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Cover photo: Image courtesy of IRAP Chapter, Georgetown University Law Center. Former IRAP client, Sham, poses with his portrait at the launch of IRAP's Inside Out advocacy campaign in Washington, D.C.

www.refugeerights.org

Note: The content of this Report is current as of September 2015. For the security and privacy of clients, some of the names in this Report have been altered or omitted where indicated.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear IRAP Community,

With the publication of this Report, we invite you to engage with our work at a critical moment. This is the first Report we are issuing as the International Refugee Assistance Project. It tells the story of our impact to date and our sustained growth to confront a truly *global* crisis.

It was not long ago that Jon Finer and I sat in the dining hall at Yale Law School and envisioned a student organization that would bring life-saving assistance to families displaced by the Iraq War. Our ambition was to work on the ground in the Middle East to identify the most at-risk Iraqi refugees and provide them with the legal assistance necessary to get out of harm's way.

In the beginning, we had no funding and no organizational structure to speak of. As law students, we were not legally able to represent refugees. To meet these gaps in resources, we got creative. We solicited *pro bono* attorneys from private law firms with the promise to provide them with meaningful casework, while also giving them the chance to recruit top law students. A unique model emerged: pairs of students partnered with a supervising attorney to afford each refugee family a talented legal team dedicated solely to helping them through the seemingly interminable process of resettlement. All of this was accomplished at no cost to the refugee applicant or IRAP.

Over time, we came to realize two things. First, the need for our services was enormous and often a matter of life and death. Second, because our model leveraged volunteer and *pro bono* assistance, there was tremendous potential to scale our services to meet that need.

I am proud to report that today, seven years later, IRAP leverages a network of more than 3,000 law students and lawyers to provide high quality, *pro bono* legal services to thousands of refugees in over 20 countries. We then utilize the technical expertise and insights we gain from direct representation to advocate for systemic policy changes that have benefited over 120,000 refugees to date.



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There remains much to be done. The world is currently facing the largest refugee crisis since World War II, with an estimated 60 million people displaced around the globe. But the unprecedented scale of displacement must not be an excuse for inaction on the part of the international community. If this Report can convince you of one thing, let it be that the plight of refugees is anything but hopeless.

Our clients inspire us. They have endured unimaginable adversity, only to pick themselves up and demand better from the world. It is our job, as their advocates, to empower and assist them as they navigate inconceivable bureaucracies, often in the midst of severe ongoing persecution, in search of safe passage and a new beginning.

It is an honor and a privilege to do this work. Thank you for making it possible.

Sincerely.

Becca Heller

Director, International Refugee Assistance Project



OUR MISSION & VALUES

MISSION

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) organizes law students and lawyers to develop and enforce a set of legal and human rights for refugees and displaced persons.

Mobilizing direct legal aid and systemic policy advocacy, IRAP serves the world's most persecuted individuals and empowers the next generation of human rights leaders.

VALUES

IRAP believes in action, accountability, innovation, and candor. We are nimble, collaborative, and nonpartisan. We believe in the power of individuals to change their own circumstances. And we believe in results.

Image by Susannah Stevens
 Two children from an Iraqi family of nine that IRAP assisted in Jordan.

EVOLUTION OF IRAP

In 2008, five students founded IRAP as an extracurricular organization at Yale Law School: one was a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; another was a *Washington Post* journalist who had reported from Iraq; three others had worked with refugees. Shortly after they launched IRAP, law student counterparts at New York University and U.C. Berkeley founded IRAP chapters. The law students realized the importance of engaging *pro bono* attorneys to provide direct legal representation to refugees overseas who had never before had access to counsel.

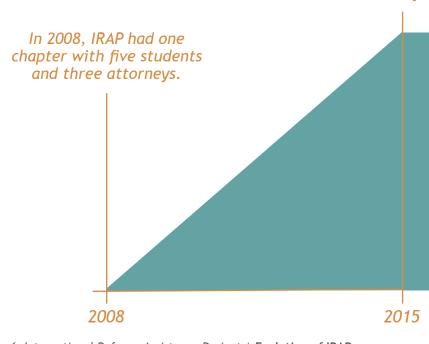
In 2010, IRAP joined the Urban Justice Center, a public interest organization that is home to ten New York-based legal service and systemic advocacy projects.

Since that time, IRAP has built an in-house staff based in New York and established offices in Jordan and Lebanon. Our network of legal representatives has also grown substantially: today, there are 26 IRAP chapters at law schools in the United States and Canada, supported in their work by over 60 international law firms and six multinational corporations that provide *pro bono* assistance.

IRAP began by serving Iraqi refugees because of the clear obligations of Western countries, and the United States in particular, to provide relief to those who were unintended victims of the Iraq War. Since our inception, IRAP has expanded to assist refugees from Afghanistan, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen.

In 2015, IRAP rebranded as the International Refugee Assistance Project to more accurately reflect the life-saving work we perform on behalf of vulnerable refugees around the world.

In 2015, approximately 1,200 students at 26 chapters and over 600 attorneys took cases.



OUR MODEL



While living in Israel during her Kirby Simon Fellowship from Yale Law School, Heller traveled to Amman, Jordan, and met with Iraqi refugees suffering from hunger, poverty, and lack of access to healthcare, seeking resettlement and protection in order to save their lives. Yet none understood how to navigate the legal processes involved. Upon returning to Yale, Heller and four peers created IRAP to address this problem. They worked with the limited resources they had—pairing passionate students with volunteer attorneys to provide legal representation to Iraqi refugees. ***

- The Charles Bronfman Prize (Becca Heller, 2015 Recipient)

lmage by Doug Jackson IRAP students discuss casework at American University's Washington College of Law.

STUDENT & ATTORNEY PARTNERSHIPS

What began at a single law school has since grown into a legal movement: a unique model of partnering law students with *pro bono* lawyers allows IRAP to leverage every \$1 spent into \$10 in legal aid.

IRAP utilizes in-kind, volunteer, and student resources to provide direct services to refugees and pursue systemic advocacy, all while maintaining very low overhead. Our 26 law school chapters partner with over 60 international law firms and six multinational corporations, deploying teams of law students and lawyers to work on urgent refugee resettlement cases.

The model ensures high-quality case performance, engages top-tier firms and law schools in refugee advocacy, and trains the next generation of lawyers to become international human rights advocates.

Pro bono hours translated into dollars:

In fiscal year 2015, IRAP leveraged \$1.14 million





- **The International Refugee Assistance Project is a beacon of hope for many refugees who have entrusted IRAP volunteers with their lives. I was lucky enough to have had that privilege. My law school career took an incredible turn when my colleagues and I established an IRAP chapter at our law school and became part of an organization unique in its services and deserving of all the praise. Because of the leading example of the hardworking IRAP team in New York, I decided to dedicate my life to helping vulnerable migrant communities. I am grateful for all the wonderful opportunities that IRAP has provided, most notably traveling to Kurdistan and meeting with refugees—in particular, a wonderful mother of two who I helped resettle to Sweden. It is my hope that more light is shed on IRAP's work and dedication, and my hope that more hardworking people join the cause.
- Christina Elhaddad, 3L American University, Washington College of Law

POLICY ADVOCACY

IRAP has a formidable track record of successful advocacy at the systemic level: in the 113th Congress alone, our policy advocacy helped enact into law five separate pieces of federal legislation, offering life-saving visas and legal protections to over 120,000 displaced people.

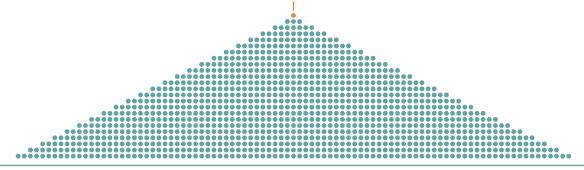
As the only organization that guides refugees through every step of the resettlement process, IRAP is often able to identify obstacles of which other institutional players are unaware. Our unique model utilizes lessons learned in individual casework to advocate for systemic changes that benefit broader refugee populations. While we never turn away an urgent case that has merit, we look for cases where legal work can create precedents that will benefit the wider refugee community.

IRAP builds untraditional, nonpartisan coalitions to advocate for the rights of refugees, ranging from veterans to religious groups to corporate attorneys. We also play a major role in including refugees in U.S. immigration legislation, drafting legislative language around issues such as access to counsel and formal appeals processes, special procedures for LGBTI refugees, and expansions of the U.S. Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) programs for Iraqi and Afghan wartime allies.



OFFERING LIFE-SAVING VISAS AND LEGAL PROTECTIONS TO OVER 120,000 placed people

Our direct legal services provide assistance on the individual level.



