



Human Rights Institute
GEORGETOWN LAW



GEORGETOWN LAW
Graduate Career and Professional Development

Human Rights Career Guide

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The Human Rights Institute (HRI)

The Office of Public Interest and Community Service (OPICS)

The Office of Graduate Programs: Career and Professional Development (GCPD)

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An Introduction to the Field of Human Rights Lawyering

What is human rights law? Human rights might be defined with reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as a body of international treaties (and thus international law) that reflects a global consensus that individuals are the subjects of international law and the bearers of a range of fundamental rights. These treaties include the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, treaties that prohibit racial discrimination and disappearances, and treaties that protect the rights of migrant workers, women, children, and persons with disabilities. But this definition is an overly narrow view of the field.

Human rights law also includes regional treaties and bodies like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (based in Washington); specialized areas of law, like those protecting the rights of refugees and the rights of workers; and bodies of law that protect human rights in very specific contexts, like in situations of armed conflict, in humanitarian emergencies, in the contexts of international development assistance, in the global economy, or while countering terrorism. Indeed, some of the rules regulating war are among the oldest bodies of international law, some of the treaties protecting labor rights are older than the human rights treaties listed above, and rules creating individual responsibility under international criminal law are among the newest. Human rights law also includes domestic local, state, and federal statutory and constitutional laws that can be enforced in ways that respect, protect, and fulfill human rights obligations (and through which international law is implemented). A broad description of human rights gives a much more complete picture of the field!

What does it mean to be a human rights lawyer? Being a human rights lawyer might be defined with regard to a practice that predominantly relies on the core set of international treaties referenced in the narrow description of the field above. But that is too limited. Many of the practices of human rights lawyers – including lawyers trained at Georgetown – draw even more from many other areas of international and domestic law. Indeed, some human rights lawyers rely almost entirely on domestic law, such as local ordinances, state constitutions, or even administrative regulations, to protect human rights.

The most common methodologies used by human rights lawyers are impact litigation, fact-finding, legal and policy advocacy, and direct service representation. Human rights lawyers also work within governments and international institutions to develop or implement human rights law, policy, or programs; teach and train other lawyers; organize communities; and do academic research.

Because there is no single way to practice human rights law, there is no set path into the field. The human rights field can be competitive, and it can take a lot of patience and creativity to become a human rights lawyer. But there are always openings to pursue new opportunities and break new ground. And it can be a wonderful and fulfilling way to use a law degree to pursue work in the public interest!

How Georgetown Can Help You

There are a number of entities on campus engaged in human rights work and advising, including the Human Rights Institute, the Office of Public Interest and Community Services and the Office of Graduate Programs Career Graduate Career and Professional Development.

The Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute (HRI)

As the focal point of human rights at Georgetown Law, the mission of the Human Rights Institute (HRI) is to promote understanding of and respect for human rights and the practice of human rights law, and to develop Georgetown Law's place as a global leader in human rights. This includes supporting and advising the work of OPICS and GCPD and, when appropriate, consulting individually with JD and LL.M. students as well as alumni. HRI also works to build relationships with practitioners and alumni interested in hosting Georgetown students and alumni in internships and externships, fellowships, and as full time human rights lawyers.

HRI collaborates with the student group Human Rights Action/Amnesty International (HRA/AI) to run the annual Human Rights Associates Program, which gives students the opportunity to learn about the human rights field and to network with human rights practitioners through a speaker series, which includes sessions focused on professional development. Students who participate in human rights work with HRI – through its Fact-Finding Project and its Law & Policy Advocacy Project – often develop close relationships with practitioners through the work involved. Finally, HRI hosts conferences and events each year that provide students with opportunities to learn about cutting-edge human rights issues, and to network with practitioners.

The Office of Public Interest and Community Service (OPICS)

Advice on human rights for JD students and alumni starts at the Office of Public Interest and Community Service (OPICS). OPICS specializes in advising JD students interested in pursuing public interest careers. OPICS can help JDs think about the human rights sectors, methodologies, and issue areas that might be good matches with candidates' knowledge, skills, and experience. OPICS has strong connections with many human rights alumni practitioners in the field and can help strategize about career paths and make connections with these practitioners. OPICS can also help develop fellowship projects and proposals and advise students regarding organizational sponsors. Note that counselors in the Office of Career Services can also advise students seeking private sector human rights opportunities (discussed on page 19 below).

Each year, OPICS (and the OCS) host the International Internship Program (IIP) that provides JD students with the opportunity to obtain summer internships with around 60

organizations all over the world, in both the private and public sectors, including many entities that focus on human rights (recent examples have included The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Bar Association, the International Organization for Migration, and the International Labour Organization, among others). OPICS also works with students to help them find other internship opportunities abroad. Throughout the academic year, OPICS collects resumes and conducts on-campus interviews for domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies with human rights-oriented missions (recent examples have included CASA of Maryland, Freedom Now, the Department of State, and the departments of Homeland Security and of Health and Human Services, the Washington, DC Office of Civil Rights – and these are just a few examples of the kinds of organizations represented at OPICS’ recruitment and networking programs). To learn more about these and other human rights-oriented employers, JD students are encouraged to meet with OPICS counselors.

