

January 05, 2010

## 2010-01-05: Resolving conflicts overseas

University Communications and Public Relations

---

### Recommended Citation

University Communications and Public Relations, "2010-01-05: Resolving conflicts overseas" (2010). *News@Northeastern*. Paper 482.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20001725>

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.

## Resolving conflicts overseas



Law student Leigh Sapir worked for the Israel Law Center in Tel-Aviv. Photo by Craig Bailey

**January 5, 2010**

Working with the family of an Israeli girl who died of gunshot wounds in the West Bank inspired third-year law student Leigh Sapir to pursue a master's degree in conflict mediation at the University of Tel-Aviv.

"I don't know if I'd be applying for a master's or thinking about post-grad in Israel had I not had this experience," said Sapir, who over the summer worked a co-op job for the Tel-Aviv based Israel Law Center, a human rights institute that partners with volunteer lawyers representing alleged victims of terrorism.

For one case, she was tasked with interviewing the Israeli girl's family and crafting an affidavit recounting the story. The Law Center was bringing a civil suit against Hamas, a Palestinian militant movement based in the Gaza Strip, for allegedly killing the young

Israeli on a family drive across the border of the West Bank town of Ramallah and Haifa.

Sapir's co-op experience on the Israeli Mediterranean coast confirmed her passion for human rights law and changed her perspective on practicing law—especially with lives at stake.

"Practicing corporate law, I felt a void between being a lawyer and being a person," she explained. "But this experience confirmed that I could be both a lawyer and a person and do meaningful work that has an impact.

"In law school, everything is handed to you in a serious, factual way, but you have to keep a level-headed mindset and make sure you don't lose the human side of the story," she said, noting that the case against Hamas is still pending and could take years for a resolution.

Sapir, who studied political science and international relations as an undergraduate at the University of Southern California, spent the bulk of her time at the Center researching and turning out memos to senior associates on comparative law in the United States, where many of the institute's volunteer lawyers are based, and writing affidavits on alleged terrorist attacks, such as suicide bombings at Jerusalem marketplaces.

Growing up, Sapir spent her summers in Tel-Aviv, immersing herself in what she calls the "layers and layers of different faiths, cultures and political ideas" of the region. While in Israel for the co-op, news reports of Israel's conflict with Gaza and Lebanon brought an intense immediacy to the day-to-day lives of the Israeli people, she noted.

"There are so many conflicts going on that Israelis have learned to live with them," she said.

Someday soon, Sapir hopes to do a clerkship with the Israeli Supreme Court, or hold a position with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, a United Nations court of law focusing on war crimes that took place amid the conflicts in the Balkans.

"I'm just one person in a big world, and I have to follow my passions and dreams and take things evenhandedly," she said.

Before working at the Law Center, Sapir completed a co-op at a corporate law firm in Tel-Aviv, from December 2008 to March 2009.

### Archives

The following news stories and features are available. For information about older content, please contact University Communications and Public Relations at (617) 373-5471.

#### 2010

January  
February  
March  
April  
May  
June  
July  
August  
September  
October  
November  
December

### Share



Like

Sign Up to see what your friends like.