Our broad policy initiatives bring about systemic changes that affect hundreds of thousands of people.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF **HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS**

Through our unique student-centered model, IRAP trains the next generation of lawyers to become informed civil servants and community leaders with deep respect for human rights and the rule of law. We have trained more than 1,200 law students in the intricacies of immigration law and refugee advocacy, affording these students hands-on legal experience, a practicum with skilled litigators at top law firms, education in legal ethics, and knowledge of international law and society.

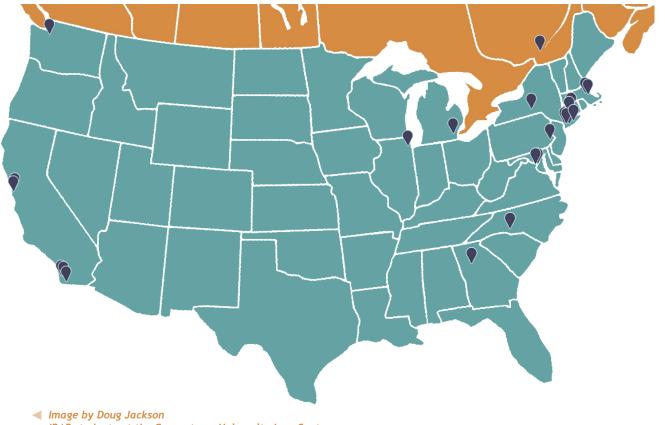
When students complete law school and their work at IRAP chapters, they join a growing cohort of attorneys that understand the challenges surrounding immigration and human rights law, and are poised to play a role in increasing the availability of legal aid for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. Many go on to volunteer as IRAP supervising attorneys, creating a direct pipeline of legal talent.



IRAP LAW SCHOOL CHAPTERS

Albany Law School American University, Washington College of Law Charlotte School of Law Columbia Law School Cornell Law School City University of New York School of Law Emory University School of Law Fordham University School of Law George Washington University Law School Georgetown University Law Center Harvard Law School McGill University Faculty of Law New York University School of Law Northeastern University School of Law Seattle University School of Law

Stanford Law School Touro Law Center University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law University of California, Irvine School of Law University of California, Los Angeles School of Law University of Chicago Law School University of Connecticut School of Law University of Michigan Law School University of Pennsylvania Law School University of Southern California, Gould School of Law Yale Law School



IRAP OVERSEAS

In recent years, the demand for IRAP's services in the Middle East and North Africa has risen dramatically. A confluence of factors has fueled this: the rise of the Islamic State: the absence of durable solutions for refugees; growing frustration among local populations in countries of first asylum that have hosted Syrian, Iraqi, and other refugees for many years; and the deplorable conditions in which refugees live.

IRAP's overseas field staff of lawyers, case managers, and interpreters works in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international government organizations (IGOs), and governmental partners to address these factors and swiftly

Our presence on the ground, and knowledge of local cultural norms, uniquely positions us to respond to emerging crises effectively and in real time, whether it's evacuating LGBTI individuals after a massacre or conducting massive outreach following a change in U.S. resettlement procedures.

identify refugees in dire need of assistance. Our offices in Amman and Beirut are responsible coupled with our legal expertise for the intake and screening processes of our prospective clients, relationship-building with partner organizations, emergency response programming, and the expansion of IRAP's geographical scope to work with the most at-risk refugee populations.

> IRAP's caseload expansion is frequently driven by the emerging needs of highly vulnerable populations in the countries in which we operate. Our presence on the ground, coupled with our legal expertise and knowledge of local

cultural norms, uniquely positions us to respond to emerging crises effectively and in real time, whether it's evacuating LGBTI individuals after a massacre or conducting massive outreach following a change in U.S. resettlement procedures.



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- Larry Yungk, Senior Resettlement Officer
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



PARTNERSHIPS

With the aim of providing holistic services to refugees, IRAP interfaces with an array of organizations and agencies that work in the human rights, refugee, and migration/immigration arenas, including:

- The American Bar Association
- The American Civil Liberties Union
- Asian Law Caucus
- Asylum Access
- The Center for Victims of Torture
- Church World Service
- Council for Global Equality
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- Human Rights First
- Human Rights Watch
- International Catholic Migration Commission
- International Organization for Migration
- Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services
- Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees
- RefugePoint
- Refugee Council USA
- Southern Refugee Legal Aid Network
- Truman National Security Project
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

IRAP's overseas offices conduct specialized outreach to the hardest to reach refugee populations:

1/3 of the caseload of our Beirut office consists of individuals persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity

IRAP's Amman office provides legal representation to 1/3 of the Somali population in Jordan

Building Capacity for Local Organizations

IRAP also helps build the capacity of grassroots organizations in the Middle East by working with nearly 50 local partners to conduct training sessions on how to identify and refer emergency cases for registration, protection, and resettlement, and how to advise refugee clients about related legal processes.

Additionally, IRAP has built robust working relationships with the U.S. federal government. We routinely liaise with members of Congress in the House and Senate, as well as their staff; with federal agencies including the Departments of State and Homeland Security; and with the White House.

STUDENT FIELD WORK

IRAP hosts four annual student trips designed to introduce law students to refugee issues in the field. In 2015, a dozen chapters sent nearly 70 student representatives to the Middle East. The trips are a pillar of IRAP's student-centered model, and a unique opportunity for law students at the outset of their careers to experience first-hand the dynamics and constraints of humanitarian work.

In advance of each trip, IRAP's staff develops an itinerary that includes meetings and trainings with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government officials, community organizations, and community leaders. These sessions enable students to cultivate a more nuanced understanding of the needs, challenges, and opportunities surrounding refugee protection.

Trip attendees also meet with clients to conduct initial and follow-up case interviews. The opportunity for face-to-face engagement deeply enriches students' knowledge and sensitivity around direct client assistance. For most students, these one-on-one sessions with their clients are the most powerful part of the trip.



"Participating on this trip was one of the best things I've done during law school. I very much valued the work that we did, learning about refugees and NGOs, and especially the opportunity to meet my client. I also really enjoyed getting to know the other law students and staff. We had an outstanding group and I hope I can maintain some of the relationships in the future."

- Anonymous Student Feedback from IRAP's 2015 Trip Survey

Jordan 2015: Two Students Meet Their Client for the First Time

In April 2015, two Yale Law School students, 2L Swapna Reddy and 1L Liz Willis, wrote a guest post for IRAP's blog about their experience with IRAP in Jordan. This is an excerpt from their reflections:

Our client was achingly kind. An artist by training, he had repeatedly risked his life to return to Iraq, where he had been imprisoned and beaten, to teach workshops on cross-cultural acceptance. He had volunteered his time to work with children and refugees, and had produced radio shows advocating for religious tolerance, democracy, and peace.

Now, an unlikely group of five had gathered in hopes of reuniting his family in the safety of the United States: our Iraqi Shia client; his Iraqi Sunni roommate; our Syrian Christian interpreter; and ourselves, a blond Southerner and a child of Indian immigrants. Predictably, communication issues instantly emerged.

We had only one week to pin down the most painful details of our client's past. But after three days of interviews, we felt more confused than before we began. We were lost in a sea of details about Iraqi military identification. We left our client's apartment feeling discouraged. Not only had we failed to get the information we needed, but we had also frustrated our client and interpreter in the process.

We returned the next day with only one more chance to pin down details. We would be leaving Jordan the following day.

After reviewing the details we had gathered, our client's story suddenly came into focus. A sense of relief washed over the room, and hours later, we had a finalized declaration in hand.

As our tension eased, we noticed the powerful yet lighthearted bond that the group had developed over the course of the week. Our client joked about stealing our interpreter's favorite pen, and we laughed as his roommate brought a second round of tea before we had finished the first. That evening, we expressed collective regret that we hadn't left time to enjoy each other's company free from our work.

We left Jordan the next day both grateful for the opportunity IRAP had provided and staggered by the amount of refugee resettlement work yet to be done.

Image by Susannah Stevens
 An IRAP client meets with an IRAP student in Amman, Jordan.

NATIONAL STUDENT SUMMIT

Every year, IRAP hosts a National Student Summit to bring together students from our 26 law school chapters for two days of training, organizing, and networking. They are joined by experts from IRAP's partner organizations who introduce attendees to the global realities that inform the everyday work of client representation in the human rights field.

