

**Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, Research and Campaigning Intern
London, England**

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Thanks to a generous grant from the Human Rights Lawyers Association I have been able to work as a research and advocacy intern for the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), for the last three months. HART is a London-based NGO pursuing a combination of aid and advocacy in eight different countries (Burma, India, Nagorno-Karabakh, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uganda). The organisation seeks to assist in areas to which large aid organisations are reluctant to go, and 'give a voice to the voiceless'. Interning with HART has furthered my written advocacy skills, and my understanding of human rights outside the UK, as well as within.

My interests have been geared towards human rights and civil liberties since I first started to engage with the work of the KCL Pro Bono Society in my first year of university. When I took over the presidency of the KCL Human Rights Project (KCLHRP) and started studying the Human Rights law module led by Professor Wintemute, I became determined to pursue a career in the field. I have since been actively searching for opportunities to gain more practical experience and knowledge in the field of human rights law.

It was through the management of the KCLHRP that I first became interested in the work of HART. I met the founder of HART, at an event on Modern Slavery that I organised on behalf of KCLHRP, together with UCL Amnesty International. I was inspired by her description of HART's work, and researched the organisation further. When my application for internship with HART was accepted I was of course thrilled, but also very concerned about how I would finance my internship. Without HRLA's generous contribution I would have had to decline the offer from HART.

General involvement in HART's work, combined with regular seminars, have highlighted and furthered my understanding of issues in the eight focus countries, as well as expanding more generally my understanding for human rights issues in the UK and abroad. While getting to learn from HART's experienced staff, I have also felt that I have been allowed to contribute. The level of independence and own responsibility that first attracted me to HART, and could be felt at the interviewing stage, have exceeded my expectations throughout my internship. The open-minded approach and independent work style of HART has enabled me to contribute to HART from a legal perspective. I have written articles and newsletters, as well as briefs for HART meetings with ambassadors and other influential actors. Very recently I also authored a larger research project on the relationship between commerce and human rights in Burma. The report seeks to push for improved human rights protection, as well as accountability and reconciliation. It includes analysis of many legal instruments in Burma, suggesting for clarifications, amendments and additions to existing law as well as the enactment of new legislation.

Apart from gaining factual knowledge from the excellent staff, I have also received guidance which has improved my writing and research skills. Support and instruction from experienced

human rights researchers has enhanced my writing, research methods, and understanding of international development. I have become adept at describing complex political or conflict situations, the representation of individuals and states, as well as the management of personal opinion. I pursued difficult and diverse research and analysis, with an international profile, something I believe will be a very beneficial experience for my future career. As I have returned to work in a strictly legal setting after the end of my internship, I can clearly identify the benefits the HART experience has had on my written advocacy and analysis. Having previously worked a lot within the bounds of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and the Human Rights Act 1998, my work for HART also provided me with a new perspective on legal protection of human rights. At HART I gained insight into the acute suffering that can flow from an absence of very basic protection. I also observed how the manner suited for protecting rights, varies depending on country and culture. Finally, I worked with individual national laws to *produce* legal protection of human rights, rather than applying a comprehensive external framework such as the ECHR.

Without the support HRLA gave me, I would not have been able to complete my internship with HART. Thank you for the experience and knowledge you made possible!