**OVERVIEW**

The International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) advances the protection and realization of human rights around the world while training the next generation of advocates. The Clinic serves as partner and legal advisor to a wide range of human rights and civil rights organizations in the United States and globally. Working closely with clinical supervisors, students take the lead on lawyering and advocating for human rights across a range of thematic and geographic areas, using a variety of skills that reflect the diverse modes of human rights practice. More information is available on our website, https://humanrightsclinic.law.harvard.edu.

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| **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED** | Fall or Spring |
| **CLINICAL COURSE COMPONENT** | Fall: Human Rights Advocacy or Introduction to Human Rights in the Middle East and North AfricaSpring: Human Rights Advocacy or Armed Conflict and Humanitarian Protection |
| **COURSE CREDITS** | 2 classroom credits |
| **CLINICAL CREDITS** | 3, 4 or 5 clinical credits |
| **LOCATION** | HLS (with travel opportunities) |
| **REGISTRATION TYPE** | Helios |

**TYPES OF CASES/CLIENTS/PROJECTS**

IHRC’s docket draws on clinicians’ established expertise and networks in six broad areas, while remaining dynamic and responsive to emerging needs and the evolving field. Our primary areas of work are: (1) accountability and remedies; (2) armed conflict & civilian protection; (3) climate justice & the environment; (4) gender, race & non-discrimination; (5) protecting fundamental freedoms; and (6) social & economic justice. Examples of projects from 2022-2023 include:

* Advocating for access to remedies for communities whose rights are violated in the name of aid. IHRC traveled to Kosovo to release our report on the need for remedies for Roma communities who suffered severe lead poisoning in displacement camps managed by the UN after the Kosovo war. The UN spent years evading claims for compensation. Eventually its own Human Rights Advisory Panel issued a decision calling for reparations, yet the UN has ignored the decision. Students are working with civil society partners and UN experts to implement advocacy strategies, conducting outreach to UN member states, high-level officials, and the media.
* Spearheading, in partnership with Human Rights Watch, international campaigns to ban cluster munitions, landmines, and nuclear weapons; negotiate a new treaty on autonomous weapons systems (“killer robots”); control the arms trade; strengthen international law on incendiary weapons; and develop new commitments on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and on toxic remnants of war. Students released a report on humanitarian disarmament and traveled to Dublin for the signing ceremony of a Declaration to better protect civilians from bombing and shelling in cities and towns, which the IHRC has worked on for more than a decade.
* Documenting how climate change amplifies unequal enjoyment of the right to water in Delhi, India. Carrying forward fact-finding begun in 2020, IHRC will soon publish a report arguing that failure to adequately protect and expand the water supply in Delhi disproportionately exposes marginalized communities to the negative consequences of climate change and falls short of international human rights legal commitments. The report is the first time that an existing methodology for proving systemic social and economic rights violations has been utilized to document the unequal harms of climate change.
* Amplifying and supporting local and regional-led advocacy to reform Muslim family laws, a system that governs all aspects of women’s private lives. In collaboration with Musawah, a pioneering regional movement for justice and equality in the Muslim family, student teams have developed a comprehensive analytical guide to Muslim family laws, which mapped legislation, case law, policies, and practices across 31 Muslim majority and minority

countries. Students also drafted submissions to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), advocating for reform of a range of gender-discriminatory laws and practices across the MENA region.

* Investigating forced labor, torture, extrajudicial killings, exploitation, and environmental damage in the seafood supply chain, as well as retaliation against independent monitors surveying this work in West Africa and Southeast Asia. IHRC and its partners are conducting legal and factual research and preparing a complaint in anticipation of launching litigation against a major retailer to ensure corporate accountability for these abuses.
* Leading efforts to create a new global treaty through the UN General Assembly to delegitimize and ultimately end international trade in law enforcement equipment, devices, and weapons used for torture or other ill-treatment. Although international law provides a right to be free from torture and other ill-treatment, international trade in law enforcement equipment is largely unregulated. In partnership with Amnesty International, the Center for Victims of Torture, and the Omega Research Foundation, IHRC is supporting an emerging global network of organizations calling for a treaty. IHRC and its partners have published guidance on essential elements of a Torture-Free Trade Treaty and seen our views reflected in authoritative UN reports.

**SKILLS**

The specific skills you will develop depend on your project.

Examples of clinical work include:

* Undertaking legal or factual research and analysis;
* Writing memos, legal briefs, treaty-body submissions, and advocacy or policy reports;
* Developing and presenting training or advocacy materials;
* Fact-finding by interviewing experts, witnesses, or survivors of human rights abuse;
* Engaging with partner organizations about research findings and developing strategy;
* Participating in convenings, hearings, or diplomatic meetings;
* Formulating and implementing legal or advocacy strategies.

**TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE**

There is no typical day in our clinic and no one-size-fits-all approach to our clinical work. Assignments and tasks can vary significantly. For example, in any given week students may be undertaking some combination of legal and factual research on specific topics, producing drafts of work product for a partner organization to review or for public release (before a court, treaty-body, or for the media), preparing to conduct or conducting interviews with experts and witnesses, and meeting with the partner organization.

Students and clinicians work collaboratively and are in regular contact. Students can expect to have at least one meeting with their entire project team and supervisor each week and some combination of smaller meetings, one-on-one conversations, and other interactions with their teammates, supervisor, and the partner organization. Team meetings are a chance for the team to check in, share and discuss the substance of their work, revise workplans, set new tasks, and reflect on their contributions and the direction of the project as a whole. At these meetings, the team will usually discuss the work the team completed the prior week, any challenges or questions that have arisen, and exchange feedback and ideas, before assessing the workplan going forward and distributing assignments. It is not uncommon for students to submit a written work product most weeks, in advance of the next team meeting. Team meetings may also cover broader strategic and ethical questions about a project, or involve discussions with the partner organization. Between weekly team meetings, students will likely complete some combination of tasks involving research, analysis, writing, planning, and coordinating with your teammates.