Office of Graduate Programs: Graduate Career and Professional Development (GCPD)

LL.M. students and alumni interested in the field of human rights should meet with a member of GCPD. GCPD specializes in advising LL.M. students. GCPD can help LL.M. students and alumni think about the human rights sectors, methodologies, and issue areas that might be good matches with a student’s knowledge, skills, and experience. GCPD has connections with human rights alumni and other practitioners in the field and can work with students to network and connect with these alumni and practitioners. Typically, each year GCPD invites human rights alumni and practitioners to campus to speak to current LL.M. students interested in this area. In addition, a number of LL.M. students participate in externships in the human rights area during their degree program.

The Office of Graduate Programs compiles a Database of “pre-approved” LL.M. externship opportunities. Students interested in the human rights field should check this Database for opportunities in this area. For more information about the externship program and to view the Database, please see the Resource List (on page 21 below). Graduate Career and Professional Development has also compiled a Human Rights Career Planning Compendium for LL.M. students. This compendium includes an array of resources within the practice of human rights and is a great starting point in the search for employment in the human rights field. Also see the Resource List for this Compendium.

Tips for Strategically Planning a Human Rights Career

How should a future human rights lawyer conceptualize career planning? As with any field, most human rights lawyers will tell you that a little bit of serendipity paved their path into the field. But in spite of the role of chance in any career, taking a strategic approach to human rights career planning can help maximize your luck. When planning courses, internships, and externships, or plotting a career path, it can be useful to conceptually divide the field by sector (what type of employers?), methodology (what kind of work?) and issue area (what focus area or topic?). When exploring various sectors, methodologies, and issue areas in the field, it can also be helpful to think about the knowledge, skills, experience, and connections that can be developed at the Law Center (and after graduation) to help bridge the gap from Georgetown into the field.

What is the best way to approach human rights career planning? First, job-seekers have to do their homework. That means spending time researching and exploring sectors, methodologies, and issue areas. Focus on what kinds of jobs are available (and have recently been available); study job postings and staff biographies to see what past experiences are desired or common, what skills are required or prioritized; understand the types of networks that might help forge connections with potential colleagues and hiring decision-makers; and discover the types of specialized legal and policy knowledge implicated by the work.

As this landscape comes into focus, it is important to think about both passion and narrative. Human rights employers generally want to see passionate applicants – they want to know a candidate is going to invest in an area of work and pursue it with zeal. So if a candidate cannot get excited about a particular issue, methodology, or employer, that area might not be worth pursuing. Employers also want to understand – in a cover letter and in an interview – how a position fits into a particular candidate’s career path narrative.

Human rights job-seekers must be strategic in pursuing knowledge, skills, experience, and connections. Job-seekers should seek to be able to craft a passionate narrative about a job in one area while also being able to re-frame their profile to be competitive for a very different post in the future. It is worth thinking about the passionate story or stories that can be told about a path to and through the human rights field (now, or in 6 months or 5 years). Fortunately, obtaining knowledge, skills, experience, and connections that are relevant to one particular sector, a specific methodology, or a discrete issue can also be relevant and useful to other sectors, methodologies, or issues. There are few better places than Georgetown Law or Washington, DC to pursue these *bona fides*. And, of course, knowledge, skills, experience, and connections developed *before or outside of* law school can also be valuable assets!

Below is a non-exhaustive list of tactics worth considering days, months, and years before a job search while pursuing human rights knowledge, skills, experience, and connections:

Obtaining Knowledge

Human rights employers generally seek to hire attorneys with significant relevant knowledge of the law and policy issues implicated by their work. Having studied or written on an issue or otherwise having substantive knowledge and expertise is a valuable asset.

- Take courses, seminars, or Continuing Legal Education (CLE) classes related to sectors, methodologies, and issues of interest.
- Read at least most of one newspaper and parts of other newspapers related to sectors, methodologies, and issues of interest *every day*, including the opinion pages. Having a sense of trends in current affairs can help you identify new opportunities for work and anticipate hiring demands.
- Follow blogs, press releases, and tweets related to sectors, methodologies, and issues of interest, particularly those published by organizations or individuals who are leaders in the field. It is hard to be perceived as knowledgeable unless you can frame your insights in the language used by insiders and know what is going on, including what does not make the papers.
- Read academic journals and books related to sectors, methodologies, and issues of interest (and not just those written by lawyers – multi-disciplinary knowledge can be a useful asset in the human rights field!). History and context is a prerequisite for good human rights work. Note: regional or country expertise and knowledge can be a huge asset (if a lawyer cannot point to Cote d’Ivoire on a map, a position handling Cote d’Ivoire research or advocacy at a major human rights organization is not a likely match – this is one place where experience before and outside of law school can help!).
- Seek opportunities and experiences at the Law Center. Become a research assistant to a professor, Center, or Institute focusing on human rights law. Learn from and with the experts in the field.
- Get published. Seek courses that focus on developing writing skills. Take a clinic or practicum that involves publication. Write a course paper and turn it into a journal note or article (or just write an article). Write a blog post on the same topic. Write an Op Ed or Letter to the Editor in a newspaper. If you follow and spot the trends, your written work is more likely to be picked up and you will be a more competitive job applicant.
- Practice public speaking. Speak at a conference. Seek out opportunities to present your research and to speak authoritatively on your topic(s) of interest.

