

# Insider's Guide to United Nations Jobs and Internships



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## INTRODUCTION

To many, the United Nations is a symbol of international legal cooperation and camaraderie—a place where changes in social, economic and political well-being can be made on a global scale. It was in this spirit of international cooperation that the UN Charter was written. The Charter established the purposes of the United Nations, which are:

- to maintain world peace and security;
- to promote respect for the principles of equal rights, international law and self-determination of peoples;
- to promote economic development and social progress across the world; and
- to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these common ends.

In pursuing these objectives, the United Nations has rapidly developed into a multifaceted and complex organization serving numerous Members States and developing nations. This broad scope affords law school students and graduates an unparalleled array of practice settings, issue areas and career options in almost every corner of the world.

While the breadth of the United Nations is one of its strengths, it can also make embarking on a career search particularly daunting. The size and complexity of the United Nations alone are enough to make acquiring a position a challenge. Moreover, a lack of uniformity across UN organizations, frequent changes in hiring processes, lengthy recruitment processes, and bureaucratic hurdles further complicate any UN job search. While acquiring a position at the United Nations may be challenging, with patience, determination, and good preparation it is an achievable goal. Nevertheless, you will have to do your most assertive networking and be able to present a truly outstanding resume of experience in public international law and other related areas to have a real chance of securing regular employment.

This guide will describe many potential paths to employment at the UN. Its purpose is to give you an insider's advantage in your search by providing you with explanations of the United Nations system and organizations, step-by-step guidance in the application process, and information on internships and post-graduate employment at prominent UN organizations.

The size and complexity of the United Nations makes it especially important for students to think carefully about their professional objectives and how their qualifications can help them achieve their goals. Before embarking on this journey, students should take time to reflect and self-evaluate. Are you ready for an international career that might place you anywhere around the world? If so, are you willing to wait for several months or even years while going through a slow and sometimes inefficient recruitment process? In which UN organization would you like to work, and in which capacity? Do you meet all of the requirements for the positions required by your preferred organizations?

## General Information on the United Nations

Founded in 1945 with the establishment of the UN Charter, the United Nations has developed into an organization composed of numerous smaller offices, departments, programs, funds and specialized agencies. There are six principal organs under which the various offices, commissions, agencies and subsidiary bodies are organized:

1. the General Assembly
2. the Security Council
3. the Economic and Social Council
4. the International Court of Justice
5. the Secretariat
6. the Trusteeship Council (*suspended operation in 1994*).

In addition to these six larger bodies, the United Nations System (the UN Family of Organizations) arranges the smaller departments into a coherent structure.

***The General Assembly*** is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations and is the only one that is equally represented by all 193 Member States. It begins each session with general debate, setting the issue agenda for the year. The General Assembly is responsible for overseeing the UN budget, appointing non-permanent members to the Security Council, following the work of other parts of the UN, and making recommendations by issuing General Assembly Resolutions. The General Assembly is organized into six broad subsidiary organs.

***The Security Council*** is charged with maintaining international peace and security. It is composed of 15 Member States, five of which are veto-wielding permanent members and ten of which are two-year term elected rotating ones. The five nations with permanent seats are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While on issues of procedure the Security Council only requires a nine-vote majority, on substantive issues the Council also requires that there are no negative votes from the permanent members.

***The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)*** was established to coordinate the economic, social, and environmental work of 14 specialized agencies, nine “functional” commissions, and five regional commissions. Composed of 54 Member States with three-year rotating terms, ECOSOC utilizes over seventy percent of the UN’s human and financial resources. Like the General Assembly, ECOSOC holds sessions throughout the year and then delineates the responsibility for implementing programs to smaller subsidiary bodies.

***The International Court of Justice (ICJ)*** is composed of fifteen Justices elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council and acts as the main UN judicial organ for settling legal disputes between states. The ICJ decides cases brought before it by states. It also issues advisory opinions at the request of the General Assembly, the Security Council, a subsidiary body that has been authorized to request an opinion, or duly authorized international organs and agencies.

***The Secretariat*** acts primarily as the administrative hub of the entire United Nations, serving the other UN organs by coordinating the administrative aspects of their projects and policies through a wide-array of subsidiary offices. Headed by the Secretary General, the Secretariat is responsible for carrying out many of the programs

established by the General Assembly and the councils. The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring the smooth, day-to-day operation of the entire UN system.

*The Trusteeship Council* was established in 1945 to supervise the transition of 11 territories, which were under the administration of seven Member States, to self-governance. All of these territories have successfully completed this transition, and the Trusteeship Council suspended operation in 1994. Accordingly, the General Assembly has been considering removing the Council from the United Nations umbrella entirely.

*The United Nations System* is comprised of the UN offices, programs and funds, subsidiary bodies, and specialized agencies. The programs, funds, and agencies have their own governing bodies and budgets and set their own standards and guidelines. Many of these bodies meet as committees or boards only several times a year and are normally composed of representatives of Member States.

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# APPLYING FOR EMPLOYMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS

## Before You Apply

There are a number of ways for prospective applicants to increase their chances of success before submitting their applications, keeping in mind that it is most important for hiring managers to be able to identify an applicant's commitment to the goals and principles of the UN. Those who plan to apply for a position at the UN should consider:

### *Academic Background*

Like most employers, the United Nations is looking for its hires to have both a demonstrated commitment to and a familiarity with its field. Recent graduates in particular can reflect these qualities in their academic backgrounds. United Nations hiring managers have consistently said that they like to see courses related to international law. Fortunately, HLS offers a number of international law resources. The HLS International Legal Studies department offers course listings and other information on international academic opportunities at HLS, accessible at <http://www.law.harvard.edu/news/spotlight/ils/>. While it is not necessary to overload on international law courses to gain employment at the United Nations, some courses in relevant fields are always helpful. Remember also that many UN organizations have narrower specializations, for which background in other specialized areas of law might be helpful: e.g., immigration and refugee law, human rights law, humanitarian law, criminal law, or constitutional law.

### *Study Abroad*

HLS students may study abroad at any time during their 2L or 3L years. Harvard offers exchange programs with designated universities and also allows students to study at a foreign university of their choice. Study abroad can enhance students' academic and professional development, build useful language skills, and facilitate networking. It can also offer an in-depth understanding of a foreign culture and legal system. UN employers often look favorably upon international experience, which study abroad can provide. For more information, visit <http://www.law.harvard.edu/academics/degrees/special-programs/study-abroad/index.html>.

### *Clinical Placements & Summer Jobs*

Clinical placements are important and summer or winter term internships are a critical way to gain experience which is relevant to the UN. A key source of international clinical placements at HLS is the Human Rights Program ([www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp](http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp)), which offers a variety of practice settings to 2Ls and 3Ls looking for clinical projects in international human rights and humanitarian law. Additionally the Immigration and Refugee Law Clinic is another important opportunity to build skills and a commitment to international issues. The Law and International Development Society (<http://www3.law.harvard.edu/orgs/lids/welcome/>) also offers volunteer and clinical opportunities in development and rule of law projects. Clinical placements allow students to get a feel for different practice areas and to take risks that they might not otherwise take without the supervision of a clinical instructor.

### *Internships*

Many UN organizations offer unpaid internships, which last for two to six months. Interning at the United Nations while in law school offers a number of benefits. First, students get a feel for the UN system and UN policies; this knowledge may help them evaluate whether the UN is indeed a place where they would like to



pursue employment. Second, a UN internship provides students with an opportunity to network and establish contacts and references inside UN organizations that they can utilize later. Third, a UN internship testifies to students' familiarity with the operations of an international organization. Finally, as a practical matter, interning at the UN during law school can be useful because many UN organizations implement a "six month rule," which states that an intern cannot apply for a regular position at the organization until six months after the end of an internship. Note that internships are generally full-time and require student enrollment status at the time of the internship. Thus interning during one's academic career eliminates what could otherwise be an awkward interim between interning and employment.

For more information on UN internships see the [Internships section](#) below (page 14).

### ***NGO and IGO Experience***

There are also a number of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international governmental organizations (IGOs) that many United Nations offices consider just as credible as the UN itself when reviewing applications for regular employment. These organizations include Amnesty International, the European Union, NATO, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), OXFAM, Human Rights Watch, CARE, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Simon Wiesenthal Center, and others. A benefit of interning at NGOs/IGOs other than the UN is that a diversity of experiences may help students determine whether the UN is their first choice organization.

### ***Professional Work Experience***

While interning at the UN requires little previous work experience, the most important qualification needed to gain permanent employment is solid professional experience that relates to the work one would like to do at the United Nations. Experience in international organizations is a huge asset, as it facilitates a smoother adjustment to operations and work at the UN. There are a number of reasons to work at law firms, academic or research institutions, NGOs, or IGOs before applying to the United Nations. First, there are very few UN organizations that will hire a candidate for a standard external job vacancy with little or no work experience. Generally an entry-level position at any UN organization requires a minimum of two years of relevant work experience. Recruitment officers place heavy emphasis on the "relevance" of candidates' experience, which means that certain organizations are more likely to lead to UN employment than others. Note that "relevant" work experience can include domestic work in a given subject area, but ideally with some international experience as well.

The United Nations may recruit through well-known NGOs (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, Red Cross, Save the Children, etc.) as they provide particularly relevant experience for individuals looking to work for the UN in human rights and humanitarian law. Note that the UN sometimes looks favorably upon individuals working in regions where the UN is also present, as this experience speaks to the candidate's familiarity with the area; however this is not a requirement. Generally, any field experience is looked upon favorably by all UN offices and bodies and required by some.

### ***Networking***

Networking is useful when attempting to gain employment at the United Nations. Networking can alert applicants to open positions and can also provide references from within the UN system that are seen as particularly credible. Internships are of course the most obvious means of acquiring contacts and references; however, there are a number of other networking methods that require a smaller time commitment. Professors at

Harvard Law School and Harvard Kennedy School have connections with the UN or other closely linked organizations and are often willing to put in a good word, or at the very least give you further contact information. Additionally, an often untapped resource is Harvard alumni and retired United Nations diplomats and employees, who often supervised or mentored people presently in upper-level positions at the UN.

