

Emma Julian

Midterm Report – IHRP Internship at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva

I spent the summer interning at the IOM head office in Geneva. IOM is the go-to intergovernmental organization for anything related to migration. IOM has field offices all over the world and it does work in everything from border management to counter-trafficking to humanitarian emergencies. My internship was with the International Migration Law (IML) unit. IML performs several key roles as part of IOM's larger mandate: an advisory role, instructing States on best practices for migration law instruments and ensuring that States' legislation and policies are in compliance with international law principles; an academic role, conducting research on migration law and current migration issues to better understand the interaction between international, regional, and national migration law; and an educative role, providing training and capacity building to government officials, civil society, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and IOM staff on international migration law. Throughout the course of my internship I completed projects that supported each of these three roles.

One of my responsibilities was to review and edit draft national legislation sent by countries to the IML. The purpose of this exercise was to ensure that the legislation adequately protected migrants' rights and complied with international human rights instruments, such as the International Convention for the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Family and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. I identified inconsistencies with international human rights principles in the legislation and offered suggestions on amendments to correct these protection gaps. Similar projects involved reviewing and editing IOM's submissions on migration policy in countries such as France and Georgia as well as the region of the Middle East and North Africa. These submissions were presented before the United Nations Human Rights Committee. I ensured that the submissions incorporated the correct principles from the appropriate international instruments and adequately highlighted important human rights matters, such as access to justice and the detention of migrants.

In addition to these projects, my responsibilities included research and writing assignments. For example, I researched and prepared case briefs on detention jurisprudence and researched and provided an overview of various States' expulsion and deportation legislation. I also extensively researched family reunification instruments and jurisprudence for my supervisor's upcoming book on migration law. I edited an IML information note on access to justice; this will eventually be published on the IOM website in order to inform migrants of their right to access legal remedies and to remind States of best practices as well as their specific obligations relating to access to justice under

international law. Lastly, I helped prepare trainings for UN staff on the human rights-based approach to project development and programming.

I enjoyed working in Geneva not only due to its beautiful lakeside location and ample amounts of chocolate but also due to its title as the global centre of diplomacy and humanitarian work. In June the UN hosted the 26th session of the Human Rights Council, which featured Special Rapporteur presentations and panel discussions on important issues ranging from the right to freedom of expression to discrimination against women to independence of judges & lawyers. I attended sessions before the HRC where I heard the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women, extreme poverty and human rights, extrajudicial, summary, and arbitrary executions, and the human rights of internally displaced persons respectively present their findings. I also witnessed the submissions of member states' delegates and NGOs on these topics. A highlight of the HRC was attending a talk on "Migration in Dignity" led by François Crépeau, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, a law professor at McGill and a fellow Canadian. I also attended a panel on Youth and Work at the International Labour Organization, which featured a rousing speech by Ban Ki-moon, current UN Secretary-General. In general, with so many international organizations in Geneva, there were a lot of interesting events and presentations to attend. Furthermore, there is such an extensive intern community in Geneva, which provides ample opportunity to meet and engage with interns from all over the world

In addition to work, I took advantage of my relatively-closer proximity to countries of interest, easyJet's flight deals, and the generous Swiss vacation allowance of 2.5 days/month and did a lot of travelling. Over the course of the summer, I visited Milan, Prague, Bratislava, London, Israel, and Morocco. I also travelled around Switzerland, witnessing the stereotypical Swiss scenes of Swiss chalets, snow-capped mountains, and grazing cattle.

Working at IOM in Geneva was an incredibly rewarding and exceptional experience. I would like to thank IHRP for making my summer so memorable.