Developing Skills

Human rights employers are not usually able to invest in training new attorneys, so they generally seek to hire attorneys who already have the skills they will need to succeed.

- Take a practicum or clinic that focuses on developing specific skills required in sectors, for methodologies, or related to issues of interest.
- Volunteer, or get a job, externship, or internship that relies on (and/or teaches) the skill or skills required in the sectors, for methodologies, or related to issues of interest. A clear demonstration of specific skills is a major asset in the human rights field.
- Pursue other opportunities to gain, hone, or demonstrate skills. Some of the skills most highly prized in the human rights sector are:
 - Language fluency (having some language skills is better than having none at all, but if you are not conversationally fluent, consider taking language courses or finding opportunities to regularly speak or write in another language to build or keep your skills strong).
 - Client and witness interview skills (including with survivors of trauma and abuse).
 - Skills working with other people (including individuals, such as clients, as well as groups, such as coalition partners or grass roots organizations).
 - Skills specific to litigation (such as taking a deposition).
 - Legal research and writing skills.
 - Non-legal research and writing skills.
 - Time/project/work-flow management skills.
 - Public speaking skills.
 - Skill at working independently and as part of a team.

Gaining Experience

Human rights employers often seek very particular experiences in attorneys. The most sought-after experience can vary considerably depending on the sector, methodology, and issue area involved.

- Volunteer, or get a job, externship, or internship that gives you experience in sectors of interest. Exposure can be the most powerful source of knowledge, skills, and connections; for some employers, practical experience in a particular context is considered a prerequisite.
- Take a practicum or clinic that provides experience relevant to sectors, methodologies, or issues of interest.
- Seek out opportunities to gain or demonstrate experience. Some of the experience/s most highly prized in the human rights field are:
 - Experience doing field work in a difficult context (such as a conflict zone or a detention facility or a refugee camp).
 - Experience using relevant skills (especially language skills or litigation skills).
 - Experience using the core human rights methodologies – impact litigation, fact-finding, legal and policy advocacy, and direct service representation.
 - Experience working with particularly vulnerable populations, such as survivors of trauma and abuse.

- o Strategic planning experience, including human rights project planning.
- o Experience working with journalists or as a journalist.
- o Experience working with foundations and fundraising.

Making Connections

For those seeking employment in the human rights field, there is no substitute for a network. Reputation matters and the human rights community is a small one (a good impression now can pay dividends in five years). A direct recommendation from a close colleague is often given more weight than any recommendation letter. Every employer's goal is to hire excellent people with the knowledge, skills, and experience to do the job from day one. Making the right connections can help secure an interview when a resume might otherwise have been passed over, or enable a job seeker to learn of a position that may not otherwise have been publicly posted. And since most human rights work is done in coalition with other groups, a good network can also amplify impact down the road.

- Seek out new contacts. Do research to understand where a given contact fits into the field and how they relate to your interests. Google everyone (many are on LinkedIn). Figure out with whom your new or existing connections might be connected (former colleague? Law school classmate? Co-counsel on a case five years ago? Testified together at the UN?). Making connections in the human rights world is much closer than 'six degrees of separation'!
- Set up informational meetings (also known as informational interviews). Getting to know current and future colleagues in the human rights field through informational meetings about their work is a great idea – particularly as far as possible (months, years) before a job search. Informational meetings can also be used in connection with other tactics, like gathering knowledge for a piece or writing or planning a human rights project.
- Take courses, seminars, or CLEs related to sectors, methodologies, and issues of interest – and then get to know the professors, guest speakers, and presenters.
- Take a practicum or clinic that will create opportunities to network while doing human rights work.
- Volunteer, or get a job, externship, or internship that connects you to practitioners. Sometimes older practitioners who are not currently at the epicenter have incredible networks and insight; similarly, junior attorneys who are not currently at the epicenter might be the ones making the (hiring) decisions in a few months or years.
- Ask professors at the Law Center to connect you to organizations they work or worked with to have an informational meeting or to learn more about the chance to apply for jobs, fellowships, internships, and externships.
- Go to, volunteer for, organize, or speak at panels and events related to sectors, methodologies, and issues of interest and get to know the speakers and presenters; note the people who attend related events and get to know them too. In cities like Washington, DC, there are many human rights lawyers at organizations across a range

of sectors. Getting to know people at different levels of various sectorial hierarchies can help in different ways – finding out how to schedule an informational meeting, making sure a resume gets read, or identifying who will be making a hiring decision (so you can determine with whom in your network they might be connected).

