



MGRUBLIAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

20 YRS · CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE



20th Anniversary Edition
2022-2023



HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE

On September 12th of 2022, the Mgrublian Center welcomed staff, faculty members and students interested in learning more about the center's programming, research, and curricular offerings. Similar to previous years, the 2022/2023 cohort consists of dedicated student assistants and research fellows eager about helping spread awareness on human rights issues. This issue highlights their work along with the center's events, public advocacy, service, research and education to provide practical experience for students in the study of human rights.

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2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights, originally founded as the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights, at Claremont McKenna College. As we celebrate this significant milestone we reflect on our history, stay committed to our mission, rely on our leadership and advisors, support and mentor our students, and look forward to our future.

Origins

Claremont McKenna College began to support teaching and research about the Holocaust in the early 1970s and in March 2003 launched the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights, which placed the College among the forerunners in the field of Holocaust Studies.

In May 2009 the Center's name was changed to The Center for Human Rights Leadership. In 2015, through a generous gift from Margaret Mgrublian P'11 and David Mgrublian '82 P'11, chair of the CMC Board of Trustees, the Center was designated as the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights.

Mission

From the very beginning, through its programs of teaching, visiting scholars, academic travel, internships, activism, research, and service, the Center has sought to enable students to understand the causes and legacy of the Holocaust and to develop the ethical commitments and leadership qualities necessary to prevent and overcome human rights abuses in today's world.

Over the years, the Center's student-led human rights initiatives have included a role in founding and developing Students Against Genocide, a nation-wide effort aimed at stopping genocide in Darfur, Sudan, and a mission to provide relief to residents of New Orleans following the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

As well, the Center has built and sustained a robust human rights summer internship program, supported numerous student-led human rights task forces, sponsored a wide range of student-faculty research projects, visiting scholars, academic travel programs, film screenings, and speakers, and was the first CMC institute to establish a post-graduate fellowship program for recent graduates.

Leadership

Since the beginning, the Center has been led by and shaped by distinguished leaders, including founding donor Leigh Crawford '94; Professor John Roth, the Center's founding director who served through 2006 and remains an active member of the Center's advisory board; Professor Jonathan Petropoulos, initially the Center's associate director, who succeeded Professor Roth as director from 2007 to 2008; Professor Edward Haley, who directed the Center from 2008 to 2014; Kirsti Zitar '97 P'26, assistant director since 2011; Professor Wendy Lower, the current director; and an active and dedicated advisory board of alumni, parents, and experts in the field.

We look forward to the next twenty years!

WELCOMING ANNA ROMANDASH TO CMC

The Mgrublian Center for Human Rights is hosting Ukrainian journalist Anna Romandash this year reporting from the war in Ukraine in a special series of programs.

This year, the Center is supporting Anna Romandash as a Mgrublian Center Research Affiliate, in collaboration with the Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies.

Over multiple visits from Ukraine to Claremont, Ms. Romandash will speak to students, faculty, staff and the 5C community about current developments in Ukraine and along its borders.

Anna Romandash is an award-winning freelance journalist with extensive experience in Europe, the Middle East, and the US. In her work, she collects evidence and testimonies from victims of the Russian war in Ukraine, documenting war crimes and civilian casualties of the occupation.

We have had the opportunity to learn directly about events on the ground in Ukraine as well as support the effort to pursue justice and end Putin's invasion. She has contributed her research to Freedom House, Deutsche Welle, US Embassies, the ICJ and the Council of Europe, and held fellowships at CNN and other international news organizations. Ms. Romandash works closely with youth on freedom movements, journalism and media training for an EU-wide consortium of universities reaching more than 55,000 students.

Anna has completed two masters degrees, one in global affairs and international peace studies at University of Notre Dame, and a second in media communications at Ukrainian Catholic University and received honors for her bachelor of arts degree at Lviv National University. Besides fluency in Russian and Ukrainian, Anna speaks English, Spanish, French and Polish. She was named Media Freedom Ambassador of Ukraine for her human rights and media coverage and was one of the winners of the European Institute of Mediterranean literary contest for her reporting.

She has been recognized for her creative approaches and crowd-funded initiatives, for example developing comic book formats to explain the threats to media freedom, collaborating with artists and media professionals from 20 countries.

When Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, Anna began writing about the situation in her home country. She has written stories about survivors of Russian-made massacres in Northern Ukraine, the drama of internally displaced people and refugees forced to flee their homes, and volunteers helping others in times of need. She is a part of an investigative team collecting data on human rights violations and crimes against humanity during the Russo-Ukrainian war.

A selection of Anna's stories are shared in this edition of our newsletter with additional articles and images available on our website, <https://human-rights.cmc.edu/news-update/>



*Anna Romandash,
Mgrublian Center Research Affiliate*



*Anna delivering a "News from Ukraine" update to students, faculty and staff.
Photo credit: CMC Magazine*

Conversations with Anna Romandash: The Current State of Ukraine

By Ilma Turcois '25

“Russian propaganda virtually creates this world where there is no truth.”

