

## 2025 IHRP Fellowship with the International Bar Association

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My three-month summer fellowship with the International Bar Association (IBA) was a transformative experience. I had the unique opportunity to work alongside international lawyers on diverse issues ranging from anti-corruption regulation to ESG due diligence frameworks. Conducting research and attending high-profile meetings not only sharpened my legal skills but also expanded my interest in areas of law that I had previously overlooked. I came to appreciate how international human rights-related issues can impact the day-to-day practice of lawyers in non-human rights or international law-related practices. Moreover, living in London, with its rich legal community, and connecting with a wide range of legal professionals made me appreciate the broad range of career paths that I could pursue in the future. I am really grateful to the IHRP and the IBA for supporting such a rewarding summer experience.

### **The IBA**

The IBA is a global organization that brings together lawyers, law societies, and bar associations to strengthen the rule of law and advance the development of the legal profession worldwide. During my voluntary internship I was primarily assigned tasks from the Legal Policy and Research Unit (LPRU), which undertakes research and develops initiatives relevant to the global legal profession. The unit both supports IBA committees in their projects and encourages further

engagement on pressing issues, such as modern slavery, climate action, and corruption, by providing research and raising awareness. Over the course of my internship, I contributed to three main projects: conducting research on international environmental law, monitoring corporate supply chain regulation, and tracking relevant political and legal developments in the U.S.

### **Climate Justice and Human Rights**

The IBA Climate Crisis Statement urges lawyers across the world, acting in accordance with their professional conduct rules, to consider taking a climate-conscious approach to problems encountered in daily legal practice. As such, the LPRU has numerous projects focused on building climate literacy within the legal profession by creating toolkits and webinars that keep climate change at the forefront of the minds of lawyers. In June, I virtually attended and wrote an article on an IBA [panel](#) during the Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB62). The panel, composed of government, corporate, and public sector lawyers, highlighted how climate risks are increasingly affecting the day-to-day practice of all lawyers and showcased a variety of legal climate education tools developed by bar associations and organizations to help lawyers integrate climate action into their work. The LPRU's success is highlighted by the growth of the IBA Climate [Registry](#), a platform in which bar associations around the world have shared the steps they are taking to address climate change.

July was an exciting time as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice released advisory opinions on climate change, recognizing the right to a healthy environment and outlining the human rights and climate-related obligations of states. I prepared memos on both opinions, analyzing their implications for climate litigation and corporate and state due diligence policies. My research helped raise awareness of the advisory opinions through an [article](#) and internal email summaries that were circulated to IBA committees. Given my interest in the ICJ opinion's implications for international investment law, I wrote an article on how states could use it in energy-related investor-state disputes, which will be shared with the IBA Arbitration Committee to raise awareness among arbitration lawyers.

I also supported preparations for the IBA's upcoming annual conference in Toronto by developing session outlines for potential panels, including one focused on nature-related risks and their implications for directors' duties. The panel topic was partly inspired by a recent legal opinion that I read from the Commonwealth Climate and Law Initiative. The opinion warns that Canadian corporate directors could face legal consequences from shareholders and Indigenous communities for failing to identify and disclose nature and climate-related risks. Canada-specific risks, such as the rapid melting of Arctic glaciers, not only affect corporate supply chains but also the fundamental rights of communities that depend on the glaciers for access to fresh water. Given that the upcoming conference is in Toronto, our team recognized that a panel on this topic would be an excellent way to raise awareness. I appreciated that my suggestions were taken into account, and it was great to see that my work could contribute to and influence discussions at the IBA conference.

### **Corporate Supply Chain Due Diligence and Human Rights**

Throughout the summer I also had the opportunity to experience supply chain and corporate accountability related projects. Early on, I attended an event in Parliament about a new [IBA report](#) on child labour and conflict-related sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The discussion on the prevalence of child labour and sexual violence in the cobalt mining industry was a powerful reminder of how closely global markets and human rights abuses are connected.

I also worked on identifying anti-money laundering and human trafficking regulations and regulatory bodies across Caribbean jurisdictions such as Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and St. Lucia. I was in charge of assessing whether local bar associations were being regulated or trained on these issues, and I soon realized that in many cases, they were not. It was sometimes frustrating to see the gaps, but also rewarding to know my research would help the IBA identify where its educational resources and advocacy could have the most impact on the legal profession.

## **U.S. Legal and Policy Shifts**

Given the global influence of the U.S, the LPRU also monitored key policy and legal developments occurring in the U.S, especially those concerning law firms. Many of the IBA's human rights partners and initiatives rely on pro bono support from corporate law firms, so executive orders and deals in relation to pro bono services were of significant interest to the LPRU. I prepared case briefs on the federal court decisions that struck down executive orders against WilmerHale and Susman Godfrey. The case briefs helped our team identify the legal arguments which enabled these firms to succeed, and we paid special attention to aspects of the decisions which emphasized lawyers' right to choose the pro bono work they take on.

These decisions, along with the American Bar Association's subsequent lawsuit highlighting a "blizzard-like chill" on the legal profession's willingness to provide pro bono services, could potentially influence ongoing amendments to the IBA Pro Bono Declaration. I was encouraged to see the IBA's steadfast commitment to the rule of law and promotion of pro bono work as a vital tool for ensuring access to justice. I also appreciated this work as it enabled me to stay up to date with all the legal and political changes happening in the U.S.

## **Reflection**

Looking back, what I enjoyed most was working alongside lawyers from different specialties on a wide range of international issues. While at times working on multiple projects regarding very different issues was intense, the opportunity to explore diverse topics was useful, as it made me realize that I would like to further explore corporate regulatory law and environmental law in the future.

The internship also gave me a clearer understanding of the IBA's role in supporting national bar associations and encouraging lawyers to engage with business and human rights concerns. Before this experience, I assumed issues like climate change and modern slavery were peripheral to the daily work of lawyers. I now believe that, in many cases, being an effective lawyer requires the ability to learn and navigate complex human rights-related issues.

I am deeply grateful to the IBA and the International Human Rights Program for making this summer possible.