A final note on strategy: When strategically planning a human rights career, it is vital not to be stretched too thin when seeking to establish human rights knowledge, skills, experience and network *bona fides* -- it is important to avoid becoming so overcommitted that you end up with too little or too few of each! In career planning, as in practice, doing a small number of things very well can be a much more successful strategy than doing a large number of things poorly.

Human Rights Work by Sector

Human rights lawyers do human rights work in many different sectors. Within the discussions of each sector below there are some examples of methodologies and issue areas that human rights lawyers use and pursue in each sector and common strategies for entry into those sectors.

United Nations and other International and Intergovernmental Organizations

Entities such as the UN and other Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) are usually created by treaty or the actions of treaty-based organizations (such as the United Nations Security Council creating the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia). These entities are primarily funded by governments and have specific mandates set by the treaties and governments that establish their missions and the types of work that they conduct, which results in organizations with varied types of power and privileges, strengths, and limitations.

Where Lawyers Work

The most well-known IGO with lawyers on staff is the United Nation and its sub-entities, including the following:

- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (based in Geneva with field offices around the world)
- Human Rights Council & Mandates (Special Rapporteurships, etc.) (the Council is based in Geneva; Mandate-holders are based around the world)
- UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies (such as the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) (though they meet in Geneva, committee members are based around the world)
- UN Secretariat (based in New York with staff at other UN Offices/Missions)
- Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (based in New York with offices wherever there are UN peace-keeping operations)
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (based in Geneva with offices in New York)
- International Court of Justice (based in The Hague)
- Specialized Tribunals established under Security Council authority (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Special Tribunal for Lebanon, etc.) (the ICTY and STL are based in The Hague; the ICTR is based in Arusha)
- UN Specialized Agencies/Funds/Programs/Entities
 - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (based in Geneva with offices around the world)
 - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (based in New York with offices around the world)

- o United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (based in New York with offices around the world)
- o World Health Organization (WHO) (based in Geneva with offices around the world)
- o World Bank Group (based in Washington, DC)
- o International Labor Organization (ILO) (based in Geneva)

This list is far from exhaustive! Other well-known international/intergovernmental entities with positions for lawyers include the International Criminal Court (ICC) (based in The Hague) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (based in Geneva with field offices around the world).

Methodologies

Human rights lawyers working at international/intergovernmental entities use the full range of human rights methodologies. To contribute to impact litigation, lawyers at international/intergovernmental entities sometimes submit amicus briefs and engage with litigators to promote the development of jurisprudence protective of human rights in domestic, regional, and international courts and tribunals. There are also international courts and tribunals, which are venues for judicial and quasi-judicial dispute resolution. Attorneys working for international entities often carry out human rights fact-finding and assessments (ranging from reports on human rights conditions to fact-finding in support of international criminal prosecutions). Some international/intergovernmental entities have the authority to take actions or issue standards with normative force. Many international/intergovernmental entities engage in advocacy to promote compliance with law and policy as well as to promote the development of new law and policy. This occurs at the national, regional, and international level. Some international/intergovernmental entities run or manage humanitarian programs, including programs to provide direct services to individuals in need. Staff at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, for example, adjudicate tens of thousands of applications for refugee recognition from individuals fleeing persecution around the world each year.

Issue Areas

International/intergovernmental entities engage the full range of human rights issues, as well as the intersection of human rights and other issues, such as international peace and security (the core of the UN mandate). Many of these international/intergovernmental entities engage in particular issues or have offices or programs related to particular issues, for example: UNHCR focuses on refugee rights, UNICEF focuses on children's rights, and the WHO focuses on health and human rights.

Strategies for Entry

Students can intern with a variety of international/intergovernmental entities over the course of an academic year. For experience during the academic term, students must limit their internships and externships to entities with DC offices, such as the World Bank and UNHCR. (Note that interning at the World Bank can be incredibly difficult for JD students without significant prior experience or connections to the Bank.) In the summer, students often intern in the field offices or headquarters of international/intergovernmental entities, including various UNHCR regional offices around the world (some participate in the International Internship Program mentioned in the “How Georgetown Can Help” section above). Geneva and New York are the two cities where most international/intergovernmental entities with human rights mandates are based (with more based in Geneva than in New York). As a graduate, one direct entry point into the UN is through the UN Exam (the exam is not administered every year and only citizens of countries designated as under-represented at the UN are eligible). There are similar recruiting programs set up by particular international/intergovernmental entities, such as the World Bank, to recruit young professionals, but some of them have very restrictive hiring criteria (those with JD degrees are not eligible for all such programs). Additionally, some international/intergovernmental entities will “employ” students postgrad if they bring their own funding through a fellowship or other program. It is rare for an international organization to hire a JD directly upon graduation. More often than these direct routes, applicants are successful obtaining positions with international/intergovernmental entities like the UN or World Bank through circuitous paths. Such routes into these international/intergovernmental entities include programs like the "UN Volunteer Programs," set up to provide readily-available staffing, such as to field operations. Some organizations have ‘Roster’ programs to provide short-term staff to field operations with particular skills/characteristics. Most commonly, individuals pursue consultancies, which can be short- or long-term and range from filling in for a permanent staff member on leave, to developing a new area of work, to managing a particular project. Success in all of these avenues is enhanced if the applicant has work experience with the international/intergovernmental entity before applying.

