduction of major reform only three years after system's establishment indicates that delivery of aid may require a much learning in public administration.

## ***SELECTED 'LEGAL AID' NEWS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD***

***PAUL FERRIE, ONLINE EDITOR, ILAG***

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.

### **Australia**

[Lawyers deterred from taking on legal aid work by under-granting of Legal Aid Commission](#) – The Examiner

### **Armenia**

[Advancing Access to Justice for People with Disabilities in Armenia](#) – Human Rights Watch

### **Cambodia**

[Hun Sen Orders Legal Aid Team For Poor Cambodian Women](#) – Elven Media Group

### **Canada**

[Legal Aid Manitoba Wants Non-Lawyers Empowered To Argue Refugee Claims](#) - CBC

[OPSEU welcomes even more members at Legal Aid Ontario](#) – National Union of Public general Employees

[Legal Aid Alberta Emphasizes Access To Justice In Three-Year, Strategic Plan](#) – Canadian Lawyer

**England & Wales**

[Advice Surgeries Are No Substitute For Legal Aid Funding](#) – The Times

[Alternative Court Provision In Chichester Is Giving 'Continued Access To Justice'](#) – Chichester Observer

[Child Welfare Hit By Lack Of Legal Aid In Family Court Cases](#) – The Guardian

[Court Users To Benefit From New Service Centres](#) – Gov.Uk

[Cuts To Legal Aid: A Hidden Factor In The UK Homelessness Crisis](#) – Open Democracy

[Government Was Warned About Cutting Legal Aid](#) – The Guardian

[House Of Commons Barista Paid More Than Average Legal Aid Barrister](#) - Legal Cheek

[Justice System At 'Absolute Breaking Point' As Legal Cuts Leave Shortage Of Criminal Lawyers](#) - iNews

[Legal Advice 'Could Be Given In GP Surgeries'](#) – BBC News

[Ministers' £6.5m For Legal Aid A Drop In The Ocean, Say Lawyers](#) – The Guardian

[Pro Bono Sector 'Overwhelmed' After Legal Aid Cuts](#) – Civil Justice Council

[UK Legal Aid Reassessed](#) – Commercial Dispute Resolution

[Young Legal Aid Lawyers Urged To Take Their MPS To Work](#) – Law Society Gazette

**Fiji**

[Commission Must Ensure Access To Legal Rights](#) – Fiji Sun

[Legal Aid To Continue To Expand Services](#) – The Fiji Times

[Two new Legal Aid Commission offices to open in Seqaqa and Keyasi in March](#) – Fiji Village

**Georgia**

[EU, UNDP Assist Georgia to Ease Access to Justice & Raise Lawyer Professionalism](#) – Georgia Today

**India**

[2.9 Lakh Await Justice: Meet the Orgs Providing Free Legal Aid to Needy Undertrials](#) – The Better India

[Nirmala Sitharaman Approves Proposal To Provide Legal Aid To War Widows](#) – NDTV

[Undertrials To Interact With Legal Aid Counsel Through Video-Conferencing](#) – The Tribune

**Liberia**

[Bar Association Promotes New Legal Aid Clinic in Buchanan](#) – Bush Chicken

**Malaysia**

[Malaysian Bar To Government: Consider Legal Aid For Migrant Workers, Refugees Too](#) – Malay Mail

**Nigeria**

[Volunteer Lawyers Give New Direction To Nigerian Legal Aid Initiative](#) – Open Society Foundations

**Republic of Ireland**

[Around €50 Million Spent Per Year On Free Legal Aid For Criminals](#) – Agri Land

[Legal Aid Board Reinforces Secure Comms For Solicitors](#) – Law Society Ireland

[Legal Aid Should Be Available In Employment Appeals Cases: FLAC](#) – Irish Examiner

[Surge In Fees Paid To Lawyers Under Criminal Legal-Aid System](#) – Irish Times

### Rwanda

[Electronic System Credited With Improving Access To Justice](#) – All Africa  
[Government, Partners Seek To Improve Access To Justice](#) – The New Times

### Scotland

[Citizens Advice Bureaux Face Big Job Losses](#) – The Times  
[Edinburgh Lawyers Shun Extradition Work Amid Legal-Aid Fees Protest](#) – Herald Scotland  
[Law Firm Funder Aiming To Fill Legal Aid Gap Raises £100m](#) – Scottish Legal News  
[Skye And Lochalsh Citizens Advice Bureau Manager Hits Out At Cuts To Frontline Services](#) – West Highland Free Press

### United States

[Barancik And Legal Aid Of Manasota Start Groundbreaking Foster Care Program](#) – Herald Tribune  
[Legal Aid Says 2 Grants Will Fuel Tech Upgrade For Attorneys, Staff](#) – Buffalo Business First  
[Hilo Attorneys Honored For Providing Free Legal Aid](#) - Hawaii Tribune Herald  
[Legal Aid of Cleveland and ACLU File Federal Lawsuit Alleging Bedford's Horrible Nuisance Laws Are Unconstitutional](#) - Clevescene  
[LSC New Leaders' Council Will Raise Legal Aid Profile](#) – Minnesota Lawyer  
[Vermont Legal Aid: Evictions Bad For Renters, Bad For Landlords, Bad For Taxpayers](#) – Vermont Biz

For more information about the work of the *International Legal Aid Group*, please visit our website which can be found at <http://www.internationallegalaidgroup.org>.