Award-winning journalist Anna Romandash visited CMC several times this past semester—each trip bringing back crucial updates regarding the war in Ukraine in a special series of programs.

As a reporter working on the ground in Ukraine, she has brought to campus some significant developments from the war—specifically regarding human rights violations like prisoner of war torture, sexual assault, the human trafficking of Ukrainian children through forced adoptions into Russian families, and other crimes.

I had the opportunity to interview Romondash, to gain some insight into her personal and professional assessment of the situation at hand.

This interview was edited and condensed.

Q: How do you navigate reporting on issues that have such a close, personal tie to you?

A: I try to distance myself from the situation and remind myself constantly that although I am here for people, although I have empathy, and am personally affected, I am here to do my job. I try to separate my personal fears from my professional self so that my emotions do not interfere as much when I am reporting.

It’s an art of trying to balance it out whenever I am working or talking to people. I understand having that emotional component of my work whenever I am writing something so they can understand what people are suffering in Ukraine is important, but I cannot have my personal stakes interfere with my work.

Q: In your work, you mention Russia’s forced adoption of Ukrainian children with the primary goal of creating a sense of nationalism—like the repopulation of Russian citizens. In your experience, is there a big enough emphasis on returning these children, on the part of both international organizations and other important actors?

A: This is an issue that we have to talk about until we are sick of hearing about it because this is such a terrible thing that is happening. This is human trafficking; it’s genocidal in nature and I do not hear this being talked about enough.

Yes, it is being reported. It is being discussed. Major international organizations have passed resolutions; they have documented it; they know about it, but it is still not talked about enough.

A lot of people outside of Ukraine are getting tired of all the negative news coming from Ukraine. They don’t want to hear about it; they want to focus on something else—something closer to home, something more domestic. Of course, there are other problems occurring all over the world, but still, this is an issue that deserves our undivided attention. It needs to be repeatedly covered; there needs to be more information and more strategizing on how to enforce some sort of punishment against Russia.

We should not be seeing the mass kidnapping of children in the 21st century.

Q: Russia is committing these crimes very publicly. Why do you think Russia has been successful in doing this with virtually no repercussions?

A: Russia has historically been able to get away with many crimes in many countries. This sense of immunity gives Russians the idea that they can get away with any crimes in Ukraine as well as they have in other countries in the past. Russia has bombed Syrian cities almost to oblivion, it has invaded Georgia and annexed parts of Ukraine in 2014—and they received little to no punishments for those crimes. In fact, the relationship between Russia and the West improved after all these crimes and violations.

I think that was a result of a lot of wishful thinking; a lot of business goes on as usual and ‘we need cheap fuel’, so we could close our eyes to the violations occurring. That lack of any sort of punishment for Russians back then is what makes them feel like this is the way to go. If you cannot win militarily, you just terrorize people as much as possible and try to break their spirits, and hope that once you destroy them morally you do what it is that you want to do.

However, this hasn’t been the case with Ukraine because Russians have been met with much more resistance than they ever expected. I think what’s so specific about this case is the fact that these are well-documented war crimes.

There is an ability to track what is happening in Ukraine in pretty much real-time; there is information that clearly proves this is what’s happening and Russia denying it doesn’t really matter because we have that evidence. Yet, Russians have been very successful in creating this parallel reality where they undermine the truth in general. Russian propaganda virtually creates this world where there is no truth.

Q: We know the situation in Ukraine is extremely dire, but in your opinion, how do you see it changing moving forward? What do you think international players and individuals at the individual level should be doing?

People are already helping a lot by volunteering their time or opening their homes for refugees, donating money, and spreading information about what’s happening in Ukraine; it’s all very important.

Holding your elected officials accountable is absolutely necessary. You must ask yourself: ‘what is it that they are doing for Ukraine; is it something that is on their agenda?’

I think it’s also important to talk to Ukrainians, to have them present their perspective so it’s not just Americans or Western Europeans talking about Ukraine. Actually listening to Ukrainians in your communities or Ukrainians in Ukraine is necessary for the international community to speed up the delivery of weapons Ukraine is asking for. Civil society could definitely demand the government to increase military aid because those arms could make a big change on the battlegrounds.

There is a lot of fake information regarding money being sent to Ukraine; people argue that money is just taxpayer money to be spent domestically, but in reality, it’s in the world’s interest for Ukraine to win. If Ukraine doesn’t win, it means that any dictatorship with nuclear weapons can do whatever it wants to do, and it can commit any crime they want to because the world isn’t going to do anything.

LOSING YOUR HOME TO RUSSIA, TWICE

A story of Ukrainians who passed Russian filtration to flee occupation

By Anna Romandash

“Our story began in 2014,” Iryna says, “We’re from Donetsk. We lived practically on the separation line.”

