

August 27, 2017

Dan Ruben
Executive Director at Equal Justice America
13540 Boundary Rd # 204B
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

With the assistance of Equal Justice America, I was extremely fortunate to spend this past summer with the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) in New York, NY. In an effort to expose me to the variety of projects IRAP devotes itself to, my supervisors gave me a diverse array of tasks, though each day also brought with it new immediate assignments, particularly regarding our litigation of the Muslim ban in *IRAP v. Trump*.

The day I began my internship, the Trump administration acknowledged it was pursuing an expedited appeal in both the *IRAP* case and its related case, *Hawaii v. Trump*. So began a race to prepare our clients and airport travelers in case the injunction was lifted and the ban came back into place. I prepared a Know Your Rights Guide to be placed in airports in anticipation of a negative SCOTUS ruling. When the SCOTUS decision was finally released, it struck what some would term a delicate balance, stating that those with a "bona fide relationship with a person or entity" from the six countries on the ban list would still be allowed into the country. The originality of this phrase led to much confusion, and I was tasked with researching and writing the first memo on its meaning, and then incorporating our pro-bono firms' research, in a short time period. My master document was circulated as a quick resource for the plaintiffs, IRAP and HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), and our counsel - the ACLU and NILC (National Immigration Law Center).

During my summer, I also assisted with in our other litigation, in particular the *Hamama* litigation (ACLU Michigan co-counsel), where I provided research citations and cite-checked the IRAP Director's Declaration in support of an injunction against the deportation of hundreds of Iraqi Chaldeans back to Iraq.

The vast majority of my work however, was with our refugee clients in the Middle East and North Africa. I worked closely with over a dozen clients, conducting telephone intakes which averaged 2-3 hours in length, sometimes working with interpreters, and always conducting follow-ups and providing continued communication. I worked intimately with one particular client, a transgender Iranian in Turkey, to get her remote emergency services – psychological counseling and housing assistance, and to get her successful expedited refugee status. After working with her daily for weeks, I left the client with warm tears of thanks as IRAP took on her case and handed it to a pro-bono team to continue pressing for her resettlement to a third country. I also worked closely with another client, an Iraqi who had risked his life interpreting for and driving international journalists, to prepare a FOIA request for his refugee case denial. With another client, I prepared him for his preliminary interview with the IOM (International Organization for Migration) that would determine his eligibility for the Direct Access Program (which allows Iraqis to apply for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program within their country).

I also worked intimately with five SIV (special immigrant visa - a program for Iraqis and Afghans who worked closely with American or International forces) applicants, assisting them in acquiring

their necessary employment verification documents and appealing their COM (Chief of Mission) denials. For many of these clients, an SIV was their last or only option for escaping the daily danger they face in their home countries because of their work with Americans or international forces. I pursued contacts for ex-military supervisors from years past in order to obtain recommendation letters and worked to wrangle HR letters from past employers.

While I engaged with other tasks this summer as well, including preparing a comprehensive LGBTQI training presentation and presenting a beta version of it at the IRAP staff retreat, working with IRAP's inspiring clients was the highlight of my internship. Receiving desperate messages from clients around the clock, pleading for help to save their lives and that of their families, wore on me heavily. Yet the hope exhibited by those clients, in spite of it all, and the fortitude exhibited by my IRAP coworkers pushed me through. I also learned quite a bit about how I need to balance my personal life to avoid burn out in such highly emotional work, work that feels so full of despair and uphill battles against policy that seems out of our hands. This summer has confirmed that despite its many challenges, this is the work I was meant to do, this is the work I love, these are the clients I love to work with.

Working at IRAP has been a fulfillment of a dream, and for its role in facilitating this work, I sincerely thank Equal Justice America and its supporters.

Sincerely,

Nikki Endsley
Georgetown Law 2019



August 16, 2017

Dan Ruben
Executive Director,
Equal Justice America
13530 East Boundary Road,
Midlothian, VA 23112

Internship Evaluation Letter for Nikki Endsley

Dear Mr. Ruben:

It has been our sincere pleasure to supervise Nikki Endsley during her Summer 2017 Equal Justice America Fellowship with the International Refugee Assistance Project (“IRAP”) at the Urban Justice Center in New York City. IRAP is a non-profit legal organization that works with 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.

Most of the clients and communities IRAP serves face urgent and ongoing threats to their lives; the vast majority of IRAP legal communication and advocacy with these extremely vulnerable individuals happens remotely. Creating a sense of rapport and an atmosphere in which an individual can disclose some of their most painful experiences in a short amount of time is a skill that takes trained volunteers, interns, and even experienced pro bono attorneys considerable time to hone when conducting legal intakes and providing direct legal representation. Nikki immediately demonstrated an intuitive understanding of how to establish a trauma-informed attorney-client relationship. Moreover, she made concerted efforts to be appropriately transparent with clients about their cases, while simultaneously providing clients with a voice in decisions that affected them, in a manner that was both purposeful and in line with legal ethical requirements.

Nikki’s thoughtful and focused questions and her commitment to reliability and follow-through on assignments surpassed our expectations. Her high level of research, organization, follow-up, attention to detail, and eagerness to learn and refine her legal skills were evident throughout each her legal intakes. Several of the intakes assigned to her were quite technically complex; Nikki’s diligent efforts made it easier for the attorneys on our team to assess the viability of potential cases as quickly as possible.

Specifically, Nikki’s attention and advocacy likely played a large role in a vulnerable client’s positive refugee status determination. Thanks to Nikki, this client’s legal case for resettlement is scheduled for placement with a pro bono legal team. Additionally, through her persistent efforts to track down remote individuals and obtain crucial information, several Afghan clients facing threats to their lives as a result of their service to the United States government are closer to meeting the eligibility requirements for a life-saving Special Immigrant Visa.

Nikki Endsley
EJA Internship Evaluation Letter

Along with producing an excellent and nuanced legal research memorandum for IRAP's ongoing Supreme Court litigation, Nikki spearheaded an inter-office training on how to best prepare volunteers, pro bono attorneys, and interpreters to work sensitively and effectively with LGBTI individuals from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Thanks to her weeks of research and outreach to individuals and organizations with expertise in these areas, IRAP is on track to provide improved training materials and technical assistance.

IRAP's law school chapters partner with international law firms and multinational corporations, deploying teams of law students and lawyers to work on urgent refugee resettlement cases. Nikki will continue to work with IRAP as a Chapter Director for IRAP's Georgetown Law chapter this upcoming school year. We are thrilled at the opportunity to place one of our more sensitive and challenging cases in Nikki's capable hands.

We are thankful to you and the Fellowship Selection Committee at Equal Justice America for awarding Nikki this Fellowship; the entire IRAP legal team expressed their gratitude – repeatedly – for her incredible work this summer. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Nikki as a Georgetown Law IRAP Chapter Director and we are excited to watch her promising legal career unfold. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



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