

# Careers in Public International Law & Human Rights



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INTEREST PROGRAMS  
UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABOUT UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

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UCLA School of Law, founded in 1949, is the youngest major law school in the nation and has established a tradition of innovation in its approach to teaching, research and scholarship.

## ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LAW PROGRAM

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The International and Comparative Law Program engages in research, advocacy, and public education in a multitude of areas of international and comparative law. Our faculty is composed of outstanding legal scholars and renowned international visitors who make UCLA Law a focal point for scholars in these fields.

## ABOUT THE PROMISE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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The Promise Institute for Human Rights is the center of human rights education, research, and advocacy at UCLA and around the region. The Promise Institute trains the next generation of human rights lawyers and leaders, generates vital scholarship, and develops programs for on-the-ground assistance to address the most pressing contemporary human rights concerns of our times.

## INTRODUCTION

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Careers in public international law and human rights take many different forms, from domestic organizing to international litigation, and everything in between. The *UCLA Public International Law and Human Rights Careers Guide* has been created to help law students and graduates understand how to enter practice in these fields.

Public international law refers to laws, rules, and principles of general application that deal with the conduct of nation states and international organizations among themselves as well as the relationships between nation states and international organizations with persons, whether natural or juridical. Public international law is sometimes called the “law of nations” or just simply international law. It should not be confused with private international law, which is primarily concerned with the resolution of conflict of national laws, determining the law of which country is applicable to specific situations.

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, religion or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights without discrimination. Human rights law lays down the obligations of governments to act in certain ways (or to refrain from certain acts) in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

The Guide is divided into seven parts. Part I provides an overview of different career paths within the public international law and human rights fields. Part II contains narratives from UCLA School of Law alumni who are now practicing public international law and human rights. Part III suggests how UCLA School of Law students can prepare themselves for practicing law in these fields during law school. Part IV contains narratives from UCLA School of Law students describing their experience while in Law School. Part V provides interview tips based on information we have learned from speaking with students and employers. Finally, Part VII lists organizations that specialize in public international law and human rights work, grouped around different practice areas.

## I. PATHS WITHIN PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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The number of ways to address problems within public international law and human rights are as numerous as the problems themselves. Similarly, there are number of different paths that lawyers take to practice law in these fields. In Part I we discuss some of those paths, as well as some of the organizations doing important work in the field. Later, Part VII contains a more expansive list of organizations.

## TYPE OF WORK

### LITIGATION

Litigation is the process of suing and bringing a party to court to answer for their actions. Litigation includes criminal prosecutions and civil claims. It is quite possible to have a career in human rights litigation in the U.S. focusing only on human rights abuses committed in the U.S. This usually goes by another name, such as civil rights, criminal, or labor law. Litigating human rights abuses committed outside of the U.S. in U.S. courts looks quite different. The jurisdiction in the U.S. for litigating human rights abuses committed overseas is quite limited: often even if the plaintiff or defendant is a U.S. citizen or entity, if the abuse happened outside U.S. territory the courts do not favor passing judgement on it, usually reasoning that since the case involves international affairs, it is a matter for the executive branch. This means that people who have suffered human rights abuses outside of the U.S. do not have much luck in getting relief from the U.S. judicial system. Because of this limited jurisdiction, lawyers who litigate international human rights matters in U.S. courts tend to focus on egregious crimes such as torture. [The Center for Justice and Accountability](#) and [Schonbrun Seplow Harris & Hoffman](#) both are involved with long term, domestic litigation based on crimes committed abroad. Another avenue for practice in litigation is working in the domestic courts of another country. To do this, it will likely be necessary to do an LLM program in that country and pass their bar exam. Advanced language skills will also be necessary in a non-English speaking country.

In the international sphere, there are opportunities to work in litigation in both criminal and civil trials. [The International Criminal Court](#) and the [Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia](#) have opportunities for lawyers to work as clerks, prosecutors, and defenders. The [International Court of Justice](#) and the [Iran-United States Claims Tribunal](#) are examples of international civil courts.

### RESEARCH & ACADEMIA

Researchers and academics have a multitude of options for where and how they do their work. Researchers work for think tanks such as the [RAND Corporation](#) and [Chatham House](#), university institutes such as the [Emmett Institute](#) and the [Williams Institute](#), and directly for UN agencies.

Legal academia is another avenue for exploring public international law and human rights issues. Academics research and publish academic articles to further the debate and policy making on human rights issues; they also teach, interact with students, and may lead research groups exploring solutions to complex problems. Academics are often called on to write amicus briefs on litigation involving international issues, advise government leaders, and train NGO staffers on their area of expertise.

### LOBBYING & ADVOCACY

Lobbying is the act of attempting to influence the actions, policies, and decisions of officials. Advocacy is the work involved in supporting a particular cause or policy. Issue-based lobbying and advocacy work can take place on the state, national, regional, and global levels. It can take the form of getting specific legislation passed, operating as a subject matter expert, or raising awareness and funds for a specific cause (or your own organization). Most work in the international sphere involves some form of lobbying and advocacy, because most work is issue-based and most organizations are

in need of funding. Because of this necessity, it is important for lawyers to know who the powerful players are within their field of work, and how to lobby them. The [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) and [Human Rights First](#) both lobby U.S. legislators in Washington, D.C., whose policies have a global reach.

## ORGANIZING

Organizing means coordinating the efforts of communities towards the promotion of a specific cause. Community organizing is usually associated with domestic public interest work, but can also be done on an international level. Organizations like [Accountability Counsel](#) use community organizing as their main method of figuring out what problems are most important to their clients. Thus, organizing is a key component of their model for advocacy and systemic change.

## ADJUDICATING

Adjudication is the process of making a formal judgement or decision about a disputed matter. Jobs in adjudication in international human rights are limited, but the opportunities are very rewarding. The UN has several areas where lawyers adjudicate, such as in refugee status determination (RSD). RSD officers interview applicants for refugee status and adjudicate their cases. This work parallels jobs within U.S. government, such as Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), where Asylum Officers and Refugee Officers adjudicate immigration applications.

Judges and jurists on international courts are appointed through a complicated political process, and while it may be a good career goal, it is not a job within the reach of any recent law student.

## POLICYMAKING & NEGOTIATION

Policymaking is the process of bringing together the needs of different stakeholders to put together a course of action to be adopted by an organization or government. Negotiation is a process of dialogue intended to achieve certain goals or ends, and which may or may not resolve a particular dispute to the satisfaction of all parties. Negotiation and policymaking in the international human rights and public international law arena is hugely important. Without policymaking and negotiation, none of the on-the-ground service delivery work would be possible. Much of the work done at organizational, regional and international headquarters consists of policymaking. For example, when the 2014 Ebola outbreak began, policymakers at the [World Health Organization](#) had to act quickly to formulate an institutional strategy and coordinate an on-the-ground response. Working in policy allows lawyers to understand the needs and desires of different stakeholders and try to negotiate agreements between them.

## INNOVATION & SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The fields of public international law and human rights are always in need of fresh ideas. Lawyers who are well versed in a particular problem or system can use social entrepreneurship and innovation to bridge these gaps. Lawyers are uniquely situated in that they are able to understand both legal and practical barriers to justice. In thinking creatively, lawyers are able to circumvent barriers and aid clients in need. For an example of innovative lawyering, see Paul Hoffman's work on the Alien Torts Statute at [Schonbrun Seplow Harris & Hoffman](#).

## PRACTICAL FIELDWORK / OPERATIONS

Fieldwork in international human rights spaces describes nearly everything that does not take place at headquarters. It may involve running a particular aspect of a refugee camp, or processing migrants from one country into another. Within operations, there are many tasks that require lawyers. For example, helping manage operations by contracting out certain tasks, advocating for changes or adjudicating claims. Every UN body has a legal office involved in writing contracts, which often involves knowing how to write a contract that will be considered valid in several countries. The [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) employs many Rapporteurs, whose job it is to do field research and report on human rights abuses and problems, thus advocating for the civil society organizations doing work on the ground. The World Trade Organization is involved with adjudicating claims of unfair trade practices between member states daily.

## DIFFERENT SYSTEMS

### UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in New York City. Its primary goal is to promote international cooperation. The UN has 193 member states and five principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice.

The UN has many specialized agencies, including the [World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#), the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#), the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#), the [UN High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#), [UNICEF](#) and the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#).

Some of these bodies, such as the OHCHR, UNHCR, and the ILO, are very legally oriented. Some bodies, like IOM or UNICEF are more operations oriented. Some, like [UN Women](#) or [UNAIDS](#), are focused on issue-based advocacy. There are also departments that deal with the UN's internal legal issues, such as the Office of Human Resources Management, or more generally the [UN Office of Legal Affairs \(UNOLA\)](#). In the past, UCLA Law students who have interned or worked at the UN were at a specialized agency, such as UNHCR or OHCHR, or a criminal tribunal such as the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT).

One of the best ways to get an internship at one of these UN organs is to connect with someone who works there. UCLA Law's International and Comparative Law Program and Promise Institute for Human Rights have alumni at some UN agencies and our faculty have lots of contacts. Many agencies post internships on the [UN recruitment website](#), but other agencies and offices may advertise on their own website.

Full time jobs at UN agencies are difficult to come by, especially for new JD graduates. On rare occasions, new JDs may be offered consultancies, but these are generally short-term contracts. 3Ls can apply for the [Young Professionals Programme \(YPP\)](#), a recruitment initiative for people under 32. It can take up to two years for the YPP to accept or reject applicants, so do not rely on this program. It is better to think about the UN in terms of your three to five year plan and think about other paths to pursue as a new graduate to work in a related field to set yourself up for being a competitive candidate for UN positions further down the line.

