

August Newsletter

Hong Kong
Refugee Advice
Centre

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Casework Update

Our most successful month!!

HKRAC is very happy to report that UNHCR has **granted refugee protection to 11 people** assisted by HKRAC since August 2010, **resettled 1 of our recognized refugee clients** to Canada, and **re-opened 3 cases** that had previously been denied at First Instance and Appeal.

Since August 2010 HKRAC has also provided full representation to 11 new cases. In addition, we have provided many other refugee claimants with customized legal advice and limited representation.

- (August 6, 2010) Two Asian refugees were recognized and granted protection. Legal Director Christine Lin provided representation in these cases.
- (August 11, 2010) An African refugee was recognized and granted protection. Volunteer Molly Bersani, Jae Lemin from Latham & Watkins, and Summer Interns Ari Cohen and Estelle Hofschneider worked on this case.
- (August 13, 2010) Another African refugee assisted by HKRAC was recognized by UNHCR and granted protection.
- (August 18, 2010) A refugee from the Middle East was recognized and granted protection. Head of Clinical Programmes Lindsay Ernst and Johime Lee worked on this case.
- (September 7, 2010) Another Middle-Eastern refugee was recognized and granted protection. Executive Director Brian Barbour provided legal representation on this case.
- (September 9, 2010) UNHCR finally re-opened the case of an African refugee whose re-opening application had been pending for over three years. Staff Attorney Andrew Lillis worked on this case.
- (September 14, 2010) A South Asian refugee was resettled to Toronto, Canada. Volunteer Alasdair Grant had represented this refugee.
- (September 16, 2010) UNHCR re-opened the cases of two South Asian clients. Haiping Li and Corey Blake from Latham & Watkins worked on these cases.
- (September 16, 2010) UNHCR re-opened the case of a South Asian refugee. Spring intern Megan Rodgers worked on this case.
- (September 22, 2010) An African refugee was recognized and granted protection. HKRAC-HKU Legal Clinic students Gabrielle Curtis and Christal Chan provided representation for this case under the supervision of Lindsay Ernst.
- (September 27, 2010) Two African clients were recognized and granted refugee protection. Lindsay Ernst and Estelle Hofschneider worked on these cases

- (October 5, 2010) Another African refugee was recognized and granted protection. Gabrielle Curtis worked on this case.
- (October 6, 2010) A South-Central Asian refugee was recognized and granted protection. Volunteer Eileen Clarke and Brian Barbour represented the client.

These successes would not have been possible without our wonderful interpreters. A massive thank you to: Rob Connelly, Kaushic Biswas, Mahbuba Islam, Katherine Chiu, Patricia Breteau, Jean-Francois Armand, Alice Delacroix, Anne Wright-Dublin, Christine O'Donnell, Jean-Michel Paray, Claudia Gonzales de Petri, Florence Carr, Rev. Raiu Baraily, Nadia Khan, Ghazala Shaheen, Waseem Khawar, Fazal Ghumman, Christian Kila, Alemelu Ramanathan, Asif Iqbal and Mevesh Ghumman.

HKRAC Clinical Programmes

Welcome and congratulations to the twelve students from CUHK and HKU who were competitively selected to participate in this Fall's Refugee Legal Assistance Clinic. Tony Leung, Leanne Tse, Irene Lam, Alex Lo, Alex Wan and Philip Cheng were selected to participate from CUHK. Jenny Ho, Lorraine Cheng, Jessie Wang, Ariel Wong, Denise Souza and Yvonne Ngai were selected to participate from HKU.

Training Weekend

HKRAC would like to thank our law firm partner Latham & Watkins for hosting our last Refugee Legal Aid Training weekend on 18-19th September. Over 30 new caseworkers were trained at this session.

Our next training session will be held on 15th – 16th January 2011 at the offices of HKRAC's new law firm partner Mallesons Stephen Jacques

Caseworker training weekends are designed to prepare volunteers and pro bono lawyers to represent asylum-seekers filing for refugee protection before the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Hong Kong. Attendance is mandatory for all new casework volunteers as well as HKRAC's Legal Clinic students. Please note that we kindly request volunteers to commit 5-10 hours per week over a 6 month period.

To apply for a place in the training please email your CV and Statement of Interest to info@hkrac.org. Please include relevant language skills, experience and your Hong Kong immigration status.

