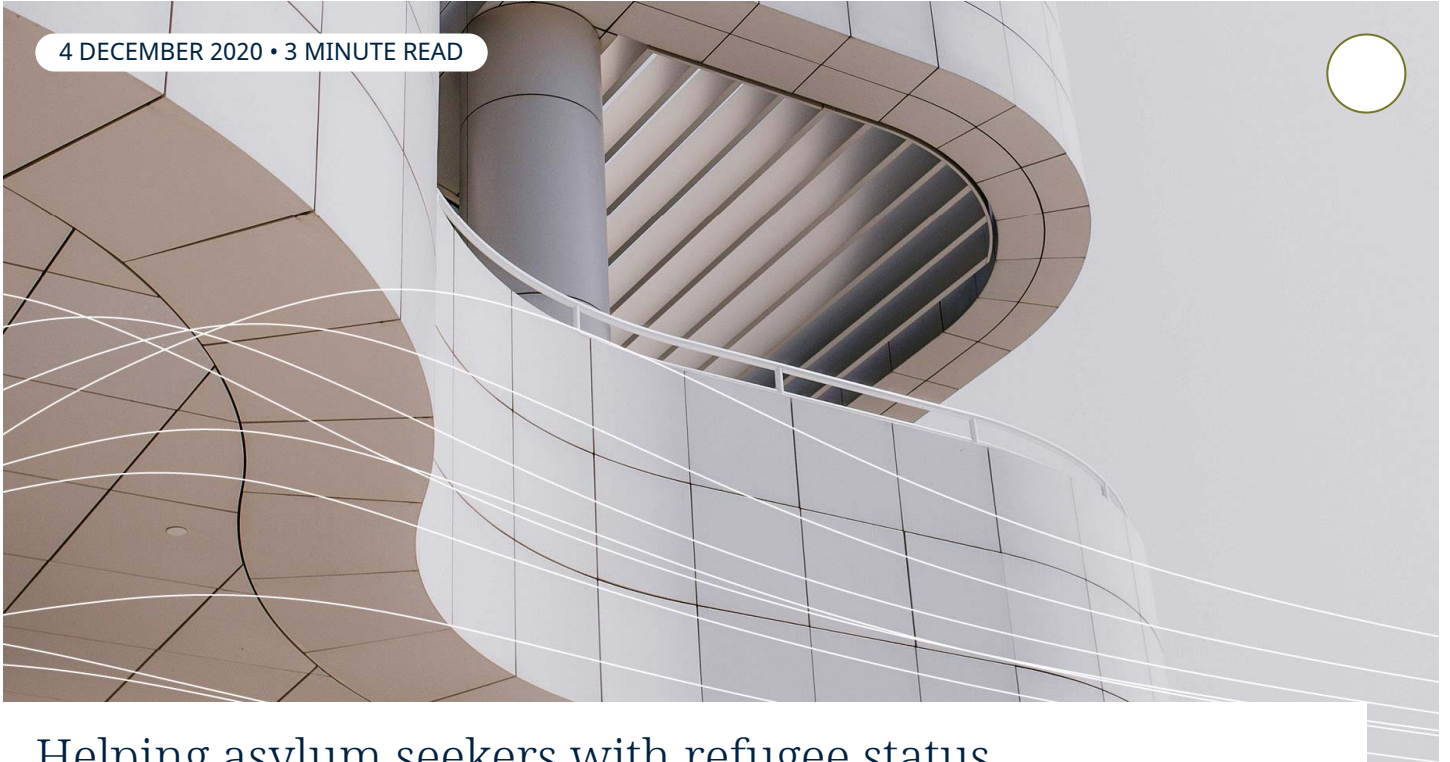


4 DECEMBER 2020 • 3 MINUTE READ



Helping asylum seekers with refugee status

Written by: Grégoire Paquet

In France, we joined forces with our pro bono client International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) to create a legal clinic for assisting asylum seekers with their refugee applications.

Having taken on 10 cases since earlier this year, our efforts started bearing fruit recently: Associate Lara Elborno reports that her clients, a Syrian family, were awarded the status of refugee in France.

French lawyers Lara Elborno, Natalia Li, and Shirley Pouget have been accompanying clients throughout various stages of the procedure before the OFPRA (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides). Our lawyers are trained by IRAP experts on:

- how to handle initial consultations and;
- fact finding,
- the submission of evidence before OFPRA,
- as well as the preparation of clients before and representation of clients during the OFPRA interviews.

Liaising with IRAP on the strategy for the case, Lara Elborno assisted Husam and Rawan (a young Syrian couple) and their children obtain legal protection as refugees. Lara worked with the couple to identify relevant documents to submit in support of their application, prepared them in advance of the OFPRA interview, and represented them during their

interview process where she notably had to step in to correct inaccuracies in the simultaneous interpretation. We warmly thank Lara for this.

This recognition as “refugees” allows the family to live, work and study in France on a 10-year residency card and eventually apply for French nationality. This marks the end of a 4-year battle to settle in a country outside of Syria, which remains unstable and where the family risks persecution in part due to Husam’s role as a rescue worker during the civil war.

Commenting on the collaboration between DLA and IRAP, Mandy Taylor, Supervisory Lawyer at IRAP, said that “the work provided by Lara, Natalia and Shirley to asylum seekers guarantees that asylum applicants are sufficiently represented at the first-instance stage. This has been crucial to assure that the administration is taking the legally correct decisions on applications, that applicants are provided with information on their rights and the asylum system in France and that these applicants have a support mechanism through DLA lawyers at the interview. This type of initial legal counsel is very rare in France and other EU Member States since State legal aid does not extend to such support. The collaboration between IRAP and DLA has shown that the added value of having lawyers at this stage is enormous and can even be determinative in clients receiving refugee status.”

People

Capabilities

About us

Insights

Careers

Locations

News

Events

Alumni

[Find an office](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Legal notices](#)

[Cookie policy](#)

[Modern slavery](#)

[Whistleblowing](#)

[Sitemap](#)

DLA Piper is a global law firm operating through various separate and distinct legal entities. For further information about these entities and DLA Piper's structure, please refer to the Legal Notices page of this website. All rights reserved. Attorney advertising.

© 2023 DLA Piper