Iryna Bilousova is a Ukrainian. Since mid-2022, she is also a refugee after she and her family had to flee Eastern Ukraine from Russian occupation. For Iryna, this is her second escape. Nine years ago, when Russians first occupied Donetsk and Luhansk, she had to run from her home to the territory controlled by Ukraine. The separation line was the divide between the Ukrainian forces and Russian proxies established in 2014 as Russians attempted to seize more Ukrainian land.

“For three months, we lived in constant fear,” Iryna recalled her 2014 experience, “We feared for our lives, and for the life of my mom, who is in a wheelchair. When we rushed into the basement, she stayed inside the house. It was very hard.”

Iryna is a mother of four children, three young boys and a teenage daughter. Together with her husband, she took care of them and her elderly mother. When the war in Donbas started, Iryna and her husband could not work anymore because their house was between constant shelling.

“We had no jobs, no money, and no food,” the woman recalled, “Thanks to the neighbors, who brought children some food, we could survive. But in September [of 2014], we realized that we could no longer go on like that.” The family decided to flee to the territory controlled by Ukraine. They moved into a village in Donetsk region, not too far from their previous home in the city of Donetsk. Volunteers helped the family find a house.

“We got a lot of help from the people, especially from Ukrainian soldiers who were stationed nearby,” Iryna said, “Things started to improve, and we had a good life for these past eight years.”

Everything changed on February 24, 2022.

“At five in the morning, the invaders entered our village,” the woman continued, “It was a complete horror. They would shoot from their tanks near our house, and then move away from that place. Then, our guys [Ukrainian soldiers] would shoot back to the place where tanks were stationed before.” The family was in the basement when a projectile landed six feet from their house.

“We were almost buried under the rubble,” Iryna remembered, “And then, I had to make the hardest decision in my life: to choose between my mom and my children. My mom told me that children needed me, and that she’d manage somehow..”



Iryna Bilousova’s home in Donetsk, Ukraine, destroyed by Russian artillery.

Photo credit: Iryna Bilousova.

Life in occupation

Iryna’s mother could not stay in the basement, and it was difficult to transport her up and down. The older woman stayed in her house while Iryna and her husband would come there between the shelling, feed her, and turn on the stove to make the place a bit warmer. “Life in occupation is scary,” Iryna said, “After Russians entered our village, there were hands, heads, and bodies everywhere. Corpses on the streets. Russians didn’t pick them up.”

The dead bodies were of Russian soldiers and Ukrainian locals killed by the invading army. The villagers collected the corpses in one spot and covered them with blankets. Iryna recalled seeing how hungry dogs would run around with human parts.

“These monsters [Russian soldiers] went from house to house and took people’s cars,” the woman proceeded, “Then, when they got drunk, they’d drive the cars around. They also moved into the houses they liked the most and roamed around looking for food. The scariest part when these drunk beasts – that’s the only way to describe them – started coming to our bomb shelter.” Russians were looking for local women in the basements, Iryna explained.

“They’d say things like “You’ve got so many pretty girls, and we have none,” the woman continued, “So we had to hide our daughter. She was seventeen. Our neighbor’s daughter was almost raped, but her parents rescued her.”

After the talk about “pretty girls”, the family decided to flee. They could not enter Ukraine-controlled territory because Russian troops didn’t allow people to evacuate there. “We decided to drive to Russia because my husband had sisters there,” Iryna said, “The drive took four days, and my mom barely survived it.” Donetsk region borders Russia; during a normal pre-war drive, it would take only a few hours to cross the border. However, the family had to make many stops at various check-points and avoid getting shot at.

Filtration camps

The family also had to pass filtration to leave the occupied areas. “We were in Bezimenne,” Iryna said, “We were very lucky and passed filtration in two hours. There were people who stayed in the camp for weeks.”

Bezimenne is a village in Donetsk region, on the Azov Sea coast. It is only 20 miles away from Mariupol, and less than an hour drive to the Russian border. Since 2014, the village has been under Russian occupation and hosts a notorious filtration camp. Ukrainians who want to flee the occupied areas have to pass a set of tests carried out by Russians; the filtration is used to torture and kill people who don’t agree to declare their hatred for Ukraine.

