

Protecting human rights is the foundation of law.

The Human Rights Program at the University of Virginia allows students to explore the range of opportunities available in the human rights field, at home and abroad, through hands-on experiences.

The program is the hub for human rights activities at the Law School, and cooperates with student groups, faculty members, the Public Service Center and Career Development, and human rights organizations to coordinate speakers, events, summer and postgraduate employment, and pro bono opportunities.

Human Rights Study Project members traveled abroad to study human rights in India during winter break in January 2020. Other teams have conducted field missions to Egypt, Cuba, Sierra Leone, Syria and Lebanon, China, India, Uganda, Cambodia, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Myanmar, Colombia, Nepal and Argentina.



Human Rights Law

COURSES AND SEMINARS

The Law School curriculum has included a number of courses focused on human rights in recent years, including International Human Rights Law, U.S. Refugee and Asylum Law, and National Security, Human Rights and the Courts. Other courses touch on human rights topics, such as Racial Justice and the Law, Constitutional Law and Economics, and Law of Armed Conflict.

ALUMNI NETWORKS

The program maintains a network of recent graduates involved in human rights law.

Current and recent employers include: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia » Canadian Centre for International Justice » Center for Constitutional Rights » Center for National Security Studies » EarthRights International » Freedom House » Council for Global Equality » Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal » Harvard Law School Human Rights Clinic » SECTION27 » U.S. Senate Judiciary and Armed Services committees » U.N. Office of Legal Affairs

JOBS AND FELLOWSHIPS

UVA Law faculty mentor students on fellowship and career opportunities. The faculty, many of whom have worked abroad, also offer a significant networking resource for those interested in human rights work. Students working in the field have access to summer grants of \$4,000 (first year) and \$7,000 (second year) from the student-run Public Interest Law Association.

Salwa Ahmad '24 and Layla Khalid '23 listen to the translation at the Organization of American States' 52nd General Assembly in Lima, Peru. The OAS asked the International Human Rights Clinic students to research the barriers to participation civil society organizations face at the OAS Dialogue and suggest ways to ensure all voices are heard equally.



Professor Mila Versteeg's co-authored book, "How Constitutional Rights Matter," was awarded the International Society of Public Law prize for best book published in 2019 or 2020, and the Best Book Award from the Human Rights Section of the American Political Science Association.

Professor Camilo Sánchez, director of the school's International Human Rights Law Clinic, formerly was a research coordinator of Dejusticia and associate professor at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá. He has also served as an adviser to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and as a researcher at the Colombian Commission of Jurists.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW CLINIC

The International Human Rights Law Clinic is the core of the program. The clinic offers students practical experience in human rights advocacy in collaboration with human rights lawyers and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and abroad.

CLINIC STUDENTS have worked on projects in the following areas:

- Reparations for slavery and other historical injustices
- Deprivation of migrants' liberty
- Gender equality and sports
- Protecting human rights advocates
- Impact of air pollution on human rights
- Access to health care in Venezuela
- National security in the war on terror
- Freedom of information and expression
- Gender-based violence, women's and LGBT rights
- Rights of indigenous people
- Legal literacy and empowerment
- Right to life and prohibition against torture
- Human rights in the Middle East
- Corporate liability for human rights violations
- Land law and housing rights
- Protecting human rights during transitional justice

THE CLINIC has partnered with the following organizations:

- U.N. Committee on Migrant Workers and Their Families
- American Bar Association Human Rights Center, Washington, D.C.
- Due Process of Law Foundation, Washington, D.C.
- Center for the Study of Law, Justice and Society, Colombia
- Center for Economic and Social Rights, New York
- Center for Reproductive Rights, New York

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