## REGIONAL / NATIONAL BODIES

### *Human Rights Commissions*

Some U.S. states, many countries and most world regions have human rights commissions, which are bodies set up to investigate, promote or protect human rights. Most national or subnational bodies are public entities which have independence from the state. Some particularly well-respected commissions are the [African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights](#), [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#), and the [Asian Human Rights Commission](#). All three have internships and externships for law students.

### *Human Rights Courts*

Regional human rights courts were established primarily as arms of regional governance bodies such as the Organization of American States or the African Union. They tend to have similar, though not identical, mandates. The European Court of Human Rights hears applications from individuals, groups, or states alleging that a contracting state violated human rights. In contrast, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights serves an additional advisory role, issuing opinions on matters of legal interpretation brought by states. The African Court on Human Rights hears applications submitted to it from individuals, NGOs, and states.

## INTERNATIONAL AND MIXED CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS

International and mixed or internationalized criminal tribunals have multiple opportunities for legal employment, sometimes dependent on nationality. These include the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

## INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) differ significantly in their structure from the UN and Regional Bodies, which are intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), meaning that they are made up of member states, to which they are beholden. As private organizations, INGOs are often able to do work that IGOs are unwilling or unable to do, giving them more freedom, but fewer protections. Listed below are a few major INGOs. There are hundreds of NGOs within any issue area-these are merely a few which are looked upon as experts in their field.

### *Humanitarian Law*

#### [International Committee of the Red Cross / Crescent](#)

The ICRC is a humanitarian organization based in Geneva, and strictly speaking not an NGO. State signatories to the four Geneva Conventions have given the ICRC a mandate to protect victims of international and internal armed conflict. They do this primarily by providing humanitarian relief in conflict zones, but they do a lot of educational and research work as well. The ICRC employs lawyers and law students to do research in international humanitarian law, which they use to influence humanitarian law policy and practice.

## [Médecins Sans Frontières](#)

MSF, also known as Doctors Without Borders, is best known for its relief work in conflict zones and with endemic diseases. MSF hires lawyers on an as-needed basis.

*Human Rights*

## [Human Rights Watch](#)

Human Rights Watch is a U.S.-based INGO which conducts research and advocacy on human rights. They do original research highlighting human rights abuses by governments and non-government groups, and pressure policy makers and governments to denounce abuse and respect human rights, often through public naming-and-shaming of abusers. Their main products are their crisis-directed research and detailed country- and issue- specific reports, which policymakers and lawyers may rely on. Human Rights Watch takes interns in all their offices, and in recent years have taken UCLA Law interns at their Los Angeles and New York offices.

## [Amnesty International](#)

Amnesty International is a UK-based INGO which conducts research and advocacy on human rights. They have observer status at the UN and, along with Human Rights Watch, are considered to be one of the leading international human rights INGOs. Unlike Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International engages with its millions-strong membership base as its central organizational tool. They engage in fact-finding investigations and report-writing, lobbying governments and civil society group education and training.

*Environment / Climate Change*

## [Earthjustice](#)

Earthjustice is a nonprofit public interest law organization based in the U.S. They advocate for environmental causes, including climate and energy, health and toxics, and the wild. They represent community organizations like the Maine Lobstermen's Association and other NGOs like the Worlds Wildlife Fund in litigation, and also employ lobbyists to influence U.S. environmental policy. They also partner with environmental organizations worldwide.

*Refugee / Migrant*

## [International Rescue Committee](#)

The International Rescue Committee is an INGO focusing on humanitarian aid, relief and development for refugees and other displaced people. Though most of their work is on operations, including resettlement, they also have an advocacy arm that focuses the attention of policy makers on humanitarian crises and the needs of refugees and internally displaced people.

*Specific Issue Areas*

## [Corporate Accountability: Accountability Counsel](#)

Accountability Counsel is a San Francisco-based international organization which amplifies the voices of communities around the world to protect their human rights and environment. Their particular area of focus is business and human rights, advocating for people harmed by

internationally financed projects. Through organizing, they work with their client communities to identify problems, and advocate through existing dispute-resolution mechanisms that are built into development finance institutions like the World Bank. Accountability Counsel was created by UCLA Law alumnus Natalie Bridgeman-Fields, who received an Echoing Green social entrepreneurship fellowship for Accountability Counsels' innovative model. They take interns at all their offices.

### [Access to Justice: International Bridges to Justice \(IBJ\)](#)

IBJ is a Geneva-based international organization dedicated to protecting the basic legal rights of individuals in developing countries. Their particular areas of interests are access to justice (the right to competent legal representation and the right to a fair trial) and torture (right to be protected from cruel and unusual punishment). IBJ was founded by UCLA Law alumnus Karen Tse, and now works in nine countries. They take interns in all their offices, and UCLA Law has sent many interns over the years.

### [U.S. BASED ORGANIZATIONS / GOVERNMENT / FIRMS](#)

“In the United States, people who work on human rights issues are fighting to preserve access to asylum for Central American refugees fleeing gang violence, challenging the excessive use of force and extrajudicial executions of people of color by the police, and attempting to safeguard voting rights from racially discriminatory practices.”

Jessica Eby, '14

There are many organizations and firms that work primarily on human rights in the U.S. or on international human rights through lobbying and advocacy. There are also many arms of the U.S. state and federal governments that work on both domestic and international human right issues. Do not discount these options-they can offer rewarding work and provide excellent experience for future employment. For additional background on how to obtain a position in U.S. government, see the companion publication, *Careers in Government*.

### [U.S. Organizations](#)

#### [Human Rights First](#)

Human Rights First is a nonprofit organization which advocates for human rights in the U.S. When the U.S. government and private companies fail to respect human rights and the rule of law, Human Rights First steps in to demand reform, accountability and justice. They work on policy advocacy in D.C., represent asylum seekers in Houston, New York and L.A., and campaign with activist coalitions at all their offices.

#### [Equality Now](#)

Equality Now is an advocacy organization based in New York. Their purpose is to work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls around the world. They work with grassroots organizations around the world to pressure governments through lobbying and litigation. Their work centers primarily on ending sexual violence, trafficking of women, female genital mutilation and gender discrimination in law.

## [Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights](#)

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights is an advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. They work to advance human rights around the world through litigation, advocacy and education. Their areas of focus include women's rights, statelessness, LGBT rights, political participation, business and human rights, farmworkers' rights, and police brutality. They also sponsor the RFK Human Rights Award, created to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to human rights in their country.

## [American Bar Association](#)

The American Bar Association (ABA) has several centers of relevance to human rights and public international law. The ABA's Center for Human Rights does work with a wide range of actors, from grassroots organizations in the U.S. and abroad, to lobbying the U.S. government. Some of their activities include providing assistance to human rights lawyers around the world, investigating business corruption and counterterrorism detention conditions. The ABA's Section of International Law promotes the rule of law and does a lot of work in educating international law practitioners. The ABA's Rule of Law Initiative creates tools to conduct rule of law assessments which are used to study rule of law conditions and inform reform efforts.

*U.S. Government*

## [U.S. Agency for International Development](#)

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the federal government agency responsible for civilian foreign aid. USAID works primarily in disaster and extreme poverty relief. USAID employs lawyers to interpret new legislation and advise on its effects on USAID. Some of USAID's projects include access to justice initiatives in the places where they work.

## [U.S. Department of State](#)

The State Department advises the President and leads the executive branch in foreign policy issues. Lawyers at the department of state negotiate treaties and agreements with foreign entities, represent the U.S. at the UN, and generally are at the front line of the national response in cases of humanitarian crises. The Office of the Legal Adviser at the U.S. Department of State is the main office law students intern and lawyers work, but JD students may intern at other offices as well.

## [Civil Rights Divisions in Government](#)

Many of the major U.S. government agencies have their own office of civil rights (OCR). Noteworthy ones include the [Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice](#), which enforces federal statutes prohibiting discrimination, and the [U.S. Department of Education's State OCR](#), which is focused on protecting civil rights in federally assisted education programs. The [OCR at the State Department](#) is internally focused, managing equal employment and diversity management within the State Department. Many states governments also have civil rights enforcement bodies, such as California Department of Fair Employment and Housing. Doing U.S. civil rights work is a great way to gain expertise in non-discrimination, which is a key human right.

Firms

## Big Law

Many large firms in the U.S. work on large and small-scale cases to do with human rights and public international law. For example, [Cleary Gottlieb](#) has a sizeable public international law practice, having represented states and international organizations on matters such as state and diplomatic immunities, sovereignty, and international human rights. [Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP](#) has expertise in the rising field of business and human rights. [Shearman & Sterling](#) is best known for its international arbitration practice. [White & Case LLP](#)'s pro bono practice is focusing on bringing domestic human rights legislation into alignment with international norms, working especially to promote the rights of children, LGBT people and Roma.

## [Schonbrun Seplow Harris & Hoffman, LLP](#)

This private public interest law firm has expertise in many areas, including employment law, civil rights, police misconduct, and international human rights. One of the partners, Paul Hoffman, is the trailblazing attorney who argued *United States v. Alvarez-Machain* and *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum*, virtually inventing Alien Tort Statute litigation in the U.S. The firm is located in Venice Beach and takes student volunteers and summer clerks. For additional background on how to obtain a position in a private public interest law firm, see the companion publication, *Careers in Private Public Interest Law Firms*.

