

# Asia-US Wrongful Convictions Roundtable

Thursday, December 9, 2021

7 PM - 9 PM Eastern Time

Register: <https://bit.ly/WC-roundtable>

## *Including:*

Innocence Groups in China

Innocence International Thailand

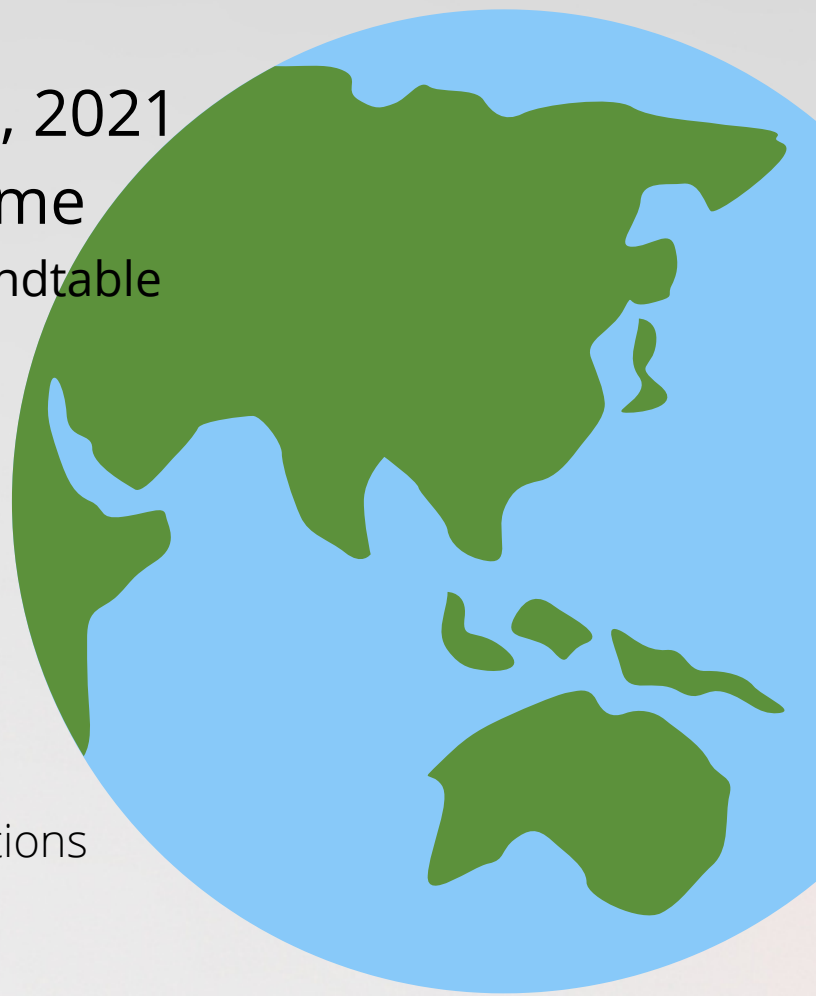
Innocence Project Japan

The Innocence Network

The Innocence Project

The National Registry of Exonerations

Taiwan Innocence Project



U.S.-Asia Law Institute  
New York University  
School of Law

## Asia-US Wrongful Convictions Roundtable

Date: December 9, 2021

Time: 7:00-9:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Moderator: [Ira Belkin](#) (Senior Research Scholar, USALI)

### 7:00 – 7:10 PM Opening Remarks

- [Katherine Wilhelm](#) (Executive Director, USALI)
- [Jerome Cohen](#) (Faculty Director Emeritus, USALI)

