American Red Cross Presents the 2026 International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign In-Person Summit Reflection

The IHL YAC In-Person Summit took place in Washington D.C., with 26 representatives from across the world participating.

July 27th–30th, 2026
Written by: Chloe Tam

From July 27th to 30th, 26 IHL YAC summit representatives from around the world came together in Washington D.C. for the 6th annual in-person summit. During the summit, youth volunteers who participated in the 2025-2026 IHL YAC campaign gathered for two days of activities, discussions, and tours. They were joined by Red Cross staff Ashley Sheehey, Christian Jorgenson, Thomas Harper, Robert Bernstein, and Abby Russell, as well as legal interns Bryn Norrie and Shannyn Reigle, and IHL YAC interns Rachel Oh, Harsita Thulasidas, Danielle Choi, and Joyce Yun. Throughout the in-person summit, summit representatives learned about the history of the Red Cross, emblem protection, historical monuments, and journalism. They also participated in various hands-on and team building events that connected to IHL and the Red Cross. Overall, the in-person summit was a valuable and memorable experience for all advocates.

On the 27th, all the advocates arrived in Washington D.C. They met at Tiffany Circle Hall for a welcome session and dinner, where advocates introduced each other over pizza and salad. During the welcome session, advocates learned what to expect and look forward to the next two days of the summit. To close off the night, a reflection circle was held, in which everyone formally introduced themselves and what they were looking forward to throughout the summit. The most popular answer was the twilight tour of the D.C. monuments the next day, which certainly did not disappoint.

On the first full day of the summit, the advocates had a morning of speakers and presentations. After having breakfast in Tiffany Circle Hall, the advocates had a tour of the National Headquarters and the archives. They also hosted guest speakers Allison Leader, Barbara Cochran, and ICRC speakers Lucas Keene, Austin Shangraw, and Steve Dorsey before having a group photo and attending the long-awaited twilight monument tour. On the second day, the day started with a tour of the Holocaust Museum, followed by Raid Cross and the CBC Module Activity with the legal interns Bryn Norrie and Shannyn Reigle. Afterwards, the closing ceremonies and dinner commenced, and, for the final time, a reflection circle was held.

By the end of the in-person summit, the advocates had thoroughly interacted and engaged with IHL and each other. Advocates found various activities and events in the summit enjoyable and notable. Raid Cross was a particularly popular activity of the in-person summit. Advocate Sadie Davis "was very proud of the way [the team] communicated and strategized to complete the games efficiently while still having fun." Shruthi Sankuratri enjoyed the triage portion of Raid Cross, saying how it "was fun to put [themselves] in the shoes of people who would have to think about IHL while also saving lives/triaging." Anushri Mishra also noted that "Raid Cross was definitely [their] favorite…[they] appreciated that [the team] all stuck together and didn't give up." Another popular event was the Twilight Monument Tour. Advocate Charlie Ha's "favorite part of the in-person summit was touring the national monuments at night." Intern Danielle Choi explained that for her, because of the "picturesque scenes paired with Thomas's detail-packed tour of each monument, the Twilight Tour was the highlight of the in-person summit!" Other popular events included the CBC Module Activity, the ICRC guest panelists, and the NHQ tour.

A notable and educational activity was the Holocaust Museum Tour. This was a reflective experience for all advocates. Advocate Bryan Oh noted that "being able to tour the Holocaust museum was astonishing…For our group to be able to get tours, while learning about one of the worst atrocities, which erupted resolves for laws of war, was not only a personal warmth for [him], but an entire conclusion of what IHL is about." Sheuthi Sankuratri noted that "It was a tangible example of the reasons for which IHL was created, in addition to being an educational experience about the signs that lead to genocide."

Even though the in-person summit was full of meaningful activities, the most memorable experiences were the friendships and connections people made. Sadie Davis noted, "It was lovely to watch all of us bond and become more open to each other as time and activities progressed." Aaliya Mazhar loved "the amazing people…there and getting to know everybody from diverse places, exchanging life stories!" Bryan Oh said, "The group of advocates made the experience of Summit so good, uplifting the mood and making the best of all situations." Danielle Choi was amazed by how "all advocates were connected by a thread for IHL, empowerment, and advocacy." Alexander Ricardo's favorite part of the summit was "getting to meet and learn more about so many people from all across the country, making some fond memories." All the advocates got to know each other and create lasting memories. Overall, the

in-person summit was a fun and memorable experience for all advocates that was the cumulation of a year's worth of dedication to IHL.
Warm Regards,
International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign Summit Representatives

SYNOPSIS: The American Red Cross IHL YAC held the in-person summit in Washington D.C. from July 27th to July 30th, 2026. The advocates got to participate in various educational activities and guest speaker events, as well as fun team building games and opportunities to apply their knowledge of IHL. The advocates' most memorable events included Raid Cross and the tour of the Holocaust Museum. Overall, the advocates enjoyed getting to know each other and the Red Cross through this experience.