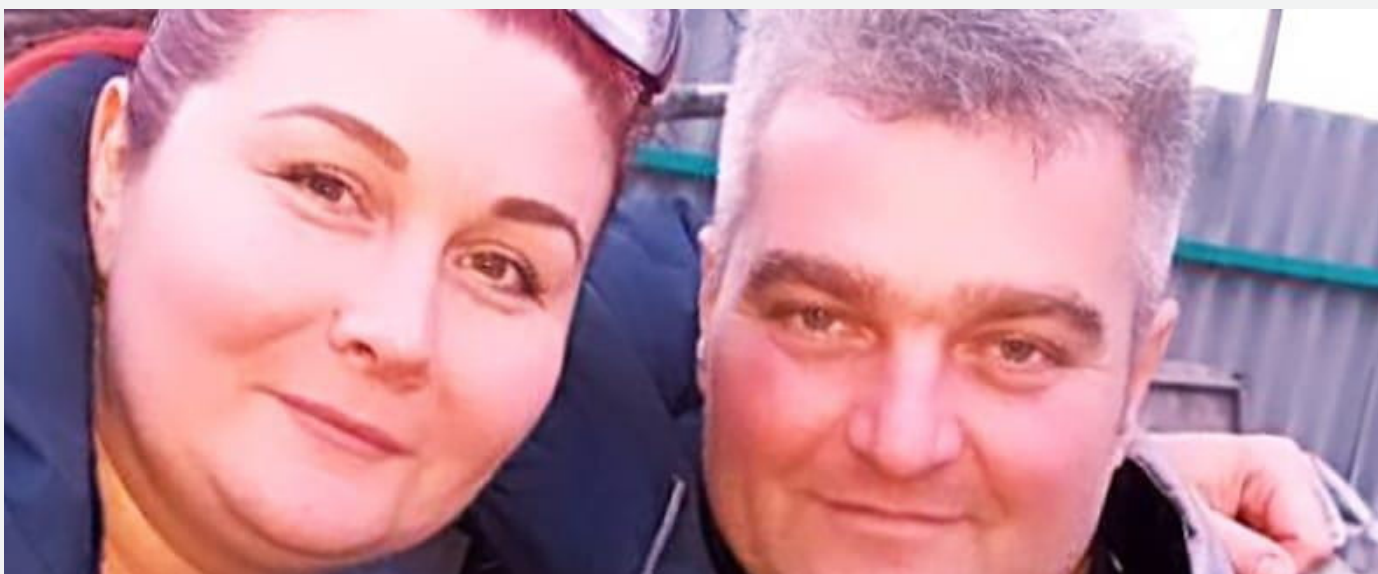
“When we arrived in Bezimenne, we told a Russian soldier that we were with children and a disabled person,” Iryna recalled, “The soldier was really rude. He was like: “Who allowed you to talk to me?” I told the guy that we have a disabled person in the car, and that she could not move and was in a very bad shape.”

The woman asked the soldier if she could go through filtration immediately. By that time, there was a line of Ukrainians waiting to pass, and it took days or weeks even to get to the questioning. In the meantime, people had to wait outside. A higher-ranking soldier showed up and allowed Iryna and her family to go for filtration without waiting in the queue.

“We entered one tent,” Iryna said, “It was me, and then, it was my fourteen-years-old son. They asked us questions and we had to answer saying that Ukraine was very bad, that Ukrainian army was very bad, and so on. It was very tough for my husband. A Russian soldier saw that we were from Donetsk originally, and he started yelling at my husband. He called him a “f***er” and yelled at him for not joining the Russian army. The guy was screaming things like “You went to Ukropia! [derogatory for Ukraine]. And I have to protect you? We will send your family away, and we will take you with us!” The questioning lasted for around an hour, with Russian soldiers threatening her husband and telling him they’d beat him up.

"When my husband was done, he was white as a ghost," Iryna recalled, “His hands still shake as he remembers that. But, thank God, they let us pass. They checked our phones and allowed us to go.” The family’s experience with filtration is better than most people who went through it; many are stripped naked and tortured if they have any Ukraine-themed tattoos or don’t answer the questions the way they are expected.

“You have to tell them what they want to hear,” Iryna explained, “About Russia, about Ukraine, about the war. That’s the only way to pass.”



Iryna and her husband. Photo credit: Iryna Bilousova.



A destroyed village school in Donetsk, Ukraine. Photo credit: Iryna Bilousova.

Escaping Russia

“We spent two months in Russia,” Iryna continued, “We needed money to move farther, and my mom needed time to come back to her senses. She almost lost her mind during the occupation because she lived alone without any electricity.”

Iryna and her husband managed to find some temporary jobs and raised a bit of money to leave Russia. They started looking for buses and private drivers. The prices were too high. “That’s when I found the volunteers,” Iryna said, “And they helped! Thanks to them, we are no longer shaking whenever we hear some noise, and we’re starting to get used to the sound of planes and helicopters.”

The woman is referring to mushrooming civil society groups which help deported Ukrainians escape Russia and enter neighboring EU countries. Volunteers – mostly Ukrainians based in Ukraine and Baltic countries – connect with Ukrainians in Telegram and help them with transportation, money, and advice.

“A volunteer-coordinator reached out to us, and helped us drive from Rostov-on-Don to Estonia,” Iryna said, “She was with us on the line throughout the entire journey. The coordinator sent us the safest route because we were driving with a disabled person.”

When the family was crossing the Russian-Estonian border, they were also questioned for a few hours by the Russian officers. The questions were similar to the ones they heard during the filtration process. “Russians asked us why we wanted to leave Russia instead of staying there,” Iryna added, “But this questioning was less scary and without yelling.”