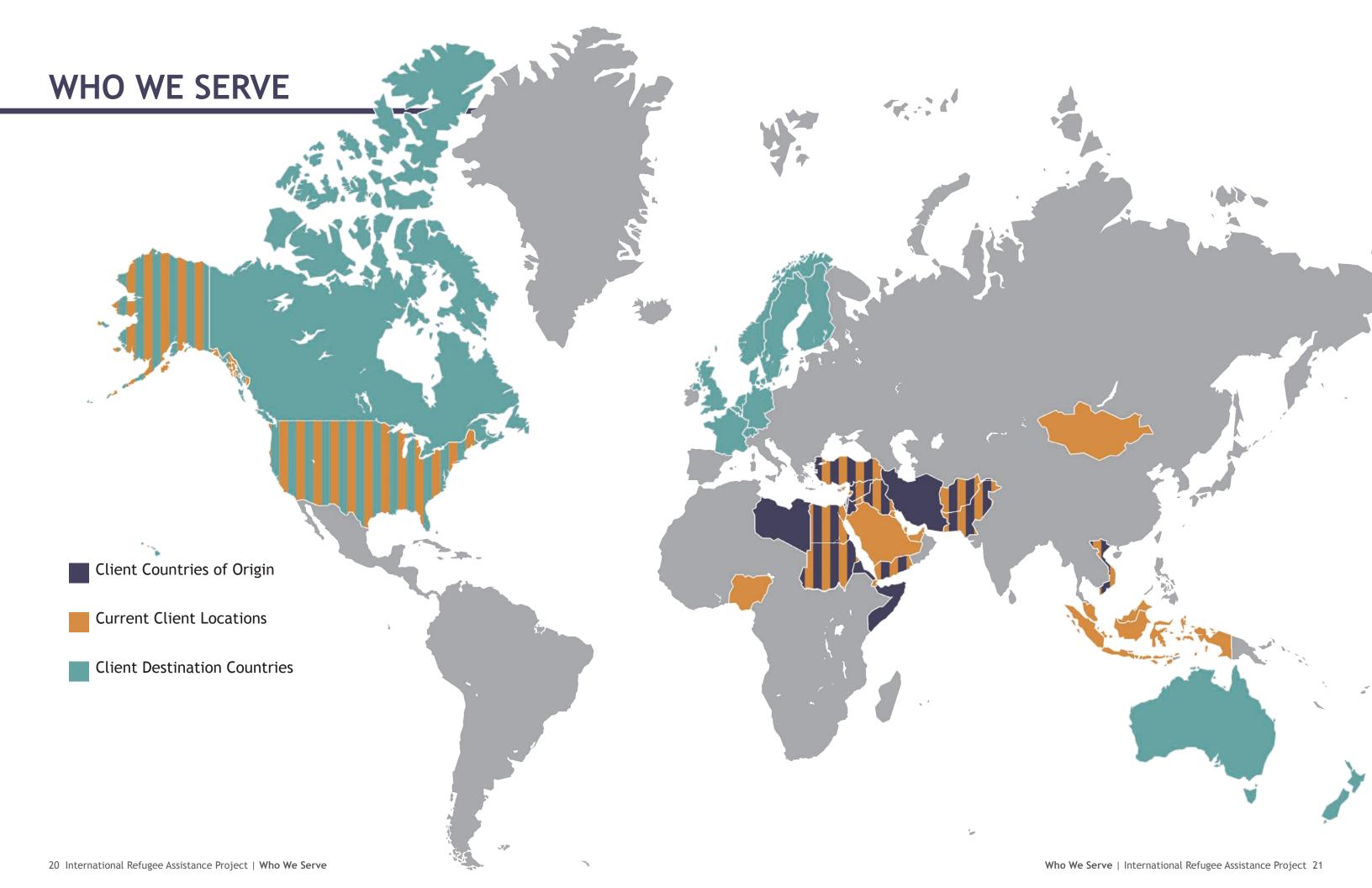
The goal is for students to come away with a multi-dimensional understanding of refugee advocacy. To that end, presenters reflect a diverse cross-section of the refugee rights arena: journalists, lawyers, academics, policy advocates, U.S. government officials, United Nations officers, and resettled IRAP clients all enhance students' understanding of the legal landscape. At the Summit, students also attend breakout workshops that take a hands-on approach to teaching the practical mechanics of refugee assistance—whether it's interviewing techniques, recruiting and working with supervising attorneys, or utilizing the Freedom of Information Act to benefit individual clients.

In late 2014, the National Student Summit coincided with our first-ever all-staff retreat. IRAP's entire field team flew to New York for the Summit, and brought a wealth of insight to a special panel focused on the current refugee crisis in the Middle East.

"The IRAP Team is a shining example of a nonprofit organization making a difference in the national security space. Safeguarding former interpreters and other refugees with U.S. affiliation has a substantial impact on current and future conflict areas. Becca has grown a critical mass of talented team members who provide meaning and purpose in people's lives, not only by helping to safeguard some of our most vulnerable indigenous partners, but also by providing many Americans in the legal community with the chance to contribute to a worthy endeavor. Many people yearn to make a difference with their time and resources. IRAP provides a tremendous channel to do just that! I am proud to be a small part of the overall IRAP effort."

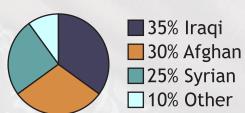
- Steven M. Miska, Colonel, U.S. Army Chair, Marine Corps University Col. Miska introduced the keynote speaker of IRAP's 2014 National Student Summit, New Yorker staff writer, George Packer

Attendance at IRAP's National Student Summit 80 2012 2013 2014 National Student Summit | International Refugee Assistance Project 19





CASE BREAKDOWN BY CLIENT NATIONALITY:



"Other" includes cases from Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. The majority of the "Other" cases are LGBTI and/or women at risk cases.

THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE REFUGEES

IRAP is the first organization to provide comprehensive legal representation to refugees throughout the registration, protection, and resettlement processes, working in some of the world's regions most traumatized by war, hostility, and political upheaval.

Since our establishment, we have provided legal assistance to more than 10,000 refugees, and have resettled more than 3,000 individuals from conflict zones to safe new countries.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) Refugees

LGBTI individuals throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have long been persecuted by militias, religious extremists, and, sadly, their own families and communities. They are particularly vulnerable to trafficking due to displacement, exclusion from laws that might afford protection, and a lack of recognized international human rights safeguards.

IRAP's work with LGBTI refugees has increased dramatically since we took our first LGBTI case in 2009; we are now one of the only organizations providing direct legal assistance to LGBTI refugee populations in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. Our LGBTI program began when we were able to resettle three gay Iraqi refugees living in Jordan and Syria to a safe country in record time. Those cases demonstrated that IRAP's approach to resettlement could be effective in aiding populations persecuted for their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Since that time, we have provided legal representation to dozens of LGBTI refugees around the world.

IRAP's advocacy has led to positive outcomes for individual refugees and to systemic policy advances, including: the creation of a special expedite category for LGBTI refugees seeking admission to the United States; documentation that led the Netherlands to change its asylum policy to recognize LGBTI Iraqis as a uniquely vulnerable population; and the establishment of the first precedent for an in-country referral by the U.S. Embassy in Iraq of a transgender man who would not otherwise have qualified for processing. This advance created an in-country processing system for LGBTI refugees in Iraq that was later codified in the Foreign Affairs Manual, the Department of State's comprehensive guidance document, as a life-saving mechanism available to any U.S. Embassy in the world.

We are currently working with our diverse network of allied organizations to advocate for a lift of the ban on access to counsel for LGBTI refugees seeking resettlement to the United States, and for broader use of in-country processing authority for internally displaced LGBTI individuals.

Image by Susannah Stevens
 A young man IRAP assisted in Amman, Jordan.

Female Survivors of Sexual or Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

Female refugees are uniquely susceptible to sexual and physical abuse, trafficking, and sexual slavery in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) because of their lesser legal status and lack of rights. Displaced or abused women are excluded from traditional human rights protocols, and most MENA countries do not recognize the basic rights of women, including the right to custody of their children.

In 2013, we began adapting our successful LGBTI program framework to serve the needs of women at risk in Iraq. Today, we provide a range of services to Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi, Somali, and Syrian women at risk. IRAP works extensively with this population, providing services that include legal representation, emergency protection, extraction from violent situations, and advocacy to make the resettlement process accessible both to women who have been trafficked, and to those who have fled abusive situations with children and are struggling to obtain legal custody. We use grassroots outreach among refugee populations to find, screen, and take on the most vulnerable women as clients; connect women to health, mental health, housing, and psychosocial services; and provide access to local attorneys for custody and divorce matters.

Children with Medical Emergencies

Nearly all refugees lack access to quality medical care, but those with chronic diseases or complex conditions are most at risk of death. Juvenile health outcomes are particularly poor, in part because many young people have lacked healthcare for the majority of their lives, and because the use of chemical weapons in conflicts has led to a high rate of juvenile cancers.