### **The General Application Process**

There are many paths to employment at the United Nations, and it is important to remember that recruitment and hiring processes are complicated and vary from organization to organization. Applicants should always investigate the specific procedures for any organization in which they are interested on the organization's website. Nevertheless, there are general procedures and a few prominent programs with which all applicants should be familiar. This section of the guide will outline important information that applies to many UN organizations.

#### ***The Inspira System***

Inspira is the centralized online staffing system for the United Nations Secretariat. It recently replaced Galaxy, the former staffing system. Some organizations may still be in the transition process, so applicants should be aware of this change and research how it might affect the application process. In particular, applicants should be aware that if they created a Personal History Profile (PHP) in Galaxy they must create a new one in Inspira. Note that it takes considerable time to prepare a PHP in Inspira. Applicants should ensure that the cover letter is tailored to each vacancy, and ensure that the PHP is professionally presented meaning no typos, concise and well written.

Most job openings on Inspira are for a specific position in a particular office and duty station, but there are also "generic" job openings, which are used to create rosters of candidates from which HR representatives select employees as job vacancies arise. While this is one way to get on the roster, another way is to apply for a specific post, and be recommended (but not selected) for that post. Generic job opening descriptions include the text "This job opening is for roster purposes." The application process for both specific and generic job openings is the same.

Inspira is accessible at <https://inspira.un.org/>. The UN has published a detailed guide to the Inspira application process entitled "The Applicant's Manual: Manual for the Applicant and Staff Selection System (Inspira)" available at: <https://careers.un.org/lbw/attachments/InstructionalManualfortheApplicant.pdf>.

While most UN agencies use the Inspira System, there are some agencies which do not. Refer to the websites below for the following agencies:

United Nations Development Program <https://jobs.undp.org/>

United Nations Population Funds <http://www.unfpa.org/about/employment>

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c491.html>

### ***Professional Levels***

The United Nations categorizes positions into “professional levels,” which rank jobs into a hierarchy. Below is a listing of the most common levels. Applicants should familiarize themselves with these levels so that they will be able to apply for the appropriate vacancies. While lawyers can enter a UN organization at any of these levels, recent law graduates are most likely to enter at P-2 or P-3 post. Some posts may also require bar qualification.

- P-2: Entry level, except for field missions (i.e. peacekeeping operations), generally reserved for successful candidates of the Young Professionals Programme (YPP) of the UN Secretariat as well as for Junior Professional Officers (JPOs). Some UN agencies require 2 to 3 years of experience for external recruitment. The Junior Professional Officer Programme (JPO) comprises a special category of staff members who are young professional men and women, interested in acquiring experience in the development field. These staff members are sponsored by their respective Government. For example, the US State Department offers JPO placements with UNHCR.
- P-3: Entry level; more analysis required than P-2; filled by insiders being promoted or external recruitment; requires about five to eight years of experience.
- P-4: Middle management; requires about seven to twelve years of experience.
- P-5: Upper management; often responsible for entire unit (4-12 people); requires ten to seventeen years of experience
- D1&D2: Top level management, 25 years of experience
- ASG: Assistant Secretary-General
- USG: Under-Secretary-General
- DSG: Deputy Secretary-General

Usually  
appointed

### ***Geographic Distribution and Quotas***

Many positions must be filled according to nationality quotas, which are set for the Secretariat on the basis of nations’ contributions to the UN budget. The UN seeks to keep geographical representation with “desirable ranges,” and hiring decisions may therefore be influenced by the applicant’s nationality. In addition, the UN strives to achieve gender equality in the workplace, so gender may play a role in hiring decisions, and the UN encourages female applicants. Different UN organizations employ different policies in pursuit of these goals. Though generally well-represented within the UN, U.S. citizens will find that many organizations seek U.S. nationals even when they are within range but below midpoint, meaning that they are at risk for being underrepresented. Some agencies prefer to hire non-Westerners to increase geographic diversity.

For an in depth review of the roles of gender balance and geographical distribution in UN hiring, see the 2012 Joint Inspection Unit Publication entitled “Staff recruitment in United Nations system organizations: a comparative analysis and benchmarking framework: Gender balance and geographical distribution,” available at [https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU\\_NOTE\\_%202012%20\\_3\\_English.pdf](https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_NOTE_%202012%20_3_English.pdf).

### ***Application Steps and Stages***

Applying for a job at the UN is a long, involved process. The following is a brief outline of the general application stages. Note that while this outline assumes application submission through Inspira, not all organizations, such as UNCHR, UNDP, UNPF, use the Inspira system, and applicants should take care to research how they should submit any given application. A more detailed explanation of the application and evaluation process is available at <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=AP>.

- 1. Search for Job Openings.** Search for jobs in the Inspira system on the UN Careers website Job Openings page (<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=SJ&vacancy=All>). Applicants should also explore the websites of organizations in which they are interested and utilize the job search resources provided at the end of this guide.
- 2. Create a Profile and Prepare an Application.** An applicant must register and create a profile before beginning an application. See the [UN guide to Inspira](#) (page 6) for precise instructions.
- 3. Submit a Job Application.** Follow the instructions in Inspira. Note that the UN does not accept resumes as attachments. Be sure to double check the submission process and any email addresses or physical addresses to which information must be submitted.
- 4. Evaluation of the Application.** The application is evaluated for experience, education, and skills. It is first screened by a computer to ascertain that the applicant has all the required qualifications. Next, all applications that pass this initial screening are reviewed by a UN hiring manager, who chooses which candidates will move on to the assessment stage.
- 5. Assessment Exercise.** If an application passes the first evaluation stage, the applicant will be asked to perform an assessment exercise, which could be a written test, a case study, or a simulation exercise. The assessment is often a timed test to be submitted via email. Out of hundreds of applicants for a particular post, approximately 20 to 50 are typically invited to complete the written assessment. For generic vacancies, more applicants may be invited to take the written assessment
- 6. Competency-based Interview.** Applicants who pass the assessment exercise stage are invited for a competency-based interview. A competency-based interview consists of questions regarding the applicant's past experiences relating to the specific competencies listed in the vacancy announcement. External applicants often do not do well on these interviews because they do not expect and prepare for these kinds of questions.  
  
Even fewer applicants, perhaps 10, are invited to an interview. Interviews are generally conducted via phone. They are typically conducted by a panel that includes the hiring manager. The UN provides interview tips and preparation resources at <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=AYI>.
- 7. Selection Notification.** A pool of candidates is recommended for selection and then reviewed by an independent review body, which also ascertains that the hiring process was conducted correctly. After the review body within the UN agency has made its recommendation the required number of candidates is selected and informed of their selection. Final hiring decisions may take geographical and gender balance requirements of the United Nations Secretariat into consideration.
- 8. Placement on a Roster.** Applicants who are selected for a generic job opening, as well as applicants recommended for selection for a specific job opening but not ultimately selected are placed on the relevant roster. An applicant must successfully pass through all rounds of the application process except for the receipt of a job offer in order to be placed on the roster; submission of an application alone does not lead to a spot on the roster. See the next section for information and tips on how to gain employment from the roster.

### ***Application Advice***

It is important to tailor one's application, especially one's cover letter, to the specific position for which one is applying. Recruiters like to see details about an applicant's background and want applicants to substantiate general statements about themselves with examples of what they have done. In addition to demonstrating the relevant academic qualifications applicants must show that they are suitable for the position. Recruiters seek candidates with relevant experience and skills. Note the "desirable" qualifications indicated in the job posting, such as knowledge of additional (but not required) languages. Candidates who can demonstrate desirable qualifications in addition to the required ones have a better chance of success.

### ***Qualifications***

Applicants must determine whether they meet the qualifications for the positions to which they want to apply. Qualifications vary from organization to organization, so if an applicant does not meet the necessary qualifications for some postings, he should research others that better match his skills and experiences.

### ***Visa and Residential Status***

Visa or residential status generally has no bearing on the success of an application; successful applicants will procure the necessary documentation after securing employment. Applicants should note, however, that if they have permanent residency in a country that is not the country of their nationality, General Assembly rules typically require them to give up that permanent residency in order to work in that country in the Professional category. People hired as local support staff in the General Service category (as opposed to the internationally-recruited Professional category) are the exception to this rule.

### ***Rosters***

UN rosters consist of candidates who have been previously recommended for selection for a specific post but did not receive job offers, and also candidates who apply to generic job openings. They provide a pool of qualified candidates who may be considered for job openings without having to repeat the entire job process. Candidates now remain on the roster for an indefinite period. In other words, the roster is open ended. However, candidates on the roster need to "apply" to jobs they are interested in even if they are on the roster, in order to express their interest in available positions and to avoid being needlessly contacted if they are not interested.

Finding a UN job while on a roster is not a passive process. Although candidates may be contacted to confirm their interest in positions in the same job family and at the same level as the job to which they previously applied, they must apply to any positions of interest. Rostered candidates should continue to proactively search for and apply to vacancies and other opportunities. Because there is a preference for candidates who have passed a competitive exam, candidates should clearly state their rostered status in their applications. The UN recommends that they also sign up for a Job Alert. Instructions on creating a Job Alert are available in Section 5.2 of the "Manual for the Applicant on the Staff Selection System (Inspira)" at <https://careers.un.org/lbw/attachments/ManualfortheApplicant.pdf>.

HLS alumna Aminta Ossom recommends joining the Yahoo group for successfully rostered candidates, as it provides a forum for those on the roster to share tips and experiences. She also recommends that candidates reach out to former supervisors and alumni who might be able to connect them with UN staff in their job families.

Not all UN organizations maintain rosters, and each organization's roster procedures may differ. The Joint Inspection Unit's 2012 review of recruitment systems found that uptake from rosters was very limited for all

organizations except for the Secretariat. Roster systems are relatively new, and their role in the hiring process continues to develop.