Regional Human Rights Bodies

Like international entities, regional human rights bodies are created by treaty or the actions of treaty-based organizations, funded by governments, have specific mandates set by those treaties and governments, and have different powers, privileges, and limitations as a result.

Where Lawyers Work

Lawyers work for regional human rights bodies all over the world. Some examples include:

- Europe

- o Council of Europe (based in Strasbourg)
 - European Court of Human Rights
 - o Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (based in Vienna)
 - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
 - o European Union (EU) (based in Brussels, with missions around the world)
 - EU External Action Service (EU Foreign Policy)
 - European Commission (EU Executive/Civil Service)
 - o European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (based in London with many regional offices)
- The Americas
 - o Organization of American States (OAS) (Secretariat in Washington, DC)
 - Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (based in Washington, DC)
 - Inter-American Court of Human Rights (based in San Juan, Costa Rica)
 - o Inter-American Development Bank (based in Washington, DC with many regional offices)
- Africa
 - o African Union (based in Addis Ababa)
 - African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (based in Banjul)
 - African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (based in Arusha)
 - o African Development Bank (based in Abidjan but temporarily based in Tunis and with many regional offices)
- Asia
 - o Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (based in Jakarta)
 - ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission for Human Rights
 - o Asian Development Bank (based in Manila with many regional offices)

Methodologies

Human rights lawyers working at regional entities use a range of human rights methodologies, though fact-finding and legal and policy advocacy are most commonly used. Regional bodies sometimes engage in impact litigation, when they submit amicus briefs and engage with litigators to promote the development of jurisprudence protective of human rights in domestic, regional, and international courts and tribunals. There are also regional courts, tribunals, and commissions, which are venues for judicial and quasi-judicial dispute resolution. Regional entities often carry out human rights fact-finding and assessments (ranging from reports on human rights conditions in a particular country in the region to fact-finding in support of thematic reports by human rights bodies). Some regional entities conduct policy advocacy because they have the authority to take actions or issue standards with normative force. Many regional entities engage in advocacy to promote compliance with law and policy as well as to promote the development of new law and policy – at the

national, regional and international level. It is less common for regional entities to run or manage humanitarian programs that provide direct services that implicate human rights.

Issue Areas

Regional entities engage the full range of human rights issues. Some have offices or programs related to particular issues, for example: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), based in Washington, DC, has staff who support Rapporteurships on, among other things, the Rights of Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons; the Rights of Children; and the Rights of Migrants.

Strategies for Entry

Students can intern in the full range of regional entities over the course of their time at Georgetown. Students looking for externships during the academic year must stay in DC and can work for entities like the Inter-American Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the EU Delegation to the United States. Over the summer, students can intern in the field offices or headquarters of regional entities. Strategies for entry into a regional organization as a graduate are roughly the same as entry into international/intergovernmental entities, as described above.

International and Domestic Work for National Governments

Work for national governments implicates human rights in different ways, depending on the context, but often includes work in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Legislative work generally includes drafting and oversight of statutory regimes governing (or appropriations related to) the conduct of foreign affairs, including foreign assistance and military issues; treaty ratification, accession, and compliance; and domestic programs that explicitly or implicitly protect fundamental human rights. Executive branch work generally includes ministries or agencies that oversee the conduct of foreign affairs, including foreign assistance and military issues, as well as those that oversee domestic programs that explicitly or implicitly protect fundamental human rights. Judicial branch work generally includes hearing and deciding cases that implicate international law and domestic constitutional and other law that implements international law obligations or protects human rights. Some governments have national human rights bodies with a specific mandate to engage implementation of international legal obligations and protect human rights.