## II. ALUMNI NARRATIVES

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Attorneys enter careers in public international law and human rights from a variety of avenues. Some begin their careers with clerkships, fellowships, and opportunities within the United Nations (UN) system. Part II features short essays from distinguished UCLA School of Law alumni working in public international law and human rights practice. These narratives exemplify how individuals can take very different paths into public international law and human rights practice and pursue very different types of work. Each of these lawyers has found fulfillment in their careers and share a clear commitment to the field.

### [ANDREW BOYLE '08](#)

#### **Assistant Prosecutor, Office of the Co-Prosecutors, United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

My first exposure to working in international criminal law was during my 1L summer, when I interned at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The United Nations established the ICTR to try suspects of the Rwandan genocide that took place in 1994. That internship was a tremendously eye-opening experience. Not only was it my first time living in Africa, but I also learned a great deal about transitional justice, substantive international criminal law, and the history of the Rwandan genocide. During the next couple of years I took a number of courses that had an international law aspect (*e.g.*, international human rights law, national security law, immigration law and a seminar on Asian legal systems), as well as participated in student groups and journals with a focus on international issues (*e.g.*, the *Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs*).

I did not immediately move into international law following graduation, however. This was partly by circumstance, but also partly because of my broader interests in legal fields outside of international law. After taking the New York Bar, I completed a fellowship working with the Brennan Center for Justice—an organization based in New York City—on issues and litigation related to campaign finance laws. I then clerked for a federal appellate judge.

Just as I finished my clerkship, I was fortunate enough to be hired as a United Nations staff attorney back in the trial chamber in which I had previously interned at the ICTR. In my application, I believe I highlighted not only my previous experience in the office as an intern, and my previous experience in judicial chambers, but also my work with domestic criminal law and litigation in the United States. While at the ICTR, I assisted the judges in adjudicating cases related to the events in Rwanda that had resulted in approximately 800,000 deaths, and countless additional injuries, in about 100 days in 1994.

After gaining experience in the trial chamber, I was interested in moving to the prosecution side. With the benefit of this experience, I was given the opportunity to join the prosecution office at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), often referred to as the UN Khmer Rouge Tribunal. The ECCC is a joint enterprise between the United Nations and the Cambodian government, set up to try persons accused of being “senior leaders and those most responsible” for the events that occurred during the period of Democratic Kampuchea, which is the name that Cambodia was known by when it was ruled by the Khmer Rouge from 1975-79. During that time, approximately 2 million people died (representing about one quarter of the total population), and millions of others were victims in other ways.

As a prosecutor for the past six years, I have been part of a team that has sought to hold defendants accountable for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. As one might expect, prosecuting these types of crimes often requires working with some very disturbing evidence. But it is very humbling and rewarding to try to seek justice for the victims, and to see the courage of those victims who survived the brutality of the Khmer Rouge and come to give evidence before the court. In addition, it has been very interesting to learn about Cambodia generally, and the Khmer Rouge period in particular.

The cases I have worked on at both the ICTR and the ECCC have all been exceptionally complex factually, and frequently have raised novel and complicated areas of law that are interesting on an intellectual level. The main motivator in my work is the desire to see justice done for the victims of the crimes, and hopefully to prevent future atrocities.

For those interested in breaking into work in international criminal courts, there are some broad recommendations I can make. For law students, internships at one of the international courts, which are offered year-round, are a big help. Completing relevant coursework, writing relevant journal articles, and participating in other international human rights or criminal law related internships is also helpful. For graduates—whether just out of law school or many years out—the most relevant domestic work is criminal litigation, although litigation of any sort would be an asset. Finally, language skills in addition to English are helpful, as some positions prefer or require candidates with fluency in particular languages. French, in particular, is used at many international courts, but other languages including Spanish and Arabic could also be helpful depending on the circumstances. As with any “unconventional” career path in law, however, there are no hard and fast rules, and there are many different paths that lead to work in international criminal law.

JESSICA EBY '14

**Senior Protections Associate, Caribbean Protection Unit, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Washington D.C.**

As I sit down to write this, it feels like I am catching my breath after a whirlwind day. But today was like many others: I trained a third new Refugee Status Determination Associate who will be working with asylum-seekers and refugees throughout the Caribbean; interviewed candidates to establish our first-ever UNHCR field presence in Curacao in response to the increasing number of Venezuelans seeking asylum there; finalized strategy documents to explain the vision for our office in Trinidad and Tobago in advance of an upcoming mission of the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations; attempted to eat lunch while talking with colleagues about the cases of individual asylum-seekers and refugees who are in the middle of refugee status determination or resettlement procedures with our office; and reported to OCHA and other UN agencies on UNHCR relief activities with people displaced by Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean. Taking a moment to step back and write this piece about my career in human rights work now, feels like a luxury of time I do not possess, using minutes stolen from the asylum-seekers and refugees whose case files clutter my desk and await my action.

Doing this work is exactly what I went to law school to pursue. One of the things that I appreciate the most about my current job as the Senior Protection Associate for the Caribbean Protection Unit of UNHCR is the fact that I am able to work both directly with refugee clients, as well as with government officials and institutions, to strengthen their understanding of and ability to respect refugees' rights. My work is both human, and institutional; micro, and macro.

Did I need a law degree to do this? The current High Commissioner of UNHCR is not a lawyer, but instead, holds degrees in history and philosophy. My supervisor, though, is a lawyer from the Netherlands with more than 20 years' experience with UNHCR. Lawyers by far predominate the ranks of UNHCR, the agency mandated to protect the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and, in some cases, internally displaced people.

But being a lawyer is not necessary to be a human rights advocate. My own human rights work began long before I was a lawyer, when I worked with human rights activists, journalists, priests, indigenous community leaders, forensic anthropologists, refugees and, yes, lawyers—from throughout Latin America who shaped my understanding of how to speak truth to power, and be effective at creating change. They were almost always people who were making change in their own countries and communities, and sometimes, were the very people affected by human rights violations.

In the United States, people who work on human rights issues are fighting to preserve access to asylum for Central American refugees fleeing gang violence, challenging the excessive use of force and extrajudicial executions of people of color by the police, attempting to safeguard voting rights from racially discriminatory practices, and much more. Black Lives Matter is a human rights movement. Civil rights are human rights. Plenty of non-lawyers are at the forefront of these movements. And the United States is just as “international” as Syria, or the Democratic Republic of Congo, or Venezuela.

I bring this up because I would encourage all law students interested in working on human rights issues, to identify not only those human rights violations occurring in far-flung lands, but also those happening in their own backyards, and find ways to employ their legal talents to address those. The

Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy (PILP) at UCLA School of Law, as well as the Critical Race Studies program and all of the local clinics offered through El Centro Legal, offer opportunities to work on current human rights issues. I enthusiastically embraced these opportunities during law school.

During twelve years of work on human rights issues, I've learned a lot about how to navigate this as a profession. As a student, try on different modes of human rights or legal work, and see how they fit with your skills and personality. Direct service, civil/human rights litigation, and policy advocacy are just three of the main sub-sets of that work. NGOs, civil rights or immigration law firms, government agencies and the UN are a few of the different institutional set-ups to work within. I used my summers at UCLA to try out modes of legal work (including litigation) and institutions (including a civil rights law firm, and the US Department of State) that I had not had the opportunity to explore before. Second, be good at what you do, and work hard at it. This may sound simple, but some people over-emphasize networking as the way to get ahead and forget about just doing a good job. I've had two past internships turn into paid positions. Your supervisors and co-workers are always your most important network, and they will know you by the work you do, and how you treat them. Finally, be conscious of power dynamics, and treat everyone with respect. You will almost always have more power than the people who have suffered from, or are vulnerable to, human rights violations. Remember that you should be ultimately accountable to them (not whoever pays your salary—it usually is not the same person in this line of work) and should view them as your clients. Be conscious of your power and privilege (and if you are at UCLA School of Law, no matter your background, you now have at least some of both) and figure out how to use those to the benefit of your clients.

And if any of what I've written here helps you someday be a successful human rights advocate, please reach out to let me know that the moments stolen from my own to-do list will not have been in vain!

**CRISTIAN GONZÁLEZ CABRERA '17**

**Legal Fellow, The Center for Justice & Accountability, San Francisco, California**

I am currently a UCLA Public Service Fellow at The Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA), an international human rights organization dedicated to deterring torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other severe human rights abuses through innovative litigation, policy, and transitional justice strategies. At CJA, I am responsible for contributing to human rights litigation using the Alien Tort Statute and the Torture Victim Protection Act. I am currently working on a case related to an extrajudicial killing ordered by a paramilitary leader during the Colombian Civil War, as well as an investigation that seeks to find accountability for a massacre that occurred during a West African conflict.

I applied to law school intending to practice in the field of international human rights law. Prior to attending law school, I was employed at the Global Justice Center (GJC), a legal advocacy NGO focusing on the strategic enforcement of international human rights law in the United States and abroad. During this first introduction to the field of human rights, I worked, for example, on the “August 12<sup>th</sup> Campaign,” which applies the right to non-discriminatory medical care—guaranteed to war victims under the Geneva Conventions and customary international law—to challenge the U.S. abortion restrictions placed on all humanitarian aid for war victims. After GJC, I had the opportunity to continue delving into issues of human rights through a Fulbright Fellowship in Germany. In order to learn more about how to serve indigent groups in post-conflict situations, I

focused on the legal and social predicament of Arab Spring refugees in Europe. My project explored why no refugee agreements in Europe were discussing international protection of Tunisian migrants by means of international labor, refugee, or human rights law. These experiences gave me a solid understanding of the international legal system and cemented my desire to go to law school.