From Estonia, the family drove to Germany where they applied for refugee status. In early January, they were informed that their refugee camp is going to shut down in mid-March.

“They told us that the land was sold, so we have to look for another housing,” Iryna said, “Those who can’t find anything can go to another refugee camp, which is in the suburbs. But it’s not as good, and they wouldn’t accept my mom there. They wanted to send her into a nursing home for disabled people instead. That’s why we’re running around now and looking for housing because I don’t want to separate from my mom.”

“So, this is what it’s like to live in Germany as a refugee,” she added, “It’s not all that great, but at least, it is peaceful here. So, we can manage.”

Besides Iryna’s family, the camp hosted many other Ukrainians. Iryna made many friends who are in a similar situation to hers.

“The main thing is that we’re all alive and together,” she concluded, “So all is going to be okay.”

Her Child Was Deported to Russia

By Anna Romandash

"It was shock, and fury, and fear all at once," says Kseniya, Lebedenko, "I just could not process that they sent my child to Russia."

Kseniya sighs as she says it: perhaps, to calm herself, or maybe, to shake off the memories of that difficult experience. It's been a month since she was reunited with her daughter, 11 year old Eva, after nearly a year of separation. She is still very angry about what happened.

"They could not just take her there without my permission," the woman proceeds, "I almost lost hope."

Kseniya's pro-Russian brother brought her child to Russia and refused to return Eva to her mother. Kseniya, a military medic in the Ukrainian army, could not get the child herself.

"I was contemplating about traveling to Russia to get Eva back," she says, "I knew I might not return, but I'd try and bring her home."

After months of struggles, Kseniya was finally able to see her child back in Ukraine.

Losing contact

Kseniya is a military medic with Ukraine's Armed Forces. In her early forties, with a round, motherly face, she is an experienced medical professional who has worked in hospitals for years.

The woman spent most of her life in her native Vovchansk, a quiet little town only 5 miles from the Russian border. Divorced, Kseniya raised her daughter as a single mom with support from her elderly parents. Her brother lived nearby with his wife and two children.

A month before Russia launched its full-scale invasion, Kseniya changed jobs. She moved to Kharkiv, a one-hour drive from her hometown, and became a military medic.

"In late January, I signed my contract, and I started to serve with the Ukrainian army," the woman recalls.

Her daughter stayed in Vovchansk with her grandparents. As Russians launched their full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Vovchansk was one of the first places that fell.

The quiet town turned eerie during the occupation. Russian troops quickly cut off all the communication Vovchansk had with the rest of Ukraine.

"I could not get to them," Kseniya says, "It was a complete disconnection."

For months, she tried to reach her family back home, but it was nearly impossible.

"They had no cellphone connection, no internet," the woman continues, "They barely had any electricity. Whenever I tried to call, I could not get through to them. It was very hard to communicate, very hard to take it in."

Throughout spring and summer, Kseniya combined her work as a military medic with her attempts to rescue Eva from the occupation.

"I was serving near Izium in the Kharkiv region, and I was looking for ways to bring Eva to Ukraine-controlled territories," she continues, "But my family was not very supportive of the idea. Basically, they turned pro-Russian while I was serving with the Ukrainian army. I could not communicate with them very much and knew little what was going on, so I could not rescue my daughter."

By that time, Eva was staying with Kseniya's brother.

I was begging my family to give Eva back to me," Kseniya says, pain in her voice, "I told them I could find volunteers who'd drive Eva to safety in Ukraine. But they didn't agree."



Kseniya didn't know this back then, but her brother supported the occupation. On September 7, he became one of the first locals to receive a Russian passport. The video of him getting the citizenship was widely circulated on the Russian propaganda channels.

"I was really waiting for this moment," Andriy Lebedenko said to Russian journalists during the citizenship ceremony, "It's like my second birthday. We are all the same people; we are all Russians."

A week after Andriy became a Russian citizen, Ukrainian troops liberated Vovchansk.

"They took my daughter to Russia"

Around the time that Russians retreated from her hometown, Kseniya was fighting on another front. With her unit, she was deployed near Bakhmut, where some of the heaviest fighting took place.

"In September, I got wounded. A brain injury," Kseniya explains, "There was artillery fire against our positions.

My phone was destroyed, so I had no contacts, no phone numbers. I could not call my parents right away, and I could not go there because of my injury."

Kseniya's acquaintances traveled to Vovchansk to get Eva after the city was liberated. From them, the woman learned that her daughter was not in the country anymore. Andriy took Eva and his family to Russia before Ukrainian forces entered the town.

"I was very angry, and shocked, and afraid," Kseniya says, "I could not believe they took her out of Ukraine illegally. They had no right to do that without my permission."