For many children, the only hope for treatment is to be granted humanitarian parole to temporarily visit a developed country to receive free medical treatment for worsening or chronic conditions. IRAP works with several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the ground to identify children with such needs and ensure that their requests for entry are expedited.

In addition to our network of pro bono attorneys, our in-house staff has provided consultations and legal assistance to thousands of refugees. Our legal advice hotline receives a large volume of requests for assistance; between the fall of Mosul in June 2014 and February 2015, we provided individualized advice to more than 2,000 people over e-mail alone.



Persecuted Religious Minorities

Across the globe, religious minorities have long histories of being persecuted. The conflicts and growing religious extremism in the Middle East have rendered many religious minorities more susceptible to abuse than at any time in recent history. In Syria and Iraq, IRAP has worked with several different populations subject to targeted violence, particularly amid the rise of the Islamic State, including: Assyrian Christians, Chaldeans, Sabean-Mandeans, and the Yazidis. We work with these populations regardless of their religious affiliation, helping them escape immediate threats, find safe harbors, and seek resettlement.

Many of these cases receive expedited treatment, enabling these refugees to build new lives in the United States and several European countries. IRAP is currently working with the European Union and U.S. authorities to decrease processing times for threatened religious minorities. We also participated in drafting and introducing to the U.S. Congress the Protecting Religious Minorities Persecuted by ISIS Act of 2015, which, if passed, will provide special protection to religious minorities fleeing persecution by the Islamic State.

U.S.-Affiliated Iraqi and Afghan Wartime Allies

IRAP strives to ensure that the over 75,000 Iraqis and Afghans who are persecuted for their assistance to the United States are not forgotten as America's physical presence in the region diminishes. Congress recognized that the thousands of Iraqis and Afghans who provided valuable support to American forces in those countries would face a backlash for their American affiliation, and created Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) programs for persecuted allies to seek refuge in the United States. IRAP is the foremost expert in, and advocate for, SIV cases and program reforms. Although IRAP's role in the SIV process was at first procedural—pairing SIV applicants with *pro bono* attorneys and law students who could assist candidates in navigating the various administrative processes—our expertise quickly made us the leading policy advocate for making the SIV process more fair, efficient, and inclusive.

Over the past five years, IRAP has advocated for, and won, a number of legislative extensions to both the Iraqi and Afghan SIV programs; groundbreaking access to counsel and due process provisions, such as the right to appeal a ruling; greater administrative transparency; and, crucially, a dramatic increase in the number of visas issued and the speed with which visas are processed. IRAP helped ensure the passage of five pieces of legislation that guaranteed visas to U.S.-affiliated allies—with overwhelming bipartisan support—through the 113th Congress. These systemic victories have benefited over 120,000 U.S.-affiliated Iraqis and Afghans.

Image by Susannah Stevens An IRAP client explains her story with the help of an interpreter.

Emerging Refugee Populations

The protracted war in Syria has resulted in the world's most serious humanitarian crisis in decades: according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over four million Syrian refugees are now displaced in neighboring countries. Because of resource constraints and delays, many of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees are not receiving the assistance they need and have turned to smugglers as an alternative.

UNHCR offices have requested IRAP's assistance in locating, documenting, and referring at-risk Syrian cases for registration, protection, and resettlement. We have utilized our grassroots networks, particularly among LGBTI populations and women at risk, to refer individuals to UNHCR who otherwise would not be able to safely register, receive aid and local protection, and apply for resettlement as appropriate. Being able to locate and serve Syrian refugees in these countries of first asylum will also give lifelines to those who otherwise might turn to boats.

IRAP has developed a specific set of program and policy agenda items to try to address the systemic failures in countries of first asylum to locate and assist the most vulnerable refugees. We are adding staff to our Middle East offices to bolster these efforts, provide capacity-building and training to local organizations, and support the efforts of UNHCR to screen, protect, identify, and resettle the Syrian refugees most in need.





States, and now I live the reality of my dream every moment."

CLIENT STORIES

Now I Live the Reality of My Dream: Sham's Story

Ibrahim, known to his friends as Sham, is an Iraqi who worked as an interpreter for the U.S. Army. His support of the U.S. mission placed him in grave danger of retaliation by extremists, and, fearing for his life, he applied for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) in 2011. After two years, Sham was still waiting for a decision. IRAP supported Sham throughout this period to navigate the SIV process: guiding him through interviews and re-interviews, helping him confirm his case status, and advising him on how best to protect himself as his fear mounted and he considered fleeing to a neighboring country.

Sham finally received his visa in the spring of 2014. In coming to America, Sham escaped persecution at the hands of those who wanted him dead because of his work with the U.S. Army. Since arriving, he has been able to expand and strengthen the bonds he formed in Iraq with his American comrades. Today, Sham works at Dog Tag Bakery, a nonprofit bakery in Washington, D.C., established to help empower veterans and military families. In 2015, Dog Tag, Inc. awarded him a fellowship to pursue a Business Administration certification at Georgetown University. Sham now hones entrepreneurship, networking, branding, and business decision-making skills, all while gaining direct experience in a small business setting. One of Sham's goals for the year ahead is to use the IRAP client network to make the Dog Tag Fellowship accessible to other SIV recipients from Iraq and Afghanistan.

■ Image by Doug Jackson Sham poses at his current job at Dog Tag Bakery in Washington, D.C.

In April 2015, Sham participated in IRAP's nationwide #BreatheFree campaign, designed to raise awareness about refugee resettlement around the country. When the campaign launched, Sham wrote a guest post about his experiences for IRAP's blog:

Wy name is Sham Hasan. I am a Mesopotamian immigrant, and I was born and raised in Baghdad, Iraq. I'm a former U.S. Army interpreter and I arrived to the United States nine months ago through the Special Immigrant Visa program.

Seeking freedom, and escaping social and sectarian violence are the main reasons I left Iraq.

So far, it has been an incredible journey, and certainly, the best is yet to come."

Miracle in Damascus: Monica's Story*

Monica is an 18-year-old woman from Latakia, Syria. While she worked in a children's apparel store to earn money, she harbored a passion for music. In 2009, she and several friends started a hip-hop group called West Side Soldiers. Two years later, when the Syrian Revolution erupted, they made a song about the uprising gaining momentum across their country. The song, posted on YouTube, immediately drew the attention of the Assad regime, which accused Monica and her friends of sedition and labeled them "devil's slaves." The regime attempted to track down members of the group, arresting and interrogating friends and peers. They contacted Monica's brother and threatened to kill him. Monica twice ran from government cars trying to run her over. She kept a low profile: she cancelled all concerts, stopped attending parties, and, for an entire year, barely left her house.

In 2012, Monica fled to Egypt. In her words, she escaped only by a miracle. At the airport in Damascus, an official recognized her name in the computer and risked his own life to help her: he said he knew she was a good person and escorted her directly to the plane.

In Egypt, as she learned that her fellow group members had been arrested or killed as a consequence of their music, Monica realized that she was still at risk. She narrowly evaded two kidnapping attempts in Egypt: the first by two men on motorbikes and the second on a bus. In 2014, Monica fled Egypt for Lebanon,

only by a miracle... Today, Monica is closer than ever to a new start thanks to the work of IRAP's staff in Beirut.

where she currently receives assistance from IRAP. In her words, she escaped Today, Monica is closer than ever to a new start thanks to the work of IRAP's staff in Beirut. With IRAP's assistance, she recently received approval from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to seek resettlement in France, where she has a relative who can support her. IRAP continues to guide Monica through the application

and interview process to give her the best possible chance of living a secure life in a place where she can express herself freely.

I Live Like a Dead Man: Mustafa's Story*

In late 2014, IRAP received a referral from a former client, a transgender Iraqi man now building a life as an LGBTI activist in New York. He said he knew someone else who could use IRAP's help: Mustafa, a transgender man who was still living in his home country of Egypt. He described Mustafa as being trapped. In 2013, Mustafa started undergoing hormone therapy in order to align his gender expression with his identity. Today, Mustafa has neither appropriate medical resources in Egypt nor legal protection to allow him to continue transitioning safely there; at the same time, the effects of the hormones on his body make him an open target of gender-related violence and sexual harassment.

Mustafa faces severe isolation and persecution as a result of his identity. In Mustafa's words, he lives like a dead man. The people around him consider him a mistake or a perversion. The police routinely harass and interrogate him. Because of discrimination, Mustafa finds it near impossible to get work. He faces the worst

Mustafa has neither appropriate medical resources in Egypt nor legal protection to allow him to continue transitioning safely there; at the same time, the effects of the hormones on his body make him an open target of gender-related violence and sexual harassment.

problems in the streets, where he has been attacked and beaten repeatedly. Mustafa sees his transgender friends confront the same challenges. They cannot live normal lives. Even Mustafa's family has rejected him, saying that he is a non-believer acting against Islam. His uncle and cousins have threatened to kill him if he pursues gender affirmation surgery, insisting that the operation would represent an unforgiveable transgression.