At UCLA School of Law, I continued to pursue my interest in human rights law. There, I was enrolled in the David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy, as well as the International and Comparative Law Specialization, programs that provided me with many opportunities related to human rights. For example, I worked as a Research Assistant to Dr. Ian Meyer, a Williams Institute Scholar. My research supported Dr. Meyer's appearance as an expert witness in Center for Constitutional Rights' (CCR) *Sexual Minorities Uganda v. Scott Lively* case. This case not only showed me the potential of challenging the United States' relationship to international law through the Alien Tort Statute, but was also my first exposure to CCR (I later interned at CCR working on their international human rights docket). At UCLA Law, I also volunteered with the El Centro immigration clinic that helps undocumented migrants in Los Angeles who were victims of sexual and domestic violence secure visas. There, I was responsible for reviewing clients' case files, interviewing them, and drafting their legal declarations. I have found that many human rights organizations are interested in these types of client interviewing skills. I also had the privilege to be part of the team representing UCLA Law at the Jean-Pictet International Humanitarian Law Competition, which taught me a lot about international humanitarian law and international criminal law, fields that are very relevant to my current position. At the law school, I was also a student attorney in the International Human Rights Clinic, a chair of the International Human Rights Law Association, and an editor of the *UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs*. In short, there are many opportunities to do human rights work at UCLA Law!

While in law school, I also acquired various professional experiences in the human rights world. For example, I was an Ella Baker legal intern at CCR, during which time I contributed to cutting-edge litigation in U.S. and foreign courts related to U.S. militarism in Central America and the criminalization of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions activism in France. I also spent time in the LGBT Program of Human Rights Watch, where I contributed to the organization's first-ever report of the rights of intersex children by analyzing the relationship between U.S. law and international law vis-à-vis children's rights. There, I was also responsible for drafting legal briefs that articulated the organization's position on certain key international legal developments such as the rights of LGBT people and women in conflict under international law. I also worked as part of the Special Procedures branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, where I provided legal research and drafting support to several thematic mandates. During my time there, I participated in the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, including by helping Mutuma Ruteere, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, research and draft his report on ethnic and racial profiling worldwide.

For a current student at UCLA Law looking to get into the field of human rights, I would say that there are many opportunities to get involved. For me, student organizations, journals, and clinics were key to learning about opportunities on- and off-campus. In addition, getting to know our international law faculty was valuable for helping to identify human rights organizations in Los Angeles and beyond for internship, externship and job opportunities. UCLA Law's summer public interest funding is also crucial to getting exposure to organizations that are normally unable to pay summer interns. Lastly, many opportunities are shared by word of mouth so identifying other fellow students on campus interested in human rights and developing a broader network of human rights peers can really help in learning about the field.

## SHANE LE MASTER '17

### **Public Service Fellow, The Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, The Hague, Netherlands**

I am writing this testimonial just as I finish the first week of my fellowship in the Chambers of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT), an international criminal tribunal established by the UN, located in The Hague. This fellowship is both the culmination of my three years of studying and interning during law school, as well as what I hope will be a stepping stone to an exciting and rewarding career.

Fortunately for me, during my 2L year the law school had just established their International and Comparative Law Specialization. I came to law school knowing I wanted to do public interest law, however, I had never really considered the option of doing public international law. When I saw that the option was available to me I knew right away that it was something I wanted to do. UCLA Law offers so many different courses in international law, including both public and private international law. This, I have learned after talking to many people from different law schools around the country and the world, is very unique since many law schools do not seem to offer many courses in international law, let alone an entire specialization.

I probably took at least eight different classes and clinics focusing on international law, and each and every one of them was taught by excellent professors and full of interested and helpful classmates. The atmosphere in the international law classes at UCLA is perfect because it allows you a great opportunity to connect with excellent faculty and classmates who come from around the world and are more than willing to help you get to where you want to be in your career.

During my 2L summer, I did an internship at Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights in Washington, D.C. My supervisor at the NGO was actually a UCLA Law alumnus who had been in the International Human Rights Clinic with the same professor that I had. He asked that professor what she thought of my work, and her recommendation helped me to get that internship. The summer public interest stipend that the law school provides made going to do that internship possible for me financially.

Right after I finished that summer internship at the Human Rights NGO, another faculty member from the law school helped me to secure a full-time semester externship at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. The experience was so incredible that when I came back to UCLA to finish my last semester, I worked extensively with different faculty members to figure out how I could establish a career for myself working at international law organizations in Europe. This led me to applying and being selected for the President's Public Service Law Fellowship, a fellowship which provides funding for recent graduates to work in public interest law for up to one year. This fellowship has probably been one of the most incredible opportunities of my life, since it has allowed me the chance to come back to Europe to work with the ICTY; allowing me to get another much-needed year of experience and the chance for further networking.

Public international law is without a doubt the most exciting and interesting area of law, and a career in this field is probably the coolest thing any attorney can hope to do. I have so far been involved in such incredible projects as suing the United States Government for systematic discrimination and police brutality before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, helping the United Nations try ex-presidents and generals from Yugoslavia and Rwanda for war

crimes and crimes against humanity, and interviewing victims of the excesses of the US immigration system inside of a prison cell.

Public international law is also an extremely competitive field of law to try and get a foothold in. Anyone at UCLA Law who dreams of a career in international law just needs to have a little bit of initiative, because all of the resources you need are right at your fingertips. Take the international law classes, do the clinics (especially the International Human Rights Clinic), and get involved in student groups like the International Human Rights Law Association and the International Justice Project. Your professors and other faculty members are always there to help point you in the right direction, and the Law School has made plenty of resources available so that you should never have to say no to opportunities for financial reasons.

### RONALD PORCELLI '16

**Law Fellow, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Apia, Samoa**

A career in international human rights law is both immensely challenging and immensely rewarding. Along with peace and security and development, respect for human rights constitutes one of the three founding pillars of the United Nations. Within the triumvirate of the International Bill of Human Rights, I am fortunate to perform some of the work grounded in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

When I was a young boy, I was saddened upon learning of the infamous destruction of a famed gem in the Persian Empire, the city of Persepolis with its stone griffins, palaces, and people. With ISIS' cultural cleansing of the city of Nimrud, an archeological treasure home to ancient Assyrian temples and ruins, I had an epiphany that I needed to join the worldwide defenders of our outstanding universal heritage.

While a law student, I interned at the Paris Headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Though there is a constellation of different treaties that cover the protection of cultural heritage, I was able to work with the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Convention serves as a unique pillar in the architecture of international humanitarian law, a field that is intricately intertwined with the broad spectrum of human rights law.

During my internship, I worked to promote State implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention in the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes, the capital of the Egyptian Middle and New Kingdoms and host to the famed necropolis of the Valley of the Kings. As I performed my legal research and analysis, my imagination was awash with gilded sarcophagi, mummies, and hieroglyphs. This work taught me that while the lives of these ancient artisans are ephemeral, we can endeavor to make sure their masterpieces of epochs past remain eternal.

I continued to further my interests in this area with a fellowship at the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, a field office in Apia, Samoa that covers numerous nations (including Small Island Developing States, such as Tokelau, Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu, and Palau) following graduation. At times, I found myself adventuring through the ethereal palm trees of the Kingdom of Tonga to observe whether ancient Polynesian monoliths and royal tombs had been afforded the legal safeguards mandated under the 1972 World Heritage Convention. I conducted awareness-raising activities on the intersection of international legal instruments, such as the 2003 Convention for the

Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and indigenous customary law with chieftains from the region of Micronesia. Other days, I participated in capacity-building seminars on the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, a treaty safeguarding sunken cities, pirate shipwrecks, and primordial temples lost to the sea, reminding me of the Atlantis myth and legends of my childhood.

The field of human rights is a vital ingredient in the wider recipe of promoting our common humanity. Though it is easy to separate international law into distinct silos, human rights do not exist in a vacuum. The work of human rights intersects with a plethora of fields. As such, in addition to international humanitarian law, I have worked with development (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), disaster risk reduction (the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction), and international criminal law (the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court) throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

While navigating a career in this labyrinthine field is certainly no easy feat, each and everyone one of us, as seen in the Standup for Human Rights campaign, holds an essential piece of the puzzle.

### SHIRIN TAVAKOLI '17

**Legal Fellow, Caribbean Protection Unit, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Washington, D.C.**

I entered law school to pursue a career in international human rights law. Growing up in the Islamic Republic of Iran, I wanted to practice in a field that would allow me to work with international institutions, have a humanitarian impact, and utilize my language skills. I knew, however, that there is no clear path to pursuing a career in international law. Therefore, from early on in law school I took advantage of every opportunity that would give me a better understanding of a career in international human rights law.

During my first year at UCLA Law, I became a member of the International Justice Project, an extra-curricular student-run project that directly partners with human rights organizations to offer research and advocacy assistance in their work. As a member, I worked with a group of law students to submit a brief to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. My involvement in this clinic helped me become more familiar with the structure of international institutions and the implementation of their mandates in human rights. In my second year, I became involved in UCLA's *Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* (JILFA), which exposed me to a group of like-minded law students and expanded my network. As a staff editor at JILFA, I learned how to research international law and review international treaties; skills that any person in an international career path needs.

I also participated in international moot court competitions such as the Clara Barton International Humanitarian Law Competition, a simulation-based moot court competition for students interested in learning about the law of war. This competition taught me a great deal about international law governing armed conflict and provided an opportunity to meet international legal scholars from around the world.

In addition to participating in extracurricular activities, I took a number of courses that focused on international legal issues including International Criminal Court and Public International Law. These courses further broadened my knowledge on the substance and procedures of international law.

