

International Human Rights Clinic

Protecting Human Rights Around the World

The International Human Rights Clinic immerses students in the practice and substance of international human rights law. Students learn to implement the international and regional human rights mechanisms to advance issues and policy on behalf of institutional clients representing refugees, forced migrants, immigrants, and stateless persons.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The Clinic comprises 12 credits over the course of the academic year. Students are awarded three credits for fieldwork and three credits for coursework each semester. As part of their fieldwork, students work in all the UN and regional human rights machinery, and they collaborate with non-governmental organizations and other groups around the world to conduct research and advocate for issues on behalf of the client communities. Students write and submit reports and briefs on international human rights issues in the UN, regional mechanisms, and US courts, and design and conduct global advocacy on behalf of human rights victims.

Students take an introductory skills seminar in the fall and an advocacy seminar in the spring that focuses on the Inter-American Human Rights system. Depending on the project, students may have an opportunity to travel internationally while participating in the Clinic.

We warmly welcome all applicants and remind students that Boston University policy prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status, and acts in conformity with all applicable state and federal laws. This policy extends to all BU Law academic programs.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Since the Clinic was created in 2013, students have conducted research and fieldwork on significant human rights issues, including the following:

The disappearance of thousands of migrants from Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala: Students working on this multi-year project have conducted fieldwork in Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. They have written two reports on the laws and policies affecting the disappearances of migrants in and from the Northern Triangle and Mexico, and in the border areas of the United States. With Clinic NGO partners and families of the disappeared, they have been advocating for the recommendations developed in the reports with UN bodies, including the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances.

The refugee crisis in Europe: Students have collaborated on two projects researching and writing mapping reports with the Refugee Solidarity Network to examine EU law governing protection of refugees from the current crises in the Middle East. They conducted fieldwork in Bulgaria with local NGOs on the rise of detention policies and the impact on the rights of refugees and migrants. They also conducted fieldwork in Greece to document the rapidly changing legal response to the surge of thousands of migrants and refugees, and the consequences of Greece's "hotspot"

policies.

Tibetan rights: Students have worked with partner organizations, the Tibet Advocacy Coalition and Tibet Justice Center, to advance their advocacy strategies for Tibetan rights in the UN human rights mechanisms. Students have also worked on several reports mapping the conditions of Tibetans in the refugee settlements in India, and on strategies for Tibetan self-determination at the UN.

Advocacy at the United Nations: Students have researched and written reports for numerous human rights treaty bodies and Special Procedures, and submitted them at UN sessions in Geneva. Students have also worked on submissions to the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review on China on human rights issues relating to Tibetans and Uyghurs, and on Morocco concerning Sahrawi refugees, among other issues.

Advocacy to reduce statelessness in MENA: Students have been working on a multi-year project mapping the laws, policies and conditions contributing to statelessness across the MENA region. They have researched, written—or contributed to with NGO partners—reports on Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia, and participated in workshops with stakeholders in these countries. They have also assisted in developing the first MENA-wide Network on Research and Advocacy on Statelessness in the region, launched in 2021 in Cairo.

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