

ADAM SEVERSON

P.O. Box 422, Grand Lake, Colorado | (970) 627-3646
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Licensed Attorney in good standing, Bar of the State of Colorado

Oct. 2011 – present

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

JUSTICE CENTRE HONG KONG, HONG KONG S.A.R.

Jan. 2017 – present

Legal Consultant

Drafting recommendations for transitions from UNHCR to state-run refugee status determination (RSD) mechanisms in Asia.

JUSTICE CENTRE HONG KONG, HONG KONG S.A.R.

June 2015 – Jan. 2017

Senior Legal Advisor

Jointly oversaw the substance and quality of Justice Centre's Protection Claimant Services program, including legal services provided by staff, partner law firms, clinic students, fellows, and volunteers. Contributed to building Justice Centre's profile, including media interviews and speaking engagements with stakeholders within the legal, academic and donor communities. Participated in strategic and work planning; drafted concept notes for potential donors; and contributed to campaigns and communications via the website, blog, and Twitter.

Key Contributions:

- Developed and delivered legal trainings for staff, partner law firms, legal aid lawyers, clinic students, fellows, and volunteers. Instructed and supervised 6 university clinic students per semester.
- Created project to recruit and train commercial law firms to represent protection claimants (asylum seekers) before the Torture Claims Appeal Board, the administrative body that adjudicates asylum appeals.
- Recruited and supervised legal staff and volunteers.
- Advised Hong Kong policy makers, NGOs, and members of the legal community on issues related to the Convention Against Torture, UNHCR resettlement, negative media coverage of refugees, human trafficking, and forced labor of migrant domestic workers.

ST. ANDREWS REFUGEE SERVICES (StARS), CAIRO, EGYPT

Jan. 2015 – April 2015

Refugee Status Determination Legal Services Consultant

Recruited to develop a professional legal services program to provide direct representation to asylum seekers in UNHCR's refugee status determination (RSD) process in Egypt. Trained and supervised staff, volunteers, and interpreters. Created standard protocols and procedures for case intake, screening, allocation, and representation.

Key Contributions:

- Developed and delivered training on UNHCR guidelines and procedures vis-à-vis RSD, international refugee law, the role of legal representation in the RSD process, ethics, legal and country of origin information research, collecting and evaluating evidence, assessing credibility, interviewing techniques, testimony and legal argument drafting, and case management.
- Drafted a practice manual with comprehensive guidance on all aspects of StARS' RSD legal services. Laid the groundwork for a legal services program staffed by 15 legal representatives and serving between 800 – 1000 asylum seekers annually.

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SUAKA CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK FOR REFUGEE RIGHTS PROTECTION, JAKARTA, INDONESIA
Interim Legal Services Coordinator

April 2014 – Aug. 2014

Worked with public interest lawyers to develop a program to provide direct representation to asylum seekers in UNCHR's RSD process in Indonesia. Trained lawyers and civil society organizations on international refugee law, the RSD process, and the importance of legal representation.

Key Contributions:

- Created guidelines for identifying cases in which Suaka will assist, intake and screening protocols for the provision of legal services, casework materials for use by legal representatives, a case management system, RSD training materials, and self-help materials for asylum seekers in Indonesia.
- Supervised and mentored Indonesian legal representatives to interview asylum seekers, conduct country of origin information (COI) and legal research, review documents for authenticity, collect evidence, prepare testimony, and draft legal submissions to UNHCR.
- Established positive working relationships with UNHCR and other NGOs assisting asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia.

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE (JRS), BANGKOK, THAILAND
Legal Officer, Urban Refugee Programme

Sept. 2012 – April 2014

Provided legal assistance to urban asylum seekers in UNHCR's RSD process in Thailand, including representation of asylum seekers and recognized refugees in exclusion and cancellation proceedings. Advised refugees on embassy and UNHCR resettlement procedures.

Key Contributions:

- Increased coordination between UNHCR and NGOs to provide protection to asylum seekers and refugees from neighboring countries at risk of arrest and *refoulement*.
- Established a collaborative relationship with UNHCR and organized regular meetings to discuss RSD, registration, and broader protection issues. Trained UNHCR staff on the role of legal aid and legal aid confidentiality practices.
- Developed JRS legal team, including: recruiting and training new legal officers, and creating legal service guidelines.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST REFUGEE ASSISTANCE (AMERA), CAIRO, EGYPT
Volunteer Legal Advisor (University of Colorado Law School Public Interest Fellow)

Jan. 2012 – Aug. 2012

Represented asylum seekers in UNHCR's RSD process in Egypt, with particular focus on appeals. Screened prospective clients, researched country of origin information (COI), collected corroborating evidence, drafted testimony and legal submissions to UNHCR, and accompanied clients to RSD interviews.

Key Contributions:

- Represented Eritrean and Ethiopian victims of human trafficking and torture, arranged for their physical protection in Cairo, and advocated for their expedited recognition as refugees and resettlement to safe third countries.
- Collaborated with RSD Team Leader to suggest changes to UNHCR's RSD Procedural Standards regarding the appeal process.
- Reviewed other legal advisors' client testimonies and legal submissions when RSD Team Leader was on leave. Trained new volunteer legal advisors on international refugee law and legal argument drafting.

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY NETWORK, DENVER, COLORADO
Volunteer (University of Colorado Law School Public Interest Fellow)

Nov. 2011 – Dec. 2011

Researched country of origin information and wrote reports regarding asylees and nonimmigrants in immigration detention, including U-visa and T-visa applicants. Drafted legal memoranda referring cases to volunteer attorneys; assisted staff attorneys with case preparation.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER, CO
Juris Doctorate

Aug. 2008 – May 2011

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE, MIDDLEBURY, VT
Russian Language Course, Level 2

June 2008 – Aug. 2008

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS, LAWRENCE, KS
Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy

Aug. 2003 – Dec. 2004

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY, KIRKSVILLE, MO
No Degree Conferred

Aug. 2000 – May 2003

LANGUAGES

Russian – intermediate

Arabic (Egypt) – beginner