



**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
MPOWERING THE STATE**

Human Rights Research

Focus Areas:

Research, human rights, history

SUMMER 2026

May 26 – July 31

This project is being offered through the **University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State (MPower)** (<http://mpower.maryland.edu>) – a formal collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership provides funding for the program.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

On this project, the UM Scholar will assist with conducting research for a forthcoming book project on the hidden histories of human rights.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Throughout this project, the UM Scholar will be asked to produce research memos, annotated bibliographies, and research trails, which will further enhance their research and writing abilities. Students will help to identify and construct a timeline of rights-claims asserted, as well as to identify the sources where claims were made, and help to identify relationships between actors and various social movements. This conceptual mapping of rights asserted, by whom and where, will be useful for achieving the learning objectives identified below.

In part, this project will equip the UM Scholar to:

1. Find, read, interpret, and use various and interrelated international human rights norms using both primary and secondary sources;
2. Find and identify rights claims and rights priorities in texts (declarations, speeches, resolutions etc.) and distinguish between rights claimed and rights enacted into positive law (constitutions, legislation, treaties etc.);
3. Efficiently, and accurately identify relevant human rights issues in diverse types of sources;
4. Understand how and why international human rights law has developed and changed as it has, and why different jurisdictions sometimes have adopted varying approaches to and positions on international human rights law;
5. Appreciate the normative implications underlying and informing the different approaches, models and positions mentioned above.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

This project is ideal for graduate students with a preferred interest and background in race,



**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
MPOWERING THE STATE**

international human rights law, history, Black Studies, African-American Studies, and/or African Studies.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Students may come from UMCP's College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, College of Arts and Humanities, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, Graduate School, and School of Public Policy. Undergraduate candidates with a background and interest in international human rights law and race and the law, will also be considered for the position.

PROJECT LOCATION

This project will be conducted in a hybrid format, mostly remote, but some in-person meetings may take place on the UMB campus.

During the meetings, the mentor will provide a summary of the various projects being worked on and how the student can contribute to research for that week.

Assignments and deadlines will be communicated at each meeting, with most assignments due before the next meeting.

Students may occasionally be asked to review and provide substantive feedback on draft materials related to this project.

PROJECT LEAD/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Matiangai Sirleaf, JD, MA

Nathan Patz Professor of Law, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
University of Maryland School of Medicine

BIO: [Matiangai Sirleaf, JD](#)

EMAIL: msirleaf@law.umaryland.edu

More than one student will be considered for this project.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

- 10 weeks/400-hour student research project conducted with schedule mutually defined and agreed upon by the student and mentor.
- The project is funded by the [University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State \(MPower\)](#) and is a part of the [UM Scholars program](#).



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
MPOWERING THE STATE

- The selected student will receive a stipend for their work, to be paid in multiple installments over the 10 weeks.
 - **\$5,500** for undergraduate students
 - **\$6,500** for graduate students
- Work is expected to occur during typical business hours; Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in the Fall 2026 semester.
- Traveling to and from UMB, as well as parking, is the responsibility of the student and costs are included in the stipend.

[APPLY HERE](#)