Candidates on the roster should remember not to be too picky about accepting job interviews and offers of employment. The UN (though not UNCHR) offers positions to candidates on the roster based on the hiring needs of the Secretariat, so candidates should realize that they may not be offered the duty stations and functions they initially wanted. Moreover, while candidates are allowed to decline job interviews, candidates who interview and subsequently decline job offers may be penalized and removed from further consideration; the new rule seems to be that you may not even decline one job offer. Candidates should also keep in mind that the UN promotes mobility across job families and duty stations, and that most UN positions are filled with internal candidates. Therefore, rostered candidates should focus primarily on getting their feet in the door of the UN, since interested candidates will likely be able to pursue a different job function after their first two-year contract.

### **Young Professionals Programme (YPP) of the UN Secretariat**

The Young Professionals Programme, formerly known as the NCRE (National Competitive Recruitment Examination, last administered in 2010), is a recruitment initiative that selects new UN employees for positions in the Secretariat through an annual entrance examination. It is administered by the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) in a variety of disciplines, known as job families. Each year the exam is offered in different job families depending on the projected hiring needs of the Secretariat. For example, in 2013 the examination will be offered in the Administration, Finance, Legal Affairs, Public Information, and Statistics job families to nationals of 63 countries, including the United States. Presently, the YPP is the only way the UN Secretariat hires P-2 (entry-level) candidates; it is therefore an integral part of the UN Secretariat recruitment process. To view which Departments and Offices are included in the UN Secretariat, refer to the system chart on page 4.

The purpose of the YPP is to equalize national representation in the Secretariat by recruiting unrepresented or underrepresented nationalities, as well as nationalities that are at risk for being underrepresented in certain job families. The Secretariat assigns quotas for each Member State based on states' representation, population, and contributions to the UN; these quotas are used to determine which countries participate in a given year. It should be noted that many Western countries which may not seem to be underrepresented in the Secretariat, including the United States, are regularly included in the YPP.

The YPP of the UN Secretariat has no affiliation with other Young Professional programs, notably the YPPs of UNESCO and the World Bank; these other programs maintain their own websites and have their own hiring procedures.

#### ***Minimum Qualifications***

To be eligible to apply to the YPP of the UN Secretariat, candidates must:

- Hold at least a first-level university degree relevant to the discipline in which the examination will be taken
- Not be more than 32 years old on December 31 of the year of the application
- Be fluent in either English or French
- Be a national of a participating country

### ***Applying for the Exam***

Candidates must apply to take the entrance exam in a particular job family. A candidate can only apply to the exam in one job family; applying to multiple job families results in automatic disqualification. For dual nationals one should consider that it may be more advantageous to apply as a Thai, for example, than an American.

The YPP only invites a maximum of 40 applicants from the same country to take the exam in a given job family. This means that eligibility requirements are typically more demanding than they appear on paper, since the number of applicants from the same country may exceed the cap of 40 exam takers per job family. American citizens usually submit hundreds of applications for these spots, so applicants are evaluated further in terms of higher degrees, work experience, international exposure, other UN languages, and publications.

There is no application fee, and there is no entry fee to sit for the entrance exam, but candidates must make their own travel and accommodation arrangements, and cover their own expenses.

In the U.S., at minimum, the exam will be offered at the UN Secretariat office in New York, at U.S. governmental offices in Washington D.C., and sometimes at other federal offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, or Chicago, depending on whether the minimum number of test takers for a given location is met. It is worth noting that non-citizens studying in the U.S. may be convoked to take exams for their nationalities in U.S. locations, and that Americans living or working abroad can take the exam abroad in the nearest examination center.

In 2013 YPP applications were due in February. Check the YPP website for current deadlines:

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=NCE>

### ***Choosing the Right Exam***

Before applying candidates should consider which job family matches their qualifications. Since admission to the entrance exam is very competitive, applicants should have academic credentials and/or practical experience in the job family for which they apply. In previous years, the UN Secretariat has offered exams in job families such as Legal Affairs, Security, Web Development, Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, Economics, Administration, Public Information, and Statistics. Generally speaking, Legal Affairs, Human Rights, Political Affairs, Civil Affairs, and Humanitarian Affairs are the job families most geared towards lawyers. Applicants can get a better feel for the different job families by visiting the YPP website, which publishes sample exams of the job families being offered that year: <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=NCES>.

Candidates should keep in mind that their future jobs will not necessarily be related to the YPP exam they take. Candidates who pass through the exam will likely be offered positions in a related field for their first UN contract; however, there is a high degree of mobility for UN employees once they get their feet in the door. Additionally, a successful candidate in one job family could be offered a position in a different field, depending on the hiring needs of the Secretariat. It may therefore be best to apply for the job family in which your chances of passing the exam are highest instead of choosing the exam that aligns best with your long-term career goals.

Candidates should realize that the timing of their application is important. Since the list of participating countries and offered job families changes from year to year, eligible candidates should take advantage of opportunities to apply in their desired fields (i.e. job families that align with their qualifications). Such opportunities may be infrequent, and will give candidates the best chance of selection at the application stage.



### ***Exam Format***

The exam consists of a written exam and an interview. The four and a half-hour written exam consists of two parts: (a) a general paper that tests drafting skills, as well as several short-answer questions covering a broad range of topics in international affairs; and (b) a specialized paper that tests the substantive knowledge of the particular job family for which the candidate is applying. Candidates must draft the general paper in English or French, but they may write the specialized paper in any of the six official UN languages. Candidates must manage their own time for the different parts of the written exam.

The exam is marked by the Central Review Examinations Board. Officially, results should be announced in April of the year following the examination date. However, the amount of time the Board takes to grade the exams in a given year may vary, so this projected date is not always definitive.

Successful candidates are invited for an interview. To arrange the oral interview, candidates must correspond with the UN to book travel arrangements. Candidates may pay a portion of the expenses up front, but the UN will offer a stipend paid a few months later to reimburse travel costs associated with the interview.

The interview is competency-based: candidates have the opportunity to share their previous experiences and speak about their skills and strengths. In addition, candidates are asked four questions testing knowledge of current events and how they relate to the UN. The questions span different subject matter (e.g. Peace and Security; Economic and Social Development; Science, Technology and Culture). Candidates can pass on one question (meaning they can receive up to five questions), but should use the pass sparingly, as they cannot return to the original question if the second option is more challenging.

Those who successfully complete the interview process have passed through the YPP. Successful candidates are placed on a roster, which is valid for two years. The roster is called upon as vacancies become available. The UN states on the YPP website that the probability of candidates being offered jobs during this two-year period is quite high. However, candidates should keep in mind that the UN does not guarantee jobs to successful candidates. In fact, in recent years the UN has had trouble getting candidates off of the roster through the program (which was known as the NCRE until 2011). Previously, the NCRE roster had no expiration date, which meant that those accepted to the roster often waited several years before getting a position; some candidates remained on the roster indefinitely. Quite often NCRE candidates had to wait long enough so that they had progressed professionally beyond the P-2 entry-level positions for which they initially sought employment. The new YPP seeks to eliminate this particular problem by limiting a candidate's roster status to two years. However, it is yet to be seen whether this change will have a significant impact on the availability of UN jobs through the YPP, which otherwise resembles its NCRE predecessor.

### ***Preparing for the Exam***

To prepare for the exam candidates should first consult YPP sample exams at <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=NCES>. Candidates should take care to distinguish between the general and specialized sections of the exam when formulating a study strategy. Candidates do not need to spend a lot of time preparing for the general section, since the general paper mainly tests one's reading comprehension skills. Aminta Ossom '09, who passed the 2010 Human Rights exam (two HLS grads were among the thirty-nine worldwide rostered for the 2010 Human Rights exam), stresses that the most helpful preparation a candidate can do for the general section is to "take a practice exam under strict time constraints."



Candidates should spend more time preparing for the specialized section since it tests substantive knowledge of a particular field. For this paper, candidates should feel comfortable writing about how the UN operates in the context of their particular job family. The legal affairs test resembles law school exams, and even the human rights test includes essay questions that present fact patterns that require issue-spotting and role-playing. Very few questions ask open-ended questions to test substantive knowledge (i.e. what is the X protocol about?). For example, when preparing for the Human Rights exam, Ossom explains that she studied the “UN human rights system and mechanisms,” and “brainstormed how the UN would apply these functions in different situations.” She also adds that she “researched and outlined secondary sources such as books on the UN human rights system” to help direct her study. Ossom further explains that at the end of her study, she “took the sample human rights questions the UN provided and made them into a timed practice exam.” All in all, she concludes, these study measures “made me feel prepared and more comfortable taking the exam,” even if “a lot of what I studied wasn’t necessarily on the exam.”

Candidates who pass the written exam should spend some time preparing for the oral interview. In the interview candidates will have the chance to indicate their preferences for job placement, so they should have an idea of which duty stations and job functions that interest them. They should also be ready to give a compelling account of how their past experiences have prepared them for employment in the UN. Additionally, candidates should possess knowledge of the UN’s structure to help them answer interview questions about current events and international affairs. Ossom notes that she found it particularly useful to study the history of the UN in order to understand the UN agencies and also to contextualize her responses. To aide her preparation, Ossom “chose to read a short book targeted toward the public that gave a basic history of the UN (which included chapters on its founding and the mandates of its agencies), *UN Today*, in addition to monitoring media reports on world events.”

### ***After the Exam***

See the section on Rosters on page 10.

### ***Conclusion***

All in all, the YPP is not an application process from which to expect instant results. The number of people who make it past each stage of the exam is relatively small, and even those successful candidates are not guaranteed jobs in the UN Secretariat. Keeping this in mind, candidates should focus on their immediate career prospects in addition to pursuing the YPP. They should try to line up other employment options, or ideally be lucky enough to wait out the YPP process from the comfort of an already satisfactory job or graduate program.

## **The United Nations Internship Programme**

Many UN organizations offer unpaid internships. These internships provide an excellent opportunity to become familiar with the UN, build professional contacts, and decide whether one aspires to full-time UN employment. They may help an applicant get her foot in the door in the door if she does decide to seek full-time employment. Remember, however, that many organizations impose a six-month waiting period between the end of an internship and when a former intern may apply for employment.

