

LEGAL INTERNSHIP
Minority Rights Group International
Legal Cases Programme
2014 – 2015

1. Overview of organisation’s mission and activities

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) is a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding between communities. Our activities are focused on international advocacy, training, publishing and outreach. We are guided by the needs expressed by our worldwide partner network of organisations, which represent minority and indigenous peoples.

MRG works with over 150 organisations in nearly 50 countries. Our governing Council, which meets twice a year, has members from 10 different countries. MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and is a civil society organization registered with the Organisation of American States (OAS). MRG is registered as a charity and a company limited by guarantee under English law, registered charity no. 282305, limited company no. 1544957.

More information about MRG activities and work can be found on our website: www.minorityrights.org - click on “Our Work”.

2. Specific role and responsibilities during the Internship:

The legal cases programme focuses on strategic litigation on minority rights and indigenous issues. The Interns will assist in identifying gaps in the law for selection of new cases and will also assist in research and writing of legal memos in support of existing cases. Finally, the Interns will be responsible for undertaking research on emerging standards in international law that relate to minorities and indigenous peoples. Within that framework, the issues we deal with are as diverse as the right to register Kurdish names in Turkey, to the protection of Sea Nomads in the Philippines.

MRG currently has experience litigating cases before the European Court of Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights. MRG has also supported litigation before the UN Human Rights Committee and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The litigation focuses primarily on land rights, political participation and wider anti-discrimination issues.

The Interns will gain full hands-on experience of MRG’s legal work. Their full engagement in the research, analysis and drafting of cases is essential. As much of our work covers new legal ground, we also count on their creativity to help establish new jurisprudence. In the past, Interns have for example been involved in developing arguments on the Right to Development for an indigenous land rights case against Kenya. These were subsequently argued before the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

Our cases generally take place over a number of years. While MRG would not require that the Interns remain involved through the duration of this process, they remain welcome to contribute when time permits for as long as the cases they have worked on progress through the courts.

Interns working on the legal cases programme can also expect to have significant contact with MRG’s partner organisations, with MRG staff in other international offices, and with staff in other departments in London.

Despite the high level of responsibility, the office atmosphere is very relaxed. We work on the basis of flexi-time – so long as the work gets done properly, we do not police the hours.

For a full overview of the Legal Cases Programme, it is encouraged to visit our website – www.minorityrights.org, click on the “Law” button. Then click on the “Key MRG legal cases undertaken since 2002” button on the left hand side.

3. Length of internship

MRG recruits Interns for a minimum period of three months, working part time or full time. Usually internships can be extended upon mutual agreement, depending on programme requirements.

4. Publishing / advocacy and research opportunities

Previous Interns have had opportunities to publish original research based on their work at MRG. For example, MRG has published a Fellow’s report on land rights in Belize. We have published interns’ blogs and photo stories, and we have assisted Interns in publishing academic work and op-eds related to our cases.

5. Particular skills necessary for fellowship

We require Interns to have strong research skills on both electronic legal databases (e.g. Lexis Nexis) and library materials. Interns must have excellent legal writing skills. Interns must have an understanding of international human rights law. Some degree of familiarity with economic, social and cultural rights, as well as minority rights and/or indigenous rights is also ideal, but not essential. For candidates with little or no knowledge of this area, we would ask for some detail on how their skills can be beneficial to our programme.

Ideally, the Interns would also be able to at least read in a second or third language. Experience conducting human rights research in the field is desirable. Experience working in partnership with human rights or related organisations in the field is also desirable.

6. Funding/Reimbursement of expenses

Unfortunately, MRG is not able to fund the internship; however Interns’ expenses will be reimbursed upon production of receipts: up to £5/day for lunch, £7/day for travel expenses.

7. Visa queries

If you do not already have a visa / permission to work in the UK, MRG can provide support for candidates' visa applications. MRG is registered as an A-rated sponsor with the Home Office.

8. Contact information:

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