Call for Applications: Graduate Research Residency at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights

December 6, 2019

Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford

Oak Foundation Research Visitor Programme (four positions)

The Bonavero Institute of Human Rights announces establishment of the Oak Foundation Research Visitor Programme through funding provided by the Oak Foundation. In 2020, the Institute will host four human rights practitioners from the Global South interested in conducting an independent research project in the field of civil liability for human rights violations.

Deadline for application is 10 January 2020.

Further information about application process and supporting documents can be found on the Institute's Calls for Applications and Papers page.

Overview

The Bonavero Institute of Human Rights (the “Institute”) is a research institute within the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford. The Institute undertakes world-class research in the field of human rights law and fosters public engagement in human rights issues beyond the academy. As part of its mission, the Institute seeks to build a vibrant community of graduate students, host Research Visitors and collaborate with human rights scholars and practitioners engaged in pressing contemporary human rights issues around the world. The Institute’s Research Visitor programme is key to building a collegial, global community of scholars, lawyers and policy-makers.

The Oak Foundation Research Visitor Programme has been established through funding provided by the Oak Foundation to the Institute linked to a new research project analysing civil liability for human rights abuses. Its objects are to provide the opportunity to the Research Visitors from the Global South to contribute to this field of research by conducting independent research in Oxford and to foster collaboration between human rights scholars and human rights lawyers in practice.

The Institute is housed in a beautiful new purpose-built building at Mansfield College. Mansfield College is committed to principles of openness, inclusivity and academic excellence. One of Oxford’s smaller and newer, but nevertheless beautiful colleges, Mansfield provides a pleasant and welcoming place to work for Research Visitors, staff of the Institute and students, and an attractive setting for meetings, symposia and conferences.

Civil Liability for Human Rights Abuses: About the Project

Criminal liability for international crimes and human rights abuses, both in national, transnational (universal jurisdiction cases) and international fora, has received substantial attention from legal scholars and human rights lawyers and a number of criminal cases for human rights violations have

been brought before a wide range of courts and tribunals around the world. By comparison, the possibility of civil liability for human rights abuses remains underexplored and scholarly investigation, particularly using the comparative method, has so far been limited. A comparative study to investigate the possibilities and challenges in relation to the role of civil liability for human rights abuses will require an investigation of the principles of national law in selected legal systems to consider in what circumstances civil liability of states, corporations and individuals for human rights violations would arise.

The Institute's new research project, Civil Liability for Human Rights Abuses (the "Project"), responds to this gap in the literature. It will identify a range of jurisdictions spanning both the Global North and South, and civil and common-law legal systems, to investigate the principles that regulate civil liability for human rights violations in those jurisdictions. The jurisdictions that fall within the ambit of the Project (the "Selected Jurisdictions") are Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Philippines, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The legal questions will include analysis of the available causes of action to bring civil claim and obtain redress; principles of causation; vicarious liability; the concept of the duty of care; and recent trends and developments in the field. The Project will also examine the legal rules governing the liability of parent companies for human rights violations by their subsidiaries.

> The Project will involve exchanges with practitioners both at the research stage and during the dissemination of findings. The Institute aims to identify jurisdictions where civil liability for human rights might be a possible mechanism for holding those responsible for human rights abuses to account. In disseminating the research, the Institute plans to equip human rights practitioners in the selected

jurisdictions with an understanding of the possibilities (and challenges) of civil liability for holding perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable. The Project will strengthen dialogue and mutual learning between human rights scholars and practitioners across a range of jurisdictions, with a special focus on the possibilities for successful human rights litigation in key jurisdictions in the Global South.

About the Research Visitor Programme

The aim of the Research Visitor Programme is to provide financial assistance to outstanding human rights practitioners from the Global South who wish to spend time at the Institute in Oxford undertaking independent research in the field of civil liability for human rights violations and contributing the collegial community at the Institute. The grant will provide a stipend to cover economy-class return travel to and from the Research Visitors' home bases, up to three months living and accommodation costs in Oxford, costs towards health insurance and visa application costs. Each of the four successful candidates will be offered up to £7,200 towards these costs.

While in Oxford, the Oak Foundation Research Visitors will conduct self-directed research in the field of civil liability for human rights violations. Candidates who have practical experience and/or scholarly expertise in the field of tort/delict law and civil liability for human rights abuses in one of the Selected Jurisdictions in the Global South are encouraged to apply. Candidates who have expertise and experience in related fields or other jurisdictions will also be considered.

The Oak Foundation Research Visitors will benefit from the opportunity to build networks within and outside Oxford including the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford. The Institute benefits from the University of Oxford's convening power and hosts many events

and conferences each year and will hold research seminars and expert roundtables as part of the Project. The Institute is linked with, and attracts, many scholars and practitioners involved in human rights and public law policy, practice and research and related fields worldwide.

Becoming a Research Visitor at the Institute

The successful candidates will be Research Visitors at the Institute with all the benefits accorded to Research Visitors, including being provided with desks in the Helena Kennedy Reading Room and the opportunity to participate in many of the activities of the Institute including events organised under the Project. The successful candidates will also be entitled to make use of the University's research facilities and libraries, and to attend seminars and lectures and other academic gatherings open to the university community. In addition, the successful candidates may apply to be appointed as a Visiting Fellow of Mansfield College or for Mansfield College Senior Common Room (SCR) membership. The details of the Research Visitor programme may be found here:https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/content/research-visitor-programme-institute.

More information about the call can be accessed here.

View online: Call for Applications: Graduate Research Residency at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights

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