

## **2011 IHRP Summer Internship Report – Christine Wadsworth**

### **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania)**

This summer I spent three months interning in Judges' Chambers at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania. The ICTR is an ad-hoc international tribunal established to prosecute crimes from the Rwandan genocide. Seventeen years after the genocide, the ICTR continues to operate so that perpetrators do not escape justice. Chambers staff members provide support to the ICTR's judges by conducting research, helping manage cases, and assisting in the drafting of legal documents. My internship gave me unique exposure to international criminal law, international tribunals, and the United Nations. I was privileged to observe and participate in the practice of international law from inside one of its most important institutions.

I spent the first seven weeks of my internship working on the *Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko et al. (Butare)* judgement drafting team. The *Butare* case has been going on for over 10 years and involves six accused, including the first woman to be convicted of genocide by an international court. I worked with a large team of judges, legal officers, associate legal officers, and interns to prepare the written judgement. I proofread and cite-checked large sections of the 1500-page judgement. I also worked with the judgement coordinator to input final changes to the draft judgement. I saw the oral judgement released in an ICTR courtroom at the end of June. All six accused were convicted on charges ranging from direct and public incitement to genocide, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Three of the accused received sentences of life imprisonment.

I also conducted research and wrote a memo for one of the Tribunal's judges on the ICTR's jurisprudence regarding sexual violence. ICTR judgements have been responsible for advances in the recognition of sexual and gender violence. The ICTR's first judgement, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu* (1998), provided the first definition of rape in international law.

Once the written *Butare* judgement was released, I moved to the Office of the President of the ICTR to work for the President's Special Assistant. Judge Khalida Rachid Khan was elected to the ICTR Presidency in May. Working in the Office of the President allowed me to gain additional insight into the legal and policy work of the ICTR. The chance to work with Judge Khan on an almost daily basis was an incredible opportunity to work with an internationally renowned judge. I worked on a number of different assignments during this time. I did considerable research on gender violence and related international criminal law jurisprudence in preparation for Judge Khan's participation in a conference. I assisted in the drafting of Judge Khan's speech to the General Assembly. I also assisted with the preparation of the ICTR's Judicial Calendar.

I was able to improve my legal research and writing skills through the diverse assignments I completed this summer. My supervisors provided excellent feedback on my memos and other written work and were available to answer all of my questions. The experience I gained at the ICTR will assist me in my next two years of school and in my future legal career.

During the course of my internship, I was also able to observe two ongoing ICTR trials, the initial appearance of a recently captured fugitive, and closing arguments in the *Karemera* case. This gave me a better understanding of how international criminal tribunals operate and allowed me to observe oral advocacy in a formal courtroom setting.

One of the significant benefits of my internship was the opportunity to learn from the diverse legal staff working at the Tribunal. Staff members were always willing to share their experiences and knowledge with me. Getting to work alongside legal practitioners gave me new insight into the advantages and disadvantages associated with being an international criminal lawyer. Speaking to different ICTR lawyers showed me that there are a variety of paths that can lead to a career in international criminal law. I was grateful for the career advice that my supervisors and other staff members offered.

I loved living in Tanzania for the summer. I had spent a month volunteering in Tanzania in high school and was excited to return. I travelled to Dodoma, Tanzania to visit the school I helped build seven years ago, which now has over 600 students. I was also able to see my younger sister, who was participating in a volunteer program in Dodoma. In July, I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with a group of ICTR interns. It was one of the most amazing and unique experiences of my life. The scenery was breathtaking and I enjoyed the physical challenge of reaching the summit of Africa's tallest mountain. I spent a weekend in Zanzibar, an island off the Tanzanian coast. I also visited Nairobi, Kenya and spent 5 days in Rwanda. It was important to me to visit Rwanda to see the genocide memorials and the places where events in my case transpired. My Rwanda trip was one of the most memorable parts of my summer.

My internship was an excellent opportunity to work in the field of international law. By working on a large case and then in the Office of the President, I was able to gain insight into different aspects of the Tribunal's work and into the different career opportunities available in the field of international criminal law. The legal skills I developed will be an asset no matter what path my legal career takes. Above all, I am grateful for the friends I made during my time in Tanzania.

I am very appreciative of all of the IHRP's support.

Christine Wadsworth

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