### 7:10 – 7:15 PM Panelists' Self-Introduction

- [Meredith Kennedy](#) (Director of Innocence Network Support Unit, The Innocence Project; Director, Innocence Network)
- [Nathaniel Erb](#) (State Policy Advocate, The Innocence Project)
- [Simon Cole](#) (Director and Associate Editor, The National Registry of Exonerations)
- [Lo Shih-Hsiang](#) (Executive Director, Taiwan Innocence Project)
- [Ko Yun-ching](#) (Communication Director, Taiwan Innocence Project)
- [Huang Jiade](#) (Defense Attorney, DeBund Law Office)
- [Yu Tianmiao](#) (Defense Attorney, Shangquan Law Office)
- [Wang Wanqiong](#) (Defense Attorney, Exceedon & Partners Law Firm)
- [Kana Sasakura](#) (Deputy Director, Innocence Project Japan; Co-Director, SBS Review Project Japan)
- [Namtaee Meeboonsalang](#) (Founder, Innocence International Thailand)

**7:15 – 7:30 PM** Discuss: To what extent has the pandemic affected your work and how have you coped with the challenge of working in the pandemic? [Respondents should limit themselves to 2-3 minutes]

**7:30 – 8:00 PM** Discuss: To what extent has government misconduct, including prosecutorial misconduct, contributed to wrongful convictions in your jurisdiction? [5 minutes each]

**8:00 - 8:30 PM** Discuss: In your jurisdiction, can prosecutors be helpful in exonerating innocent persons in a post-conviction context and have they been helpful? [5 minutes each]

**8:30 – 8:50 PM** Discuss: What other developments in your jurisdiction do you want to share? [3-4 minutes each]

### 8:50 – 9:00 PM Further Discussion and Closing Remarks

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Organized by U.S.-Asia Law Institute of New York University School of Law

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Innocence Groups in China

Innocence International Thailand (อินโนเซน อินเตอร์เนชั่นแนล ประเทศไทย)

Innocence Project Japan (えん罪救済センター)

The Innocence Network

The Innocence Project

The National Registry of Exonerations

Taiwan Innocence Project (台灣冤獄平反協會)

## The Innocence Project

The Innocence Project, founded in 1992 by Peter Neufeld and Barry Scheck at Cardozo School of Law, exonerates the wrongly convicted through DNA testing and reforms the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice. It is its mission to free the staggering number of innocent people who remain incarcerated, and to bring reform to the system responsible for their unjust imprisonment. As of April 2021, [232 Innocence Project clients](#) in the United States had been exonerated; 10% of these 232 people were exonerated from the death row. These people collectively served 3555 years before their exoneration, or spent an average of 16 years in wrongful incarceration. During 2020-2021, the Innocence Project worked to [free or exonerate 15 clients](#) who collectively spent 369 years in prison.

To facilitate exonerations and prevent future wrongful convictions, the Policy Department at the Innocence Project works with the U.S. Congress, State Legislatures and local leaders to reform old policies and enact new laws, formulate executive actions, and reform court rules. The Innocence Project's policy work falls into three main categories: revealing wrongful convictions, preventing wrongful convictions, and restoring the lives of exonerees.

Over the past two years, the policy department facilitated [32 policy wins across 21 states](#). In 2020, the team was able to secure the passage of 11 laws to prevent wrongful convictions and make it easier for the innocent to get justice across multiple states. In 2021, the team secured the passage of 21 laws across [17 states](#) and made progress in areas including emerging technology, police accountability, the role of confessions, and capital punishment.

In addition, the Social Work department reaches out to exonerees before they have even left prison to assess what type of support they will need to restore their lives.

Check here to read the [2020-2021 annual report of the Innocence Project](#).

## The Innocence Network

[The Innocence Network](#) is a coalition of [68 organizations](#) from all over the world dedicated to providing pro bono legal and investigative services to individuals seeking to prove innocence of crimes for which they have been convicted of, and working to redress the causes of wrongful convictions. Currently, the Innocence Network consists of 56 U.S. based and 12 non-U.S. based organizations.