"Why didn't he go to a territory controlled by Ukraine?" the medic asks bitterly. And, without waiting for an answer, "Well, what's the point when he already got the Russian passport?"

Through her mother, Kseniya got Andriy's phone number.

"I started calling him," she says, "I begged him to let me talk to Eva, but he refused."

Andriy moved to Belgorod region, not far from the Ukrainian border. He bought a small house there and established his family – and his niece – in a small village two hours away from Vovchansk.

"I asked Andriy to return Eva to me," Kseniya goes on, "I wanted to talk to her, but he would find all kinds of excuses. This went on for months."

As soon as the medic was released from the hospital, she resigned from her position to be able to return Eva. Kseniya went to the local police and reported that her daughter was illegally taken to Russia.

The police connected Kseniya with volunteers who focus on returning deported Ukrainian children from Russia.

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, Russia deported at least 12,000 Ukrainian children although Russian sources claim that the number is at least 700,000. Many children are orphans, taken away from their legal guardians and relatives. Some were orphaned recently when their parents were killed during the occupation. Some got separated like Eva.

Russian parliament passed a new law that allows for the speedy adoption of Ukrainian children.

According to the Russian authorities, at least a 1,000 of them have been adopted already. Ukrainian guardians are denied information on children's whereabouts, so unless a child finds a way to communicate with family back home, it is nearly impossible to track and return the kids. Often, when the parents appeal to Russian authorities to get their children back, they get a refusal.

"In Ukraine, volunteers help the families return the kids if they already know where they are. Volunteers create the safest route and help with transportation and documents. Most times, relatives have to drive to Russia to get the children themselves.

For Kseniya, this was tricky.

"I served in the Ukrainian army, so I couldn't go to Russia," she says, "And my brother did not want to cooperate at all. He didn't want to return Eva or tell me where they were. I felt like I was failing, and I could not get to him. There were moments when I was on the verge of giving up."

Eva's Home

Eva was in Russia from September to December. After three months of non-stop calling, Andriy finally agreed to return the child home.

"Volunteers helped me prepare a document that granted power of attorney to another woman who was in a similar situation," Kseniya explains, "She went to Russia to get her child, and she brought Eva with her."

On December 17, Kseniya finally saw her daughter.

"I have not seen her for almost a year," Kseniya says, tears in her eyes, "I don't remember how we met again. It was just too much for me, so blurry. Too many emotions."



Mother and daughter moved to Poltava region, in the North of Ukraine. They took Kseniya's parents with them.

"We cannot go back to Vovchansk now," she explains, "It is too dangerous because there is constant shelling from the Russian side. The town is on the verge of humanitarian catastrophe."

In their new home, Kseniya takes care of her parents and spends as much time as she can with Eva. She doesn't talk to her brother anymore.

"There is nothing I have to say to him," she sighs, "We have very different values. I don't know how he could sell his country like that. It is bad, and it upsets me very much that this happened to my family. I don't know how it happened, but it did."

Kseniya hopes to return to the Armed Forces soon. But for now, she's staying home; Eva and her parents need her.

"I am very happy she is home," Kseniya says, "I was afraid she'd not return. But now, she is here, and everything will be all right."

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MICHELLE TUSAN

Over an Athenaeum dinner program on October 6th, Michelle Tusan, professor of history at UNLV, explored the origins of the response to stateless refugees by international institutions and humanitarian organizations. It has its roots in one of the forgotten stories of World War I when forced migration began as a problem in its modern form. The internationalization of the refugee problem—the then highly publicized case of Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek Ottoman Christian minorities—created the dual solution of the refugee camp and resettlement. This became a utopian and ultimately unrealizable solution to the problem of mass displacement in a period of rising xenophobia and nationalism.

Michelle Tusan's current book project, *The Last Treaty: The Middle Eastern Front and the End of the First World War*, is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In addition, she is the author of *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide: Humanitarianism and Imperial Politics from Gladstone to Churchill* (2017/2019); *Smyrna's Ashes: Humanitarianism, Genocide and the Birth of the Middle East* (2012); *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (2005), and articles in the *American Historical Review*, *The Journal of Modern History* and *Past and Present*. She also has published a co-authored textbook, *Britain Since 1688: A Nation in the World*. She is the vice president/president elect of the North American Conference on British Studies.

Michelle Tusan is a professor of history at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) with expertise in the areas of modern British history, the British Empire, and women's history. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 1999. Before coming to UNLV in 2001, she was a Fellow in the Humanities at Stanford. A British historian by training, her teaching and scholarship broadly engage the relationship between geopolitics, culture, and human rights.

The Watchtower PODCAST

The Watchtower, hosted by Joseph Zhong '25 and Joshua Morganstein '25, sheds light on human rights issues worldwide, featuring the work of contemporary scholars, journalists, and other activists.

On December 12th 2022, the first episode titled "The Russian Invasion of Ukraine" was launched on Spotify.