Where Lawyers Work

Examples of some of the key human rights entities with lawyers on staff in the US Government in Washington, DC include:

- Legislative Branch

- Offices of individual members of Congress
 - House Foreign Affairs and Judiciary Committees
 - Senate Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committees
 - Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
- Executive Branch
 - White House
 - National Security Council (NSC)
 - State Department
 - Foreign Service/Embassy & Mission postings
 - US Mission to the United Nations (USUN)
 - Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)
 - Population, Refugees and Migration Bureau (PRM)
 - International Organizations Bureau (IO)
 - Office of the Legal Adviser (L)
 - Office of Human Rights and Refugees (L/HRR)
 - US Agency for International Development (USAID)
 - Justice Department (DOJ)
 - Office of Legal Counsel (OLC)
 - Office of the Solicitor General
 - Civil Rights Division
 - Special Litigation Section
 - Criminal Division
 - Office of International Affairs
 - Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section
 - Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR)
 - Department of Labor (DOL)
 - Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
 - Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate (RAIO)
 - Department of Defense (DoD)
 - Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (OUSDP)
- Judicial Branch
 - Cases that implicate human rights (including in relation to domestic constitutional and statutory challenges) are brought nationwide, but, in federal court, the circuits that most commonly handle such issues are the D.C. Circuit, the Second Circuit and the Ninth Circuit

Methodologies

Human rights lawyers working in national governments use the full range of human rights methodologies, though impact litigation and legal and policy advocacy are those more commonly used. National governments are involved in impact litigation when they defend the government's interest(s) in court, through civil and criminal actions. This includes

promoting the development of jurisprudence consistent with the government's interest(s), including in areas related to human rights. In some areas, national governments submit amicus (or statements of interest) briefs and engage in actions to promote the development of the law. National governments carry out fact-finding and assessments, including sometimes using similar methodologies to human rights fact-finding. The statements and actions of national governments can have important legal implications (including, in many cases, the force of law) and can dramatically alter policy. National governments thus engage in activities to develop and implement law and policy as well as to promote the development of law and policy consistent with their national interest(s) – at the local, regional and international level. Some national governments also run or manage humanitarian programs, including programs to provide direct services to individuals.

Issue Areas

National governments engage the full range of human rights issues. Some parts of national governments engage in a broad range of human rights issues while other offices or programs focus on particular issues. For example, the State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) focuses on human rights issues in the context of US foreign policy and the Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review (DOJ EOIR) focuses on appellate issues under US immigration law, including domestic law implementing international law protecting refugees.

Strategies for Entry

Students can intern in a range of government agencies, including US government agencies and offices, during the academic term and summer. It is generally less competitive to secure an internship in a US government office in Washington, DC during the academic term (though some offices do not accept part-time interns, such as the State Department Office of the Legal Adviser, Office of Human Rights and Refugees. As a recent graduate, the most direct ways into US government agencies are various government agency honors programs -- including the DOJ Attorney General's Honors Program and the Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) program -- and applying for entry-level positions directly via USAJobs.gov. OPICS provides information sessions on PMF and USAJobs, and many Honors programs recruit JDs on campus through the Government Interview Program. (Note: the DOJ only recruits Honors applicants through their online application; many government agencies will only accept US Citizens for internships or employment.)

Large and Small, International and Domestic Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-Governmental Organizations (also often called Non-Profits) are generally created to pursue a particular purpose or mandate, which can change over time. NGOs are funded by individuals, foundations, and sometimes governments. Generally, NGOs are incorporated in

one or more jurisdictions (and often have tax-exempt status as a charitable or public benefit organization there), but many NGOs operate across multiple jurisdictions.

Where Lawyers Work

Large international and small domestic NGOs can vary significantly in the range of opportunities and type of work they pursue. Some large international human rights NGOs include:

- Human Rights Watch (based in New York City with staff based in more than a dozen offices worldwide)
- Amnesty International (based in London with a range of International Secretariat offices worldwide as well as national-level Sections in most countries, including a US section based in Washington, DC)
- Federation International des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH) (based in Paris with 178 member organizations worldwide)
- International Crisis Group (based in Brussels with 24 field offices)
- Open Society Justice Initiative (based in New York, Washington, DC, and Budapest with a few other offices worldwide)
- The Center for Justice and International Law (based in Washington, DC)
- Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (based in Washington, DC)

Some large, US-focused domestic human rights NGOs in the United States include:

- American Civil Liberties Union (based in New York and Washington, DC with state affiliates nationwide)
- Human Rights First (based in Washington, DC with an office in New York)
- Center for Constitutional Rights (based in New York)

There is an incredibly broad range of smaller NGOs that focus on international and/or domestic human rights, including:

- Asylum Access – refugee rights (based in San Francisco with a few offices worldwide)
- Freedom Now - prisoners of conscience around the world (based in Washington, DC)
- Disability Rights International – disability rights issues worldwide (based in Washington, DC)
- The National Center on Homelessness & Poverty – homelessness and poverty issues in the United States (based in Washington, DC)
- American Bar Association Center for Human Rights – protecting human rights defenders around the world (based in Washington, DC)

There is a range of large and small, international and domestic NGOs whose work implicates human rights, but who also pursue work on other issues, including:

- Humanitarian Aid NGOs, for example:
 - International Rescue Committee – major provider of humanitarian assistance (based in New York with offices worldwide)

- International Development NGOs, for example:
 - Save the Children USA – major recipient of US development assistance (based in Connecticut)
- Legal Services NGOs, for example:
 - Capital Area Immigrants Rights (CAIR) Coalition – provides and coordinates legal assistance to detained migrants (based in Washington, DC)
 - New York Legal Aid Society – oldest and largest non-profit legal services provider in the US (based in New York)
 - Pangea Legal Services – small non-profit immigration legal services organization with a small international human rights program (based in San Francisco)