### ***Minimum Qualifications***

- Enrollment in a Master's, PhD, or other graduate program, or in the fifth year of a university program equivalent to a Master's program
- Fluent French and/or English

UN internships last between two and six months and are unpaid; the intern must cover all costs, including travel, visas, medical insurance, and accommodations. Harvard offers summer funding for international travel and internships (see [www.law.harvard.edu/news/spotlight/ils/iti/funding.html](http://www.law.harvard.edu/news/spotlight/ils/iti/funding.html)) that may make a UN internship financially manageable.

The Internship Programme webpage on the UN Careers website (<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=ip>) provides general information and links to internship opportunities. Internship opportunities are posted on the UN Job Openings page at <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=SJ&vacancy=All&lang=en-US>. Other opportunities are posted on the websites of individual UN organizations, such as UNICEF and the UNHCR. Applicants should research and apply for these and other internships on the organizations' websites. Remember that application regulations and processes vary from organization to organization.

Students interested in interning with the UN Secretariat at the Headquarters in New York should visit [www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/sds/internsh/index.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/sds/internsh/index.htm). The UN Headquarters internship is full-time and offered over three sessions: mid-January to mid-March, early June to early August, and mid-September to mid-November. The departments to which interns are assigned and the duties for which they will be responsible are based on the intern's experience and qualifications.

## **The United Nations Volunteer (UNV) Program**

The UNV Program is a good way to gain experience working with the United Nations that can later lead to a full-time career. UNVs are provided with a living, travel and resettlement stipend and insurance coverage; despite the name "volunteer" in the program, volunteers receive enough compensation to live in their duty stations, although salaries are significantly beneath P post levels. UNVs are often placed in posts with similar working environments as individuals with more regular employment; however UNVs generally have a greater range of potential positions than someone who is applying for regular employment. It should be noted that while some UNV positions have a legal component, many do not. Note that there are international and national UNVs

### ***Application and Selection***

There are approximately 8,000 United Nations Volunteers working in development assistance projects and in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. To be considered for a position as a UNV applicants must apply online at [www.unvolunteers.org](http://www.unvolunteers.org). Applications are reviewed for the requisite experience and expertise. If approved, applicants are placed on the UNV Roster. If selected as a potential candidate, applicants must be available to start work immediately. The recruitment process for UNV positions is generally much faster than for regular positions. In some cases, candidates may be on the ground within weeks of their application.

One thing to note is that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) collaborates with UNVs and hires about 2,000 volunteers for field positions. Those interested in human rights or voting rights should apply and clarify their interest in their applications.

Additionally, UNHCR also relies heavily on UNVs.

### ***Minimum Qualifications:***

- Usually from five to ten years of working experience in the area of specialization to which a candidate applies. UNCHR requires less minimum experience.
- Recent graduates who were exceptionally active in clinics; who have shown a commitment to their area of specialization in their coursework; and who have had employment experience prior to entering law school can be considered to have sufficient experience.

It is essential to be as specific as possible about the areas of specialization in which one is interested when applying.

### ***Serving as a UNV and the Path to Future Employment***

If selected, UNVs usually serve from six- to twelve-month contracts that are renewable. The expectation is that volunteers will work for more than one year. Often after two years as a UNV, applicants are able to apply to other UN bodies and departments. UNHCR requires 4 years of uninterrupted UNV service. Seventy percent of all volunteers work outside of their countries and only thirty percent are considered 'national' volunteers working in their own country. Applicants have no choice of duty station once assigned to it. A benefit of working as a UNV is the status volunteers receive as an internal applicant for future UN job applications. Experience with the UNV program can be especially helpful in applying for positions that require field experience.

### **Translation Positions**

Employment as a translator may offer talented linguists with a passion for legal writing a great way to gain entry to the UN. Though not specifically legal in nature, translation work is performed on legal documents; therefore, a legal background is highly preferred. In addition, language posts are out of the regular budget, but do not need to satisfy geographic quota. There is a shortage of translator candidates, so gaining employment with a translation office is a faster and somewhat less competitive process. The Language Exam is typically less selective than the YPP of the UN Secretariat; once admitted to sit the exam, candidates are almost definitely selected for the position. Though newly hired translators must commit to a five-year contract, once this contract is up they can apply to any UN job as an internal candidate.

### ***Minimum Qualifications:***

- Perfect command of the language in which the examination is held, an excellent knowledge of English, and an excellent knowledge of at least one of the other official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, or Russian). Note that fluency in the third language may be waived for those who elect to take an additional specialized legal paper translation exam component.
- Meet all the requirements, including educational requirements, for the language examination for which the candidate applies.
- Be younger than 56 before the application submission deadline.
- Good computer and word-processing skills

The number of exams offered per year varies based on necessity. The exam consists of an eliminatory general translation, and a written and oral exam, which includes specialized sections in legal affairs, environment, or economics. See <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=LE> for more information on language positions.

## **HIRING INFORMATION FOR SELECTED UN ORGANIZATIONS**

### **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**

The UNDP provides development advice, advocacy and grant support to developing countries and coordinates the development work of all UN and UN-related agencies. Key UNDP issues democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, and HIV/AIDS. The UNDP also oversees the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Special Unit for Technical Co-Operation among Developing Countries, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Unlike many subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, the UNDP operates under a fairly independent financial and recruiting system; for example, it is not subject to YPP requirements.

For more information on the UNDP, go to [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org). Visit the UNDP Jobs Site, which provides employment information and job listings sorted by issue area and location, at <http://jobs.undp.org/>.

- **Internships:** UNDP internships are available to students currently enrolled in graduate programs and are designed to complement the intern's studies. They are offered part-time or full-time in country offices/regional centers and in the UNDP Headquarters in New York. The internships are competitive and unpaid. Interns must have a demonstrated interest in development, interest in global mobility, adaptability to new places and cultures, and proficiency in at least one of the UNDP working languages (English, French, and Spanish). While the internships are not designed to lead to future employment, they sometimes do lead to employment at the UNDP or another UN organization. Note that interns must remain enrolled in their program of study after the completion of their internship (you cannot do a UNDP internship if you have already graduated).

UNDP internships are posted on the UNDP jobs site. Visit the [Internships page](#) for more information.

- **Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Program:** Through the JPO program, donor governments sponsor young professionals to work at the UNDP and related organizations. At this time, the United States does

not participate in the UNDP JPO program, but nationals of participating countries may apply. For more information, visit the [JPO website](#).

- **United Nations Volunteers (UNV):** The UNDP represents United Nations Volunteers, and UNV reports to the UNDP Executive Board. Moreover, given the nature of UNDP programs, the UNDP is the organization that employs the most United Nations Volunteers. Working as a volunteer is therefore a relatively sure way to work with the UNDP, although there is no guarantee. For more information see the [United Nations Volunteers section of this guide](#).
- **Field Missions:** UNDP field missions provide recent law school graduates with a unique opportunity to get a hands-on experience that can later aid them in gaining more permanent office positions within the UNDP or other United Nations organizations. Most missions hiring is done through the regional offices, so it is best to contact the regional offices individually (contact information is available through the main UNDP site). Though regional offices may not have any specific postings, being proactive and inquiring with the office is generally looked upon favorably.

### **The International Court of Justice (ICJ)**

The [International Court of Justice](#) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its primary functions are to settle legal disputes between states in accordance with international law and to give advisory opinions on legal questions submitted by the UN and its specialized agencies.

- **University Traineeship Programme:** Each year the ICJ invites eight recent law graduates from around the world to participate in its University Traineeship Programme. After going through a competitive selection process, these trainees work directly for one or two judges for a period of nine months.

To select its trainees, the Court first solicits applications from select law schools from a number of countries to sponsor candidates for the program. The Court generally sends out an invitation to the Career offices of preferred law schools in November; law schools must submit candidates by a specified deadline in order to be considered. It is important to note that trainee positions are unpaid, so law schools need to come up with their own sources of funding. At HLS candidates must be nominated by Alexa Shabecoff in OPIA so it is a good idea to meet with her early in the process so she can be an effective advocate for you. Completed applications, including recommendation letters, must typically be submitted to Alexa in early January. Candidates should also apply for fellowship funding to support their traineeship and are urged to meet with Judy Murciano, OPIA's Fellowships Director. In each of the last two years, HLS candidates were selected for the traineeship program and were also able to land Harvard University "traveling" fellowships to fund their traineeship period.

After the application deadline, the ICJ judges review submissions as a committee to select eight trainees. The Court favors applicants with substantial academic and/or practical experience in international law, as well candidates who have excellent French or English skills (and a working knowledge of the other language). It should be noted that law schools often sponsor candidates with graduate law degrees, so JD

candidates have to be exceptionally strong in order to be selected. Once selected, trainees work at the Court from September to May of the following academic year.

Trainees assist judges and other members of the Court by conducting research, preparing case files, and drafting various Court documents. The duties of trainees also vary based on the individual needs of their assigned judge or judges. It is important to note that *university trainee* positions are not the same as *law clerk* positions in the ICJ; each judge has his or her own law clerk in addition to a university trainee. Unlike unfunded trainee positions, law clerk positions are P-2 (entry-level) appointments in the UN; these positions require five years of public international law experience. Law clerks often work collaboratively with university trainees on assignments.

For more information on the University Trainee Programme, contact Alexa Shabecoff in OPIA.

- **Internships:** The ICJ also recruits unpaid legal interns through postings on the employment opportunities page of its website, which is linked to the ICJ homepage. Internships usually last from one to three months, and occur under the supervision of the Registry staff. Interns are required to speak both English and French. For more information, visit [the ICJ website](#).
- **Full-time Employment:** Full-time legal personnel must have at least five years of experience practicing public international law, as well as fluency in multiple languages (including English and French). Many lawyers who have been selected for employment have previously served as university trainees; this program tends to be a promising path for those who want to pursue paid legal positions. All employment vacancies in the ICJ are [listed](#) through the Court's registry.

