

In support of international human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

ABOUT CIHR

Led by Professor David Scheffer, former U.S. Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues (1997–2001), the Center for International Human Rights (CIHR) provides a comprehensive range of classroom courses on the norms and mechanisms of international human rights law, international criminal law, and international humanitarian law, as well as provides valuable clinical experiences for students interested in the protection of human rights on a global scale and projects researching and addressing emerging human rights and international criminal law norms and related issues.

CIHR faculty members supervise students in several areas of clinical work, including advocacy and preparation of filings before federal courts, international criminal tribunals, and human rights bodies. They also teach core and elective courses and seminars for JD students and others in the LLM, JD-LLM, and Masters of Legal Studies (for non-law students) degree programs in International Human Rights.

CIHR faculty assist in placing students in international externships for academic credit and post-graduate staff positions with international courts and human rights organizations.

In August 2012, the CIHR was granted special consultative status with the Economic and Security Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN). This prestigious status offers CIHR faculty and student representatives (under faculty supervision) the opportunity to participate in events, conferences, and activities of the UN, including the Secretariat, programs, funds and agencies, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, the General Assembly, Human Rights Council, and other UN intergovernmental decision-making bodies.

PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

JD-LLM in International Human Rights

Northwestern Law and its Center for International Human Rights offer a four-year joint degree program leading to both a JD and an LLM in International Human Rights, with a focus on both international human rights law and international criminal law. Northwestern Law remains the only law school in the country to offer a joint JD-LLM in International Human Rights (JD-LLM IHR) program.

JD—International Law Concentration

LLM Program in International Human Rights

The LLM Program in International Human Rights Law is designed for students with American JDs or law degrees from other countries who wish to undertake an in-depth study of the norms and methods of international human rights law and international criminal law and their implementation by international courts and organizations and in domestic legal systems. The structure of the program affords unique advantages for educational and social interaction. Students are assured of a close working relationship with the professors, all of whom have had hands-on legal practice and academic experience in the field, and access to the programs of the Center for International Human Rights. Over the past six years, the International Human Rights LLM program has welcomed students from 31 countries, including Chile, India, Guinea-Bissau, Panama, Spain, Eritrea, Mexico, Ghana, the Philippines, Uganda, Ethiopia, Italy, Tanzania, South Africa, Turkey, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Iraq, Indonesia, South Korea, China, Pakistan, and Puerto Rico.

MSL Program in International Human Rights

The MSL Program, which is identical to the LLM Program, is available for those with other qualifications in lieu of a law degree.

The Human Rights Clinic Program allows JD, LLM and JD-LLM International Human Rights students to participate in cases and projects raising human rights norms within domestic courts, foreign legal systems, and international tribunals. CIHR oversees the international externship program for JD and JD-LLM students to obtain law school credit while working full-time for an academic term with designated international tribunals and international organizations. To date, CIHR has placed JD students with the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, and the International Criminal Court.

FACULTY



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Northwestern Law students walk a Malawian woman out of prison after persuading the court to release her.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Cambodia Tribunal Monitor

In collaboration with the Documentation Center of Cambodia and thanks to the financial support of the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, CIHR operates the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor (www.cambodiatribunal.org). This web site provides daily coverage of and expert commentary about the trial proceedings of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia before which senior Khmer Rouge leaders and others most responsible for the atrocity crimes of the Pol Pot era are being brought to justice.

The “Death Penalty Worldwide” Project

In April 2011, the CIHR launched a groundbreaking international database and website tracking information on the application of the death penalty around the world. The database provides critical information to judges, lawyers, journalists, policymakers and activists around the world who are interested in global trends toward the abolition of the death penalty. The DPW project collaborates closely with UN Special Rapporteurs and other international experts on the death penalty, and is currently producing a manual of best practices for the defense of individuals facing the death penalty.

Advocacy on behalf of prisoners facing the death penalty in Malawi

CIHR faculty and students have traveled to Malawi every year since 2007, where they worked directly with prosecutors, legal aid lawyers, and prisoners in order to facilitate plea bargains that reduced severe prison overcrowding, conserved scarce judicial resources, and enabled many prisoners to walk again as free men or to receive sentences that were proportionate to the crimes they had committed.

International and Domestic Litigation on Behalf of Mexican Nationals Condemned to Death

Over the last three years, the clinic has engaged in litigation before the International Court of Justice, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Supreme Court, and domestic courts in Texas regarding the rights of Mexican nationals who were deprived of their rights to consular notification and access upon their detention in the United States.

Technical Assistance to the Uganda Human Rights Commission with respect to proposed anti-torture legislation

At the request of a Human Rights Officer/Legal with the Uganda Human Rights Commission, CIHR faculty and staff are conducting an international comparative analysis of domestic anti-torture legislation and are researching model legislation in order to provide commentary on a proposed Ugandan anti-torture law.

Advocacy on Guantanamo cases before the U. S. Supreme Court and lower federal courts regarding violations of international human rights law

arising from the military commissions prosecuting detainees at Guantanamo, including representation of a Guantanamo detainee who was tortured by his interrogators.

Collaboration with UNICEF (Thailand) on juvenile justice in the context of insurgency

At the request of the Thailand Country Office of UNICEF, CIHR faculty and students are assessing whether three Thai anti-insurgency laws comport with international and Thai domestic standards on juvenile justice.

Provision of assistance to international and hybrid criminal tribunals

Clinic students, under the guidance of CIHR faculty, have prepared memoranda for these tribunals on legal issues raised by particular cases pending before the tribunals. These include amicus briefs in contentious cases.

Participating as plaintiffs’ counsel and as amicus curiae in federal court cases

brought under the Alien Tort Statute and the Torture Victim Protection Act to hold accountable multinational corporations and government officials for atrocities committed in violation of the law of nations.

Atrocity Crimes Litigation Year-in-Review Conference

Early each year CIHR convenes the Atrocity Crimes Litigation Year-in-Review Conference to examine the practice and jurisprudence of the major war crimes tribunals during the immediately preceding calendar year. Moderated by Professor Scheffer, the conference is the only one of its kind in the United States and brings together prosecutors, judges, defense counsel, investigators, and administrators of the tribunals, as well as a distinguished academic commentator, to hold a day-long discussion about the preceding year’s developments in the dynamic field of international criminal law and where it is litigated. The Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights works closely with CIHR to publish a special edition each year of articles drawn from the conference. A video and transcript of each conference are posted on the CIHR web site.

Northwestern Access to Health Project:

The Access to Health Project is an interdisciplinary health and human rights project in which students and faculty from Northwestern Law School and Northwestern’s Center for Global Health work with a community in the developing world to assess the public health needs of that community, and to design an appropriate, sustainable intervention. In 2012, the Access to Health Project has focused on the community of Bonga, Ethiopia, and students traveled to Bonga in March 2012. In 2013, the Access to Health Project will work in the Dominican Republic.

Please visit our web site for more information on our programs, projects, and events
www.law.northwestern.edu/humanrights/