Despite the challenges the global pandemic presented (and there were many), 2020 was still a year of astonishing growth and accomplishment for the Network. Some highlights include:

- The Network's aggregate budget was **\$36,740,985**, which represents a **6% increase** over 2019 and a whopping 25% increase over 2018 (figures do not include the Innocence Project, which is by far the largest Network member and serves as its headquarters).
- Network organizations' single biggest source of revenue in 2020 was individual donors. **Individuals gave \$7,851,279** to Network members, which represents a **19% increase** over 2019 and a 22% increase over 2018 (figures do not include the IP).
- The Network's collective staff capacity increased significantly in 2020. Fourteen organizations now have **more than 10 employees**, and almost half of Network organizations have more than 5 employees.
- The mean (average) number of staff per Network organization is now **6.2 individuals**. This is up from a mean of 5 individuals in 2019.

- Network organizations continue to build capacity through pro bono partnerships and traditional volunteer programs. In 2020, there were a total of **171,454 pro bono hours** contributed to 51 Network members. Of these 51 organizations, 12 reported more than 2,000 pro bono hours contributed. Additionally, 15 organizations reported more than 1,000 hours contributed by traditional volunteers.
- More resources mean we can help more wrongfully convicted people. In 2020, Network organizations heard from a total of **19,629 new individuals** requesting assistance. At the end of the year, Network organizations collectively **represented 1,537 people**, an **increase of 6%** over 2019. Of these 1,537 people, 284 were new clients in 2020.

Most importantly, more than **125 people were freed** through the work of Network organizations in 2020. The Network collectively achieved exonerations on behalf of **60 people**; sentence vacatur on behalf of **25 people**; parole successes on behalf of **25 people**; sentence reductions on behalf of **45 people**; and helped secure Alford pleas for **2 people**.

## The National Registry of Exonerations

The [National Registry of Exonerations](#) is a project of the Newkirk Center for Science & Society at the University of California, Irvine, the University of Michigan Law School and Michigan State University College of Law. It was founded in 2012 in conjunction with the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law. The National Registry collects, analyzes and disseminates information about all known exonerations of innocent criminal defendants in the United States, from 1989 to the present. We publish their stories and we provide accessible, searchable online statistical data about their cases. We also conduct empirical studies of the process of exoneration and of factors that lead to the underlying wrongful convictions.

### Updates

- We continued to develop two additional databases: the [Groups Registry](#) and the [Exonerations before 1989 Registry](#).
- We founded the National Registry of Exonerations Foundation, a non-profit corporation, to support our fundraising efforts. The Foundation has no staff. The Registry itself remains a shared research project of three universities.

### Exonerations in the United States in 2021

- So far, there have been 130 exonerations (120 of which are currently posted) in the United States in 2021 bringing the total since 1989 to over **2,900**.
- However, so far the Registry has posted 188 exonerations in 2021. These additional cases include exonerations that occurred prior to 2021 but only became known in 2021.
- In June 2021, the 2,800+ exonerees surpassed a combined total of **25,000 years lost in prison**.
- **The total number of exonerees who spent more than 25 years in prison now exceeds 190.** Eleven of them were exonerated in 2021.
- 64 (53%) of the 120 posted exonerations involved murder. The rest were assorted crimes, with drug crimes (16) being the second most common.
- **Innocence Organizations were involved in 56 (47%),** and Conviction Integrity Units were involved in 46 (38%). Both were involved in some of those cases.
- **70 exonerees (58%) were Black,** 36 (30%) were white, 10 (8%) were Hispanic.
- 17 (14%) occurred in Illinois, and 15 (one-eighth) in New York.
- 3 involved sentences of death, **42 (35%) sentences of life,** including 24 (20%) sentences of life without parole.
- Only 17 cases (14%) involved DNA evidence.
- **Official misconduct contributed to 81 (68%) of the cases.**
- In 2021, the National Registry added an additional nine group exonerations involving more than 1,200 defendants to its Groups Registry, bringing the total to 25 group exonerations involving **more than 35,000 defendants**.

