

Martina E. Vandenberg

Founder and President

Martina E. Vandenberg is founder and president of the Human Trafficking Legal Center. Vandenberg established the Human Trafficking Legal Center (formerly HT Pro Bono) in 2012 with generous support from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) Fellowship Program.

Prior to becoming an OSF Fellow, Vandenberg served as a partner at Jenner & Block LLP, where she focused on complex commercial litigation and internal investigations under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. She served as a senior member of the firm's Pro Bono Committee.

Vandenberg has spent two decades fighting human trafficking, forced labor, rape as a war crime, and violence against women. She has represented victims of human trafficking pro bono in immigration, criminal, and civil cases, and has testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, the Helsinki Commission, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the House Armed Services Committee on an array of human rights issues. Through the Human Trafficking Legal Center, she has trained more than 3,600 pro bono attorneys nationwide to handle human trafficking matters.

A former Human Rights Watch researcher, Vandenberg spearheaded investigations into human rights violations in the Russian Federation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Uzbekistan, Kosovo, Israel, and Ukraine. She is the author of two Human Rights Watch reports, "Hopes Betrayed: Trafficking of Women and Girls to Post-Conflict Bosnia & Herzegovina for Forced Prostitution," and "Kosovo: Rape as a Weapon of Ethnic Cleansing."

As a researcher for the Israel Women's Network, she investigated and published the first report documenting human trafficking into Israel. While living in the Russian Federation in the 1990s, she co-founded Syostri, one of Russia's first rape crisis centers for women.

Vandenberg has received multiple awards for her leadership against human trafficking. In 2012, the Freedom Network USA presented her with the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Award for her "outstanding leadership and dedication in working to combat human trafficking and slavery in the United States." In 2013, she received the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation's Stevens Award for outstanding service in public interest law. Truah presented her with the Raphael Lemkin Human Rights Award in 2014. She received the Katharine & George Alexander Law Prize the following year. Vandenberg also served as a co-chair of the International Bar Association's Human Trafficking Task Force.

A Rhodes Scholar and Truman Scholar, Vandenberg has taught as an adjunct faculty member at the American University Washington College of Law and the Oxford University Human Rights Summer Program. She is admitted to practice in New York and the District of Columbia.