

Human Rights First New York, NY

1 Please describe your organization briefly, including mission statement, activities, size, etc.

Mission Statement

Human Rights First believes that building respect for human rights and the rule of law will help ensure the dignity to which every individual is entitled and will stem tyranny, extremism, intolerance, and violence.

Human Rights First protects people at risk: refugees who flee persecution, victims of crimes against humanity or other mass human rights violations, victims of discrimination, those whose rights are eroded in the name of national security, and human rights advocates who are targeted for defending the rights of others. These groups are often the first victims of societal instability and breakdown; their treatment is a harbinger of wider-scale repression. Human Rights First works to prevent violations against these groups and to seek justice and accountability for violations against them.

Human Rights First is practical and effective. We advocate for change at the highest levels of national and international policymaking. We seek justice through the courts. We raise awareness and understanding through the media. We build coalitions among those with divergent views. And we mobilize people to act.

Program Activities

For nearly 30 years, Human Rights First has fought to create a humane, secure and stable world. We work to find lasting solutions to human rights problems in the United States and abroad.

Protecting the rights of refugees fleeing persecution

Human Rights First is a leading advocate, both in the United States and around the world, for the human rights of refugees - those forced to flee torture, abuse and persecution in their home countries. We run the country's largest pro bono legal representation program for these asylum seekers, representing more than 1,000 people from over 80 countries. Last year, volunteer lawyers - many from the nation's leading law firms - worked with Human Rights First and devoted nearly 61,000 hours, valued at over \$21.6 million. We win more than 90% of our cases, a rate greater than three times the national average. In 2007, we launched the Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees campaign to secure a comprehensive response to the Iraqi refugee crisis. We ask the United States to bring some of the most vulnerable refugees to safety through a major resettlement initiative and to lead the international community in providing aid for refugees and those displaced within Iraq.

Ensuring that national security practices uphold human rights

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the U.S. government instituted a variety of security measures - some grounded in common sense, but others that violate traditional concepts of liberty without increasing safety. Through our research and advocacy, Human Rights First has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that the rule of law is protected in the post-September 11 environment. Through our End Torture Now Campaign, we fought for the adoption of the McCain Amendment, which prohibits all forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees by any U.S. personnel. The McCain Amendment was passed overwhelmingly by both houses of Congress and was signed into law by the President in December 2005. We enlisted the support of more than 30 retired U.S. generals and admirals in this effort. Human Rights First now works to ensure that the law is fully implemented. We are also actively engaged in challenging illegal detentions and abusive interrogation practices in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Currently, the “Elect to End Torture ‘08” campaign works to make sure that the next President puts an end to policies allowing torture and cruel treatment and adopts a strong national security policy that is consistent with the laws and values of our nation.

Combating crimes against humanity as they are occurring

Crimes against humanity are acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against civilian populations – in extreme cases, these patterns of widespread violence amount to acts of genocide. Human Rights First aims to help stop crimes against humanity while they are occurring, such as in Darfur. Since 2003, the Sudanese government and its proxy militia, the Janjaweed, have waged a vicious campaign against the people of Darfur, Sudan and neighboring Chad. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed or injured, and more than two million people have been forced to flee their homes. Through our H.O.P.E. for Darfur Campaign, Human Rights First urged the U.N. Secretary- General to appoint an envoy of the highest international stature to make sure all parties to the conflict live up to their promises for peace. The H.O.P.E Campaign resulted in then-Secretary General Kofi Annan’s appointment of U.N. Special Envoy Jan Eliasson.

Fighting discrimination and violent hate crimes

Human Rights First has helped lead the effort to build the capacity of national legal systems to deal with discrimination, hate crimes and human rights abuses, and to support the emerging global system to deal with the worst of these crimes. We worked with the U.N. Security Council to reach consensus on how to bring to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity in Darfur. We released *Everyday Fears: A Survey of Violent Hate Crimes in Europe and North America*, a groundbreaking analysis of the alarming increase in antisemitic, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hate crimes. We led the successful effort to establish three Special Representatives to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to combat antisemitism, discrimination, hate crimes and xenophobia. We worked with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights to build a broad rights-based coalition to address hate crimes. In 2007, we released our first annual Hate Crime Survey.