### Notable Cases

- **More than fifty-five years** after they were convicted of murder in the shooting of Black civil rights leader Malcolm X, Muhammad Aziz and Khalil Islam were exonerated in November 2021 after a reinvestigation into their convictions by the Manhattan District Attorney's office, with help from the Innocence Project, found that the prosecutors, the New York Police Department and the FBI didn't disclose evidence that contradicted witness testimony and the

state's theory of the crime.

- In July 1949, the “Groveland Four”—three Black men and a 16-year-old Black boy— were falsely accused of raping a White woman in Lake County, Florida. Their case triggered a prolonged episode of racial terror. On November 22 of this year—**72 years later**—all charges and convictions against the four were dismissed by a Lake County Circuit Court judge. This case is being reviewed to determine whether it meets the criteria for posting in the Registry.
- In 1982, Anthony Broadstreet was sentenced to 8 1/3 to 25 years in prison for rape in Syracuse, New York. He was exonerated in 2021 after the victim--best-selling author Alice Sebold--disclosed details in her memoir about how a prosecutor persuaded her to identify Broadwater after Sebold identified another man in a lineup. (This case is not yet posted on the Registry.)
- [Anthony Mazza](#) of Boston, Massachusetts was wrongfully incarcerated for more than **47 years, the longest time served in prison by an exoneree**. He was sentenced to life in prison for murder in 1973, released from prison in 2020, and exonerated in 2021, after a public-records search uncovered a witness statement that implicated the state’s key witness as the perpetrator.
- [Isaiah Andrews](#), of Cleveland, Ohio, was convicted in 1975 of killing his wife. **He served 45 years in prison** and was acquitted at a retrial in 2021, at which his attorney was able to tell jurors about evidence of an alternate suspect that prosecutors never disclosed to his original attorney. We believe that Andrews and Aziz (see above) are **the two oldest people ever to be exonerated at 83 years old**.
- In 1981, [Terry Talley](#) was sentenced to life in prison for four rapes in Troup County, Georgia. The convictions were vacated and dismissed in 2021 based on DNA evidence pointing to another suspect. Arrested at age 23, Talley walked free on February 23, 2021, after spending **more than 39 years in prison**. He was 63 years old.
- In 1988, [Curtis Crosland](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2021 because the prosecution failed to disclose evidence impeaching the only witnesses linking him to the crime, as well as evidence pointing to the real killer. The charges were dismissed on June 24, 2021 and Crosland was released—**more than 33 years from the day of his arrest in 1987**.
- [Gilbert Poole](#), formerly of Pontiac, Michigan, was sentenced in 1989 to life in prison for murder. He was exonerated in 2021 after the bitemark evidence used to convict him was discredited and new DNA testing excluded him from forensic evidence found at the crime scene. **He had served more than 31 years in prison**.
- [Eddie Lee Howard Jr.](#) was **sentenced to death** in 1994 for the murder of an 84-year-old woman in Columbus, Mississippi. With help from the Innocence Project and the Mississippi Innocence Project, he was exonerated in 2021 after the bitemark evidence linking him to the crime was discredited and DNA testing on the murder weapon excluded him.
- In 1999 and 2000, [George Bell](#), [Rohan Bolt](#), and [Gary Johnson](#) were **sentenced to life in prison without parole** for a 1996 double murder in Queens, New York. They were exonerated in 2021 because evidence pointing to the true perpetrators was concealed from the defense at trial.
- A [group exoneration added this year and notable for its scope of corruption and injustice involves the Baltimore Police Department](#), where members of the Gun Trace Task Force drove the wrongful convictions of **800 men and women**. The legitimate goal of getting illegal guns off the street became instead a vehicle for vigilantism and racketeering. Indictments were filed against seven officers, which included, “violating the legitimate purposes of the Baltimore Police Department.” The seven officers stopped individuals and stole money, illegally entered residences to steal money and property, conducted traffic stops and stole from the occupants of the vehicles, and defrauded the public by submitting false time and attendance records and in some instances nearly doubled their salaries.