### **The International Criminal Court (ICC)**

The [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) came into being through the Rome Statute in July, 2002. It was the first permanent international court created to prosecute the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. On September 1, 2011, the number of Member States that ratified the Rome Statute will reach 116. A number of important countries – including the United States, Russia, China and India – have not joined the court.

While the ICC is not a UN organ, the Rome Statute grants certain powers to the UN Security Council to refer cases for prosecution by the Court. Additionally, work or internship experience at the ICC could be of assistance when applying for a job at the UN.

- **Internships and Visiting Professionals:** The ICC offers internships to people early in their careers and visiting professional placements to more experienced professionals. Internships last between three and six months, visiting professional placements last between one and six months. Duties correspond to experience and areas of interest. For more information visit the [ICC website](#).
- **Full-time Employment:** US citizens may find it difficult to gain employment with the ICC because applicants from countries that have ratified or are in the process of ratifying the Rome Statute are given priority. Nevertheless, citizens from states signatories or even from states that have refused to sign the

Statute are occasionally employed by the ICC. The ICJ website provides [more information and a link to current vacancies](#).

HLS students interested in the ICC may contact Professor of Practice [Alex Whiting](#), [awhiting@law.harvard.edu](mailto:awhiting@law.harvard.edu).

### **International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals**

The [International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia](#) (ICTY) and the [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#) (ICTR) are UN courts of law that deal with war crimes and human rights violations that took place in the Balkans during the 1990s and in Rwanda in 1994. Both courts are nearing the end of their mandates but will continue to hire for the next few years. The [Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals](#) was established by the UN Security Council in 2010 to carry out the essential functions of the ICTY and the ICTR after the completion of their mandates. The MICT took over some of the functions of the ICTR in Tanzania in 2012 and took over some of the functions of the ICTY in The Hague in 2013.

Given that the ICTY, ICTR, and MICT are in a period of transition, interested applicants should research any potentially available positions. The ICTY maintains an [Employment and Internships page](#). Internships are available in the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) and in Chambers. The ICTR likewise maintains an [Opportunities page](#) with vacancy announcements and also provides information about its [internship program](#). The MICT provides [recruitment information](#) and directs interested applicants to the UN recruitment Inspira system.

HLS students interested in these courts may contact Professor of Practice [Alex Whiting](#), [awhiting@law.harvard.edu](mailto:awhiting@law.harvard.edu).

### **Special Court for Sierra Leone**

The [Special Court for Sierra Leone](#), which was established jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law on the territory of Sierra Leone since November 30, 1996. It is expected that the Court will complete its work this year. The Court is funded exclusively by voluntary contributions of governments.

- **Internships:** The Court offers internships for law school graduates who have passed the bar in the Registry Legal Office, the Office of the Prosecutor, the Office of the Principal Defender, and the Chambers. They also offer non-legal internships, which last between three and six months. Applicants must speak English, and knowledge of local languages and humanitarian law is considered an asset. Funding is available for nationals of Sierra Leone, but all international applicants must secure their own funding. More information is available on the Court's [website](#).
- **Full-time Employment:** Visit the Court's [website](#) for vacancies and application information.



The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, which was established jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, will carry out the residual functions of the Special Court for Sierra Leone upon its closure. Information about recruitment and internships will be provided when the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone commences its functions.

### **Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL)**

The [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#) was established to try those suspected of the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others in 2005. Unlike in other UN or UN-assisted tribunals, the Special Tribunal applies Lebanese national law. The Tribunal officially opened in March, 2009 and is expected to complete its work by 2015.

- **Internships:** Internships lasting between three and twelve months are available to highly motivated, highly qualified students and young professionals. Candidates must have a degree or be nearing the completion of their studies. Almost all internships are unpaid; only a limited amount of funding is available for applicants most in need of financial assistance. Applications are accepted throughout the year but should be submitted at least four months before the desired start date. For more information and application information, visit the Tribunal's [website](#).
- **Employment:** Job opportunities are available in criminal law, international and humanitarian law, social sciences, and administration. The official languages of the Tribunal are English, French and Arabic, but knowledge of Dutch, the language of the host country, can be useful. Fixed-term positions usually last for one year with the possibility of extension. For current vacancies and application information, visit <http://www.stl-tsl.org/en/jobs>.

### **Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)**

The [Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia](#) for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed during the Period of Democratic Kampuchea was created to prosecute the atrocities that occurred during the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge regime. It has Cambodian and international staff and judges and is located in Cambodia. The ECCC receives international assistance through the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials (UNAKRT).

- **Internships:** UNAKRT manages international applications for the ECCC. Internships last three months and may be extended to six months; they are available to recent university graduates and postgraduates students, and they are unpaid. For more information, PDF brochures describing the program in detail, and a link to the UN Careers site, through which candidates must ultimately submit their applications, visit the UNAKRT [recruitment page](#).
- **Employment:** International applications for full-time employment are also managed by UNAKRT. Visit the [website](#) for vacancies



## The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) acts as the subsidiary body of the General Assembly responsible for the coordination of worldwide protection and action on behalf of refugees. More specifically, the UNHCR works to ensure that all refugees can find a safe haven in an alternative state or can resettle locally. The UNHCR is a very large, complex organization and is composed of seven sections, many of which offer unique opportunities for recent graduates. Practice settings at the UNHCR are extremely variable—for example, if you find yourself in the Division of Internal Protection Services, you could be doing work that involves policy guidance at the Protection Operations and Legal Advice section; or, you could be handling the operational tasks of refugee status determination in the Status Determination and Protection Information Section. The variable and expansive nature of the UNHCR makes it worthwhile to research the many smaller sections that offer opportunities for both post-graduate employment and summer internships.

Hiring at the UNHCR works differently than in many other UN organizations. Students should explore this guide and the UNHCR website to familiarize themselves with the hiring process and the different paths to employment.

- **Internships:** The UNHCR offers internships, including legal internships, at its offices in Geneva and Budapest and in some family duty field offices. The internships last between two and six months and are unpaid. While there is no guarantee of employment at the end of the internship, and while interns must wait six months before reapplying to the UNHCR after the end of their internships, internships can be a good way to build experience. Candidates must submit an online application and should also submit an application to the field/branch office to which they are applying. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. A submitted application remains in the system for six months, after which time candidates who were not selected may reapply. See [the UNHCR website](#) for general and application information, FAQs, and a copy of the Internship Agreement, which outlines the basic conditions of an internship.
- **Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Program:** The JPO program is one of the best ways for recent law school graduates to gain employment at the United Nations. More information on the JPO Programme is available in the [“Applying for Employment” section of this guide](#).

Though the JPO program is available at a number of United Nations agencies, UNHCR is the only UN organization that partners with the United States. The United States JPO program is administered by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, which is under the purview of the State Department and which advertises P-2 level positions at the UNHCR. To be notified of open JPO posts, potential applicants must subscribe to a list serve by sending an email with the subject line “JPO & AE subscription request” to [JPOcoordinator@state.gov](mailto:JPOcoordinator@state.gov). There are generally six to ten positions open for United States JPOs, and, depending on the position, JPO opportunities can attract anywhere from twelve to one hundred applicants. The application review process can take up to six months.

United States JPOs at the UNHCR work in various assignments over a period of two years, usually entailing refugee protection, repatriation or resettlement activities in a variety of countries. Often, JPO assignments can develop into longer term positions with the UNHCR or at the very least provide exposure to the inner workings of the United Nations and priceless networking opportunities. JPOs who were on the IPR can apply as internal candidates and do not have to wait for a six-month period.

Applicants can subscribe with a mailing list created to inform applicants of vacancy posts. After identifying positions of interest they should submit a resume, curriculum vitae, a cover letter and a P-11 form via email to [JPOCoordinator@state.gov](mailto:JPOCoordinator@state.gov). See [www.state.gov/g/prm](http://www.state.gov/g/prm) for more information.

For an overview of the UNHCR JPO program, see the [UNHCR/JPO page](#). There is also a page on [JPO vacancies and information on the application process](#).

- **International Professional Roster (IPR):** Recruitment for entry-level international professional positions occurs through the UNHCR's International Professional Roster. Much like the Young Professionals Programme of the UN Secretariat, the IPR has two stages: application and examination. It is open to external applicants pursuing P-2 and P-3 posts, but internal candidates are preferred. Watch the website for application deadlines and the next exam date. You can find detailed information on the necessary qualifications and application process for International Professional positions [online](#).
- **Refugee Status Determination Unit Project Roster (RSD):** The RSD Project was established within the RSD Unit of the UNHCR to provide technical support to RSD operations. Through the RSD Project roster candidates are recruited to aid UNHCR field offices and governments worldwide by assisting in the development and implementation of operating procedures, aiding with the training needs of staff, and assisting in processing backlogs of pending refugee applications. To obtain a place on the RSD Project Roster, applicants must have two years of experience in the field of refugee determination and must submit an application, which will then be reviewed by a panel at the Department of International Protection. While acceptance to the RSD Project Roster are much more attainable for recent law school graduates than those of the IPR or even the JPO program, the RSD Project Roster can provide many of the same networking opportunities and is an equal stepping stone for acceptance into other UNHCR hiring tracks. See the [RSD page](#) for more information.
- **International Rescue Committee – Surge Protection Project:** Working in conjunction with the UNHCR, the International Rescue Committee has developed a surge project to provide crucial services to field missions. Individuals on the surge project roster can be deployed on extremely short notice to work on issues ranging from voluntary repatriation, local integration, physical protection in camps, and returnee monitoring to registration and detention. Candidates are only required to have two years of experience in a related field. Those with a background in law, especially international law, are extremely desirable, making this an excellent post for recent graduates hoping to gain exposure to the UNHCR and/or the field experience necessary to apply for more permanent positions. Unlike the other UNHCR rosters, the International Rescue Committee does not require a P-11, but only a curriculum vitae and a cover letter. Applicants are encouraged to send their application materials by email to [SURGE@rescue.org](mailto:SURGE@rescue.org). See the [Surge Protection Project](#) page for more information.
- **International Catholic Migration Commission – UNHCR Deployment Scheme:** The ICMC maintains a roster of individuals available for deployment to areas where there are large refugee populations in order to increase the UNHCR's capacity. Individuals on the ICMC roster are often deployed to developing countries and get hands on experience working with refugees to fight for their legal rights. Those deployed work at UNHCR field offices but are employed under an ICMC contract. The ICMC is less competitive than other rosters associated with the UNHCR, and applicants who have a

background in international law are viewed favorably. See the website for more information about the [deployment scheme](#), [position information](#), and [application information](#).