IRAP is now advising Mustafa in his efforts to relocate to a place where he can live the life he wants for himself. Our lawyers and students recently prepared and submitted his application for resettlement to a safe country where he can live without fear of being killed because of his identity.

*We have used pseudonyms in these stories in order to protect our clients.



From Persecution to Peace: Sayed's Story*

In 2012, Sayed, a gay Syrian man, was studying in Homs, Syria. In April of the same year, regime soldiers occupied his university and shot at protestors from the student dormitories. Sayed was determined to document the abuses, so he photographed the soldiers shooting at peaceful demonstrators. He was caught. Officials arrested Sayed and brought him to the police station. There, he was viciously beaten until he could not feel his body at all. He was raped violently with foreign objects, and experienced severe pain and bleeding as a result.

Sayed fled to Lebanon, but the trauma of his experience followed him there. He couldn't walk very far or his knee would dislocate as a result of the beating. He suffered from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, experiencing tremendous and unrelenting fear and anxiety. Twice, he attempted suicide.

Finally, in 2014, a local organization referred Sayed to IRAP. IRAP's Beirut staff was able to offer him a lifeline. IRAP helped him apply for resettlement via UNHCR

IRAP helped him apply for resettlement via UNHCR and the Canadian government, drafting his referral documents, attending his interview with him, and submitting follow-up requests to expedite his case.

and the Canadian government, drafting his referral documents, attending his interview with him, and submitting follow-up requests to expedite his case. We alerted sexual and gender-based violence protection officers at UNHCR when further threats to his safety arose in Beirut. We referred him to a local organization that provides psychological assistance for survivors of torture. And we

assisted in his application for a Canadian conjugal partner visa, including submitting a letter attesting to his relationship and the extreme urgency of his situation, which would enable him to escape to Canada to finally reunite with his long-term partner.

In February 2015, Sayed received his conjugal partner visa, and was able to join his partner in Canada. He is once again pursuing his education, working hard to improve his English, and preparing to start a degree in Petroleum Engineering.

Living Like in Prison: *Maryam's Story**

Maryam is originally from Damascus, and is Chechen—a minority ethnic group in Syria. She was 22 years old when a wealthy man approached her family and asked to take her as his wife. Maryam's parents agreed to the arrangement, and she left Syria to move with her new husband to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Soon after their arrival in Riyadh, Maryam's husband began to severely abuse her. There were instances of gang rape, in which he brought his friends to the house and forced Maryam to engage in sexual intercourse with multiple men. Under her own roof, Maryam became a victim of extreme sexual violence.

Maryam's husband watched her closely whenever she called home, making it impossible for her to tell her parents of the danger she faced. After nearly three years, she was finally able to communicate with them from a housemaid's phone. Her parents immediately brought Maryam back to safety in Damascus. For a time, she felt safe under her parents' protection. She developed a romantic relationship with a female friend—Maryam was attracted to women and finally felt able to express her sexual orientation openly. Her father and sister generally respected her independence. But Maryam's life was soon to be disturbed by external factors.

At the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, the government suspected Chechens of supporting the opposition. They rounded up members of the Chechen community, imprisoning them, forcing them to work with the regime, and killing many. In 2012, Maryam's cousin was murdered for refusing to work with the government. Maryam was picked up by the government in 2013, and interrogated. Her interrogators requested that she work for them as a spy, expecting her to have sex with men to see who was truly in support of the regime and who was not. Their demands terrified Maryam, especially in light of the sexual violence she had survived at the hands of her former husband. After the interrogation, she fled her home. Her younger brother—who was also interrogated—was not able to escape. He was kidnapped and his children were tortured. His whereabouts are unknown.

Around the same time, Maryam's older brother discovered her girlfriend. He turned to violence. He stalked Maryam to learn where her girlfriend lived, and one day showed up at her home brandishing a gun. Certain that her brother would murder her, and terrified of what the Assad regime would force her to do if caught, Maryam fled to Lebanon. There, Maryam is still scared and depressed. She

She is afraid to leave her house, convinced that either her brother or regime officials will be able to find her. Maryam compares her life in Lebanon to life in prison.

is afraid to leave her house, convinced that either her brother or regime officials will be able to find her. Maryam compares her life in Lebanon to life in prison.

IRAP's staff is working hard to free Maryam from her current situation. We recently submitted a referral on her behalf to UNHCR,

underscoring the urgency of resettlement in her case. We're taking steps to ensure that her application moves through the process as efficiently as possible. With our assistance, we hope that Maryam will soon be able to build a secure life in a safe place.

MOHAMMAD'S STORY

Mohammad Usafi served alongside the U.S. Marines in Afghanistan for four years as an interpreter. Affectionately nicknamed "Yoda" by his unit, Mohammad was shot at twice and survived an improvised explosive device (IED) attack. In retaliation for his service, the Taliban kidnapped, tortured, and killed his father in 2009. Despite this, Mohammad continued to serve U.S. forces for another three years. In 2010, he applied for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV); for three years he had no real response to his application. During this time, the Taliban kidnapped his three-year-old brother. After paying his life savings as ransom for his brother, Mohammad and his family fled to Pakistan. Mohammad eventually reached out to IRAP for support in getting himself and his family out of harm's way.

Inauspicious Beginnings

With support from his American friend and colleague Adrian Kinsella, Mohammad submitted his SIV application in September 2010. Then he waited. For nearly two years, they both struggled to understand the status of Mohammad's application. As of January 2013, his SIV application remained in bureaucratic limbo.





Enter IRAP

On January 31, 2013, Adrian—then a law student at U.C. Berkeley—got in touch with his school's IRAP chapter, and subsequently reached out to IRAP's policy team. Because of the horrible circumstances that Mohammad and his family had endured, IRAP advised Mohammad and Adrian to use media to apply pressure on government actors. IRAP then helped Adrian interest *The Chicago Tribune* in an article about Mohammad's plight. In February 2013, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approved the next step in Mohammad's visa application, and his application moved forward for further processing.

A Bureaucratic Black Box

Mohammad completed his SIV interview at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad in April 2013. His interviewer told him everything looked good, and that he should have his visa within one to three months.

In July 2013, Adrian asked the Embassy for a status report about the case. The Embassy responded that



it was still pending under "administrative processing." Frustrated, Adrian and Mohammad sought guidance from IRAP. Based on IRAP's recommendations, they began drafting letters to Congress and published an op-ed in *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Eleven members of Congress submitted inquiries on Mohammad's behalf. Congressman McDermott and Congressman Blumenauer wrote directly to Secretary of State John Kerry. IRAP attracted the interest of other media outlets to build additional pressure.

A Friend of the Americans

Meanwhile in Afghanistan, Mohammad's little brother was kidnapped. The ransom note accused Mohammad of "being a friend of the Americans," and instructed him to leave \$35,000 on the grave of his murdered father to save his brother from the same fate.

Adrian informed the U.S. government of this development and asked if there was any way for the case to move more quickly. The government responded that there was no way to expedite his case.

Mohammad withdrew his life savings from the bank and followed the instructions in the ransom note. Amazingly, the kidnappers complied with their terms and released his brother; shortly thereafter, Mohammad gathered his family and fled to Pakistan.

Images courtesy of Mohammad Usafi and Adrian Kinsella

Finally, FNU

On January 16, 2014, Mohammad's visa finally arrived. It listed his name as "FNU [First Name Unknown] Mohammad."

On January 20, 2014, Mohammad arrived safely at San Francisco International Airport. After being held for three hours in customs, he was greeted with a hero's welcome by 25 supporters.



lmage © Deanne Fitzmaurice

Family Matters

Unlike the Iraqi SIV and refugee programs, the Afghan SIV program offers no avenues to safety for the extended family members of interpreters. Mohammad's arrival in America represented a huge victory for him, but his widowed mother and seven younger siblings were forced to remain behind. Mohammad again reached out to IRAP for help. In August 2014, we submitted the family's application for humanitarian parole, which, if granted, allows temporary admission to the United States for people confronting dire emergencies. This route, however, is entirely discretionary and very rarely exercised by the State Department so we knew the family faced long odds.