- In February, a bill was introduced to the California legislature that would **prevent law enforcement from using jailhouse informants** to secure convictions thus improving the integrity of criminal investigations and helping restore trust between law enforcement and the public.
- In July, Illinois **banned the use of police deception during interrogations of children** under the age of 18 – **the first state to ever to ban the practice**. The Registry’s information and analysis about false confessions were essential in making the case for reform.
- Montana lawmakers used Registry data and analysis to take a major step forward in improving its current compensation law, increasing the amount exonerees will receive.

## Registry Impact

- In October, 2021 a social worker wrote us an email:
 

*“I work almost exclusively with people who have been exonerated, and the summary on your site is the first thing I read before I have my first meeting with any client. And often I print it out and encourage clients to use it in case they have difficulties getting an ID, housing or work, things that are always a challenge and shouldn't be. One client and I were at the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles] together and he didn't have enough documents to prove his identity. He was away for 24 years so he didn't have much to show. We decided to run over to a copy shop, printed out his page from your site, and ran back. It worked!”*
- In November, 2021, we heard from Jon Eldan, founder of the excellent project [After Innocence](#), which assists exonerees after exoneration, about an intensive project to assist Indiana exonerees with filing statutory compensation claims. Indiana passed a compensation statute in 2019. It provides \$50,000/year of incarceration. People exonerated prior to the passage of the statute were given a two-year window in which to apply, but state officials provided no notice or help with applying. The deadline was in October, 2021. Jon writes that **thanks to the National Registry of Exonerations**, After Innocence had a list of 39 Indiana exonerees. After Innocence was able track down 5 Indiana exonerees who were eligible but had not yet applied. All filed timely claims by the deadline. **(One Indiana exoneree thanked After Innocence for the notification, but declined to pursue compensation, explaining that "no amount of money" would be worth re-opening that chapter.)** As After Innocence notes, this is "but for" work: without this vigorous outreach, these exonerees' claims would undoubtedly have expired without them even knowing. **But for the amazing work of After Innocence, these exonerees would not have been compensated.**

That is not the only “but for” in Indiana. Three of the 5 exonerees ([Danny Wood](#), [Richard Zawacki](#), and [Steven Everling](#)) were added to the Registry through a class on Miscarriages of Justice taught at the University of California, Irvine. In that class, a Registry editor and staff supervise students to search one particular state for overlooked exonerations. **If the Registry had not chosen to focus on Indiana in 2018, it is unlikely those 3 exonerees would have been listed and thus able to file their claims for compensation.**

Check here to read the Registry’s [2020 annual report](#).



## The “Legal Aid Program for the Wrongfully Convicted” at Shangquan Law Office (尚权蒙冤者援助计划)

In May 2014, Beijing Shangquan Law Office and the Criminal Legal Aid Research Center (CLARC) of China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL) jointly launched the “[Legal Aid Program for the Wrongfully Convicted](#)”. Inspired by “The Innocence Project” of the United States, the Legal Aid Program provides free legal representations to wrongfully convicted people involved in serious violent crimes carrying the sentence of life imprisonment or death penalty. Due to limited funds and manpower, the project only takes post-conviction cases in which the existing inculpatory evidence is obviously insufficient. As a pro bono project, all the expenses involved are borne by Beijing Shangquan Law Office and volunteer lawyers who participate in the project. The project widely engages well-known scholars, criminal law practitioners, the media, experienced criminal defense lawyers and postgraduates in China to provide high-quality assistance to people most in need. The number of Shangquan’s legal aid lawyers increased from 12 in 2014 to 72 this year.