Currently, I am a Legal Fellow at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). My work focuses on the Caribbean region and the refugee issues there. My primary responsibility is to draft written assessments determining whether a particular applicant seeking asylum in a Caribbean country can be recognized as a refugee under international law. This position has challenged me intellectually and has been very fulfilling. Additionally, I have the opportunity to work with the governments of the Caribbean countries to help them develop asylum procedures consistent with international law.

UCLA Law's curriculum, clinical programs, extracurricular opportunities and wealth of programming created a structure that afforded me numerous avenues to gain knowledge and training in human rights law. These opportunities helped me build my research, writing and advocacy skill set and to ultimately achieve my goal of practicing in the field of international human rights law.

### JESSIE TEMPLE '16

#### **Staff Attorney, OneJustice, San Francisco, California**

Before attending law school, I took nearly two years off to gain practical experience in domestic and international human rights advocacy. During this time, I worked with attorneys and non-attorneys on issues ranging from genocide prevention to comprehensive eviction defense work. I was routinely cautioned against going to law school, and today I am really grateful to have been challenged by my colleagues not to choose a career in the law as any kind of default. I learned that I was especially passionate about access to justice issues, and that I was fascinated by the international human rights mechanisms available at the regional and universal levels of an increasingly interconnected inter-governmental system.

I was thrilled to join my classmates at UCLA School of Law, and to immerse myself in the academic and extracurricular landscape of human rights on campus. I quickly joined student led human rights organizations, and the school's international law journal, *Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* (JILFA) and began collecting courses I intended to fill my 2L and 3L schedule with. Yes, these activities came up in my interviews for human rights jobs, but what I believe was far more instrumental to my ability to forge a career in human rights was the relationships and mentorships that resulted from these activities. As I have learned, the human rights legal community is a small one, and the resources available at UCLA School of Law to engage with this community are your foot in the door.

By way of example, I secured a summer position with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1L in part because UCLA students before me had developed positive relationships with the UN, and because those students were willing to share their knowledge about the positions I was applying for to better prepare me as a candidate. In my 2L summer, I pursued a position with a human rights and civil rights law firm, largely as a result of a connection I made with a partner at the firm during a seminar for Professor Achiume's International Human Rights Clinic.

In addition to a demonstrated professional interest in human rights work, I pursued unique extracurricular opportunities to develop substantive expertise. One of the most intense, and rewarding, experiences during law school was my participation in the Jean-Pictet Humanitarian Law Competition. I was given the opportunity to engage students from across the globe in a series of simulations relating to the laws of war. I walked away with a new set of skills, and group of friends and colleagues from almost every continent.

After graduation, I secured a one-year legal fellowship through UCLA's robust post-graduate public interest fellowship program to work with the International Justice Resource Center, an international human rights law nonprofit located in San Francisco, California. This experience was tremendously reaffirming, and provided me the opportunity to contribute to IJRC's mission to increase advocate's effective use of international human rights law as a tool to secure justice for human rights abuses.

At the end of my fellowship, the legal landscape in the United States had shifted dramatically, and I had the opportunity to apply my background in human rights to the work of OneJustice, a legal aid nonprofit in California, by providing immigration and criminal record change services to folks in need throughout California.

I have worked as a part of an inter-governmental agency, a public interest law firm, and international and domestic focused nonprofits. I have found that a career in human rights law is a constant exercise in adaptability, and unlike some other courses of law, there is no predictable path for the human rights lawyer. I do this work because it is urgent, and because I am deeply passionate about amplifying the voices of those impacted by human rights abuses around the world. Choosing a legal career is deeply personal, and I have been fortunate to be able to pursue this path.

A colleague once explained to me that being a human rights lawyer is a vocation - that it does not begin and end with any singular job, but rather is a lifelong lens that lawyers can apply to their work. I am thrilled to apply this lens to the work that I do today, and always.

To anyone considering a career in human rights law, know that I am here to help in any way I can!

### III. PREPARING FOR CAREERS IN PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Part III provides a general background on how to pursue a career in public international law and/or human rights. It is organized according to class year. However, students and graduates may find the entire discussion useful.

#### 1L STUDENTS

##### COURSEWORK AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

During the first year of law school, students should focus on building a resume that demonstrates a dedication to public international law and/or human rights work. This should include becoming active with the International and Comparative Law Program (ICLP) and the Promise Institute for Human Rights through attending events, conferences and workshops. You should attend all careers related events offered by ICLP and the Promise Institute, as those events are curated to give you broad exposure to different career paths in public international law; particularly important as you explore your options.

“Being in law school at UCLA is a luxury and a privilege. I am surrounded by opportunities to develop my skills for my future career while pursuing a diverse array of my personal interests. The key is to contribute to projects and communities that you care about.”

Ihaab Syed '19

“At the law school, I was a student attorney in the International Human Rights Clinic, a chair of the International Human Rights Law Association, and an editor of the *UCLA Journal of International Law & Foreign Affairs*. In short, there are many opportunities to do human rights work at UCLA Law!”

Christian González Cabrera '17

You should also consider participating in student organizations and journals, such as the International Justice Project (IJP), the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), the International Human Rights Law Student Association (IHRLA), the Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs (JILFA), the Pacific Basin Law Journal (PBLJ) or the Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law (JINEL). It is a good idea to meet with ICLP and Promise Institute faculty to get their advice early in your 1L year. Though the first year curriculum is generally fixed, the one opportunity 1Ls have is to take the International and Comparative Law Modes of Legal Inquiry class in the Spring Semester. Taking this Modes class will give

you an overview of different areas of international law, and introduce you to some of the international faculty at UCLA Law.

### SUMMER INTERNSHIPS: WHEN AND WHERE TO APPLY

Each UN agency and international NGO has a different timeline. Most, but not all, UN Agencies compile their internship openings on their hiring portal, Inspira ([inspira.un.org](http://inspira.un.org)). If there is a particular UN country office or UN regional office you hope to work at, it is a good idea to scour the internet to try and find a direct contact to email directly. Do not be afraid of “cold” emailing, even if you do not see an advertised vacancy. Generally, UN agencies are very slow to process applications, unless you are able to connect with a specific supervisor you would like to work with (in which case, you could have a job within days of reaching out).

In determining what office to apply to, in general, it is a good idea to look at your resume and figure out what is missing. If you have experience working directly with client populations, you might want to spend a summer at a headquarters office, working on policy or large-scale operations. If you have experience working in HQ, consider a field placement where you will get a better sense of the day-to-day of field staff.

International NGOs often are often stretched even thinner than UN Agencies, and supervisors may not respond even after many attempts on your part. The best thing to do is to be persistent. Submit your application and then continue to follow up with emails and phone calls to ensure your application gets reviewed.

“My first exposure to working in international criminal law was during my 1L summer, when I interned at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The United Nations established the ICTR to try suspects of the Rwandan genocide that took place in 1994. That internship was a tremendously eye-opening experience.”

Christian González Cabrera '17

### THE IL SUMMER EXPERIENCE

Depending on where you work and what is needed, 1Ls can work on anything from writing grants, policy proposals, and treaty analysis to adjudicating refugee status determination, helping in internally displaced camp operations, or preparing prosecution materials for war crimes. Before accepting an internship, think about what it is you are hoping to get out of the summer.

## **2L STUDENTS**

### **COURSEWORK AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

2L students have complete freedom in selecting courses to build a strong resume. Students interested in careers in public international law should pursue the specialization in international and comparative law, to enable them to demonstrate to prospective employers their profound commitment to international law study and practice. Foundational courses like Public International Law, Comparative Law, and International Human Rights Law are strongly recommended. Otherwise, it is recommended that students develop their knowledge in the field of international law that they intend to practice in (e.g. Immigration & Refugee Law, International Human Rights Law or International Trade Law). There is a plethora of courses available in each subject. You can also think about taking a language course outside of the Law School to brush up on a second language you may need for your post-graduate work.

2L students also take on leadership positions in student organizations, which further demonstrates their commitment to human rights law to employers. Students may apply to participate in international law related moot court competitions, such as the Clara Barton International Humanitarian Law Competition and the Jean-Pictet Humanitarian Law Pleading Competition. Students may undertake a full or part time externship for credit during the Spring semester or may study abroad at one of UCLA Law's partner schools through the Foreign Legal Study and Exchange Programs.

### **SUMMER INTERNSHIPS: WHEN AND WHERE TO APPLY**

While different organizations and agencies have different timelines, it is good to start applying in the Fall. Some organizations fill their positions quickly, while others don't review until the Spring.

Keep in mind that, unfortunately, spending a summer in a UN Office or NGO usually does not lead to a job offer. However, many of these offices would be happy to have former interns as post-grad fellows, and it is not inappropriate to speak with them about this possibility early on. Furthermore, the international human rights community is small, and building a strong network as early as possible will be useful in your career.

### **THE 2L SUMMER EXPERIENCE**

Though the substance of students' work may not differ greatly from their 1L summer, the 2L summer is a time for reflection and planning. 2L students should consider whether the kind of work they are doing is what they want to do going forward. Often, employers in international law and human rights jobs (particularly outside of the United States) are not familiar with the various pressures 2L students are going through, so it is important to speak openly with your supervisor if you would like to work for them after graduating.

## **3L STUDENTS**

### **COURSEWORK AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Like 2L students, 3L students should continue to pursue courses, clinics and extracurricular activities that develop the skills and knowledge relevant to work in international law and human

rights, to ensure that they complete all the requirements to graduate with the international and comparative law specialization. 3L students may also want to strategically pursue externship opportunities with potential post-graduate employers, or take an advanced skills-based course. Third year may also provide be a good opportunity to brush up on language skills you may need for your post-graduate work. Students are able to take an undergraduate language course for credit, with prior approval.

