



## National Speaker & Media Expert Guide



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENSE CENTER

*Dedicated to Protecting Human Rights*

[www.HumanRightsDefenseCenter.org](http://www.HumanRightsDefenseCenter.org)



The **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENSE CENTER** is an internationally recognized civil rights advocacy organization headquartered in Palm Beach County, Florida. ***HRDC's headquarters is within driving distance of numerous media hubs including Miami, Fort Lauderdale & West Palm Beach.***

Founded in 1990, the **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENSE CENTER** currently distributes around 50 different criminal justice, legal and self-help titles, and continues to publish Prison Legal News, which has become a 72-page monthly publication with subscribers in all 50 states and internationally. Prison Legal News is the largest collection of criminal justice-related articles and publications on the internet.

**[www.humanrightsdefensecenter.org](http://www.humanrightsdefensecenter.org)**

**[www.prisonlegalnews.org](http://www.prisonlegalnews.org)**

HRDC staff is available for interviews in Spanish, Japanese & Shona.

The HRDC has experts available on several issues:

- Immigration Issues
- Prisoners' Rights
- Border Issues / Refugees
- Police Conduct / Accountability
- Law Enforcement Use of Force
- Criminal Justice Issues
- Freedom of Information Laws / Public Records Statutes
- Government Transparency
- Mass Incarceration
- Sentencing / Death Penalty
- Private Prison Operations

**To schedule an interview call the HRDC: t: 561-360-2523 After hours: 802-275-8594**

The Human Rights Defense Center has served as a national expert on numerous issues for over two decades and has been quoted hundreds of times in many of the nation's leading media outlets:



REUTERS



...and over 100 additional local print and broadcast news outlets across the United States.

To schedule an interview call the HRDC: t: 561-360-2523 After hours: 802-275-8594



# National Campaigns by the Human Rights Defense Center

## **Campaign for Prison Phone Justice:**

Cofounded by HRDC in 2011, the Campaign for Prison Phone Justice works to reduce the historically exorbitant costs of phone calls made from prisons and jails -- costs that are overwhelmingly borne by prisoners' family members and friends, not by prisoners. HRDC is the leading authority in the nation on prison phone-related issues and the exploitive prison phone industry. HRDC staff have testified before the FCC and have filed dozens of formal comments on the FCC's docket related to prison phone issues, in addition to working at the state level. Prison Legal News, HRDC's monthly publication, has run two extensive cover stories on the prison phone industry, including 50-state surveys of phone rates and "commission" kickbacks.

[www.prisonphonejustice.org](http://www.prisonphonejustice.org) / [www.phonejustice.org](http://www.phonejustice.org)

## **Stop Prison Profiteering campaign:**

HRDC runs the Stop Prison Profiteering campaign to challenge the ruthless monetization of services in prisons and jails that impact prisoners and their families. Such services include money transfers, video visitation, secure email, tablets, release debit cards and other fee-based services provided by for-profit companies, often through monopoly contracts that provide "commission" kickbacks to corrections agencies. This cost-shifting to prisoners and their family members puts an even larger financial burden on people enmeshed in our criminal justice system who are least able to afford it.

[www.stopprisonprofiteering.org](http://www.stopprisonprofiteering.org)

## **Prison Ecology Project:**

The Prison Ecology Project examines the intersection of environmental justice, social justice and criminal justice, by researching and exposing the impact of correctional facilities on the environment and local communities, and the impact of the environment on prisons and those who reside and work in them. For example, wastewater (sewer) discharges from prisons and jails add to environmental pollution and impact local waterways, while arsenic-contaminated water systems near prisons impact prisoners' who have no other choice but to drink and bathe in the contaminated water. Flooding, siting prisons and jails on former landfills, and contamination from nearby coal mining operations are other environmental factors that impact prisons and prisoners.

[www.prisonecology.org](http://www.prisonecology.org)



## HRDC Executive Director Paul Wright

Paul Wright is the founder and Executive Director of the Human Rights Defense Center.