Over the past seven years, the project has received hundreds of applications. After careful review and selection, 15 cases have been taken by Shangquan lawyers. Among these cases, 10 people in six cases have been exonerated. In these exoneration cases, the leading factors that led to the wrongful convictions include false and coerced confessions, misapplication of physical/forensic evidence, flawed forensic reports, and unreliable witness statements, including jailhouse informants’ statements.

Check the [short video](#) about the highlights of the project.

In 2007, Shangquan Law Office started a one-year pro bono project aimed to provide legal aid to defendants in need of help during the procedure of review of death penalty sentences. In 2017, the firm relaunched this project for another term. During this term, the firm took 16 cases in total, of which the death sentences in 4 cases were disproved. After taking these death penalty cases, the firm conducted empirical research and produced the [Research Reports on Lawyers’ Participation in Death Penalty Review Cases](#) and submitted them to the Legislative Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress and the Supreme People’s Court. In 2021, Shangquan Law Office and the CLARC of CUPL jointly launched [this project for the third term](#), hoping that we can help more wrongly convicted defendants in time and make more contributions to the legislation of death penalty.

## Xiyuanwang.net (洗冤网)

[Xiyuanwang.net](#) is a website dedicated to showcasing nationwide exoneration efforts and achievements. It was established by the founders of the “Save the Innocent” Exoneration Initiative on November 20, 2013 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. The Exoneration Initiative was initiated by Li Jinxing, a well-known defense lawyer, with co-founders Wang Wanqiong, Chen Jiangang, and Zhang Lei. Mr. Wu Changlong, an exoneree in a bombing case who spent 12 years in prison for a crime he never committed, was invited to be an ambassador for the initiative. On the same day it was established, the initiative decided to take as its first case the Chen Man arson-murder case in Hainan Province. They were ultimately successful: Chen Man was released from prison in 2016 after 24 years in detention.

Xiyuanwang.net cooperates with *pro bono* lawyers, medical examiners, media, scholars, and experts. The unique historical background of the innocence movement in China contributes to the complicity and heavy workload of the exoneration work. As a result, people dedicated to this cause need to jump

out of the box and think creatively to help the wrongfully convicted.

In the past year, some of the founders left Xiyuanwang.net for various reasons. However, some of them still take on innocent cases on their individual capacity. These two cases below are represented by a private lawyer who used to be a volunteer lawyer at Xiyuanwang.net and still devotes time to this project.

Mr. Li Jin was convicted of murder and robbery in 1994 and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Mr. Li maintained his innocence through the trial and provided alibi evidence but was rejected by the court. The only other two accomplices in the same case were acquitted in the first trial for lacking sufficient evidence. Mr. Li was convicted based on his coerced confession. After serving his time, Mr. Li was released in 2017. In May 2020, the Sichuan High Court decided to reopen this case for retrial. This case is now pending in the retrial procedure.

Another case is the Su Jifeng and Su Xiaofeng murder case. Two defendants were in their seventies when they were prosecuted for murdering the victim (in his fifties). Both defendants claimed that they were tortured to confess and recanted their confessions at trial but were both convicted and sentenced respectively to death and life imprisonment in August 2019. The case is now pending on appeal. Both defendants asserted their innocence claims. A jail snitch was used in this case. I had a five-day hearing at the appellate court in September 2021 and I believe the defendants are innocent.

## **Innocence Project Japan (えん罪救済センター)**

[Innocence Project Japan \(えん罪救済センター\)](#) is an organization based in Kyoto, Japan, which is dedicated to supporting and redressing wrongfully accused or convicted cases in Japan. IPJ was founded in April 2016 by a group of lawyers, scholars, and scientists. The efforts to establish an innocence organization started in 2015, when several scholars and lawyers gathered to discuss miscarriages of justice in Japan.

There are currently more than 40 board members including attorneys, law professors, psychology scholars, a computer scientist, and two former scientists at police crime laboratories. In addition, volunteer attorneys work on cases pro bono. IPJ provides legal assistance in convicted cases as well as cases that have not yet been decided, since it is extremely difficult to obtain a retrial in Japan after conviction. It has received more than 420 requests for assistance. The cases range from minor cases to murder.