Additionally, various foundations have an expertise in and funding commitment to the human rights field, including:

- The Ford Foundation (based in New York)
- The MacArthur Foundation (based in Chicago)
- The Open Society Foundations (based in New York, with offices worldwide)

Methodologies

Human rights lawyers working at NGOs use a range of human rights methodologies as varied as their organizations. NGOs engage in impact litigation on behalf of individuals or groups of clients and regularly submit amicus briefs and engage with litigators to promote the development of jurisprudence protective of human rights in domestic, regional, and international courts and tribunals. NGOs often use human rights fact-finding and assessments to prepare reports on countries or to support individual clients. NGOs commonly engage in legal and policy advocacy to promote compliance with law and policy as well as to promote the development of new law and policy – at the national, regional, and international level. Many NGOs run or manage humanitarian programs or provide direct legal services, including, in the US, immigration or criminal justice-related legal services.

Issue Areas

NGOs engage the full range of human rights issues. As is clear from the list of “Where Lawyers Work” above, many NGOs engage in work that touches on a broad range of human rights issues. Some large NGOs have departments or specific programs related to particular issues while other NGOs specialize in work on one specific issue.

Strategies for Entry

Students can intern in the full range of NGOs over the course of an academic year. A vast range of opportunities for summer or academic term internships is available through OPICS recruitment programs (for JDs), postings on websites like Symplicity or PSJD, or through students’ research and networking. As a graduate, one of the most direct routes into an

NGO is through a fellowship. Some NGOs (such as HRW, OSJI, RFK Center, ACLU, and CCR) have their own fellowship programs to recruit new attorneys for one or two years (fellows are then very competitive candidates for permanent positions after their fellowship year, but there are almost always fewer open positions than fellows). Georgetown also has a few school-sponsored human rights-focused fellowships for graduating JD students, including the Detention Fellowship with Catholic Charities and the Bazelon Mental Health Fellowship. Other Georgetown-supported fellowships may be available for graduating JDs, based on year, cycle, and funding availability. Additionally, The Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program, though not only for Georgetown students, is hosted at Georgetown and supports fellows working for a variety of organizations that focus on women's human rights. Finally, many NGOs host attorneys who can provide their own funding, such as through a Skadden, Equal Justice Works, or other project-based fellowship. Most applications for these fellowships are due a full year before the applicant will begin his or her work, and therefore they are most often pursued by JD students. OPICS assists JD students in applying for these fellowships. Some organizations hire entry-level positions when openings become available due to attrition, new funding sources, or the creation of new positions (and all organizations hire laterally). Success in the application process is often linked to the applicant having worked for the NGO (or for someone who knows the person reviewing applications) before applying, as hundreds or thousands of applicants often apply to positions at human rights NGOs.

Large and Small Law Firms

Law firms, generally, are operated for profit and without tax-exempt status. A small number of firms, generally very small firms, structure their practice with the primary goal of furthering the public interest, rather than to maximize profit

Where Lawyers Work

There are a variety of ways law firms support or engage in human rights work. Lawyers at large and small law firms provide *pro bono* legal services to major human rights organizations and small human rights NGOs. Firms benefit from supporting *pro bono* work because it provides good experience (for junior or interested senior attorneys), can help attorneys comply with legal ethics requirements, and can raise the profile of the lawyers and the firm. *Pro bono* work in firms is often formalized and there may be caps on time allowed to be spent on the work in deference to work done for paying clients, particularly in large firms. Some examples of *pro bono* law firm involvement from lawyers at large law firms include representing individual clients (in cases involving asylum, human trafficking, and habeas petitions for Guantanamo detainees) and partnering with NGOs to co-counsel on cases, including high profile cases (such as many recently LGBTI-rights cases). While the majority of lawyers at law firms who engage in human rights law do so through *pro bono* work, large and small law firms sometimes provide remunerated legal services on behalf of alleged victims of human rights abuses, including cases under statutes that provide for attorneys

fees, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and in other civil cases, such as those brought against corporations under the Alien Tort Claims Act/Alien Torts Statute. Some examples of the relatively few law firms with extensive human rights practices include:

- Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll, PLLC, a plaintiff-side litigation firm that has a specialized human rights practice group (based in Washington, DC with a few offices nationwide)
- Schonbrun DeSimone Seplow Harris & Hoffman, LLP, a civil rights litigation firm that has litigated a range of human rights cases (based in Southern California)
- Conrad & Scherer, a commercial litigation firm that has a dedicated international human rights practice group (based in Florida with a few other offices)
- Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, LLP and Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP, large firms that have represented plaintiffs in high-profile Alien Tort Statute and Torture Victim Protection Act cases (Akin Gump is based in New York with a few offices nationwide; Boies Schiller is based in New York with a few offices nationwide)
- Shearman & Sterling LLP, a leader among law firms in representing Guantanamo detainees in habeas corpus litigation (based in New York with offices worldwide)
- Foley Hoag, LLP, a top firm for sovereign representation, including in regional and international tribunals (based in Boston with a few offices nationwide)