December 12, 2022, marks the 292nd day of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24 of this year, when Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a so-called “special military operation” aimed at forcefully overthrowing the Ukrainian government. The first episode of The Watchtower, featuring the Ukrainian journalist Ukrainian Anna Romandash, offers her perspective on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine.

On January 12th 2023, the second episode titled "Protests in China—What 1989 can teach us about today" was launched.

On November 24th, 2022, a fire caused by an electrical issue broke out in a residential high-rise apartment building in Xinjiang, China. In a country where the fire response was, on average, 17 minutes, the 3 hours it took to extinguish a minor fire and at least ten dead, confirmed by the local government, stunned the nation. So why had such a delay occurred?

As the video was shared through social media, civilians across China rose up against the highly unpopular zero-COVID policy. Thousands of demonstrators from across China rose in protest; the coordination and mass protest had not been seen since the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests. The protests were joined by the Chinese diaspora abroad. As the protests continued, they became a direct challenge to the Chinese government, with some even heard chanting, “Communist Party, step down. Xi Jinping, step down.”

This episode features Terril Jones, who has spent 30+ years as a foreign and business correspondent and editor for Reuters, the Los Angeles Times, Forbes magazine, and The Associated Press. His assignments included 18 years in Beijing, Paris, and Tokyo, covering politics, business, bilateral and regional relations, and all manner of domestic issues. Terril was on the ground in Beijing, covering the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, a series of protests that engulfed all of China where students, youth activists, and civilians pushed for social liberalization, including private ownership, in the pursuit of democracy. Terril’s also had postings in New York and the United Nations, Detroit covering the auto industry, and Silicon Valley covering technology. In addition, he has had reporting assignments in South Korea, Taiwan, North Africa, West Africa, and Western Europe.

Currently, Terril is a Visiting Lecturer of Government, specializing in International and Political Journalism at Claremont McKenna College. This episode offers his perspective on the protests in China.



BHANU'S TRIP TO CAMBODIA AND REVIVING AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

BY LABIBA HASSAN '25

What was your summer experience?

"Over the summer, I was an extractive industries intern at the Cambodia office for Oxfam working on the PEM project. It is a ten-year collaborative program with Oxfam, MacArthur Foundation and the Margaret A Cargill Foundation that roughly stands for people protecting their ecosystems in Lower Mekong. The intent of the program was to create a system for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam that would empower the indigenous people of that region to fight back against threats to their livelihood, land, biodiversity, and to challenge large scale development projects that are taking over the region. The work centered around the Mekong River and its tributaries, which are one of the most critical riverine ecosystems in the region. It is home to the largest inland fishery, which the surrounding indigenous communities rely on, not just as a source of food, but as a core aspect of their culture. Even their culture is closely intertwined with the animals and plants and how they interact."



What was the goal of the project?

"We were looking at floodplains, deep pools, and key fish migration corridors, which is part of the larger move to the Global South. Larger industrial projects, such as dams built in mines and land changes from deforestation, hurt the ecosystem. It is killing fishery resources, reducing water quality and its flow. All these people that rely on these resources for jobs, farming, and nutrition, are greatly affected by it. The aim of my work was to synthesize the data and findings, and build a foundation to pitch to future donors of Oxfam."

The structure the project followed was by identifying an issue and a theoretical change, focusing on social change and justice. Towards the end of my time with Oxfam, I took a field visit to Ratanakiri province. The people of that area did a wonderful job employing the tools Oxfam provided to fight for their resources and autonomy when facing authoritative regimes (in place even now) or even international donors. I interviewed and investigated first person narratives of community-based natural resource management, also referred to as CBNRM. The aim is to empower communities that are most well equipped with centuries of knowledge and history of how to foster the land; these communities highlight the need for a symbiotic relationship between people and the environment. The community based natural resource management is the idea of giving communities the knowledge of how to implement these strategies for groups who haven't been up to par. For example, different mining companies claim to understand how water quality is affected by these massive deforestation schemes. The overall goal is to create an enabling environment. Specifically with Oxfam, this entails promoting women and youth participation in leadership so that there is proper representation in policy dialogues."



What did you learn in the process?

"I've always had this passion for activism and 'grassroots organizations,' which embodies a raw, bottom up structure. I was especially excited because I feel like theory of change is a perfect example of how to execute strategy and involve more established and well-funded stakeholders in the process of activism, while still valuing what the people want and what the people know, rather than upholding oppressive power like power structures."

I'm hoping to bring this to our revival of the CMC Amnesty International chapter because post-pandemic organizations on campus that really rely on grassroots organizing have faced hardships greatly during the pandemic. Amnesty International is an example of that. I'm excited to see how to strategize and create support networks that both bring in resources but still keep the power to (in this case) the students and activists. My summer experience set the foundation for working towards this for me."

Amnesty International focuses on about 10 - 20 prisoners of conscience, where the aim is to connect them to various activist groups and place an emphasis on methodology; the goal is to translate that activism into policy change."

