



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Witness Biographies

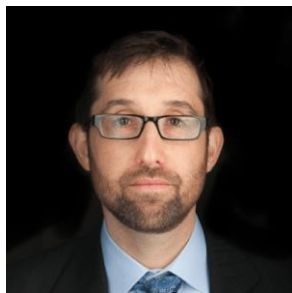
Climate Change and Human Rights

Panel I



Darío José Mejía Montalvo belongs to the indigenous Zenú Peoples of San Andrés Sotavento. Mr. Mejía Montalvo is a Political Scientist from the National University of Colombia, with a Master's degree in Development Management from the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN). He is also a member of the National Commission for Labor and Coordination of Education of the Indigenous Peoples of Colombia (CONTCEPI). Mr. Mejía Montalvo serves as the leader of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), and from 2008 to 2012, he served as the ONIC Counselor of Education. Additionally, Mr. Mejía Montalvo is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Technical Secretary of the Permanent Dialogue Mechanisms between the National Government and the Indigenous Peoples of Colombia. In 2014, Mr. Mejía Montalvo coordinated the adoption of Decree 1953, the indigenous component of the National Development Plan 2014 and the shortened period procedure "Fast Track," in the framework of the implementation of the Final Peace Accord.

Panel II



Robert Blecher is Director of the Future of Conflict program at International Crisis Group. He leads the organisation's work on the implications for conflict of climate change, digital technologies and war economies. Before heading the Future of Conflict program, he was Crisis Group's Chief Strategy Officer (2018-2021). In that capacity, he was responsible for all aspects of strategy development and served as a Chief Counselor to the organisation's president. During this period, he led the strategy review that put thematic work on Crisis Group's agenda and established the Future of Conflict program. He previously served as the acting Director for the Middle East and North Africa program (2013-2014) and then Deputy Director for the same program (2013-2018). He originally joined Crisis Group's Arab-Israeli project as Senior Analyst (2007-2010) then Project Director (2010-2013), based in Jerusalem and Ramallah, where he conducted field research into political, economic, security and social conditions in Israel/Palestine, Jordan and Egypt. He holds a Ph.D. in Middle East History from Stanford University and taught history at Stanford and the University of Richmond.



Kayly Ober is the senior advocate and program manager of the Climate Displacement Program at Refugees International. She also currently serves as a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Task Force on Displacement. Kayly has more than a decade of experience on climate, migration, and displacement issues, including working as a policy specialist for the Asian Development Bank and a consultant at the World Bank, where she authored the flagship report *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. She has also previously worked at the University of Bonn, Overseas Development Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and World Resources Institute, among others. Kayly holds a Master of Science in Environment and Development from the London School of Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from American University. She is currently completing her PhD in Geography at the University of Bonn, where her dissertation analyzes policymaking and governance structures around the climate change-adaptation-migration nexus.



Keith Slack is Director of Strategy and Campaigns at EarthRights International, where he coordinates organizational strategy and campaigning on human rights and environmental issues. He previously directed Oxfam America's Extractive Industries Global Program and worked for the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights and in the human rights program of Catholic Relief Services' Peru office. He served as a nonresident fellow at the Carnegie Council on Ethics in International Affairs. He holds an MA from the Fletcher School of Law

and Diplomacy and BA from Vassar College. He has written widely on human rights and natural resource justice issues.



Robert A. Destro is a Professor of Law at The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. He has been a member of the CUA Law faculty since 1982, served as Interim Dean from 1999 to 2001, and as Director of the University's Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies from 2017 to 2019. From September 2019 to January 2021, Professor Destro served as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. In 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo named him the State Department's Special Representative for Tibetan Issues. As Assistant Secretary, he led the State Department's worldwide policy and foreign assistance programs on human rights and democracy issues such as free and fair elections, Internet freedom, and the growth of the surveillance state. His work on labor issues focused on State Department and inter-agency efforts to ensure that business supply chains do not include goods or services produced by slave or forced labor. Since leaving the State Department, he has served as an advisor to domestic advocacy groups actively involved in both trade and human rights issues in East Asia, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1972 from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and his law degree (J.D.) in 1975 from the University of California, Berkeley. He is an active member of the Bar in Ohio and an inactive member in California.