He is also editor of Prison Legal News (PLN), the longest-running independent prisoner rights publication in U.S. history. He has co-authored three PLN anthologies: *The Celling of America: An Inside Look at the U.S. Prison Industry* (Common Courage, 1998); *Prison Nation: The Warehousing of America's Poor* (Routledge, 2003); and *Prison Profiteers: Who Makes Money from Mass Imprisonment* (New Press, 2008).

His articles have appeared in over 80 publications, ranging from *Counterpunch* to *USA Today*. A former prisoner, Paul was imprisoned for 17 years in Washington state until his release in 2003. During and since his incarceration he has successfully litigated a wide variety of censorship and public records cases against prison systems around the country, both as a pro se plaintiff and on behalf of PLN.

Paul is a former military policeman, a graduate of the University of Maryland with a degree in Soviet History, and the former National Lawyers Guild Jailhouse Lawyer co-vice president (1995-2008). He is a 2005 Petra Fellow, the Freedom Fighter of the Month for *High Times* magazine in July 2006, a 2007 recipient of the James Madison Award from the Washington Coalition for Open Government, the 2008 inaugural recipient of the National Lawyers Guild's Arthur Kinoy award, and a 2011 recipient of the Distinguished Public Interest Service Award from the City of New York Law School.

Paul can help you with stories regarding:

- Immigration Issues
- Prisoners' Rights
- Border Issues / Refugees
- Police Conduct / Accountability
- Law Enforcement Use of Force
- Criminal Justice Issues
- Government Transparency
- Freedom of Information Laws / Public Records Statutes



## General Counsel & Litigation Director Sabarish Neelakanta

Sabarish Neelakanta ("Sab") is a seasoned trial attorney having litigated over 50 jury and bench trials, and dozens of appeals in state and federal courts.

Sab was a former Assistant Public Defender in the felony trial division for Palm Beach County, Florida, and was named Best Trial Advocate at the Public Defender College sponsored by the Florida Public Defender Association. He later founded a litigation firm in West Palm Beach, Florida and was recognized as an "Up and Comer" by Florida Trend magazine – a designation reserved for only 2% of the more than 67,000 active Florida Bar attorneys.

Sab can help you with stories regarding:

- Immigration Issues
- Prisoners' Rights
- Border Issues / Refugees
- Police Conduct / Accountability
- Law Enforcement Use of Force
- Criminal Justice Issues
- Government Transparency
- Freedom of Information Laws / Public Records Statutes

He has worked on countless criminal justice issues ranging from sentencing to felon disenfranchisement, and has been a speaker on prison conditions, the PLRA, and censorship issues. Sab is also a graduate of the Western Trial Advocacy Institute (Gerry Spence Trial College) and was inducted as a lifetime member to the National Order of Barristers.

Prior to joining HRDC, Sab was the Advocacy Director for the Inter-American Center for Human Rights, a researcher with the U.S. Committee for Refugees in Washington, D.C., an activist and a writer

Sab is an active member of the Trial and Public Interest Lawyers Section of the Florida Bar, the American Civil Liberties Union, and has served on the Board of Trustees for the Craig S. Barnard, American Inns of Court.



## HRDC Associate Director Alex Friedmann

\*PLEASE NOTE: ALEX IS LOCATED IN THE HRDC  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE OFFICE

Alex Friedmann is the Associate Director of HRDC and managing editor of Prison Legal News.

He is responsible for news research, investigative research, editing, advocacy campaigns and other tasks, including litigation support as a paralegal. He also serves in a volunteer capacity as president of the non-profit Private Corrections Institute and is a national expert on the issue of prison privatization.

Alex can help you with stories regarding:

- Immigration Issues
- Prisoners' Rights
- Border Issues / Refugees
- Police Conduct / Accountability
- Law Enforcement Use of Force
- Criminal Justice Issues
- Government Transparency
- Freedom of Information Laws / Public Records Statutes

He has testified before a Congressional subcommittee and legislative committees in two states on criminal justice-related issues, and has spoken at numerous conferences and other events -- including Critical Resistance, the National Lawyers Guild, the Children Defense Fund's annual conference, a Congressional caucus meeting and a Congressional briefing.