Strengthening and protecting the work of human rights defenders around the world

Local human rights activists undertake their work at enormous personal risk – they are harassed, jailed, threatened, tortured and even assassinated. In order to ensure that grassroots activists are able to carry out their vital work, Human Rights First provides support and assistance for them at the local, national and international levels. To this end we have advocated for the repeal of repressive national security or counterterrorism measures, working to lift restrictions on the activities of specific human rights defenders and human rights organizations. Our Defenders Action Network (DAN) alerts and mobilizes the public when activists come under fire.

Organizational Facts

Human Rights First has a staff of 70, with offices in New York and Washington, D.C. Our annual budget is nearly \$10.3 million. All of our funding comes from private contributions from individuals, foundations, law firms and corporations. To maintain our independence, Human Rights First does not accept any government support.

2 Describe **in detail** the work or project an intern will do, **please be as specific as possible**.

Internships may be available in the following areas: Human Rights Defenders, Crimes Against Humanity, Fighting Discrimination, Law and Security, Refugee Protection, and Public Programs. Intern placement will be determined based upon experience, relevant skills, and interests. Specific tasks vary by program and project; examples include:

Human Rights Defenders

- Press tracking: intern will be responsible for searching six to ten newspapers daily for relevant news articles. The articles will be electronically filed and distributed to the Human Rights Defender Program as a daily newsletter;
- Data management: intern will be responsible for periodically entering new contacts into the organization's database;
- Defender case research and updates: intern will research and update defender cases that are featured in our weekly Defender Alerts. This will consist of researching developments and occasionally drafting statements for our e-mail network and the website;
- Administrative tasks: intern will assist the program with administrative tasks such as faxing and mailing letters, filing, and photocopying when needed; and
- Research of global trends or cases: in addition to case research for the Defender Alert Network, he or she will be responsible for assisting with research on human rights defenders as needed in the program.

Crimes Against Humanity

- Support program staff through factual and legal research on issues of interest to the Crimes Against Humanity program, including:
 - the situation in Darfur, Sudan;
 - the principle of Responsibility to Protect;
 - international mechanisms for the cessation and prevention of mass atrocities;
 - international courts and tribunals;
 - the role China in supporting abusive governments, such as Sudan, Zimbabwe and Burma;
 - other regions of the world where mass atrocities are occurring or could potentially occur.
- Research, analysis and drafting of memoranda; and
- Document and report on developments related to the issues outlined above.

Fighting Discrimination

- Research and analyze hate crimes laws and their implementation/enforcement;
- Document and report on hate crimes and related developments;
- Assist with program advocacy activities; and
- Provide support with other tasks, as needed.

Law and Security

- Research and analyze issues concerning U.S. national security policy, detention, interrogation and rendition;
- Bluebook, proofread and cite-check legal filings, memoranda, briefing materials and publications;
- Assist with program advocacy activities; and
- Provide support with other tasks, as needed.

Refugee Protection

- Assist staff in providing referrals and responding to correspondence and requests for assistance, including from detained immigrants and asylum seekers;
- Assist staff with preparation for trainings, meetings, special projects, and other events;

- Provide support with tasks such as filing, updating departmental database and occasional interpretation and/or translation, depending on foreign language proficiency;
- Assist staff in yearly asylum case review procedures;
- Assist with front desk and/or other telephone coverage, including answering phone, transferring calls, and providing referrals to asylum seekers and other immigrants; and
- Other tasks as needed.

Public Programs

- Support program staff with research and outreach on public programs including the Primetime Torture project, Elect to End Torture campaign, Darfur campaign and Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees project;
- Support program staff with research, drafting, outreach and implementation of human rights and advocacy curricula for high school students; and
- Research, editing and packaging of documentary clips for Human Rights First website.

3 Describe any particular skills, background, or qualities you are seeking in an intern

- Demonstrated, informed interest in international human rights issues;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Proficiency in one or more foreign languages, especially French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Farsi, or Mandarin Chinese (other languages welcome);
- Demonstrated ability to work as part of a team as well as independently; and
- Energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of humor.

There are required dates for this internship. Internship must start on _____ and end on _____ or most include the period _____.

Start and end dates for the internship are flexible.

The expected working schedule for this internship:

Begin ~ 9:30 a.m. End ~ 5:30 p.m.

Lunch break: Length flexible specific time flexible