Nightmare on Graham Street

HKRAC invites you to our first ever HALLOWEEN Party!!

Hong Kong
Refugee Advice
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When: 8pm-11pm, Tues 26th Oct
Where: The Globe, 45-53 Graham Street,
SoHo, Central
Dress: Costume optional
(Best costume wins a prize!)
Theme: Hollywood Horror Films



30% of the revenue raised will be donated back to HKRAC and used directly to provide life-saving aid to refugees. Partners, friends, colleagues, classmates all welcome - the more the merrier! Games will be played all night and whilst participation is not compulsory it is highly encouraged!

HKRAC Halloween Social Night

Nightmare on Graham Street

HKRAC is pleased to be holding its first ever Halloween party!

When: 8pm-11pm, Tuesday 26th October
Where: The Globe, 45-53 Graham Street, SoHo, Central
Dress: Costume optional (Best costume wins a prize!)
Theme: Hollywood Horror Films

Costumes are optional (and highly encouraged - best costume wins a prize!) and there will be games played all night. Please feel free to invite friends, partners, and colleagues along - it will be a great mid-week break and an opportunity to mingle and dress up. The theme of the evening will be 'Hollywood Horror Films' so we look forward to seeing a few Freddie Kruegers, Carries, Draculas, zombies and even - Edward Cullens!

30% of the revenue generated that night will be donated by The Globe back to HKRAC. This money will be used directly towards providing life-saving assistance to refugees. **Please remember to inform The Globe waiting staff that you are with the HKRAC group when ordering and settling your bill.**

We look forward to seeing you all there!

Message from Mallesons our Newest Law Firm Partner

Mallesons Stephen Jaques is delighted to join HKRAC as a law firm partner for the 2010/11 year.

Mallesons has a longstanding commitment to supporting the communities in which it operates - including Asia, where the firm has operated for over 20 years. As part of the '*Mallesons in the Community*' program, the firm's specific charitable targets are to help alleviate poverty, improve community welfare and help children and young people at risk. This program is underpinned by partnerships with not-for-profit organisations that have initiatives in these areas. With a growing number of staff completing the HKRAC training, the Mallesons team is excited about starting case work over the coming months. Needless to say, it will be an exponential, challenging and rewarding learning process.

Mallesons joins our five current law firm partners in providing funding in support of our mission, as well as significant pro bono hours in representing the most vulnerable population in Hong Kong: refugees.

Network News

The Third Annual Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR), Bangkok, Thailand

This November, refugee rights practitioners and civil society groups will be convening in Bangkok with a common goal: to improve access to refugee rights in the Asia Pacific.

The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) is made up of civil society organizations and individuals who collaborate through information sharing, mutual capacity-building and joint advocacy. HKRAC was a founding member in 2008. HKRAC Executive Director Brian Barbour currently serves as the East Asia Working Group Chair whilst HKRAC Legal Director Christine Lin serves as Deputy Chair of the Legal Aid Working Group.

This year the consultations will focus on planning the 60th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention in 2011. In addition, the East Asia Working Group will hold its planning meeting for 2011 supported by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. HKRAC and APRRN believe that as the most affluent and democratized sub-region in Asia, East Asia has both the capacity and the responsibility to establish a better refugee protection system whilst supporting other Asian countries to do the same.

HKRAC Invited to Coordinate Korean Refugee Legal Aid Training, Seoul, Korea

HKRAC will travel to Seoul at the end of October to lead training sessions for Korean lawyers and the Korean Immigration Service (KIS). HKRAC has worked with Korean civil society organizations for 2 years via APRRN. Recently, this collaboration resulted in a tremendously

successful roundtable between the Government, UNHCR, and key civil society members in Seoul. After travelling to Hong Kong to attend one of HKRAC's legal aid trainings, UNHCR Korea engaged HKRAC to coordinate a training of lawyers and adjudicators in Seoul. HKRAC feels strongly that collaborations like this are the key to effective and lasting refugee protection locally, regionally, and internationally.

Development News

Outreach:

Over the past two months HKRAC has presented to Kellett School, Hong Lok Yuen International School, Hong Kong International School and the ISF Academy. We also participated at the Canadian International School CAS Fair, and have upcoming presentations scheduled with the Singapore International School and Australian International School. HKRAC's continued outreach program to schools in Hong Kong has led to the formation of a Student Refugee Aid group at the Chinese International School. HKRAC plans on holding a Student Awareness Refugee week in conjunction with CIS and a number of other senior schools in Hong Kong. Please watch this space for further updates.

