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Faculty Sponsor: Professor Laurel E. Fletcher

Project: Reconsidering International Human Rights Praxis



David Maxson Harris is a 3L at Berkeley Law focusing on domestic human rights. As a student advocate in the International Human Rights Law Clinic, he has helped pass local legislation promoting border policies in accordance with human rights best practices and develop a truth, justice, and reconciliation commission to confront racialized police and prosecutor misconduct in San Francisco. David also represents LGBTQ+ asylum seekers as part of the California Asylum Representation Clinic and is a Senior Executive Editor of the California Law Review and a steering committee member of the Law and Political Economy Society. He previously interned at the Impact Fund and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, working on impact litigation ranging from gay conversion therapy to public benefits. Prior to law school, David was a litigation paralegal at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, working on pro bono matters involving the Muslim Ban, prisoners' rights, police misconduct, and human trafficking. David attended Columbia University, where he majored in political science and linguistics and codirected the university's Amnesty International chapter.

David Maxson Harris will work with Professor Laurel E. Fletcher at the Miller Institute for Global Challenges and the Law on a project that reconsiders international human rights praxis. International human rights came of age in a particular political context which shaped the international human rights imaginary. These foundational ideas and understandings about what international human rights meant and therefore how they should be advanced have continued to influence the international human rights movement and driven the rift within the movement. This research critically will examine the current debates about the future of human rights, and propose a new conceptualization of international praxis to address the current crisis.