John Oliver and Franz Kafka

With the humanitarian parole application submitted, IRAP once again pursued media attention, this time around Mohammad's family's case. IRAP's staff spent hours working with the production team of HBO's Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. In October 2014, John Oliver interviewed Mohammad on the show—poignantly introducing him as FNU Mohammad—and provided a hilarious but hard-hitting critique of the "Kafkaesque" SIV program. The coverage made Mohammad's story, and the challenges confronting thousands of stranded U.S. allies, a reality for millions of viewers across the world.

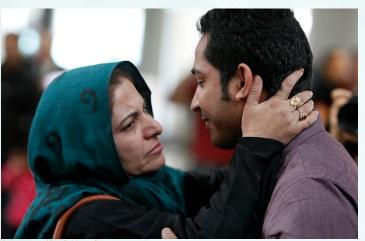
Later in October, IRAP helped harness the momentum from Mohammad's story to further leverage public interest, this time turning to the popular web forum, Reddit, and its AMA ("Ask Me Anything") platform. IRAP coordinated Mohammad's AMA, during which he fielded questions from dozens of everyday people newly concerned about SIV policy, and eager to write to whomever was appropriate to galvanize support for reform of the SIV program.

"I don't have words to express my thanks. They were dead and you guys gave them life."

- Mohammad Usafi Former Interpreter and IRAP Client

Amplifying Success

IRAP's advocacy does not end with an individual case victory. Even as Mohammad celebrated the arrival of his family, he acknowledged those who remained in peril overseas. Throughout 2014, IRAP's policy team devoted hours to pushing crucial reforms through Congress. In December 2014, through the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, IRAP helped attain thousands of additional visas for Afghan and Iraqi interpreters, greater transparency and accountability in refugee processing, and greater consular resources dedicated to visa processing.



lmage © Karl Mondon



Image courtesy of Mohammad Usafi and Adrian Kinsella

Reunification (

Soon after Mohammad's appearance on Last Week Tonight with John Oliver and his Reddit AMA session, IRAP received word that his family's humanitarian parole application had been approved.

On December 3, 2014, Mohammad's mother and seven siblings finally arrived in the United States.

IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

2008

Becca Heller and Jon Finer, students at Yale Law School, recruit a group of student volunteers to assist a handful of Iraqi families displaced by the Iraq War.

Yale Law School recognizes the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project as a formal student

October



Students at New York
University School of Law and
U.C. Berkeley School of Law
form IRAP chapters at their
schools to assist families
displaced by the Iraq War.

organization. IRAP partners

with its first law firm.

November

August



A NEW ERA IN REFUGEE RIGHTS

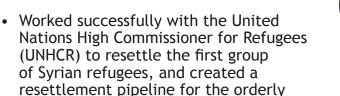
The world is facing a refugee crisis the likes of which we have not witnessed since World War II. Refugees around the world continue to be neglected, victimized, and denied the procedural safeguards that are the hallmarks of a just society. IRAP is changing this. We are reshaping thought and practice in the field by providing high quality legal representation and engaging in successful policy advocacy. We are elevating the plight of refugees in the halls of Congress and before the United Nations and other international bodies. And we are incorporating refugee rights into the geopolitical narrative through thoughtful engagement of the media.

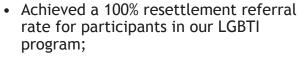
Providing Safe Passage and New Beginnings to the Most At-Risk Refugees

IRAP provides comprehensive legal representation to the most vulnerable and hard-to-serve refugees around the world. We ensure that refugee legal processes are efficient, fair, and transparent. IRAP's work has:

- Helped to resettle over 3,000 refugees and their families to nine different countries, establishing an 85% success rate in resettlement cases;
- Developed a service model that leverages every \$1 spent into \$10 in legal assistance for refugees;
- Established a one-of-a-kind legal advice hotline for requests for assistance;

2009





handling of their cases;

- Established a successful women at risk pilot project that performed above and beyond established goals, facilitating protection for 62 extremely vulnerable women in Lebanon and Jordan;
- Conducted capacity-building trainings around sex trafficking, educating local stakeholders and organizations that women who are trafficked are not legally prostitutes—crucial because women convicted of prostitution are not eligible to be legally recognized as refugees by many countries;
- Conducted capacity-building workshops with non-governmental organizations in Kurdistan that did not know that Female Genital Cutting could be the source of a refugee claim;
- Worked with women's shelters in two countries to accept and shelter lesbians;
- Filed and won the first-ever lawsuit on behalf of a Special Immigrant Visa applicant claiming unreasonable delays in processing, in partnership with a law firm co-counsel, bringing our client to safety in the United States weeks later.

January

IRAP students and faculty from Yale, NYU, and U.C. Berkeley make the first of what will become bi-annual trips to the Middle East to meet refugee clients and learn first-hand about the situation on the ground.

June

The office of the UNHCR in Washington, D.C. reaches out to IRAP to ask if we can refer cases in need of legal assistance.



IRAP provides legal assistance in its first LGBTI case, and begins conducting grassroots outreach to isolated LGBTI individuals in the Middle East.



Becca Heller is awarded a Skadden Fellowship, allowing her to begin working full-time on IRAP following her graduation from law school.

Creating Systemic Reforms Benefiting Hundreds of Thousands of Refugees

IRAP has provided life-saving assistance in thousands of individual cases. We also commit significant resources to systemic reform that not only assists refugees seeking protection and resettlement, but also leads to the development of an enforceable system of legal rights and procedures for refugees worldwide. IRAP recently:

- · Helped enact five separate pieces of legislation in the 113th Congress that afforded unprecedented legal rights to over 120,000 displaced people;
- Worked with the American Bar Association to create a policy platform around access to counsel for refugees seeking resettlement to the United States, including directly engaging the Secretary of Homeland Security;
- Compelled the U.S. government to create a special expedite category for LGBTI refugees seeking admission to the United States who face persecution based on gender identity or sexual orientation;
- Established a precedent for in-country referrals by the U.S. Embassy in Iraq as a result of our assistance to a transgender Iragi who was under a death threat. The in-country referral system was subsequently expanded to every U.S. Embassy in the world through a change in the State Department's Foreign Affairs Manual;
- Won Freedom of Information Act lawsuits that resulted in the release of over 10,000 pages of previously unreleased refugee processing information, which now serves as the basis for numerous advocacy and reform efforts:
- At the request of the White House, conducted research that led to improved Special Immigrant Visa processing for U.S. allies in Iraq and Afghanistan, resulting in an increase in visas processed from 392 in 2011 to more than 6,000 in 2013;

Organizational Growth

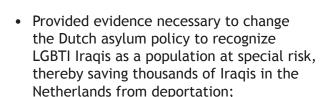
Becca graduates from law school and receives an Echoing Green Fellowship to start building IRAP to scale. At this time, IRAP has chapters at ten law schools throughout the United States, serving dozens of clients.



Organizational Growth

IRAP becomes part of the Urban Justice Center in New York. It has two full-time employees, one in New York and one in the Middle East.





- Through the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, attained the right to attorney representation for Iraqi and Afghan visa and refugee applicants—the first-ever access to counsel provisions for any overseas applicant seeking to resettle in the United States: and
- Extended and strengthened both the Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa programs, ensuring the allotment of additional visas for over 50,000 U.S. allies and immediate family members.

Providing Crucial Support and Building Capacity in the Field

IRAP provides vital support to students, professionals, and organizational partners in the United States and across the globe. This work includes:

- Engaging over 3,000 law students and pro bono lawyers in our work, thereby developing a generation of advocates and leaders in human rights and refugee resettlement advocacy; and
- Developing partnerships with over 50 U.S.-based and international human rights, immigration, and refugee resettlement organizations. This work bridges the gap between IRAP services and clients' comprehensive needs. It also builds capacity for legal service professionals by providing strategic advice and training on how to identify, refer, and advise clients.



IRAP holds its first board meeting.



IRAP holds its first National Student Summit in Washington, D.C. Students from 12 law schools attend the Summit.



At the request of the White House, IRAP conducts research and makes recommendations on troubled SIV programs. The research leads directly to major program improvements, with a jump in visas issued from 392 in 2011 to more than

6,000 in 2013.



July

Organizational Growth

IRAP has 110 active cases, with over 20 law firms and 16 law schools engaged in providing legal aid to refugees.



IRAP begins representing nine women who are survivors of sexual trafficking in Syria in the refugee registration and resettlement processes.



IRAP negotiates a settlement with the U.S. government under the Freedom of Information Act, securing the release of over 5,000 pages of previously unavailable documents that provide critical insights into how the United States processes refugee claims.

2013

In response to the massacre of dozens of LGBTI individuals in Iraq, IRAP creates an evacuation and protection pilot program for 22 LGBTI refugees.

IRAP hires its first in-country staff member for its program in Lebanon.