IPJ continues to grow its network of lawyers and experts who are interested in working with and volunteering for cases of wrongful accusation and conviction. The fields of expertise of network members include: DNA analysis, false confessions analysis, and forensic image analysis.

In 2018, IPJ, together with the Taiwan Innocence Project, co-hosted the first Asian Innocence Network (AIN) conference. In 2019 IPJ hosted the second annual AIN conference in Kyoto.

## **SBS Review Project Japan (SBS 検証プロジェクト)**

[SBS Review Project Japan \(SRP\)](#) is an organization based in Osaka and dedicated to helping persons accused or convicted of shaken baby syndrome (SBS) / abusive head trauma (AHT).

Since around 2010, Japan has seen an increased number of convictions based on the SBS/AHT hypothesis. Many caretakers have been accused of abusing babies by shaking them. Their indictments were based on the SBS hypothesis, which presupposes the baby must have been violently shaken if there is a triad of certain symptoms. In 2017, attorneys and scholars teamed up and founded the SRP to research debates in other countries and use the knowledge to exonerate persons who had been wrongfully accused of abuse.

Since it was established, attorneys in the project have won acquittals in eight cases and had charges dropped in more than 13 cases. In the past year alone, it has achieved three favorable decisions: one Supreme Court decision and two High Court decisions affirming the not-guilty verdicts in lower courts. Aside from direct service, the SRP also holds several international symposia, seminars for attorneys litigating SBS/AHT cases and regularly educates the public through meetings and media. The SRP also has cooperative ties with forensic pathologists, neurosurgeons and radiologists. Together with experts from other countries, SRP is co-editing a book critically analyzing the SBS/AHT debate, forthcoming in 2022.

## **Taiwan Innocence Project (台灣冤獄平反協會)**

[Taiwan Innocence Project \(TIP\)](#) was founded in 2012 to address the issue of wrongful convictions in Taiwan. It provides pro bono legal services to the wrongfully convicted, works to redress the causes of wrongful convictions, and supports the exonerated after they are proven innocent.

TIP only accepts post-conviction cases where there is a claim of innocence, either due to flawed forensic evidence or severe due process violations. Since its establishment in 2012, TIP has received more than 1,673 claims of innocence. Since 2012, TIP has accepted 33 cases with 36 clients, including three death-row clients and two clients who were sentenced to life imprisonment. So far, TIP has achieved 10 exonerations, including a death-row exoneration in 2020.

As of October 31, 2021, TIP received 159 requests for assistance and successfully persuaded the courts to reopen two cases in 2021. However, we also have two cases receiving guilty verdicts again after the retrials.

In addition to exonerating the innocent, TIP also pushes to reform the criminal justice system. We have been actively lobbying the Legislative Yuan (the congress) to have our amendments of the Criminal Compensation Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure (incorporating the Daubert standard). We have also completed the draft bill on chain of custody and evidence preservation and are shifting our focus to forensic interviewing of vulnerable witnesses.

Still, there are challenges to be faced. Until now, we have three cases receiving guilty verdicts once again in their retrials (two were decided this year, and the other one was in the previous year). The defense teams for those cases appealed, but there is a great chance that the cases will still end with guilty verdicts, since the statistics have shown that 90% of the cases appealed to the Supreme Court were rejected.

In 2017, inspired by the Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) in the United States, the Ministry of Justice set up an internal review of convictions inside the prosecutor's offices. However, little has been achieved in the past 4 years, with only two cases brought out for reopening. Thus, how to improve the effectiveness of the CIU in Taiwan is also an important challenge for us.

One of the most important cases TIP has handled in the past year is that of Mr. Wu Ming-Feng. Based on a highly misleading single-photo identification process and a flawed polygraph test result, Wu was accused and convicted of robbing two women with a knife in 1999 and was sentenced to five years.

