



WELCOME BACK! School Year 2017-2018

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

As we prepare for another wonderful academic year in the “city of trees and PhDs”, we at the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights would like to reaffirm our beliefs and core values. As a Center which educates and encourages students to become leaders, activists, advocates and educators in the field of human rights, our priority is supporting students regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin. We strive to create and facilitate a space in which students feel safe, respected, and honored.

Human rights are inalienable and universal, as dictated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), established in 1948. As strict followers of the UDHR, we seek to foster an appreciation for human rights both on our campus and around the world. We seek to shine a light on human rights violations and we will work tirelessly to ensure that all human beings are treated with dignity and respect. Nelson Mandela stated, “To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity.”

We continue to be inspired by the kindness and compassion, empathy, understanding, and perseverance of the students on this campus. We will continue to foster a safe and supportive community for students of all backgrounds.

We are proud to make the commitment to support the work of these human rights leaders in the making and look forward to another successful year ahead.

Sincerely,

The Mgrublian Center for Human Rights
Kravis Center, 3rd Floor
Claremont McKenna College



Medina Latic '20 interned for the Human Rights House Foundation where she worked on a project for transitional justice, accountability, and remembrance of the Genocide which occurred in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia.

The main objective of the organization is: to become a permanent place and area for the work of organizations engaged in the protection and promotion of human rights. Presenting the multi-ethnic work community, organizations within the Human Rights House are actively engaged in justice, reconciliation, and peace throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Medina had a personal connection to the organization and to Bosnia and Herzegovina because her parents were able to flee to the United States during early genocidal campaigns. Though her parents shielded her from much of what they witnessed, Medina eagerly travelled to Sarajevo "in the hopes of learning more about the war and its victims, delving deeper into my passion for human rights, and slowly developing the courage to reach further into our history."

Mohamad Batal '18 interned with the International Rescue Committee, an NGO which helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and regain control of their future.

"This summer I interned at the International Rescue Committee in Washington D.C., and I learned more about the nation's capital than I could have ever anticipated. As a member of the Policy and Advocacy team, I consistently received substantive and interesting projects, including an in-depth analysis of the FY2018 N.D.A.A bills; helping draft op-eds for our executive team; and working with the World Bank on health infrastructure projects in Jordan and Lebanon.

However, the single most memorable experience was covering a Senate hearing on the Trump administration's proposed budget for the State Department and Foreign Operations. I was sitting almost directly behind Secretary Tillerson, and for over two hours I was either scribbling down notes or sending back the most salient quotes to the Comms team in New York for use in real-time. Luckily, I was just outside the C-SPAN camera shot, because I think I would have been quite the distraction!"



Student Profile

NEW! Each month, the newsletter will feature students affiliated with the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights, profiling them and their activism on campus and why they are passionate about making a difference both on campus and around the world. The first ever Student Profile is on Mohamad Moslimani '21! Mohamad is a dedicated student, activist, and humanitarian. Since he arrived to campus, he has shown that he is a human rights crusader, determined to make our world a better one.



"My commitment to human rights is not focused so much on concrete policy issues, although I do, in fact, hold many opinions on specific policies in my own country and abroad. My commitment to human rights is focused on the principles I hold in regard to humanity and how we allow ourselves and different institutions to either undermine or strengthen that regard. Two individuals to whom I can credit the formation of my principles are Eugene V. Debs and Elie Wiesel. Wiesel, for instance, once said: "You who are so-called illegal aliens must know that no human being is illegal." It is from this quote that I developed the principle of holding the institutions which affect so much of our culture accountable for the way that they openly discuss our humanity. It's through his own experiences that Wiesel understands that institutions and our cul-

ture must actively be tuned into the idea of maintaining individual personhood, and recognizing that they hold no power to dictate another group's social acceptability. Debs is furthermore the one who shaped my principles of commitment. If one can observe a wrongdoing in the world, then they have a right and an obligation to put their fair share of work into rectifying that wrongdoing. He makes this clear with his statement: "While there is a lower class, I am in it, while there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free." Debs' excitement at the existence of these stark differences in society and the solidarity he has with anyone who he perceives to be oppressed is something that resonates deeply with me. As a result, my belief that a society must elevate the human rights of all individuals and caution against tyrannical elements that seek to do otherwise is only solidified by the principles I hold to maintain solidarity with all oppressed members of society. It's because of the principles I've derived from these two giants that I excitedly anticipate my work here at the Center. I hope to do as much as possible to exemplify these principles as a Student Assistant for the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights!