## WHEN AND WHERE TO APPLY

3L students should make contact with places of interest before the fall semester. It is important to gather timelines and information as early as possible. In addition to reaching out to organizations that provide permanent positions, 3L students should also look into places that offer post-bar clerkships, fellowships and unpaid volunteer opportunities.

## CLERKSHIPS

### **CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA**

The constitutional court of South Africa is one of the few domestic court systems to hire foreign clerks. Foreign clerks are usually appointed for six-month periods. Only five foreign clerks are appointed at any time, and one of those five must come from elsewhere in Africa. For more information, visit their [website](#).

### **INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE**

The International Court of Justice takes clerks from U.S. law schools. These clerkships are not funded, so students have to pursue alternative funding sources, such as fellowship funding through UCLA, the Promise Institute, or elsewhere.

### **INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS**

Many of the international criminal tribunals accept interns in Chambers for six-month to year-long positions. Although these are called “internships” in the European system, they are similar to clerkships as you are placed with either a particular judge or the Chambers office. The international tribunals do not provide funding for these opportunities, so you will need to explore other funding avenues. UCLA graduates and staff have clerked at or otherwise worked at the UN Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.

### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COURTS & COMMISSIONS**

Each of regional human rights courts and commissions discussed above offer clerkships, often referred to as “judicial internships.” Again, these opportunities are not funded and students have to pursue alternative funding sources.

## IV. STUDENT NARRATIVES

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The following UCLA School of Law student narratives illustrate the variety of ways in which students can expose themselves to public international law and human rights experiences and opportunities while in law school. Each narrative includes tips and strategies about how to maximize internship and externship experiences to build a network that is crucial to securing a post-graduate position.

### CHRISTINA AVALOS '19

I spent my undergraduate career studying how armed conflict and economic oppression contributed to poverty and mass forced migration. Upon graduation I knew I wanted to work with indigent populations and forced migrants, but I had no relevant international experience and didn't know how to get into the field of human rights.

I decided to take advantage of a study abroad program at my university the summer after I graduated, which had a volunteer and research component. I spent three months in a shantytown outside the capital of Costa Rica working with impoverished youth and researching a nonprofit poverty alleviation organization called Parque La Libertad. While I was volunteering, I was also frantically looking for a job and was desperate enough to apply to unpaid internships. Some level of desperation helps, I suppose, because I got an internship with the United High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Washington, D.C. The UNHCR office usually only accepts law student interns, but one thing my supervisor mentioned regarding her willingness to take a chance on a college graduate with minimal experience was my demonstrated interest.

The combination of demonstrated interest and language skills is by far the best currency for getting into an international human rights position. I spent one semester volunteering with the International Rescue Committee and three months volunteering with indigent youth abroad, but that wasn't necessary enough to demonstrate my commitment to the field. What my supervisor meant was that I could talk about international refugee law and policy with more interest than other students who had applied. Many students will apply to prestigious international aid organizations simply because of its reputation. For example, if you mention that your dream has always been to work for the United Nations (UN), then you are not showing an interest in the issues that particular agency works on. However, the goal is to be able to talk passionately about the work the organization does and relate it to global human rights policy in general. This, coupled with my fluent Spanish and intermediate French skills, aided when interviewing for a position to assist asylum seekers from Latin America and francophone Africa.

Once you have one internship with a reputable international human rights organization, regardless of whether it was outside of the U.S. or not, the prospects of obtaining another are much higher. Particularly within the UN system, they seem to favor applicants who have already worked with another UN agency. This was the case when I applied for a paid internship position with the UN Migration Agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in Geneva, Switzerland. Although the position I had and the one I was applying for were not practically related, my supervisor showed favoritism towards applicants who had previous experience within the UN.

I had the opportunity to extend my contract with IOM because I had built great relationships with directors of different departments. Yet, my short time working within the international human right

field showed me that there was also human rights advocacy to be done back home, within the U.S. immigration system. Now, in the U.S., I continue to take a rights-based approach when working with immigrants facing deportation because I believe human rights must always first start at home.

## LAURA BLOOM '18

As an undergrad, I focused on the spread of xenophobia and Islamophobia in Denmark, the country of my birth. I saw the discrepancies between the law and its application, and how xenophobic laws can quickly amass in response to the rise in influence of a right-wing populist agenda. I wanted to help combat the dangerous proliferation of illiberalism in response to globalization, and figured law school was a step towards that goal. I then came to UCLA School of Law with the intention of specializing in International and Comparative Law, and with the hopes of working in the field of human rights.

Despite my professed goals coming into law school, I would be lying if I said that my experience from there on was a clear path towards human rights. I felt tugged in several directions, and I struggled to find a community of people whose academic and professional interests were similar to mine. Luckily, I was re-immersed in my interests as the research assistant for Professor Asli Ü. Bâli, who I worked for during my first summer and throughout my 2L year, and who served as an invaluable resource throughout the remainder of my law school experience.

During 2L, I found the community I was looking for as a board member of the International Human Rights Law Association and as a student in the International Human Rights Law Clinic. I was also able to take more classes I was interested in, such as EU Law or Political Crimes & Legal Systems, and I attended as many International and Comparative Law Program (ICLP) events as possible. That year I also served as a writing advisor, worked as an article editor for the *Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* and participated as a team member in the International Justice Project (IJP). That summer, I interned at a small NGO in Benin working on children's and women's rights by securing birth certificates for those who needed them and by creating and implementing a women's rights training program. In my final year, I served as co-president of IJP.

As part of IJP during 2L, I worked on a report for the UN Special Rapporteur for Racism regarding the effects of state counter-terrorism measures on racial and xenophobic discrimination. The research harkened back to my goals entering law school, so I used the connections from that project to secure an externship with the Special Procedures Branch at the UN for my first 3L semester. This experience was an interesting counterpart to my previous summer because it showed me how the larger organizational side of international human rights work can be both complementary and antithetical to work in the field.

In sum, my 3L externship, in conjunction with two former summer experiences, allowed me to work in international human rights in three different arenas: in academia, in the field, and in an international organization. I am so grateful for these experiences because I feel it gives me greater perspective moving into my professional career. More importantly, I appreciate the community of public-interest minded students that I have come to know and admire while attending UCLA.

## ERIN N. FRENCH '19

When I was an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, I was introduced to the law's ability-and lack thereof-to define and enforce human rights through a course on international human rights. I was most

shocked to discover the prevalence of sex trafficking and embarked on a senior honors thesis to evaluate current advocacy efforts working to combat it. I was surprised to learn sex trafficking was not confined to the rural communities of developing nations, but was transpiring in the apartment buildings, businesses, streets, and hotels of the area I had called home for the past four years—the San Francisco Bay Area. Efforts to combat sex trafficking focused heavily on the prosecution of traffickers, while the needs of survivors were often left behind. I argued that by recognizing and understanding these complex needs, advocacy efforts could more effectively rehabilitate and empower survivors beyond the courtroom.

After graduating, I wanted to better understand these needs and decided to volunteer for nonprofits in Los Angeles serving victims of sex trafficking. I served as a mentor to at-risk foster care youth with Saving Innocence and saw how difficult it is to break cycles of exploitation when the legal, social, and psychological needs of victims are ignored. And as a project assistant to the state-wide Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Action Team, I recognized that these needs could only be served through a multi-faceted approach informed by survivors, lawyers, social workers, public health experts, and government officials. Through these experiences, I learned an effective solution requires understanding the lived experiences of those the law is designed to protect and an ability to craft legal interventions that will break the cycle of exploitation. I decided to pursue a legal education at UCLA Law as a member of the David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy to gain the tools and skills to draft legislation that will influence systemic transformations, to provide legal services to trafficking survivors, and to ensure they receive the support needed to rebuild their lives.

My first summer in law school I served as a Summer Legal Intern for International Justice Mission in Kolkata, India and assisted its mission to combat sex trafficking. Not only did I conduct legal research and draft memoranda of findings regarding cases of sex trafficking, but I also assisted with a training for public prosecutors, visited shelter homes for survivors and at-risk youth, toured freedom businesses and red-light districts, and attended court. I recognized similarities in the challenges faced by survivors in Kolkata and Los Angeles and the dire need for more lawyers to advocate on their behalf. Having the opportunity to develop relationships with the young girls the law was designed to protect reinforced my belief in the law's ability to not only protect human rights, but also to empower survivors to thrive.

In addition, specializing in Public Interest Law and Policy, as well as International and Comparative Law, has provided me the opportunity to further explore and develop effective advocacy strategies to serve those subject to human rights abuses. My current courses include Problem-Solving in the Public Interest, Contemporary Issues Facing the International Criminal Court, and Public International Law. For my final project for Problem-Solving in the Public Interest, I am evaluating the current efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of minors in Los Angeles. I am grateful for the mentorship of UCLA faculty and alumni who have helped me to develop my project and further excited my interest in innovating effective legal strategies to serve survivors. I hope to take these advocacy strategies with me moving forward as I continue to better my ability as an advocate.

## AMELIA KIMBEL '19

After living in a slum community in Mexico City after college, I left with an ongoing sense of calling to Latin America. Next, I worked as a paralegal at direct-services organizations including Inner City Law Center and Public Counsel. In coming to law school, I knew that I wanted to keep

the door open to working in Latin America in the future, but I wasn't sure how, or if, U.S.-trained lawyers could be useful within another country's legal system.

