

Name of Agencies:

JOB DESCRIPTION-INTERNSHIP

Position Information:

Duration (From X to X): 03/06/19 to 28/12/19 (possible 6 month extension)

Reports To: Philip Thorpe, Senior Protection Associate

Team: UNHCR Sub-Office for Hong Kong Protection Unit

Job Description:

Background information/Organizational Context

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

In more than five decades, the agency has helped an estimated 50 million people restart their lives. From only 34 staff members when UNHCR was founded, it now has more than 8,600 national and international members of staff, including 972 in UNHCR's Geneva headquarters. The agency works in 126 countries, with staff based in 135 main locations such as regional and branch offices and 279 often remote sub-offices and field offices.

UNHCR's presence in Hong Kong dates back from the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) period when over 200,000 Vietnamese Boat People fled to Hong Kong to seek asylum. After the end of the CPA, and in view of the fact that the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was not extended to Hong Kong, UNHCR had undertaken Refugee Status Determination (RSD) under its own mandate.

However, on 25 March 2013, the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region delivered judgment in *C & others v Director of Immigration and the Secretary for Security* (FACV18/2011). The Court ruled that the Hong Kong Government, despite not being Party to the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol, has an independent duty, subject to judicial review, to enquire into whether asserted fear of persecution in the event of return is well-founded. The Court further stated the Government cannot defer to or rely on UNHCR RSD decision making, although it should give weight to UNHCR's decisions.

In compliance with the judgment, the Hong Kong Government on 03 March 2014 commenced its Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) to assess claims for non-refoulement protection. Such claims are those lodged by persons not having the right to enter and remain in Hong Kong, on the basis that removing them to another country would expose them to a risk of torture or persecution. Persons who indicate that they will face the risk of persecution upon return to their country of origin and/or those who filed a claim under the USM will continue to be considered as Persons of Concern to UNHCR until a final determination of persecution risk is reached under the USM.

Despite UNHCR's changing role in Hong Kong, it will continue working with all stakeholders to ensure Persons of Concern receive adequate protection and assistance as well as to seek durable solutions for refugees.

Duties and Responsibilities

The intern will work directly with the UNHCR office, under guidance and supervision of the Senior Protection Associate, the incumbent's responsibilities will include:

- Communication with Persons of Concern
- Referrals to relevant stakeholders
- Face to face engagements with Persons of Concern
- Communication with government, NGOs and legal partners
- Keeping abreast of media developments relating to refugees in Hong Kong
- Monitoring incoming communications
- Translating incoming communications from Cantonese to English
- Assisting in the preparation of resettlement cases
- Attending meetings with relevant stakeholders
- Making appointments, keeping minutes, and documenting key events
- Undertaking other duties and projects as required by the supervisor

Recruitment Qualifications

- Enrolled in a university degree program: Bachelor/Masters or equivalent
- Academic background in a development related field (preferred)
- Interest in humanitarian issues
- Fluent written and spoken English and Cantonese
- Ability to work in a small team, sometimes with limited supervision
- Reliability in keeping deadlines and delivering a high quality of work
- Strong organizational skills
- Strong communication skills
- Strong IT skills
- Strong attention to detail