IRAP issues the first-ever treatise documenting how to provide legal aid to refugees in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Process.

Organizational Growth

IRAP hires both its first Legal Director and Policy Director.

Organizational Growth

IRAP places nearly 50 new cases at 20 law school chapters. IRAP's Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) advocacy work begins in earnest when we place an A1 story in *The Washington Post* shedding light on the stalemate of the Afghan SIV program.

IRAP SUES THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OVER MULTI-YEAR DELAYS IN OVERSEAS VISA PROCESSING

In February 2015, with co-counsel Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, IRAP filed a groundbreaking, multi-party lawsuit against the Departments of State and Homeland Security. The suit was filed on behalf of nine Iraqis whom the U.S. government found to be under "serious threat" as a consequence of their work in support of U.S. troops in Iraq, but who remained stranded in Iraq for years with no decision on their Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications.

The Plaintiffs include an interpreter who was shot in the back while on a mission and continued working for the U.S. Army; a physician who provided life support and emergency medical care at a U.S. base in Iraq; and an engineer who worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build security infrastructure around the country and who survived multiple suicide bombing attacks.

The lawsuit aims to set precedent for the timely adjudication of overseas refugee and visa cases, particularly when applicants are in imminent danger.

The suit alleges that the U.S. government has failed in its obligation to provide life-saving protection to our allies through the SIV program. Congress mandated that the process for getting an SIV should take nine months. As of the February filing date, however, the Plaintiffs' applications had been pending for an average of four years and three months since submission of their documents.

In July 2015, IRAP and Freshfields amended the lawsuit to include three more Iraqis and four Afghans, all of whom risked their lives to support the United States.

As a result of the lawsuit, five of the Plaintiffs and their families have been issued SIVs, and numerous improvements have been made to SIV processing. IRAP continues to litigate the case to set important precedents for all refugee and visa applicants in overseas processing whose persecution necessitates timely adjudication of their applications.

IRAP takes more than 40 law students on trips to the Middle East to meet with clients and experience the situation facing refugees on the ground.

March

June

September

October

November

The landmark Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill passes 68-32, including three sections containing IRAP agenda items.

Organizational Growth

IRAP begins taking cases in a third location in the Middle East, and hires a new staff attorney in its New York office. Increased capacity enables IRAP to place nearly 100 cases at 22 law school chapters, including a pilot cohort of Syrian cases.

In the midst of a government shutdown, IRAP facilitates the passage of H.R. 3233, which renews and extends the Iraqi SIV program.

IRAP holds its third annual National Student Summit in New York; 80 students attend from throughout the country.

IRAP helps extend and expand the Iraqi and Afghan SIV programs and achieves the first-ever access to counsel provisions for Iraqi and Afghan visa applicants and refugees.



July

August

September

October

. Inter

2014

IRAP joins Republican and Democratic Members of the House and Senate in introducing the Afghan Allies Protection Extension Act at a stand-up press event in the Capitol Building.

On Capitol Hill, VICE News and IRAP partner to screen "The Interpreters," a documentary featuring IRAP, about the plight of U.S. allies in Afghanistan.

IRAP helps extend the Afghan Allies Protection Act, adding 1,000 emergency visas to the program.

> Last Week Tonight with John Oliver features IRAP in a segment on the SIV program.

IRAP, in partnership with lawyers from the American International Group (AIG), receive the 2014 Corporate Pro Bono Partner Award for their work with refugees.

Organizational Growth

Over the course of 2014, IRAP staff doubles to 12 individuals; its *pro bono* resources now include 24 law school chapters and over 50 law firms.

IRAP helps attain additional visas for U.S. allies in Iraq and Afghanistan and greater transparency and accountability in refugee processing via the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act.

May

July

August

October

November

December

The Plaintiffs in the lawsuit provided a range of critical support to U.S. military personnel and civilians, such as interpretation in active combat zones, medical care to wounded U.S. soldiers, and logistical support on U.S. Army bases. "Frodo," as he is affectionately known to his U.S. supervisors, served as an interpreter. Here is his story.

Frodo is an Iragi citizen who, until July 2015, lived in Baghdad. He is Shia, and his wife is Sunni. Together they have three young daughters. Frodo was originally hired as an interpreter for U.S. forces through a U.S. government contractor. He served as an interpreter for years, rode side-byside with American infantry in Humvees and Stryker armored fighting vehicles, and joined dangerous combat missions in some of the most volatile areas in Iraq. Frodo and his American comrades were targeted by approximately 50 IEDs and car bombs and engaged in approximately 20 firefights. In one particularly deadly attack, Frodo's convoy was targeted by a car bomb that killed numerous Iraqi police recruits. Frodo had been riding just ahead of the vehicle that was destroyed. He helped wounded American soldiers to find cover and secure the immediate area.

Frodo's loyalty to the U.S. troops exposed him and his family to serious risk of violent reprisals. Because knowledge or even rumors about Frodo's work as an interpreter could have fatal consequences for him and his loved ones, Frodo kept his service secret from everyone but his immediate relatives.

Nevertheless, in 2006, two men came to Frodo's front door and threatened his brother and family, specifically mentioning Frodo's work as an interpreter.

Knowing that he and his family were in grave danger, Frodo applied for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) in 2011. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad acknowledged in August 2011 that Frodo faced a "serious threat" as a result of his service to the United States. Yet, years later, his SIV application remained stuck in the bureaucracy, and Frodo and his family remained in harm's way.

Frodo joined IRAP's lawsuit as a Plaintiff in the hopes that his pleas for help and safety would finally be heard. It worked. On June 18, 2015, Frodo and his family received their visas. Two weeks later, they received their travel itinerary. IRAP welcomed them to safety on U.S. soil on July 30, 2015.

As a result of the lawsuit, five Plaintiffs have been issued visas. By strategically raising the profile of neglected cases to the U.S. government, IRAP's lawsuits save lives—not only by bringing individual Plaintiffs swiftly to safety, but by establishing precedents that benefit thousands more who remain at risk.

"IRAP helped me with my case, which had been stopped for four years and a half for no reason. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad didn't tell me about why it was stopped. Nobody answered me. So I contacted IRAP to get help. After that, my case moved forward. Thank you for your organization and for your amazing office. Without your help, I'd still be waiting."

- Frodo, Former Interpreter and IRAP Plaintiff

January

February

March

IRAP takes nearly 70 students from 12 law school chapters to the Middle East to meet with clients and learn about the situation on the ground.

IRAP and Freshfields file a

2015

9

groundbreaking lawsuit against the U.S. government on behalf of nine Iraqi SIV applicants. The Wall Street Journal breaks the story; CBS and NPR cover the story as well.

April

IRAP mobilizes its law student network to launch #BreatheFree, a nationwide guerrilla art campaign designed to raise awareness about refugee resettlement, in collaboration with the Inside Out Project.

Organizational Growth IRAP launches the IRAP

June

Alumni Association to engage former law school chapter members in IRAP's work after they graduate from one of the 26 partnering law schools across North America.

July

IRAP and Freshfields expand their lawsuit against the U.S. government to include three additional Iraqi Plaintiffs and four Afghan Plaintiffs.

September

Organizational Growth
In recognition of the global scope of its work, IRAP rebrands as the International Refugee Assistance Project.

Septem

44 International Refugee Assistance Project | Impact & Achievements

Impact & Achievements | International Refugee Assistance Project

THEN AND NOW: CHARTING OUR SUCCESS

In 2013, IRAP conducted a strategic planning process for the next several years. Over the past two years, we have made remarkable strides towards the goals we enunciated in that process:

Goals
Achievements

Gours	Achievements
Identify and expedite at-risk refugee applicants from throughout the Middle East, with the help of the United Nations and resettlement destination countries.	IRAP has provided legal assistance and advice to over 10,000 of the world's most vulnerable refugees, and achieved resettlement for over 3,000 individuals in partnership with the United Nations and its member countries.
Assist in the creation of a resettlement pipeline for Syrian refugees by locating, screening, and assisting with resettlement of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees.	IRAP significantly ramped up its caseload of Syrian refugees, which reached 25% of its total caseload by the end of fiscal year 2015. We also hired a dedicated Syria Case Manager in order to continue to grow our capacity to take on Syrian cases.
Model a pilot for female survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence, including forced marriages, after our successful pilot program for LGBTI refugees.	IRAP created and expanded a pilot service program for female survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. It is now operational in three countries, and has served over 100 individuals. Services include legal representation, emergency protection, wrap-around case management, and evacuation assistance to women who are at immediate risk of honor killing and persecution because of domestic violence, trafficking, and/or sexual assault.
Maintain momentum in the processing of Iraqi and Afghan visas.	IRAP stewarded vital legislation through the 113th Congress, enabling thousands of additional Iraqis and Afghans to seek refuge in the United States under the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. Among other things, this legislation authorized over 13,000 additional SIVs for Iraqi and Afghan wartime allies, and tens of thousands of additional visas for their family members.
Utilize individual casework to identify and promote policy and legal protections needed for resettling refugees.	IRAP's highest priority is to provide representation to individual refugees and their families. However, in our casework, conditions on the ground are observed, analyzed, and lead to advocacy that achieves systemic reforms at the national and international levels. In the 113th Congress alone, IRAP was the driving force behind ten legislative vehicles resulting in five pieces of enacted legislation that afforded unprecedented legal rights to over 120,000 displaced people.
Achieve organizational sustainability through donor engagement and strategic planning.	IRAP is more stable and sustainable than at any point in its history. Donor outreach, engagement, and contributions have grown significantly over the past two years. Strategic planning has resulted in a blueprint for growth, including substantial expansion of regions to be served and rebranding IRAP as the International Refugee Assistance Project to reflect that expansion.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED

IRAP began by serving six Iraqi refugee families living in Jordan in 2008. The five law students who set forth on that quest utilized the resources they had on hand: law students and attorneys providing pro bono assistance. That model—law students, lawyers, and IRAP staffers—thrives today because of its flexibility and scalability. With connective technology, it can be deployed to provide representation to refugees living nearly anywhere. Today, IRAP is helping thousands of refugees fleeing conflict across three continents.

Tomorrow will bring much more:

Broadening Horizons

IRAP's work in the Middle East piloted remote legal representation for refugees in one of the world's most challenging regions. But our services are applicable to refugees regardless of location. Over the coming years, IRAP will build towards a more global scope, deploying our model in regions with great need, scant resources, and strong local partners.

Deepening Engagement

While IRAP takes all urgent cases with merit, our work on behalf of the most vulnerable refugees—such as women at risk of violence and persecuted LGBTI populations—is creating options for refugees whose cases were previously considered hopeless. We are investing in our capacity to serve at-risk populations through a wider array of services that create more durable solutions for refugees.

Expanding Partnerships

Refugee registration, protection, and resettlement rely on a patchwork of national and international agencies and organizations. As IRAP grows, we will work more closely with key refugee law actors, closing gaps in service coverage and rendering recognition and resettlement mechanisms more accessible and efficient for those most in need.

Achieving Systemic Change

Propelled by case outcomes and lessons learned on the ground, IRAP's advocacy role has grown greatly over the past two years. In the years to come, we will push for landmark refugee rights, including the right to attorney representation for all refugees seeking to enter the United States. The scope of IRAP's advocacy will also grow to include greater international efforts, particularly among the United Nations and non-U.S. destination countries.

The IRAP of tomorrow will act as a global clearinghouse for legal issues arising from refugee recognition, protection, and resettlement: one central organization to train lawyers and law students, troubleshoot legal challenges for specific cases, compile and share best practices, and move quickly to shine a light on emerging crises for refugees the world over.

IRAP IN THE MEDIA

IRAP's media strategy stems from, and strengthens, our legal and policy initiatives as they unfold. We engage with media when we believe that a widely-circulated story will encourage the U.S. government and other international entities to act, whether on urgent individual cases or for systemic policy reform.

Over the past two years, numerous news outlets have relied on IRAP's expertise and told the story of our mission, including:

























































IRAP IN THE MEDIA

New Hork



Why Can't Refugees Get Lawyers?



WALL STREET JOURNAL



Iragis Who Served U.S. Seek Visas... and Wait







Translators



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"We have been inspired by our work with IRAP for the past few years to help Afghans obtain U.S. Special Immigrant Visas. Our partnership with IRAP has been very meaningful to our pro bono program and has been motivating to our employee volunteers. IRAP is tireless in its commitment to helping refugees in need and the results that they have achieved in a short period of time are truly remarkable. IRAP continues to impress and raise the bar."

- Erica P. Blau, Counsel American International Group, Inc. (AIG)



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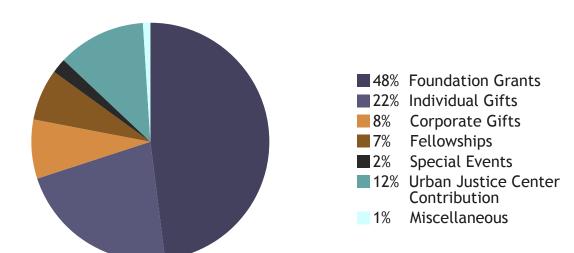
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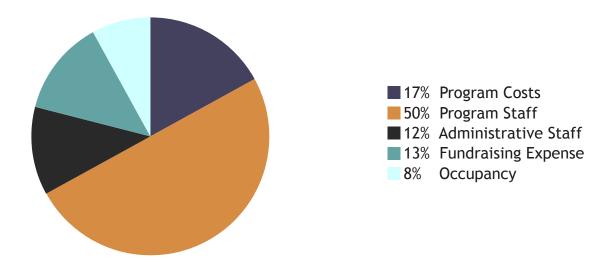
FINANCIAL GROWTH

Fiscal Year 2014

Income: \$962,422

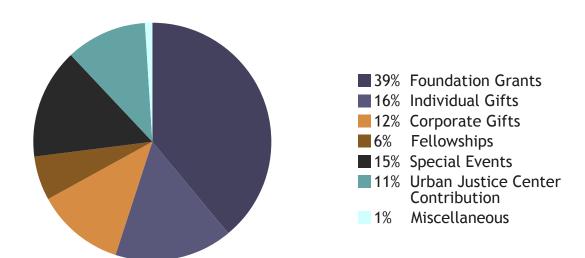


Expenses: \$733,492

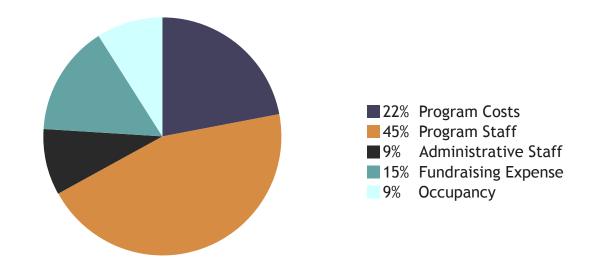


Fiscal Year 2015

Income: \$1,427,227



Expenses: \$1,121,005



Staff Growth:

May 2010
All volunteer

September 2010
Two

September 2012

Five

September 2013
Seven

September 2014

Twelve



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In the summer of 2015, we launched the IRAP Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is comprised of individuals who are committed to IRAP's program, goals, and continued development, and have agreed to serve as IRAP ambassadors in their communities—seeking to enhance the organization's visibility and engage new supporters in our work. We are excited to see it grow!

Steven M. Miska

Colonel, U.S. Army Chair, Marine Corps University

Neal E. Rickner

Senior Manager, Field Operations, Makani, Google[x]

Thomas A. Russo

Executive Vice President & General Counsel, Legal, Compliance, Regulatory Affairs & Government Affairs, American International Group, Inc.

"My grandparents escaped Europe during World War II and made it to safety thanks, in part, to the help and sacrifice of some good people who helped them along the way—people I will never meet, who didn't have to do anything, but recognized the opportunity to make right something that was wrong in the world. Working with IRAP has allowed me the precious opportunity to apply my time and legal training towards that same goal. Together with the outstanding law students with whom I have worked, I have been fortunate enough to see several deserving families escape persecution, violence, and war, and brought to safety, or even reunited, in the United States. Every time, I have breathed a huge sigh of relief, and then signed up for another IRAP matter. It is a privilege to be able to participate in this most humane and necessary of projects. And it is the least I could do given what others did for me."

- Maurice Horwitz, Senior Associate Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP



Image courtesy of IRAP Chapter, Harvard Law School Harvard Law School IRAP students pose with client portraits at the launch of IRAP's Inside Out advocacy campaign in Cambridge, MA.

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ABOUT IRAP

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) organizes law students and lawyers to develop and enforce a set of legal and human rights for refugees and displaced persons. Mobilizing direct legal aid and systemic policy advocacy, IRAP serves the world's most persecuted individuals and empowers the next generation of human rights leaders.

IRAP is the first organization to provide comprehensive legal representation to refugees throughout the registration, protection, and resettlement processes.

We leverage our work with refugees into advocacy for broad systemic reforms within national and international refugee resettlement processes so that refugees globally may better enforce their human rights.





info@refugeerights.org www.refugeerights.org 40 Rector Street, 9th Floor New York, NY 10006