### United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

[UNICEF](#) was created by the UN in 1946. Its mission is to protect the rights of children, especially those in developing countries, by improving health care, sanitation, education, and access to basic essentials through community-based projects. UNICEF has significant global authority and partners with other organizations and communities at the grassroots level to turn the most innovative ideas into reality. There are no specific legal posts at UNICEF, but attorneys work throughout the organization primarily in the Policy department.

- **Internships:** UNICEF offers internships for currently enrolled graduate or post-graduate students at both headquarters and country offices. For more information and to apply, visit [http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/index\\_internship.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/index_internship.html).
- **The Junior Professional Officer Program (JPO):** Through the JPO program, governments sponsor young professionals for employment. At this time, the United States does not participate in UNICEF's JPO program, but potential applicants from other participating countries, including Canada, France, Germany, and Switzerland, may still apply. See [more information and a full list of participating donor countries](#) online.
- **The New and Emerging Talent Initiative (NETI):** This program offers young professionals a way to enter UNICEF. Its goal is to attract, select, develop, and retain talent from entry to mid-level careers. Participants are appointed for an initial one-year appointment, which entails a month-long introduction in New York and then deployment. Applicants must have completed an advanced degree, have proficiency in English and another official UN language, be prepared for an assignment anywhere in the world, and have at least two (P-2) or five (P-3) years of relevant work experience. Applications are submitted via UNICEF's e-Recruitment system, and successful applicants undergo a rigorous and lengthy application process. NETI has a comprehensive [website](#) that links to the application process.
- **United Nations Volunteers:** Some UN Volunteers work at UNICEF. For more information see the [United Nations Volunteers section of this guide](#) and, for UNICEF related information, the [UNICEF website](#).
- **Regular Recruitment:** UNICEF maintains its own e-Recruitment system and a very thorough employment [website](#) with hiring information and application instruction.

### World Health Organization (WHO)

The [World Health Organization](#) is responsible for directing and coordinating health initiatives within the UN system. It provides leadership on global health matters, shapes the health research and policy agendas, and sets health standards. The organization's goals include promoting global health standards, improving living

conditions, eradicating disease, and equipping nations with the technology to battle diseases. About 42% of WHO staff work around the globe, about 24% work in the six regional offices, and about 30% work at headquarters in Geneva.

The Legal Division in Geneva reviews agreements signed by the WHO and advises the organization. Attorneys also do work throughout the organization in human rights jobs. Professional technical staff members often act as advisers in public health to Member States. Therefore, candidates should normally have substantial training and experience in this field before they can be considered for an assignment. Competition for positions is keen and WHO needs are very specific, so securing employment may be challenging.

- **Internships:** The WHO offers unpaid internships for between six weeks and three months to students who are currently enrolled in graduate school and have a first degree in a public health, medical, or social field related to the technical work of WHO or a degree in a management-related or administrative field. For more information, visit the [WHO Internship Programme page](#), and for more information see <http://www.who.int/employment/internship/interns/en/index.html>.
- **The Junior Professional Officer Program (JPO):** Through the JPO program, governments sponsor young professionals for employment. At this time, the United States does not participate in WHO's JPO program, but potential applicants from other participating countries may still apply. Visit <http://www.who.int/employment/jpo/en/> for more information and a full list of participating donor countries.
- **Regular Recruitment:** The WHO maintains its own e-Recruitment system. It recruits staff internationally and locally. Applicants are normally required to have a university degree as well as a relevant postgraduate specialization. They should also have experience at the national and/or international level in the required fields of public health and development issues. Health-related specialists such as medical officers, epidemiologists, public health specialists, related paramedical fields, environmental health specialists, health scientists, statisticians, health economists, and policy analysts, as well as non-health-related specialists in finance, human resources, informatics, law and general administration are highly valued. Visit the WHO Employment [website](#) and view current vacancies.

### **World Trade Organization (WTO)**

The [World Trade Organization](#) is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and strives to facilitate trade in goods and services throughout the world. It is responsible for the administration of a set of multilateral agreements that seek to liberalize and expand international trade. Trade-related issues such as intellectual property, the environment, and agriculture are also addressed by the WTO. Most attorneys at the WTO work in the Appellate Body Secretariat, Legal Affairs Division, Rules Division, and Intellectual Property Division.

- **Internships:** The WTO has an internship program for post-graduate students interested in gaining experience in the work of the multilateral trading system. Applicants must be between 21 and 30 years of age and must be nationals of WTO members or of countries and customs territories engaged in accession

negotiations. They should have completed their undergraduate studies in a related field such as economics, law, political science, or international relations. The recruiting period for the internships is ongoing, and internships last for up to 24 weeks. Paid interns receive 60 CHF per day, including weekends and official holidays, and the WTO also accepts unpaid interns funded through other sources. For more information, visit the [internship page](#).

- **Regular Recruitment:** The WTO maintains its own e-Recruitment system and recruits nationals of WTO member states who are under 65 years old. Postings are advertised on the WTO employment website. Visit [the job vacancies page](#) for more information.

## CAREER NARRATIVES

**Natalie Boucly**

**Senior Legal Officer – United Nations Development Programme**

I have walked the streets of over 70 countries and lived (and worked) in 10 of them so far. As I sit to narrate this short snippet of my life, and I am wondering how I am going to cram all these different experiences into 2 to 3 pages, I hear in the distant background the now very familiar call to prayer; for a brief moment, life in the busy streets of Khartoum will come to a standstill. The hustle and bustle will resume when people break their fast with the traditional Sudanese hospitality: offering food to whoever happens to pass by their front door, garden or spontaneous street gathering.

Every day, in addition to being passionate about international law, I feel privileged to work for the United Nations, a unique institution I truly believe in and which also enables me to experience the wonderful diversity of the world we live in. Of all places, how did I end up in Sudan, you might ask?

Well, to start with, I was fortunate enough to realize very early on in my life that I was suited to an international life in the public sector.

Upon receiving bilingual French/English education at an international high school in France where I was taught many other languages along the way, I went on to study law at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in the UK. LSE was (and remains) an open-minded, international university, and as I got to mix with students from all over the globe and walks of life, my interest in other cultures grew even stronger. The world needs all kinds of lawyers, but as far as I was concerned – and this is a very personal view of course – one of the primary aims of the law is to protect those who need it most. With this in mind, I specialized in civil liberties, international human rights and public international law.

My interest in working both as a lawyer and for the United Nations was triggered – or perhaps confirmed, given my initial natural inclinations - by one of the greatest (in my humble view) international law professors of all times, Dame Rosalyn Higgins QC (former President of the International Court of Justice in The Hague) whose engaging lectures at the LSE were an inspiration to many.

As early as 1992 (I was 21 years old), I started sending applications for internships and jobs alike to all the legal divisions of the United Nations around the world. Of course, with little work experience to show for at the time, my efforts were rather in vain, but I never lost hope as this was what I wanted to do, and I believe that success comes from what I would call enthusiastic determination.

I did not succeed in obtaining an internship with the UN but I did get one (which came with a stipend) with the European Commission in Brussels. Upon graduating from LSE in 1994, I spent a year experiencing a semi-international life within European Institutions, including the European Parliament. I then returned to the UK to qualify as a Barrister-at-Law and became a fully-fledged Barrister upon completing pupillage,<sup>1</sup> during which time I appeared almost daily in UK courts as a criminal defense attorney. As exciting and intellectually challenging as the work was, something was missing for me; I could not see myself spending the rest of my life - or at the very least a very substantial chunk of it - “confined” to roaming the UK territory only, as picturesque as it may be!

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<sup>1</sup> Only upon completion of pupillage can a Barrister be granted full advocacy rights in UK Courts. Pupillage lasts one year.

We were now in 1997 and I had yet to receive any form of official reply from the UN to my many applications – let alone an offer for an internship or job! But I did not give up hope, and in 1999 my lucky break came along. The United Nations Development Programme<sup>2</sup> was looking for an entirely French/English bilingual lawyer specialized in international law. This had to work, I thought! The position, however, involved handling international administrative law issues and I had no knowledge of this. To this day, it is not a topic which one can take at university and graduate in. I thoroughly prepared for the tests and interviews by reading the “bible” of international administrative law written by C. F. Amarasinghe,<sup>3</sup> and somehow I pulled through and there I was in Manhattan in early 1999, having landed my first UN job. A dream came true!

The UN is a mirror of the world. It is also as unique in its purpose as it is in its diversity. From New York, and as a Serbian speaker, I was asked to take up a legal officer job in Kosovo, just after the war ended; from there, I moved to Haiti, this time in a position which combined legal and political work. As the Haitian Government then in power declined to renew the mandate of the UN Mission, I ended up in Rome, working again for a number of years in international law and more specifically in international administrative law. From Rome, I was transferred to Kenya where I was second in charge of a major emergency operation linked to the drought in the country (in 2004). After a stint back in the UK, I returned to New York for close to five years working as senior legal adviser for UNDP again and from there, I moved to Sudan, still with UNDP, where my main task is to coordinate the work of all 20 UN agencies present on the ground.

If you already feel exhausted trying to keep track of my whereabouts, imagine how my family and friends must feel! But with this brief paragraph outlining the posts I had in the many countries I lived in, I wanted to convey a sense of what working for the United Nations is usually about.