During my 1L year, I went to lots of lunchtime talks about international law, volunteered with the International Justice Project, and took LAW 165: Methods and Theories in International and Comparative Law (the international "modes class"). The modes class in particular helped me realize that many international law jobs involve working for large organizations on broad, macro-level policy change. This felt like it might not be a good fit for me because I love direct client services so much. Now, I am trying to figure out exactly what it is that I love about direct services so that I can find it in an international opportunity. Is it frequent client contact? Seeing concrete change for individuals? Being embedded in a community-based organization?

Going into my 1L summer, I looked for international jobs using the UCLA International Human Rights Law Association database, UCS charts that described where students had worked in the past, and psjd.org. I also looked at lists of past recipients of the UC Human Rights Center fellowship and the Ashoka fellowship to see which organizations fellows had worked for in Latin America. Talking with Jessica Peake was very helpful. One organization had not had a U.S. legal intern before, so I needed to translate my resume into Spanish (an LLM friend kindly helped me review it) and explain more in initial emails about what an internship could look like.

I spent my 1L summer at International Justice Mission (IJM) in Guatemala City. IJM is a global anti-trafficking organization. Their work in Guatemala focuses on criminal justice system reform and individual representation of victims of child sexual abuse. I spent most of my time reading court files or drafting documents for attorneys to use in Guatemalan court. I loved the team I worked with and my Spanish improved from a shaky professional fluency at the beginning of the summer to being able to skim a large legal file in Spanish and quickly pull the important parts. IJM was also an easy on-ramp to international work because they have a U.S.-based application process and because they help interns figure out housing, insurance, and other logistics.

Fall semester of my 2L year I took the International Human Rights Clinic with Professor Berra. Professor Berra has extensive connections with community-based organizations in Latin America. My team's project involves writing a pleading that will be filed in a Honduran court. I am using things I learned this summer about the Guatemalan legal system that I never thought would be relevant to a law school class. I am so grateful that we have this class that fits so closely with my interests. Taking the International Human Rights Clinic with Professor Berra is the most important thing that someone who is interested in human rights practice in Latin America could do at UCLA.

## RIE OHTA '19

From a young age, I wanted to "help people." Then, I wanted to be a scientist, and find a cure for cancer or AIDS. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade that dream changed after a school trip to Cambodia. It was then that I realized that many people in the world are suffering not because of a lack of scientific discovery, but because of a global misallocation of resources. I then switched track to studying international development, a journey which took me to Dakar, Senegal, Zuumod, Mongolia, and Lenggong, Malaysia. In the beginning, I felt helpless-what could I do to solve global inequality? That question changed to "What *should* I do?" after immersion in Development Studies, a degree seemingly designed to put students off international development through case study after case study of development projects gone wrong, neo-imperialist patterns reinforced, and well-intentioned people from wealthy countries wreaking havoc in a town in the Global South they had come to "help."

I turned to law to get away from all this. The last thing I wanted to do was become a hypocrite, perpetuating the problematic systems I had come to despise. I thought that being a lawyer would be simple: I would provide a service that people needed. Little did I know that similar unequal power dynamics exist in the domestic legal aid world, and that public interest lawyers struggle with ethical dilemmas every day. I understand now that this is not something I can run away from—in fact, better to dive in head first. Moreover, I am not alone—everyone in the helping professions deal with similar ethical issues every day.

I came to UCLA Law for the David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy (EPILP) and the International and Comparative Law Program (ICLP), and if it were not for them, I would have dropped out by now. With their support, I got an internship with the UN Migration agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in Geneva for my 1L summer and an internship with United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) Malaysia, the UN Refugee Agency for my second. I absolutely loved working at IOM and hope to work there again someday. The people I worked with tackled everyday problems with creativity and vigor, all while keeping the needs of vulnerable migrants central to their work. With UNHCR, I will be doing Refugee Status Determination, which undoubtedly will offer great training in understanding UNHCR's definition of a refugee. However, the satisfaction of granting refugee status to some applicants will undoubtedly be marred by the difficulty of denying it to others. I am also externing with Human Rights Watch's U.S. Program, focusing on human rights abuse in our immigration system. All of these opportunities felt like pipe dreams a few years ago.

Working for the public interest in the international sphere will undoubtedly present ethical, geographic, and even financial problems. But, at the end of the day, I can't see myself doing anything else.

## IHAAB SYED '19

The framework of positive, “human rights” guaranteeing economic rights, life necessities like food and water, and socio-political equality is rarely used in the context of social justice advocacy within the United States. However, doing so would allow us to think more broadly about what a just society would do and to push for those changes more directly.

I am pursuing human rights work through advocacy on domestic issues, specifically in voting rights and election law. I'd like to take an intersectional approach by combining community organizing, direct services, public education, and litigation to addressing complex issues, drawing from my experiences as a political campaign organizer and as a legal services paralegal.

Being in law school at UCLA is a luxury and a privilege. I am surrounded by opportunities to develop my skills for my future career while pursuing a diverse array of my personal interests. I am enrolled in four specializations (David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy, Critical Race Studies, Law and Philosophy, and International and Comparative Law), on the board of three student organizations (International Human Rights Law Association, National Lawyers Guild, and the Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law), and writing a student comment. I don't believe there's a singular path to success in law school. You have to define a path for yourself. The key is to contribute to projects and communities that you care about.

## KRISTINE UEDA '19

When applying for law schools, I knew that I wanted to pursue a career in international human rights, but I knew that it might be an uphill battle given my mostly domestic experiences.

During my undergraduate studies at UCLA, I was involved in student associations and volunteer groups that addressed these issues domestically while pursuing degrees in Political Science, with a concentration in International Relations, and History. It was fascinating to learn about foreign affairs and world politics and history, but the human-aspect was greatly lacking. Then, following the devastating tsunami in Japan, I jumped on the opportunity to volunteer in disaster relief and rehabilitation. I felt that talking directly to survivors and listening to their stories and needs was the most important part of my work there, and this reminded me of my interests in helping the global community.

By the end of my undergraduate career, I contemplated law school, but wanted to make sure that this was the right choice for me, so I served in JusticeCorps following graduation. I was attracted to this position because of the focus on access to justice and direct client interactions. This was my first experience witnessing how the law can provide tangible improvements on peoples' lives through domestic violence restraining orders, enforcement of family law orders, etc. However, I still had an interest in international work, and so after speaking with my supervising attorneys, they encouraged me to apply for law school to pursue international human rights law.

After accepting my admission to UCLA School of Law, I researched all opportunities to become involved in the expansive field of international human rights on campus. I knew that with my resume of mostly domestic experiences, I needed to prove to my future employers that I was serious in my passion for this work. Therefore, immediately when I began 1L, I joined International Justice Project and the El Centro Violence Against Women Act / U-Visa Immigration Clinic. The International Justice Project was particularly helpful in honing my interests because of the variety of projects offered. During 1L spring semester, I joined the *Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs*.

In addition to these extracurricular activities, I found that speaking to the International and Comparative Law Program director and faculty and attending the lunch time discussions on international law and international human rights were key in remembering why I came to law school. Neither international nor public interest-friendly, 1L courses were particularly cumbersome for me, but speaking to the 2Ls and 3Ls who attended these lunch time discussions who were pursuing my passions was both reassuring and therapeutic.

It was at one of these lunch time discussions that I met my first law school summer employer, Karen Tse, UCLA School of Law alumni and founder and CEO of International Bridges to Justice. Although I had never considered working in anti-torture law, I was so moved by her aim to improve access to counsel and justice that I knew I had to speak to her and apply to intern for her organization. My summer at International Bridges to Justice's headquarter office in Geneva was transformative. I engaged in a variety of tasks, ranging from editing country-specific public defender manuals, planning access to justice trainings and conference sessions, addressing the needs of defense lawyers and advocates at our country offices, writing grant proposals, etc. It was so refreshing and empowering to be surrounded by like-minded individuals in both my office and in Geneva, where I was also able to attend United Nations conferences and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) discussions. After my exposure to numerous issues and needs in the human

rights field, this summer experience solidified my desire to pursue access to justice work and how it relates to violence and conflict.

2L has been a breath of fresh air compared to 1L because of the opportunities to enroll in classes that align with my passions. So far, I have had the chance to take classes on international humanitarian law and public international law, which have been useful in better understanding the international systems that I will need to navigate in my future work. I am excited to take more international law classes, enroll in the International Human Rights Clinic, and utilize the programming provided by the Promise Institute for Human Rights to further prepare myself for a career in international human rights.

## V. INTERVIEW PREPARATION

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When hiring for summer or post-graduate positions human rights and public international law organizations will look for a commitment to the field in addition to a strong academic record. You can demonstrate this commitment by pursuing the specialization in International and Comparative Law, summer employment, externships, clinics, relevant course and extracurricular activities, such as participation in organizations and journals. They will also be interested to see that you have some experience working in a foreign environment, which can be shown through summer internships or externships abroad, study abroad programs and any relevant experience prior to law school.

During interviews for jobs in human rights/public international law it is important to be able to answer the question “why human rights” or “why public international law.” It is also important for you to demonstrate a sustained interest in the field.

### **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### General Interest in Public International Law and Human Rights Work

- Why are you interested in working in the area of human rights/public international law?
- Why are you interested in this specific area of law?
- What about your background has led you to want to pursue this career path?
- Have any personal experiences significantly contributed to your desire to this work?
- What have you done in law school that demonstrates your commitment to public international law/human rights?
- Describe any experiences you have studying or working abroad.

#### Interest in Working at the Interviewing Organization

- Why are you interested in working for this organization?
- How did you find out about this organization?
- Why do you want to be in this country/city?
- Describe why working at this organization is the next logical step in your career.

#### Inquiries about Specific Skills

- Describe your previous experience conducting research on human rights/public international law questions.