The victims reported the case to the police and claimed that they were robbed by two teenagers riding on a scooter with a knife. The police thought of Wu Ming-Feng, a teenager then who had committed a similar misdemeanor in the neighborhood and showed Wu's headshot to the victims. Despite that Wu's height didn't match what the victims originally stated, they changed their statements after seeing Wu's photo and Wu himself in person. The polygraph of Wu conducted by the Investigation Bureau, Ministry of Justice asserted that Wu had shown "a lying reaction." Besides the flawed identification process and the polygraph result, there was no substantial incriminating evidence against Wu. Neither the other robber, the stolen goods nor the knife were ever found.

Wu was accused by the prosecution but was initially acquitted by the Banqiao District Court due to lack of evidence. The prosecution appealed, and the Taiwan High Court reversed the non-guilty verdict, and sentenced him to five years in prison in 1999.

In 2017, the report issued by the Control Yuan explicitly pointed out that the polygraph tests conducted by Li Fu-Kuo, a former investigator in the Investigation Bureau, had serious flaws and suggested a comprehensive review into the tests he had conducted. Wu's test was also one of Li's works. In 2020, the Control Yuan issued another investigation report of the case, urging the Ministry of Justice to petition for a retrial. The Taiwan High Court reopened the case in July 2021 and found Mr. Wu not guilty due to lack of sufficient evidence on November 17, 2021. However, as the prosecutor appealed again a few days ago, the case has yet to receive a final judgment of not guilty.

## **Innocence International Thailand (อินโนเซน อินเตอร์เนชันแนล ประเทศไทย)**

Dr. Namtaee Meeboonsalang, who is also a public prosecutor, founded the Innocence International Thailand (IIT) in 2015 with a couple of friends. IIT is run by a group of people who share the ideological commitment to “exonerate innocent people from miscarriage of justice at all stages, from interrogation, prosecution to post wrongful conviction.” As a result, IIT will perform once IIT proves that the accused is innocent. IIT does not wait long until the innocent is wrongfully convicted because it would be harder to reopen the cases.

To achieve the above goal, IIT brings together professionals such as prosecutors, academics, lawyers, mass media, forensic pathologists, auditors, etc. Since 2015, IIT has handled over 20 criminal cases across the country, including cases involving murder, drug trafficking, battery, sexual assault, fraud and trespassing.

In 2016, IIT participated in the Innocence Network Conference in San Antonio. At the conference, IIT suggested the direction that IIT embraced in exonerating the innocent people as following: “The fundamental principle of Innocence International Thailand is to exonerate the innocent at the earliest stage of criminal justice process as possible.” In 2018, Dr. Namtaee Meeboonsalang visited the Taiwan Innocence Project and signed the Statement of Asian Innocence Movement Activists in Taiwan. IIT participated in the Innocence Network Asia Symposium in Japan in 2019 to seek cooperation between countries and hosted the Third Innocence Network Asia Conference in Bangkok in 2020. Participants from Asia and Europe attended the conference.

According to Thailand's criminal justice system, prosecutors are precluded from investigating crime scenes. They have nothing to do at the investigation process and are only relying on information written in case reports handed in by the police. Due to corruptions within the police department, it is not uncommon that evidence would be distorted or destroyed at the investigation stage. The deficiency of Thailand's criminal justice system is a significant factor that causes wrongful prosecutions and wrongful convictions; and the defensive attitude of the law enforcement agencies and judges has led to denial of failures and mistakes, rather than corrections and exonerations.

In addition to handling criminal cases to return justice to the innocent, IIT is also dedicated to promoting justice and policy reforms to prevent wrongful convictions and raise the awareness of wrongful convictions and their causes among the public via articles, academic seminars, mass media broadcasting and by participating in the lawmaking process. Yet under seven years of the dictatorship regime, criminal justice reform has never materialized in Thailand.