But let me describe what my ‘regular’ job as a senior lawyer for the UN is about daily: as glamorous as it may sound, international law remains law and the UN ends up tackling the very same legal issues that a national lawyer encounters (i.e. contractual claims, employment disputes etc.), the only – and main – difference being that it all happens on an international scene in all kinds of languages<sup>4</sup> and against very diverse cultural backgrounds. International law is vastly based on precedents and on internationally-recognised principles of international law. Our main reference is the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities. Because of its privileges and immunities, the UN, its property and officials are immune from suit in national jurisdictions unless such immunity is waived. The UN therefore has its own tribunals to deal with administrative law and employment related claims, for example. Similarly, contractual disputes are not litigated in national courts but rather by way of negotiation and ultimately arbitration.

The UN recently went through a major legal and contractual reform and I was lucky to be in post in New York when this happened and to not only witness it but to play a role in it. It was exciting because it was the first reform of its internal justice system since its creation, in over 60 years.

What I love about my job is the diversity of issues that come to my desk at literally any time of day and night, given our presence in over 170 countries. I like the fact that beyond the mere legal aspects, I work for an Organization that is committed to maintaining international peace and security and developing friendly relations

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<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Development Programme helps countries find solutions to achieve poverty reduction, the Millennium Development Goals, Democratic Governance, Crisis Prevention and Recovery as well as Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development. UNDP is present on the ground in 177 countries.

<sup>3</sup> The full reference is : The Law of International Civil Service, by C. F. Amarasinghe.

<sup>4</sup> There are 6 UN official languages which are; English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. Most of the work is conducted in English, French and Spanish.

among nations, along with promoting better living standards and human rights. In short, I like the fact that I work for an Organization which tries to make the world a better place for all. The frustration of the job is that the UN is so vast and so much is going on in all corners of the world that it is impossible for an employee to follow it all. Our busy days mean that we rarely find the time to attend events or get involved in activities outside of our own specialized field.

As criticized as the UN might be, it is as good as its Member States want it to be; but one should never lose sight of the fact that it is the only forum in the world where 193 countries come together and are able to engage in a dialogue, thereby resolving and averting many conflicts.

Life in the UN is not to everyone's taste. It is tough on personal life; depending on where one is, it can also be dangerous, of course. We all lost colleagues and friends somewhere and these people cannot be replaced. Yet we continue to be enriched by new friendships, new cultures, new lives. I have absolutely no regret: I love the law and I know that the UN is the right place for me to practice it.

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**Mona Ali Khalil**  
**Senior Legal Officer - Office of the Legal Counsel - UN Office of Legal Affairs**

I joined the UN Office of the Legal Counsel in 1993 through the National Competitive Exam (NCE, now known as the Young Professionals Programme, or YPP) after obtaining my B.A. in International Relations and Masters in Middle East Studies from Harvard University as well as my Masters in Foreign Service and Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University. Between 1993 and 2005, my work involved providing regular advice on questions arising under public international law, ensuring respect for the rules of procedure of the meetings of the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations including the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as an appearance before the International Court of Justice in a landmark case. From 2005-2009, I was seconded to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna where I also provided advice on a broad range of public international law issues including the Board of Governors resolutions and Security Council sanctions as well as on nuclear security and counter-terrorism. I returned to the United Nations Office of the Legal Counsel in late 2009 where I am serving as the team leader on UN peacekeeping and Security Council sanctions, including the UN counter-terrorism regime.

Two or three out of five days of the week, my day begins with a task force meeting on one or more of the many UN peacekeeping missions. These meetings are usually conducted by video teleconference and include representatives from all relevant UN departments, our counterparts in the field as well as actors from the broader UN family such as UNDP and UNICEF in New York, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and the World Food Programme in Rome. These weekly meetings are intended to coordinate a unified response to current issues confronting the missions and ensuring that all actors are fully informed of all developments and any decision-making in this regard. The issues raised range from purely operational issues to legal, political or policy issues. The legal issues can be as simple as confirming the mandate or privileges and immunities of the mission concerned or as sensitive as advising on the use of force by the military component of a particular mission.



At least one day of the week, I usually start my day with my colleagues in the Department of Political Affairs either advising on legal issues arising from the work of the various sanctions regimes or briefing the independent experts serving on the various bodies mandated by the Security Council to investigate individuals and entities for violations of those sanctions regimes. The nature of such advice ranges from ensuring a consistent understanding of their mandate; sensitizing them to evidentiary standards and due process requirements; protecting their status, privileges and immunities; and ensuring proper cooperation with Member States and respect for confidentiality obligations. The sanction regimes themselves also vary from counter-terrorism sanctions against Al-Qaeda and the Taleban to counter-proliferation sanctions against the DPRK and Iran as well as targeted sanctions regimes against public and private individuals and entities violating the regimes in certain countries, including Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Eritrea, Liberia, the DRC and Cote d'Ivoire.

Before going to lunch, I try to return as many phone calls and emails as I can. These can be to colleagues in the Office, counterparts in other departments or to Member States. In this connection, I should note that, as a matter of principle and long-standing policy, the Office of the Legal Counsel does not provide individual Member States with substantive legal opinions. To ensure its own impartiality and to respect the sovereign equality of Member States, such advice is only given at the request of a competent intergovernmental organ or its presiding officer. In that way, all Member States get the same advice at the same time. This policy does not preclude the Office from providing Member States factual or procedural information.

The lunch break is a rather generous one at the UN to afford time for working lunches between colleagues and/or between Secretariat officials and representatives of Member States. I usually have lunch around 1:30 and at least one working lunch a week. On the other days, I make a point of getting out of the office with friends or colleagues for at least an hour as the worst thing as far as I am concerned is eating at my desk. I find that a proper break rejuvenates me both physically and intellectually.

As I have meetings in the late morning, I try to avoid scheduling regular meetings in the afternoon. From 3:00-8:00 pm, I field calls and prepare drafts of written legal opinions for the Assistant Secretary-General or Under-Secretary-General's signature in response to requests from or through the Secretary-General or other USGs and ASGs. Whenever the requests are informal or at the working level, I provide legal advice directly to my counterparts by phone or email. Such advice may relate to one or more of the following:

- questions relating to the interpretation and application of the Charter of the United Nations, other international conventions and Security Council or General Assembly resolutions;
- interpretation of the mandate of peacekeeping operations and sanctions mechanisms as established by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council;
- the preparation, negotiation and implementation of agreements with host countries and troop contributing countries concerning the status and privileges and immunities of operations and missions as well as of the basic legal instruments governing their activities;
- the rules of engagement for the use of force by peacekeeping forces and advice on compliance therewith and with international humanitarian law;
- criminal accountability and conduct and discipline of peacekeeping personnel, including for sexual exploitation and abuse and other violations of human rights;
- the legal aspects of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the counter-terrorism sanctions regimes including assistance to the Ombudperson;

- legal aspects of ad hoc political or policy questions.

During the course of the day, my colleagues and I may be called in by the Assistant Secretary-General and sometimes also by the Under Secretary-General to discuss the implications of more complex or sensitive issues. Such discussions are often based on briefing notes which we each prepare for the ASG or USG on the subjects within our respective competencies and are followed by talking points or full written statements which we also prepare for the USG or ASG with a view to conveying the legal advice concisely to the SG or to the relevant intergovernmental organ.

If I foresee that I need to work beyond 9:00 pm, I try to leave the office for a short dinner or drinks with friends and return to the office thereafter. It is very important to maintain a reasonable balance between work and personal life so as to ensure that neither suffers.

Upon returning to the office, I dispose of all remaining working level or email inquiries which do not require the USG or ASG's approval. I have a personal policy of responding to all phone calls and emails within the same day of receipt so this self-imposed deadline regularly keeps me in the office until midnight. With few exceptions, I am usually home in time to catch up on the news and watch the second airing of the Daily Show with Jon Stewart, in my view, one of the best commentators on current events in today's media. Along with an equally necessary daily dose of Stephen Colbert, I find that the comic relief is good therapy and allows me to return to the heavy matters of the next day with a lighter spirit. I find that taking the time to keep an eye on the "real world" gives perspective to my work at the United Nations and allows me to gauge where we have made a difference and where we have failed to do so.

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**David Marshall, LL.M '02**  
**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

David Marshall, LL.M '02, works for the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York. David grew up in Canada and studied law in the United Kingdom at the University of Leeds. After graduation, he passed the Bar in London and then in New York. He is also a member of the US Supreme Court Bar.

After working at The Hong Kong Bank for a year, David returned to the London Bar to practice criminal law, primarily defense work, including drug trafficking, sexual offences and murder cases.

His path to the UN began in the early 1990s, when he wrote an article for the London-based *New Law Journal* about civil rights legend and defense counsel William Kunstler and his involvement in the case of Leonard Peltier, a Native American who was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences in 1977 for the murder of two FBI officials. Amnesty International – International Secretariat, which disputed the fairness of Peltier's trial read David's article and asked him to work with Amnesty International on Peltier's clemency position filed in 1992 with President Bush. Interestingly, the head of David's Barrister's Chambers in London, Sir David Cocks Q.C., had drafted the previous Amnesty International clemency petition for Mr. Peltier. Following this work, David began *pro bono* work for Amnesty International while also continuing his defense practice. His

*pro bono* work focused on US criminal justice issues and trial monitoring. He also began representing death row defendants from the Caribbean before the UK Privy Council (at that time, the final court of appeal for a number of Caribbean States). In 1993, David joined the Executive Committee of the Bar of England and Wales Human Rights Committee, undertaking a mission to Texas to explore the administration of the death penalty.

In 1994, David was recruited to assist in the clemency petition of Nicholas Ingram, a UK national on death row in Georgia, US. Co-counseling with Clive Stafford-Smith, Director of the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center (LCAC), David co-represented Mr. Ingram at the clemency hearing, which was unsuccessful. Mr. Ingram was executed by electric chair in April 1995. David then joined LCAC, providing legal services to persons charged with capital murder in Louisiana, eventually moving to Austin, Texas to represent persons in State post-conviction proceedings. His work in New Orleans and Austin involved undertaking investigations of allegations against clients, preparing for preliminary hearings and drafting pre-trial memoranda. He would travel to death row to visit clients in Angola, LA and Huntsville, TX once a month. This work also involved meaningful communication with family members, visiting them at home and taking them to the prison for family visits.

