

Final Report – IHRP Internship at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

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This summer, I worked for two months in the Appeals and Legal Advisory Division, Office of the Prosecutor, at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania. Both the high caliber legal experience and the excitement of living in Tanzania made my summer unforgettable, and I am immensely grateful to the IHRP for making the summer possible.

From a legal perspective, my work was largely substantive, and perhaps more importantly, I left with an enriched understanding of how international law, and specifically international criminal law, works in practice. My timing turned out to be fortuitous, as an accused had filed a major appeal just as I arrived. He was convicted of a slew of crimes in 2011, and he appealed every conviction on both factual and legal grounds. As a result, I got to work on an Appeal from its first stages to the submission of our written brief nearly two months later. My work on our response brief was wide-ranging, including drafting, cite-checking, proofreading, document review, strategy discussion, researching and drafting memos, and any other ad-hoc tasks which arose. I specifically got to draft our response to the accused's war crimes conviction, which was a unique learning experience. My work also involved the researching and drafting of a memo on different modes of liability, including Joint Criminal Enterprise (a form of co-perpetration), a subject I plan to continue working on.

Outside of my work on this appeal, I contributed to an upcoming ICTR publication on tribunal jurisprudence and best practice. I read a number of ICTY Appeals Judgments, and added their jurisprudential contributions to the best practices digest. This work enabled me to hone my legal research and writing skills, and to add to my knowledge of international criminal law.

I was privileged to work with an amazing team, and much of what I learned this summer has already proven to be useful legal knowledge outside of the international criminal law realm (such as the laws of evidence, and the best way to respond to a 'bad fact' in litigation).

Work was wonderful but challenging, and life in Arusha was the same. Arusha is a vibrant, lively, occasionally overwhelming but always exciting place, and I am really grateful to have experienced what it is like to practice law and live in a developing country. Although my movement at night was limited for safety reasons, I loved to walk around during the day, go to the market, haggle for avocados and enjoy my brief sojourn as a UN legal advocate in what people call 'the Geneva of Africa.' It was also amazing to

see what life was like for my colleagues, who hailed from all over Africa and the rest of the world – my team alone came from Senegal, Cameroon, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Panama and South Korea. I will never forget watching my supervisor, a world-famous and esteemed senior appeals counsel, jump for joy when Uganda won its first gold medal since 1972!

The final aspect of my summer which I want to highlight was my visit to Rwanda. I went to Kigali and some outlying rural areas, and visited the Genocide Museum. It was surreal to drive on Rwandan highways, see signs for different regions, and to know about the devastating events which had occurred there during the genocide. Further, the museum mentioned the accused in my case a number of times, and it was incredible to realize that the case that I was contributing to will eventually form an integral part of Rwandan history. My visit to Rwanda raised lots of challenging questions for me on the efficacy of the tribunal system and international criminal law and transitional justice in general, and I continue to think about these issues. My work at the ICTR was incredible, but it was my visit to Rwanda which enabled me to put it in its global and historical context.

While work at the ICTR is winding down, its legacy is undeniable. My time there was formative, engaging and pleasurable, and I am so grateful for the experience.