

Foreword

CAMPAIGNING FOR JUSTICE: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN PRACTICE is a much-needed antidote to the perceived gap in the literature between human rights theory and the practice of human rights advocacy. The book demonstrates that ideas about human rights and the contemporary world are deeply connected with forms of practice and institutional shifts within international and transnational communities and that case studies of individual actors within these broader movements are a singular source of experiential knowledge and insight. Jo Becker is a longtime staffmember at Human Rights Watch with years of global experience in human rights advocacy, reporting, and monitoring. She draws from this considerable experience on the frontlines of international human rights practice in a wide-ranging study of organized advocacy campaigns, developments in the UN monitoring system, the politics of accountability within international criminal law, and the role of new forms of media in creating a “curious grapevine” of information about human rights violations that transcends—and transgresses—the boundaries of nation-states. Her book is meant to be used in multiple ways: as a source of new information about contemporary human rights practices; as a guide to the lives and experiences of people caught up in ongoing struggles for human rights and accountability; and as a deeply felt reflection on the pitfalls and potential ways forward for activists in the midst of conflict, resistance, and movements for social justice.

Her book is organized around profiles of human rights advocates and is structured in such a way that the lessons learned from these diverse experiences can be used by others who wish to participate in future campaigns. The writing and presentation are accessible, and the book speaks to a growing constituency that desires more grounded perspectives on human rights,

both within academia and beyond. The book is not a simple how-to manual; rather, it is an informed overview of current human rights practices anchored in illustrative lives and institutions. What is so indispensable about *Campaigning for Justice* is the way Becker distills her many years at the forefront of highly visible human rights campaigns and interviews with dozens of other experienced activists to identify the most promising areas of human rights advocacy for the future. Despite what critics might say about the politics of human rights and the strategic manipulation of international law by particular nation-states, Becker's book paints an optimistic picture of the role of human rights and the people who have dedicated their lives to a more just world. As she puts it, the "human rights movement is full of . . . examples of innovative partnerships, skillful messaging, strategic interventions, and persistent organizing," and her book serves as a signpost for those who would carry on the fight for human rights with understanding and creativity.

Mark Goodale
Series Editor
Stanford Studies in Human Rights