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 Services, and human rights organizations to coordinate speakers, events, summer and postgraduate employment, and pro bono opportunities.

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:

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<th>National security in the war on terror</th>
<th>Human rights in the Middle East</th>
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<td>Freedom of information and expression</td>
<td>International criminal justice and universal</td>
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<td>Gender-based violence, women’s and LGBTI rights</td>
<td>jurisdiction</td>
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<td>Rights of indigenous people</td>
<td>Corporate liability for human rights violations</td>
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<td>Legal literacy and empowerment</td>
<td>Land law and housing rights</td>
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<td>Right to education</td>
<td>Transitional justice/responsibility to protect</td>
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<td>Right to an effective remedy</td>
<td>and to fulfill human rights</td>
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<td>Rights respecting legislative reform</td>
<td>Rights related to health and medical treatment</td>
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<td>Right to life and prohibition against torture</td>
<td>Rights of refugees</td>
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SPONSORED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM and the VIRGINIA JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW (VJIL), this global competition is designed to encourage student scholarly inquiry into human rights topics. Submissions are accepted from J.D., LL.M. and S.J.D. candidates from both the United States and abroad. The student author of the top paper receives a $500 cash prize, an invitation to present the paper at a special Student Scholars Workshop at UVA, and expedited consideration for publication in the Virginia Journal of International Law.

STUDENTS HAVE WORKED ON THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

U.N. SPECIAL RAPPORTOEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Organized a roundtable with U.S. gender and rights advocates; drafted briefing paper on the due diligence standard; coordinated and edited five civil society briefing papers for the special rapporteur’s official U.S. visit; contributed to the special rapporteur’s 2013 thematic report on the development of due diligence standards and consistency between international and regional treaties

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH Researched Israel’s legal obligations with regard to land and housing rights of its indigenous population for a published report: “Off the Map: Land and Housing Rights Violations in Israel’s Unrecognized Bedouin Villages”
Cowan Fellows/Human Rights Study Project

Six UVA Law students — members of the Human Rights Study Project, called Cowan Fellows — recently traveled to the Republic of Ghana to do field research on the status of some of the West African country's ongoing human rights issues [such as the effects of illegal mining, left]. Each year a team of Cowan Fellows undertakes a field mission to investigate and report on human rights issues in a particular country or region; they then write papers based on their findings, for which they receive academic credit. Teams have traveled to Egypt, Cuba, Sierra Leone, Syria and Lebanon, China, India, Uganda, Cambodia, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Madagascar.

Women's Justice Initiative

(Guatemala, founded by Kate Flatley ’08) Designed training modules on human rights law, gender-based violence, and inheritance and property rights for indigenous Guatemalan women

Center for Constitutional Rights

(New York) Researched for plaintiffs' legal team in the case of Al Shimari v. CACI, a federal lawsuit brought by four Iraqi torture victims against private U.S.-based contractor CACI International Inc. and CACI Premier Technology Inc.

Center for Justice in International Law

(Washington, D.C.) Wrote amicus brief for the International American Court on Human Rights in support of petitioners in the case of Benito Tide Méndez et al. v. Dominican Republic

Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, Program on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

(Guatemala) Prepared comparative analyses of draft legislation and policy initiatives concerning indigenous peoples in the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala.

Jobs and Fellowships

UVA Law faculty meet with students to discuss fellowship and career opportunities, and students are invited to join an email list to regularly receive job and fellowship announcements. The faculty, many of whom have worked abroad, also offer a significant networking resource for those interested in human rights work. Students who intend to work in the United States and abroad have access to summer grants of $3,500 (first year) and $6,000 (second year) from the student-run Public Interest Law Association.

Alumni Networks

The program maintains a network of recent graduates involved in the human rights law field. Alumni employers include the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Canadian Centre for International Justice, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Center for National Security Studies, law firm Burke O’Neil, EarthRights International, Freedom House, the Council for Global Equality, the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal, the Harvard Law School Human Rights Clinic, Section 27 the U.S. Senate Judiciary and Armed Services committees, and the U.N. Office of Legal Affairs.

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; Poverty, Inequality and Human Rights in Education; Comparative Human Rights Law; Rights of Indigenous Peoples and more. Other courses touch on human rights topics, including Death Penalty: An International Perspective; and Refugee Law and Policy.

Events

Since its inception in 2003, the Human Rights Program has brought leading figures in the field to the Law School. Recent events and speakers include:

All the Missing Souls: A Personal History of the War Crimes Tribunals, with David Scheffer, the first U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues and professor and director of the Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern University School of Law

Rashida Manjoo, U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and UVA Distinguished International Fellow in Residence and visiting research professor

Outside of the Box Luncheon: A Conversation with Joseph Zogy ’96, chief counsel and staff director, U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights

Measuring Human Rights: Indicators, Metrics and Evidence-Based Practice, with NYU Law professor Margaret L. Satterthwaite

A Transitional Justice Strategy for Syria, with Mohammad Al Abdullah of the Syria Justice and Accountability Center, and Balkies Jarrah of the International Justice Program and Human Rights Watch

Crossing Borders: Rethinking International Development, a symposium sponsored by the Virginia Journal of International Law and the J.B. Moore Society of International Law; with keynote address by Hassane Cisse, deputy general counsel for knowledge and research at the World Bank

Prosecuting Human Trafficking: Ending the Myths, Confronting the Facts, with Martina Vandenberg, president and founder of the Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center

Corporate Liability in U.S. Courts for Global Actions, with EarthRights International Legal Director Marco Simons and Professor Brandon Garrett

Improving Women's Access to Justice in Rural Guatemala, with Kate Flatley ’08

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

www.law.virginia.edu/humanrights

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