During this time, David had been added to a list of criminal justice experts being compiled by the Canadian government. In 1999 he was asked to serve as legal advisor in the human rights pillar of the UN Mission in Kosovo. He spent two years in Kosovo as head of the legal systems monitoring team, and then spent a year earning his LL.M at Harvard. David then served as the Senior Legal Advisor in the Canadian Department of Justice's International Cooperation Section, primarily working on justice reform in Afghanistan. The work on Afghanistan, in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs, explored ways to strengthen both the Legal Drafting Unit within the Ministry of Justice in Kabul and the Afghan Human Rights Commission (HRC). David was responsible for overseeing the production of a fair trials manual for the HRC.

Just over a decade ago David joined the UN/OHCHR as a P-4 level Criminal Procedure Advisor, based in their Headquarters in Geneva. There he led the development of major policy materials on rule of law in post-conflict states and the development of indicators to measure reform of justice institutions (prisons, police and the judicial system). In 2006 he was transferred to New York, where he provides law and policy advice to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights.

His work often takes him to the field for three months to a year. In 2003, David was Team Leader to the UN/World Bank Rule of Law assessment of Iraq. The team was responsible for assessing the state of 'justice' in Iraq, which involved meeting with national legal actors, including the Chief Justice, and civil society.

He was the acting Legal Advisor to the OHCHR Special Envoy on Darfur (2005), served as acting Legal Adviser to the head of OHCHR Nepal (2007), and was the senior Human Rights Advisor to the head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (2007-08). All these positions relate to the provision of human rights legal advice to UN officials and in some instances, the government. In Nepal, David drafted the UN's position on the draft truth commission law that was provided to the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation. In Kosovo, he provided the UN's position on a draft right to assemble law.

More recently David was appointed as the first head of a new justice team within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity, and in that role, was deployed to South Sudan as the acting Director of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Support Office, responsible for developing the

strategy for the UN's work on rule of law reform. Within days of arriving, he was responsible for providing the UN's response to the government's criminal justice and legal aid strategies. Given the UN mandate to support an improvement in the prisons, he would undertake weekly visits to the country's ten state prisons, examining conditions of detention and identifying persons who were held arbitrarily. He also worked with the Chief Justice in identifying law and practice reform priorities.

David has returned to NY, where his primary focus is on death penalty issues, leading OHCHR's advocacy and policy campaign for the abolition of the death penalty. He is organizing for UN Member States, a series of 'knowledge events' on the death penalty, focusing on wrongful convictions, deterrence and discrimination. These events bring leading international experts to the UN to meet with Member States to meaningfully discuss human rights dimensions to the application of the death penalty. The outcome of this thematic focus will be a publication in 2014 that David will draft, which will be presented to the UN Member States in the fall of 2014, prior to the UN debate on the Death Penalty Moratorium Resolution.

Headquarters work is significantly different from that in the field. David states it is heavily process-driven, with a cacophony of task forces and working groups and little engagement with the realities in the field, where your daily engagement is with actual stakeholders.

David concedes that his work has, at times, been difficult, dangerous, and requires personal sacrifice. He was in the UN building in Baghdad that was bombed in August 2003, killing 21 of his colleagues. His trips to challenging duty stations, he says, only become harder with time. Nevertheless, David finds liberation working in the field since this is where the UN should be at its best, trying to make a real difference in the lives of people.

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### **Andra Nicoara '97**

#### **Senior Legal Officer – General Legal Division – Office of Legal Affairs**

For better or worse, my interest in law and human rights was born of deep, personal experience, forever colored by living my formative years in Ceausescu's totalitarian Romania.

My family's arrival to the United States provided me not only with safe haven, but also with the opportunity to pursue my very personal interest in human rights on an academic and professional level. As an undergraduate at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, I was immediately drawn to international relations, and recall spending many nights re-learning the history of the Western world, from a non-Marxist perspective, as well as *Das Kapital*, from a Western one. I combined my studies with hands on, practical experience, such as volunteering for AYUDA, a non-profit organization which advocates for and defends the legal and human rights of low-income Latino and other immigrant communities in the Washington, D.C. area.

Subsequent to graduating from Georgetown, I worked for USAID, organizing and setting up programs in the fields of democratic institution building, human rights and economic restructuring for Eastern European professionals, after the fall of the Iron Curtain. While pursuing my J.D. at Harvard Law School, I co-founded Students Concerned about the War in Bosnia, and served as editor on the Human Rights Journal. Moreover, as an HLS Human Rights Program Summer Fellow, I interned at the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva,

where I assisted in editing the report of the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, and intervened on behalf of lawyers and judges persecuted in their native countries on account of their political and/or social stances.

Contrary to popular belief, joining the international arbitration/litigation department of a large New York law firm subsequent to graduating from law school did not prove homicidal to my public interest work. On the contrary, it armed me with the tools – sound research, writing and oral advocacy skills – necessary to be an effective lawyer. While an associate, I took on a variety of pro bono projects, and I regard my successfully appealing several asylum cases before the Board of Immigration Appeals as some of my most significant accomplishments to date.

My full-fledged transition to the public international legal arena occurred in 2001, when I joined the United Nations, thus fulfilling a life-long goal. During the past twelve years, I have worked in the General Legal Division (GLD), Office of Legal Affairs. As its name intimates, GLD is responsible for providing general legal services and support to all parts of the United Nations in the day-to-day administration of their mandates and programmes. GLD services not only the UN Headquarters, but also UN offices and duty stations located away from Headquarters, peacekeeping operations around the world and the separately administered Funds and Programmes, such as UNDP and UNICEF. We regard ourselves as global firefighters.

During my career in OLA, I have been involved in and provided advice on a smorgasbord of different matters, which have ranged from representing the United Nations in several commercial arbitrations (with venues of arbitration ranging from Yemen to New York) and the Secretary-General in exceptional oral hearings before the UN Administrative Tribunal, to advising on matters related to the privileges, immunities and the legal status of the United Nations pursuant to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, and negotiating substantial contracts (e.g., fuel-support, food rations and tented camp services) for our peace-keeping, observer and humanitarian missions, as well as the historic renovation of the UN Headquarters Complex (i.e., the Capital Master Plan). I have also represented OLA before various internal UN bodies, such as the Headquarters Committee on Contracts,<sup>5</sup> the Advisory Board on Compensation Claims,<sup>6</sup> and the Visa Committee.<sup>7</sup>

Most recently, I have been co-heading the legal cluster that handles, inter-alia, UN public-private sector partnerships and advises on events featuring and promoting UN Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace. In this capacity, I have negotiated collaboration agreements with the private sector (e.g., consulting, publishing and record companies) and NGOs benefitting such events as the Rio + 20 Conference on Sustainable Development, advised on intellectual property issues such as the use of the UN name and emblem as well as on framework agreements between the UN and various governments concerning UN conferences such as the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, and counseled the UN Funds and Programmes in connection with their fundraising and operational activities in the economic, social and humanitarian fields. I have also served as GLD's focal point on issues related to the UN's employment of social media, and have been representing the UN in the coalition of the International Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) established to protect the IGO names and acronyms against inappropriate third-party registration in the expanding Domain Name System administered by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

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<sup>5</sup> A committee composed of senior UN officials which renders advice to the Under-Secretary-General for Management on actions leading to the award or amendment of procurement contracts.

<sup>6</sup> A joint staff and management board that advises on workers compensation related claims.

<sup>7</sup> A committee that advises on issues related to the visa status of non-United States staff members serving in the United States, and liaises with the host country authorities.

As may be gleaned from the above, I have successfully escaped absolute specialization in any particular area as well as the dreaded pigeonholing that, in my opinion, serves as the main cause of professional boredom and early mid-life crisis. I intend to carry on as a creative generalist – at least for now.

## **ADDITIONAL JOB SEARCH RESOURCES**

### ***UN Careers***

General information about employment at the UN and links to specific hiring programs are available at <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx>.

### ***US Department of State***

The US State Department provides information on employment opportunities at the UN and other international organizations for US citizens. Visit <http://intlorganizationjobs.state.gov/iva/default.aspx> and click on *Internship Links*.

### ***UN Job List***

The UN Job List (<http://unjoblist.org/>) is an unofficial site that automatically compiles vacancies from UN organizations. You can filter the list by duty station or organization, or you can do a more specific advanced search. You can also sign up for email alerts based on your search criteria. Because this list is unofficial, you should confirm the authenticity and accuracy of any job postings in which you are interested. There is no official site that compiles job opportunities from all UN organizations (each organization posts its own vacancies), so UN Job List may be a useful search tool and time saver, especially if you are interested in more than one UN organization.

### ***International Civil Service Commission (ISIC) – Jobnet***

The ICSC (<https://jobs.unicsc.org/>), an independent expert body established by the United Nations General Assembly, is responsible for regulating and coordinating employment in the UN common system. It provides links to job opportunities in the UN System and other international organizations.

### ***A Guide to a Career with the United Nations***

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has published a guide, similar to this one, that details the structure of the UN and employment opportunities. In particular, this guide provides more detailed explanations of hiring levels, pay, and other technical or administrative aspects of hiring. It also provides in-depth information on opportunities with the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Children’s Fund, and United Nations Volunteers. In addition, this guide provides UN resume guidelines and sample application forms. [http://esa.un.org/techcoop/associateexperts/APPLICANTS/Guide\\_to\\_employment/unpan000153.pdf](http://esa.un.org/techcoop/associateexperts/APPLICANTS/Guide_to_employment/unpan000153.pdf).

***Staff Recruitment in United Nations System Organizations***

In 2012 the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System published a review of the recruitment systems at UN system organizations. This publication offers an in-depth, technical perspective on UN hiring. While the publication does not offer tips on how to get hired, it provides an insider's perspective on hiring mechanisms.

[https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU\\_REP\\_%202012\\_4\\_English.pdf](https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_%202012_4_English.pdf)