



Over the last decade, geopolitical crises and fears of regime insecurity have fueled an unprecedented crackdown by governments against civil society, prioritizing state security and sovereignty over human rights and traditional values over liberal democratic principles. As a result, the space for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is shrinking and freedom of expression is eroding. This trend is particularly prevalent in the post-Soviet region, where burdensome registration and financial restrictions have been imposed; in Russia, several rights-promoting organizations have been declared “undesirable” and their activities criminalized. In light of this, we have devoted a significant portion of our programming this year to human rights–related issues and are including two articles on human rights in this issue of *Harriman Magazine*.

We are excited to feature a profile on the life and work of Rachel Denber ('86), deputy director of the Europe and Central Asia division at Human Rights Watch (HRW), whom we honored as our 2016 alumna of the year. Denber opened HRW's first Moscow office in 1991 and has been conducting courageous field research and advocacy in Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan ever since. We are delighted and honored to pay tribute to her invaluable contribution to the field of human rights.

In late February, we welcomed Dunja Mijatović, the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, to deliver our annual Harriman Lecture. Mijatović has been serving as the world's only intergovernmental media watchdog since 2010, and she provided a fascinating overview on the shrinking freedom of expression landscape. In our in-depth interview with her for the *Magazine*, Mijatović discussed the trajectory of her career and the contemporary challenges to freedom of expression and media freedom across the OSCE states.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexander Cooley".

Alexander Cooley
 Director, Harriman Institute