

IHRP Report 2018 – International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Migration Agency

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This summer, I had the opportunity to work at the International Organization of Migration (the UN Migration Agency) in their headquarters in Geneva. I was part of the International Migration Law Unit (IML), which is a team composed of lawyers who liaise with government policymakers, other UN bodies, and practitioners on the ground to establish best practices and rights-based approaches to migration management within the rule of law. The team is responsible for elucidating complex legal problems for internal staff and external Member States and assisting in legal capacity building. I was lucky to witness and be a part of the team as soon as the Global Compact for Migration had been negotiated by Member States, because the unit had (and continues to) provide a pivotal role in facilitating dialogue.

This internship was an enriching learning experience because I obtained a holistic understanding of the unit's dual roles in policy advising and publication of legal research. I was involved in a diverse array of work, including high level government advising, legal research, and liaising with internal and external bodies. I enjoyed my long-term research assignments on issues of jurisdiction and human rights law because it gave me the opportunity to delve into challenging legal questions regarding the protection needs of migrants in specific situations. Particularly, I researched and wrote about LGBTI migrants as well as the standards on rescue at sea. Through such research, I was able to enrich my understanding of international case law on labour and employment, health, and civil/political/social rights. I also enjoyed supporting my colleagues' missions abroad, which included capacity training and advising responsibilities to Member States. My contributions to these assignments gave me a sense of ownership of the team's work.

This summer also helped me evaluate and compare the responsibilities and work environments between two different but related roles at headquarters and a regional office. Because of the IHRP, I had the opportunity to pursue a fellowship at the UNHCR in Bangkok last summer as part of their Refugee Status Determination (RSD) unit. On a superficial level, the IOM deals with migration and rights-based approaches to migration management overall, while the UNHCR focuses on its mandate of protecting refugees. However, I also found that the work I did at the IOM had to do with capacity building and advising policymakers and other partners about State obligations, whereas RSD responsibilities entailed using legal research to *apply* international obligations and adjudicate cases.

I am particularly grateful to have been able to spend the summer in Geneva with fellow University of Toronto Faculty of Law student Rachel, who worked with me in the office, as well as our other friend and colleague, Amanda. We were a collaborative and close-knit team working towards issues that we were passionate about. Outside of work, we also had the chance to go on weekend trips to nearby towns and hang out by the lake with our friends from the University of Toronto and other universities.

I would like to thank IHRP for their support and guidance with this internship. I am also appreciative of my supervisors and colleagues at the IML for their generosity and mentorship.

Finally, I am particularly thankful to the Professional Development team at Fasken for graciously allowing me to pursue this incredible learning opportunity through their student secondment program.