Events:

HKRAC hosted a successful fundraising social night at Wagyu Lounge at the end of the summer. Almost 50 people attended, and 30% of the revenue generated that night was donated back to HKRAC. HKRAC is hosting another fundraising social night on Tuesday 26th October. Please join us at The Globe on Graham Street in SoHo, Central for our "Nightmare on Graham Street" Halloween social!

HKRAC is also in the initial phases of planning a wine-tasting dinner in collaboration with Altruistic Wines. Further information will be shared once details are confirmed. We need dinner sponsors so please contact Laura at llee@hkrac.org if you have any suggestions or contacts.

Workshops:

HKRAC recently attended the AFPHK Events Planning workshop and is currently participating in a series of fundraising workshops organized by the Asian Charity Services. Thank you to ACS for selecting HKRAC as a beneficiary client!

Donations:

HKRAC would like to thank the following people and institutions for their generous support:

Jonathan Yeap, Chinese International School and Andrew Chiu, Kassia Women's Choir and Ms Sarah Jay Allen, Martin Schmidt, Paul and Melissa Strecker, Nadia Wong, and Wilfred Young.

Staff Notices

➤ Team news

HKRAC hired a new full-time Accounts Officer at the end of August: A massive welcome to Melissa Lit Mei Sum!

Also joining the HKRAC team as a Legal Intern is Tal Gory from Down Under. G'Day Tal!

HKRAC is sad to bid farewell to Staff Attorney Andrew Lillis this month. Andrew will be joining an exciting bio-tech company but will remain a volunteer with HKRAC. Thank you for all your efforts Andy, good luck and we hope to still see lots of you!

Finally, welcome back to Johime Lee who will temporarily serve as Andrew's replacement.

➤ Internship Opportunity

HKRAC is looking to hire a new **Development Intern**. Candidates should:

- ✓ Have a pro-active attitude and enjoy working autonomously
- ✓ Be sociable and enjoy working with a wide range of people
- ✓ Be keen to work on a range of development tasks including organizing events, conducting research and drafting grant proposals
- ✓ Be presentable and comfortable with public speaking
- ✓ Evidence an interest in refugee issues and human rights

The Development Intern will assist the Development Officer in tasks directly pertaining to Outreach and Awareness-Raising, Donor Relations, Communications, Strategic Planning and Fundraising.

Please note that refugee client contact would be minimal.

Candidates with fluency in Cantonese and IT/Graphic Design skills will be favored.

Interested Development Internship candidates should submit a Cover Letter and their CVs to Laura Lee at llee@hkrac.org by 15th December.

➤ **Interpreters Wanted**

HKRAC is currently seeing interpreters who are fluent in both English and in **Arabic, Dari, Ewe, Farsi, Lingala, Lugandan, Mongolian, Pashto, Punjabi, Sinhalese, Somali, Swahili, Tamil, or Urdu** to assist with HKRAC's work in providing legal assistance to refugees.

Interpreters must possess the following qualifications:

- Oral fluency in both English and the language of interpretation.
- Sensitivity towards working with asylum seekers and victims of trauma and torture.
- Ability to interpret in an impartial manner.
- Ability to maintain all interpretations as confidential.
- Available when needed on weekdays between 9:00 am – 6:00 pm.
- Proof of work authorization or permission to volunteer in Hong Kong.

What does interpretation for HKRAC involve?

As many refugees do not speak English, interpreters are crucial in facilitating communication between HKRAC caseworkers and refugee clients. Interpreters assist by translating word for word what each party says during interviews and counseling sessions. As refugees are victims of trauma and torture, interpreters must be sensitive to working with this vulnerable population and translate in an impartial manner.

What is the time commitment for an interpreter?

Interpretation is on an "as needed" basis. Generally, intake interviews last between 1-2 hours per session. HKRAC has drop-in hours for intakes on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 2:00-5:00 pm as well as other times by appointment. Caseworkers typically spend about 10-20 hours over a 9 week period interviewing a client through the assistance of an interpreter to complete a testimony. Interpreters may also help translate documents from the refugee's native language into English.

Interested parties should contact the HKRAC office at (852) 3109 7359 or email clin@hkrac.org