Student Activism: DACA



Recently, Amnesty International and Latinx student group, Mi Gente! led efforts to protest President Trump's repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals act, (DACA). In a total of three days, the two groups gathered over 300 letters and made over 150 calls to senators. The following is a letter written by the Presidents of Amnesty International on the DACA repeal:

To the students of the Claremont Colleges on behalf of the CMC Amnesty International Chapter:

Education is a human right, to which all people are entitled, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, identity or national origin. The recent decision by the Trump Administration to repeal the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) has left us, confused, speechless, and utterly heartbroken. As an organization that works closely with and strives to support all students on our campus, we are overwhelmed with sadness and anger over this recent action.

Nelson Mandela stated, *Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.* How are we expected to change our world and make it a better and more accepting place for all if students of all backgrounds and walks of life do not have access to educational resources and opportunities? How can we promote human rights in this country if children are not allowed to receive an education, and are forcibly removed from this country based on their national origin? How can we be a great country if we close off our borders and prevent access to immigrants, migrants, and refugees? How can we be proud of our country if we do not encourage the ideals and principles our founders fought for?

The repeal of DACA is a devastating blow to our human and civil rights communities. We can only imagine the pain and heartbreak of DACA students in our community. Each and every one of us has studied or has been personally impacted by unjust immigration policies, whether we look to history, or to our own family members, friends, or loved ones who have immigrated here for a better life. We as a community cannot stand idly by as the human rights of our students and students across the country are being violated. We must act. We must strive to do all that we can to protect members of the Claremont community from unjust laws and practices. We, the leadership of Amnesty International CMC, offer our support to students who have been and will be impacted by this action. We are outraged by the President's decision and will work for basic human rights until we see justice for DACA and undocumented students on our campus and around the country.

To these students: we stand with you and your families; we will do everything in our power to protect your right to an education. We admire your strength and perseverance and you are an integral and essential part of our community. We encourage you to continue to stay strong and fight against injustice. We will be by your side very step of the way.

In solidarity,

Students of Amnesty International, CMC

Task Forces



Amnesty International

In the fall of 2015 a group of dedicated students launched the inaugural Amnesty International chapter at Claremont McKenna College. Amnesty International (AI) is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights around the world. The CMC chapter has organized a variety of programming and initiatives for the 2017-18 school year, including:

- Fundraising event for disaster relief in Puerto Rico
- Letter writing campaign for political Prisoners of Conscience
- Reproductive Rights campaign for women in El Salvador who have been imprisoned for receiving abortions or having miscarriages
- Debate hosted by AI, with 5C liberal and conservative groups on the death penalty
- Variety of discussions focused on: achieving a peaceful two-state solution, human rights in Latin America, rape used as a tool of war, sexual violence against women in prison, tangible actions to support refugees, current measures for atrocity and genocide prevention
- Amnesty will partner with the Mgrublian Center to send a small cohort of students to Washington D.C. for the Lemkin Summit (February 2018) where students can interact with change makers and human rights activists, and learn effective tools to engage in human rights advocacy.



International Development and Education Association (IDEA) is a student organization at CMC dedicated to promoting awareness about issues regarding education all around the world. Some issues include unequal representation of girls and boys in schools, poor quality of education, students' lack of confidence and self-assertion, poor retention rates, or even no access to education. This year will feature events including:

- Boba Tea sale to raise money to pay for birth certificates of children in Ouidah, Benin.



Power of Women (POW): is a student run activist organization that works to raise awareness about the severity of all forms of interpersonal violence. Last year, POW hosted a variety of workshops, events, and discussions highlighting women's rights. The following is a few highlighted events they have planned for this year:

- Rural Women's Rights Campaign, *Oct. 1st to 17th*
- *Girl Rising* Film Screening + Raffle
- Self-Defense Workshop
- Title IX Workshop: What's Changed

Upcoming Events:

Fall 2017

September 18th: Summer Intern Welcome Back Dinner –Parents Dining Room.

September 20th, 3:30-5pm: Research Institute Open House

September 25th, 6pm: Valentino Achak Deng, *Education and Economic Empowerment in South Sudan*, CMC Athenaeum.

October 9th, 6pm (dinner): Evgeny Finkel, *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*, CMC Athenaeum.

November 3rd, 11:30am (lunch): Pavel Cernoch, *The European Refugee Crisis*, Freeberg Dining Room.

November 3rd, 7pm-10pm: 2nd Annual Human Rights Benefit Concert

November 15th, 12:15pm (lunch): Eric Bordenkircher, *The Refugee Predicament in Lebanon*, KRV 321.

Spring 2018

March 2018: Human Rights Career Panel & Networking Dinner

April 12th: 4th Annual Mgrublian Center Lecture on Armenian Studies

May 2018: Human Rights Research Fellowship Presentations

To submit event/speaker suggestions, please contact Larissa Peltola, lpeltola18@cmc.edu



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