- Describe your familiarity with relevant databases and research tools.
- Describe your experience with working abroad and/or conducting fieldwork.
- Describe your experience of working with data.
- Describe your experience working in non-English-language settings and your proficiency in other languages. Describe some of the challenges in working in a non-English-language environment.
- Describe your relevant prior administrative or management experience.
- Describe any prior advocacy experience.
- Describe the strategies you have developed for effective writing and/or advocacy in inter-cultural and/or international settings.
- Describe your experience working in a team or collaborative setting.
- Describe a situation in which you demonstrated leadership.
- Describe a time in which you had to be entrepreneurial.
- Describe an example of instance where you have been able to work without hands-on supervision in a new setting (e.g. in a new substantive area, new geographic area, etc.).
- Describe a time when you have had to exercise your professional judgement in decision-making.
- Describe your experience in working with populations of people at risk, or in situations of risk.

#### General Competency

- Describe a current human rights situation/state-based dispute you are aware of and outline some of the key challenges.
- What are some of the ethical considerations attorneys should be aware of when working with at-risk populations?

## VI. FELLOWSHIPS

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Students interested in a career in public international law and/or human rights should consider applying for a post-graduate public interest fellowship. Fellowships are especially worthwhile because they give fellows an opportunity to gain valuable experience in their chosen field, while continuing to make contacts and strengthening networks. Part VI includes a non-exhaustive sample of exceptional fellowship opportunities for recent law graduates.

### **ARYEH NEIER FELLOWSHIP**

The Aryeh Neier fellowship is a two-year program where fellows spend one year at Human Rights Watch and one year at the ACLU. One to three fellowships are awarded each year. The Aryeh Neier fellowship is administered through the Open Society Foundation. The Fellowship is posted by Human Rights Watch and the ACLU once the fellowship period is open.

### **EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS FELLOWSHIP**

Equal Justice Works provides more than fifty two-year fellowships annually to recent law school graduates who undertake various public interest projects at a sponsoring nonprofit host organization. Equal Justice Work fellowships are only awarded for domestic work, however like with Skadden, fellowships are occasionally awarded for work with U.S.-based organizations that serve clients overseas. For more information, visit their [website](#).

## **OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION**

The Open Society Foundation offers a limited number of grants to individuals for a variety of programs. The Open Society Justice Initiative is a good place to look for currently open grants. For more information, visit their [website](#).

## **PROMISE INSTITUTE POST-GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS**

The Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA Law offers one-year fellowship for students committed to a career in human rights. These fellowships are run through the UC President's Public Law Service Fellowship application process.

## **SKADDEN FELLOWSHIP**

The Skadden Fellowship is a two-year fellowship with twenty-eight fellowships each year. Though the application process is competitive, almost every year, one or more UCLA student is awarded a fellowship. Skadden fellowships are only awarded for domestic work, however fellowships are occasionally awarded for work with U.S.-based organizations that serve clients overseas, like the International Refugee Assistance Project. For more information, visit their [website](#).

## **UC PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC LAW SERVICE FELLOWSHIP**

The UC President's Post-Graduate Public Service Law Fellowship provide one-year fellowships, \$45,000 for UC law school graduates entering public service, plus an additional \$2,500 to help defray bar-related costs. The UCLA program is administered through the public interest office, and applications are generally due late in the Spring semester. UC President's Public Law Service Fellowships are awarded for projects outside the U.S. For more information, visit the [UCOP website](#).

# VII. HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW ORGANIZATIONS

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Part VII provides a small selection of organizations doing work in a variety of substantive areas in human rights and public international law, organized by theme. Please note that the classifications are very broad, so it is advised that you look through each section carefully and use the hyper-links to explore different organizations. This Part can be used as a starting point to identify organizations working in your interest area.

## **BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

- [Accountability Counsel](#)
- [Amnesty International: Business & Human Rights](#)
- [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#)
- [Danish Institute for Human Rights: Human Rights and Business Project](#)
- [ESCR-Net: Corporate Accountability](#)
- [FIDH \(Int'l Federation for Human Rights\): Business & Human Rights](#)

- Global Business Initiative on Human Rights
- Global Rights: Natural Resources & Human Rights Initiative
- Institute for Human Rights & Business
- International Commission of Jurists: Expert Legal Panel on Corporate Complicity
- International Corporate Accountability Roundtable
- NomoGaia - Global Human Rights
- Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER)
- Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID)
- The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)
- UN Global Compact: Human Rights
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: Business & Human Rights
- UNICEF: Corporate Social Responsibility - Advancing Children's Rights in Business

## **DEMOCRACY / RULE OF LAW / TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**

- American Bar Association-Asia & the Pacific Initiative
- American Bar Association-Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative
- American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative
- Center for Policy Alternatives
- Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice of the New York City Bar
- Democracy Council
- Documentation Center of Cambodia
- Dullah Omar Institute (Previously Community Law Center South Africa)
- Freedom House
- International Bridges to Justice
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- International Law Institute
- Lawyers without Borders
- National Democratic Institute
- Open Democracy Advice Centre
- Open Society Justice Initiative
- The Foundation for Democracy in Africa
- The International Legal Foundation-Afghanistan
- The International Legal Foundation-Nepal
- The Khmer Institute of Democracy
- Transparency International

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Advocates for International Development
- African Economic Research Consortium
- Arab NGO Network for Development
- BRAC
- Bread for Life

- Bretton Woods Project
- Center for International Private Enterprise
- Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth
- FINCA International
- Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy (previously Institute for the Economy in Transition)
- Global Development Network (GDN)
- Global Exchange for Social Investment
- HelpArgentina
- Hong Kong Policy Research Institute
- ICC Dispute Resolution Services
- ICC International Court of Arbitration
- Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa
- Institute for Policy and Legal Studies
- Inter-American Foundation
- International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Policy Department
- KASHF Foundation
- Landesa-Rural Development Institute
- Libertad y Desarrollo
- One Acre Fund
- Opportunity International
- Overseas Development Institute
- OXFAM International Secretariat
- PACT
- Sevalanka Foundation
- Technoserve
- Trans-Atlantic Business Council
- Trickle Up
- United States Council for International Business
- Unitus
- Winrock International

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- Center for Environment and Development
- Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide-U.S. Office
- Global Witness
- Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development
- International Institute for Environment and Development
- Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT)
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- World Wildlife Fund

## **EQUALITY / WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

- Association of Women's Rights in Development
- Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya
- Global Fund for Women
- Women in Law and Development in Africa
- Women's Environment & Development Organization

## **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

- Child Workers in Asia
- Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children (FIMRC)
- Save the Children

## **FOUNDATIONS**

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Brookings Institution
- Clinton Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Nelson Mandela Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

## **HEALTH / MEDICAL**

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Clinton Foundation
- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, & Malaria
- Global Health Corps
- IntraHealth International
- Project Hope

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- African Development Bank Group
- Asian Development Bank
- Bank for International Settlements
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- Inter-American Development Bank
- International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes
- International Fund for Agricultural Development
- International Monetary Fund

- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- OPEC Fund for International Development
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Permanent Court of Arbitration
- UNIDROIT
- United Nations
- United Nations Children's Fund
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- United Nations Environment Programme
- United Nations Headquarters Internship Programme
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
- UN Youth and United Nations Internships
- World Bank
- World Bank-Integrity Vice Presidency (INT)
- World Bank-International Finance Corporation
- World Health Organization
- World Intellectual Property Organization Arbitration and Mediation Center
- World Trade Organization

## **INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS**

- African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- European Court of Human Rights
- Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
- Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes
- International Court of Justice
- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals
- Special Tribunal for Lebanon

## **MULTI-ISSUE ORGANIZATIONS-DOMESTIC (MAY ALSO HAVE OFFICES ABROAD)**

- American Bar Association
- ABA Center for Human Rights
- ABA Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative
- ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice

- American Civil Liberties Union
- Amnesty International USA
- Amnesty International USA-Southern Regional Office
- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Center for Economic and Social Rights
- Center for Justice and Accountability
- Center for Justice and International Law
- Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking
- Disability Rights International
- Freedom House
- Global Lawyers and Physicians
- Human Rights First
- Human Rights Watch
- Indian Law Resource Center
- Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
- International Center for Transitional Justice
- International Human Rights Law Group
- International Service for Human Rights
- Jesuit Refugee Service
- Legal Assistance Center
- MADRE
- Public International Law & Policy Group
- Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
- Save the Children
- The Carter Center
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- UN Volunteers
- Vera Institute of Justice
- Washington Office on Latin America

## **MULTI-ISSUE ORGANIZATIONS-INTERNATIONAL**

- Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)
- Al Haq
- Amnesty International
- Anti-Slavery International
- Arab Institute for Human Rights
- Article 19
- Association for Civil Rights in Israel
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
- CARE
- Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
- Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales
- Danish Institute for Human Rights

- [Equitas](#)
- [Global Rights](#)
- [International Center for Not-for-Profit Law](#)
- [International Commission of Jurists](#)
- [International Committee of the Red Cross](#)
- [International Institute of Humanitarian Law](#)
- [Justica Global](#)
- [Lawyers for Human Rights](#)
- [Minority Rights Group International](#)
- [Redress](#)
- [Section 27 \(formerly AIDS Law Project\)](#)
- [South African Human Rights Commission](#)
- [World Organization Against Torture](#)

## **POVERTY**

- [Accion International](#)
- [Consultative Group to Assist the Poor](#)
- [Heifer International](#)

## CONCLUSION

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This handbook provides a guide to pursuing a career in public international law and human rights. Our hope is that through this resource, law students may become interested in these career paths, more equipped to apply for positions, and, ultimately, practicing lawyers in these fields.