Alex served 10 years in prisons and jails in Tennessee, including six years at a privately-operated CCA facility. While incarcerated he litigated his own cases in state and federal court; served as the resources editor of Prison Life magazine, a national publication; self-published the Private Corrections Industry News Bulletin; and founded and directed a non-profit prisoner organization called the Pledge Program. He is based out of Nashville, Tennessee.



## Staff Attorney Masimba Mutamba

Masimba Mutamba is HRDC's inaugural William A. Trine fellow and an HRDC staff attorney who works on civil rights matters.

Masimba graduated magna cum laude from the University of Miami School of Law, where he was an associate editor of the University of Miami International & Comparative Law Review.

Masimba obtained a Master of Laws (LLM) degree, with distinction, from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Prior to joining HRDC, Masimba litigated complex real estate cases on behalf of Fortune 500 financial institutions and a nationwide mortgage servicer.

Masimba can help you with stories regarding:

- Immigration Issues
- Border Issues / Refugees
- Police Conduct / Accountability
- Law Enforcement Use of Force
- Criminal Justice Issues

He handled matters in various state and federal courts and at both the trial and appellate level. Further, Masimba represented individuals against municipal police departments in civil rights actions and represented the rights of a student in an administrative proceeding against a school board under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He worked at a full-service immigration law firm representing clients across the country in lawsuits against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Masimba is an active member of the F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr. Bar Association, the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion of the Palm Beach Bar Association and the Young Lawyers Section of the Palm Beach Bar Association.





## Staff Attorney Daniel Marshall

Daniel Marshall is an expert in criminal law, having defended over a thousand criminal cases, including dozens of jury trials.

He is Board Certified in Criminal Trial Law by the Florida Bar – a distinction held by only 7% of all Florida Bar members. Dan has focused his legal career advocating for criminal justice reform and its impact on prisoners, their families and the community. He has lectured on numerous issues, including Florida's "Stand your Ground" law, medical marijuana and issues concerning the elderly and criminal law, as well giving presentations in a number of schools in the community.

Daniel can help you with stories regarding:

- Prisoners' Rights
- Police Conduct / Accountability
- Law Enforcement Use of Force
- Criminal Justice Issues
- Government Transparency
- Freedom of Information Laws / Public Records Statutes

After earning his J.D. degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law, Dan worked at the Office of the Public Defender in West Palm Beach, Florida for nearly nine years handling felonies, misdemeanors, juvenile delinquency and appellate cases. He was the Division Chief of a felony division for several years before becoming the County Court Resource Director, in charge of training more than two dozen new attorneys in the office.

Dan is admitted to practice in all Florida state courts, as well as the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. He is also a member of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the National Police Accountability Project. In a prior life, Dan worked as a spacecraft engineer at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, MD.



P.O. Box 1151  
Lake Worth, FL 33460  
Phone: 561-360-2523  
Fax: 866-735-7136

## About the Human Rights Defense Center

The Human Rights Defense Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of the human rights of people held in U.S. detention facilities. This includes people in state and federal prisons, local jails, immigration detention centers, civil commitment facilities, Bureau of Indian Affairs jails, juvenile facilities and military prisons. HRDC is one of the few national opponents to the private prison industry and is the foremost advocate on behalf of the free speech rights of publishers to communicate with prisoners and the right of prisoners to receive publications and communications from outside sources. HRDC also does significant work around government transparency and accountability issues by filing and litigating public records and Freedom of Information Act requests at the state and federal levels.

HRDC's advocacy efforts include publishing Prison Legal News, a monthly publication that covers criminal justice-related news and litigation nationwide. HRDC publishes and distributes self-help reference books for prisoners, and engages in litigation, media campaigns and outreach, public speaking and education, and testimony before legislative and regulatory bodies.

Prepared by:  
My PR Guru, LLC  
11419 W. Palmetto Park Road #971402  
Boca Raton - Florida - 33497