

Fall 2011-Spring 2012

The Human Rights Clinic (HRC), which launched in January 2011, exposes students to the practice of law in the international and cross-cultural context of human rights litigation and advocacy at the local, national, and international levels. In the classroom, students critically engage with human rights law and contemporary social problems while honing their lawyering and advocacy skills. Outside the classroom, students gain hands-on experience working on cutting-edge human rights projects and cases before the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other human rights bodies. Highlights of the Human Rights Clinic's work this academic year include:

Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v. United States: Groundbreaking decision from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) which found the US in violation of its human rights obligations to prevent, protect and fulfill human rights in the context of domestic violence. *Lenahan* is the first international human rights case brought by a domestic violence victim against the U.S. The Clinic is working to implement the decision in numerous ways, including through work on developing protocols and guidelines for the Department of Justice on police response to domestic violence. The clinic is also engaged in community outreach to local domestic violence advocacy organizations and is working to raise awareness of the decision through drafting and disseminating advocacy pieces, supporting Jessica Lenahan in her advocacy work around the country, and participating and organizing conferences focusing on preventing violence against women.

Human Rights in Post-Earthquake Haiti: The Human Rights Clinic, together with the Immigration Clinic and other partners, has successfully brought a case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights asking the United States to stop deportations of Haitian nationals from the U.S. back to Haiti in light of the humanitarian crisis there. The Clinic is working on raising awareness of the issue and implementing the Commission's decision through negotiations with the U.S. government, advocacy before the U.S. Congress, and continuous monitoring of deportations. The Clinic is also working with the United Nations Independent Expert on Haiti in documenting problems with U.S. and other countries' deportation policies and practices. This work has included trips to Haiti, interviewing officials and deportees, and trips to Washington, DC to meet with government officials and appear before the IACHR.

Violence Against Aboriginal Women in Canada: Over 600 aboriginal women and girls have gone missing or have been murdered over the last 30 years in Canada. The government has failed to effectively prevent, investigate and prosecute those responsible. The Clinic is supporting the work of Canadian Native women's organizations to present the issue at a thematic hearing at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Clinic is preparing a briefing paper for the Commission, and drafting legal and other background material on the topic.

Reproductive Rights: In 2011, the Human Rights Clinic co-sponsored a conference on *Gender Justice in the Americas* where human rights activists, academics, and lawyers from across North and South America met to discuss pressing issues regarding gender justice. One of the issues that arose was the connection between violence against women and reproductive rights violations. The Clinic has since then been working to address this issue through participation at the Second Latin American Legal Conference on Reproductive Rights, and development of a hands-on workshop. The clinic is also working with the World Health Organization on a submission to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights on the status of reproductive rights in Peru and on supporting the work of partners in pending cases and implementation of cases against Poland regarding reproductive rights violations before the European Court of Human Rights.

Tenants' Rights in Foreclosed Properties: Florida has been hit hard by the foreclosure crisis but the impact of the crisis on tenants living in these properties is rarely raised in public discourse. The Clinic has worked to help local advocates document the issue in the Miami area and raise awareness of the issue globally, including at the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and in the U.N. Human Rights Committee's forthcoming review of the U.S.'s compliance with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).