Methodologies

Lawyers at law firms at times use the full range of human rights methodologies. Most commonly, in the context of *pro bono* service, lawyers at law firms engage in impact litigation on behalf of individual or group clients and regularly submit amicus briefs to promote the development of jurisprudence protective of human rights in domestic, regional, and international courts and tribunals. Sometimes, lawyers engage in human rights impact litigation because the matters could be profitable through damages or fee-shifting statutes if they prevail. While most legal work requires investigative work of various kinds (including much that resembles human rights fact-finding), lawyers at law firms only rarely engage in human rights fact-finding, usually in conjunction with an NGO partner. Similarly, lawyers at law firms generally only engage in human rights legal and policy advocacy *pro bono* and in conjunction with NGOs (although they sometimes they do so for remuneration). Note that lawyers at law firms sometimes provide direct representation for paying clients (ranging from individuals to sovereign governments to multinational corporations) to defend their interests in matters implicating human rights. Many lawyers at law firms provide direct legal services to individuals *pro bono*.

Issue Areas

As mentioned above, lawyers at law firms can and do engage the full range of human rights issues, though with a few exceptions, most of this work is conducted in a *pro bono* capacity. Note that recent case law may significantly curtail the reach and volume of Alien Tort

Claims Act/Alien Torts Statute that has recently increased the volume of human rights litigation in US courts.. Although this may reduce the number of opportunities to pursue human rights litigation in private law firms, there may also be a rise in human rights cases brought under trafficking and other statutes, as well as state and foreign tort law.

Strategies for Entry

Students can work for pay at law firms during the summer or school year. Many large law firms have defined summer programs for second-year JD students that can lead to full-time positions after graduation. Smaller firms that handle cases for fees do not generally have predictable hiring needs; they may or may not hire entry-level associates each year. Some small firms with human rights practices hire fellows (such as the Cohen Milstein Human Rights Fellowship), but this is rare.

Selected Resources

Georgetown Law Resources

- The Human Rights Institute Website: <http://www.humanrightsinstitute.net>
 - HRI Human Rights on Campus Website: <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/centers-institutes/human-rights-institute/opportunities/index.cfm>
 - HRI Job Search Website: <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/centers-institutes/human-rights-institute/Human-Rights-Internships-Fellowships-and-Jobs.cfm>
- The Office of Public Interest and Community Service Website: <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/careers/opics/>
 - OPICS Human Rights Practice Area Website: <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/careers/career-planning/practice-areas/international-human-rights.cfm>
- The Office of Graduate Program: Graduate Career and Professional Development (GCPD) Website: <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/academic-programs/graduate-programs/careers/index.cfm>
 - GCPD Externship Database Website: www2.law.georgetown.edu/academics/academic-programs/graduate-programs/externships/index.cfm
 - GCPD Career Planning Compendium Website: www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/academic-programs/graduate-programs/careers/job_search_resources/online-directories-resources-databases/upload/Human-Rights-Compendium2014.pdf

Other Resources

- PSJD International Resources includes links to several NALP resources on International Public Interest Careers and excellent school guides. See especially *The Harvard Guide on International Development: Public Service Careers and Opportunities*, the *NALP Guide to Finding and Funding International Public Interest Opportunities*, the *NALP Finding Employment Opportunities with International Governmental Organizations and the United Nations* and *The Yale Law School Guide to International Public Interest Careers*. Website: http://www.psjd.org/International_Resources
- American Society for International Law Career Resources Page (ASIL) promotes the development of opportunities in international law for individuals at every stage of their career. The Career Development Page includes resources, professional development programming, research and job links. Website: <http://www.asil.org/resources/careers-international-law>. See also the ASIL

Electronic Information System for International Law for additional career resources.

Website: <http://www.eisil.org/>

- The Georgetown School of Foreign Service features a series of employment sector profiles that span a wide range of international law-related fields. Website: <http://sfs.georgetown.edu/careers/graduate/work/apsia/>
- HG.org: Human Rights provides a basic overview of the practice area as well as useful links to educational resources and selected employers. Website: <http://www.hg.org/human-rights.html>
- Human Rights.gov is a web portal of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy for international human rights related information from the United States Government. Website: <http://www.humanrights.gov/>
- Idealist Career Center provides basic information about public interest legal and non-legal opportunities including in human rights. Website: <http://idealistcareers.org/category/job-search/>
- United Nations Human Rights spearheads the United Nations' human rights efforts offering leadership training, education and support to empower individuals and assist States in upholding human rights. Website: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx>
- The Oxford Guide to international law. Website: <http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/options-and-occupations/sectors-and-occupations/international-law/>