

# Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh

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**matrix**  
chambers

Registered name on the Bar Standards Board Register: Blinne Ni Ghralaigh  
VAT Number: 937689557

Called 2005



## Main Areas of Practice

Crime and Regulatory law	Public law	Civil actions against the police
International law/Arbitration	Prison Law	Discrimination and equality law
Human Rights		

**Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh has a broad civil and criminal law practice, appearing in both domestic and international courts and tribunals, with a particular focus on human rights and civil liberties.**

### Domestic practice

Domestically, Blinne's practice encompasses all areas of criminal defence and [criminal justice](#), including prison law and [actions against the police](#), prison and other state authorities. She has particular experience - and a particular interest - in criminal cases involving questions of [human rights](#) and civil liberties, and appears before the Youth, Magistrates' and Crown Courts on behalf political, environmental, human and animal rights activists, and those involved in hunt monitoring. She successfully co-defended one of six animal rights protestors in the first effective trial under s145 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (*R v. Golding and others*). Blinne is also instructed in capital punishment appeals before the Privy Council, having previously spent three months in Trinidad and Tobago, working on death penalty cases. She is a contributing author to *Human Rights and Criminal Justice* by Emmerson, Ashworth and Macdonald (2nd Ed., Sweet & Maxwell, 2007) and to *Prison Law* by Livingstone, Owen and Macdonald (4th Ed., Oxford, 2008).

Blinne also practices in [public law](#), including education and environmental law cases, often involving aspects of European and human rights law. She further acts and advises in [discrimination law](#): she has been instructed in cases alleging race discrimination in the prison law context and was junior counsel for the Equality Commission in *R (Kaur and Shah) v. Ealing London Borough Council* [2008] EWHC 2062 (Admin), a case involving the interpretation and application of the Race Equality Duty in relation to a decision to withdraw funding from the Southall Black Sisters in respect of their domestic violence work.

### International practice

Blinne's [international law](#) practice includes cases before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the United Nations International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and arbitral tribunals. She was instructed on behalf of Guyana in its successful ITLOS case against Suriname (*Guyana v. Suriname*) and is currently co-counsel for the Republic of Macedonia in its claim against Greece before the ICJ. Blinne also has experience of [arbitrations](#) under the ICSID and UNCITRAL rules, and was recently instructed as junior counsel on behalf of the Czech Republic in *Frontier v. Czech Republic*.

Blinne regularly advises non governmental organisations (NGOs) on matters of international law, including the availability of domestic remedies for violations thereof. She is an executive committee member of the Bar Human Rights Committee, the international human rights arm of the Bar Council, on behalf of which she spent three months in the occupied Palestinian Territory in 2007, delivering training to Palestinian lawyers and NGOs on international [humanitarian and human rights law](#). She continues to provide training to NGOs and national Bar Associations on questions of international law.

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Blinne has a particular interest in international criminal law and the human rights obligations of corporations. She recently undertook a three-month fellowship at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, focusing on cases involving corporate liability under the Alien Tort Statute, including *In Re Apartheid*, a claim against a number of American and German corporations for alleged complicity in the South African apartheid regime. Blinne holds two certificates from the London School of Economics in International Human Rights Law and Practice, and Law, War and Human Rights. She has also co-authored a number of articles on human rights and international law with Philippe Sands QC.

Blinne graduated from Queens' College, Cambridge with First Class Honours in Modern and Medieval Languages (French and Latin). She received a distinction on the Graduate Diploma in Law and was graded Outstanding on the Bar Vocational Course, placing fourth in her year. Prior to coming to the Bar, Blinne worked for a leading solicitors' firm specialising in actions against the police and prison law. She also spent two years working on the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, first as legal observer for a specialist NGO and subsequently as legal assistant to the solicitors representing the wounded and the families of those killed. Blinne came to the legal profession after an initial career working for a think-tank.

## Publications

Contributing author to *Prison Law* by Livingstone, Owen and Macdonald (4th Ed., Oxford, 2008)

Contributing author to *Human Rights and Criminal Justice* by Emmerson, Ashworth and Macdonald (2nd Ed., Sweet & Maxwell, 2007)

Co-author with Professor Philippe Sands QC of:

'Human Rights, International Justice and the Rule of Law' in *Globalisation - A Liberal Response* (CentreForum, 2007)

'Towards an International Rule of Law?' in *Tom Bingham and the Transformation of the Law: A Liber Amicorum* (Oxford University Press, 2009)

## Memberships

Bar Human Rights Committee, (executive committee)

Criminal Bar Association

Human Rights Lawyers' Association

Police Actions Lawyers' Group

Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights

Young Legal Aid Lawyers

Haldane Society

## Scholarships and Awards

Pegasus Scholarship, Inns of Court (2009)

Phoenicia Scholarship, Bar European Group (2006)

Bairstow Scholarship, ICSL (2005)

Buchanan Prize, Lincoln's Inn (2005)

St Thomas More Bursary, Lincoln's Inn (2004)

Lord Bowen Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn (2003)

Hardwicke Award, Lincoln's Inn (2003)

Foundation Scholarship for academic excellence, Queens' College, Cambridge (1998)

## Languages

Fluent French

Basic Irish

Currently learning Arabic

## Education

Certificate in Law, War and Human Rights - LSE (2009)

Certificate in International Human Rights Law and Practice - LSE (2005)

Bar Vocational Course - Outstanding - ICSL (2004/5)

GDL - Distinction - University of Westminster (2003/4)

BA Honours - First Class - MML (French and Latin), Queens' College, Cambridge (1994/8)

## Previous Employment

Legal Assistant on the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, Madden & Finucane Solicitors (2003)

Legal Observer on the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, British Irish Rights Watch (2002/3)

Legal Assistant, Bhatt Murphy Solicitors (2001/2)

Research Associate / Senior Manager, Corporate Executive Board (1999-2001)