TASK FORCE UPDATES

Student-led human rights task force groups address current national and global human rights problems and are a great way for students to be involved with the Center on a volunteer-basis and to focus on a human rights topic or campaign of their choosing. Below is an update from some of the task force groups and events they are sponsoring during AY 22-23.

CURIS

Translated from Latin, “Cura Personalis” means care for the entire person. In Curis, our mission is to help improve access to care for people around the world. This year, Curis members voted to dedicate their efforts to spreading awareness and raising money for the Syrian Refugee Crisis. On November 6th, Curis hosted a movie night showing *Salam Neighbor*. Directed by two CMC alumni, the award-winning documentary exposes the front lines of Syria’s refugee crisis. In Spring, Curis is hosting a campus-wide “Scavenger Hunt.” Flyers will be posted around campuses, and students are challenged to learn different facts about the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Scanning a QR code, participants will have a chance to win prizes for correctly answering questions about the flyer’s content. Lastly, Curis is hosting a clothing drive, collecting new/gently used clothing from student dorms and donating items to nearby organizations including House of Ruth and Foothill Family Shelter.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International (AI) is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. CMC's AI chapter spent this year getting reorganized, building its membership, and planning new events, campaigns, and advocacy opportunities for students across the 5Cs. During one event, Write for Rights, the CMC chapter participated in a letter-writing campaign which advocated for 13 individuals whose rights to protest have been violated. As well, the chapter plans to host a virtual discussion with members of Amnesty's Washington, DC staff to learn more about Amnesty's programs to protect reproductive rights in the US and across the globe.



Stay tuned for updates in our next issue from our two newest Task Forces:

- Ukraine on the West Coast
- LiNK (Liberty in North Korea)

Gun Violence Does Not Surprise Americans Anymore. When will the U.S. Change the Norm of Gun Violence?

By Savannah Grier '25

“Black youth are four times more likely to be killed with guns than their white peers.”⁴

Increased gun violence has been a norm in American society for years now. The United States continues to have some of the worst gun violence history. However, there seems to be a failure of stricter gun control laws in order to combat this issue.

So I ask, how many more shootings have to take place in order to see change?

These high rates of violence not only affect society as a whole, but a good number of these shootings affect the lives of the marginalized. The lack of policy making in order to keep the citizens in this great nation safe is disturbing. Many who have grown up or have been in the US long enough, have become increasingly desensitized to these incidents. We live under a false sense of security which can change at any given moment because the wrong person has access to a deadly weapon.

Gun violence should not be a norm. However, the lack of incentive within the government to rewrite gun access laws has proven that the United States is ready to make it a norm. This issue has definitely risen in light of the Covid pandemic and has manifested in different ways. Gun violence in America ranges from mass/school shootings, gun related homicides, and even suicides. What is most startling is the lack of coverage of gun related suicides that occur. Stated by Pew Research Center, in 2020, fifty-four percent of gun related deaths were suicides.²

According to CFR, “in 2021, guns killed more than forty-five thousand Americans,” a number that only seems to increase with each new year. One of the scariest parts is that a lot of the victims are kids or young adults. Years of unaddressed policy has led to this moment. Easy access to assault weapons and gun ownership in the United States is definitely a factor that sets it apart from other nations.

Nations that allow citizens to legally own guns, have their own policies in place to ensure the safety of their citizens. Many have heavy regulations on who can own certain guns and require reasoning on

why they need a weapon. A lot of them established gun control policies as a form of response to mass shootings or other gun related violence that may have occurred in that country. For example, after a school shooting in the United Kingdom, laws restricting handguns were put in place and strengthened gun control policy. The same cannot be said about the United States.

Individual state policies on stricter gun control are unable to prevent this nationwide issue. Although they are a step in the right direction, the number of deaths in relation to gun violence remains incredibly high. This crisis has been continuing for too long. People deserve to feel safe in their homes, schools, public places, etc. Minorities who are victims at high rates to the majority of gun violence deserve more.

I remember watching the news at the start of the new year and hearing the reporters talk about a 6-year old who shot his teacher. I was momentarily surprised at first but looking back, I was not as surprised as I should have been. That is not normal. Kids should not have access to guns. I then started a new semester and a few weeks in, there have been multiple mass shootings across the US targeting minorities. Later, learning that some people that I know were at the place where a shooting occurred near my school. That is not normal. There is always the question “How does this keep happening?” It keeps happening because not enough is being done to prevent it. In order to not make gun violence in the US a norm, there needs to be reform of the current policies that make it easier for these types of incidents to occur as frequently as they do.

“Hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, have risen significantly, increasing by 76% from 2019 to 2020 and another 339% from 2020 to 2021.”⁵

¹ Council On Foreign Relations
² PEW Research Center
³ Council On Foreign Relations
⁴ The State of America's Children
⁵ National Library of Medicine

My Family's Murder

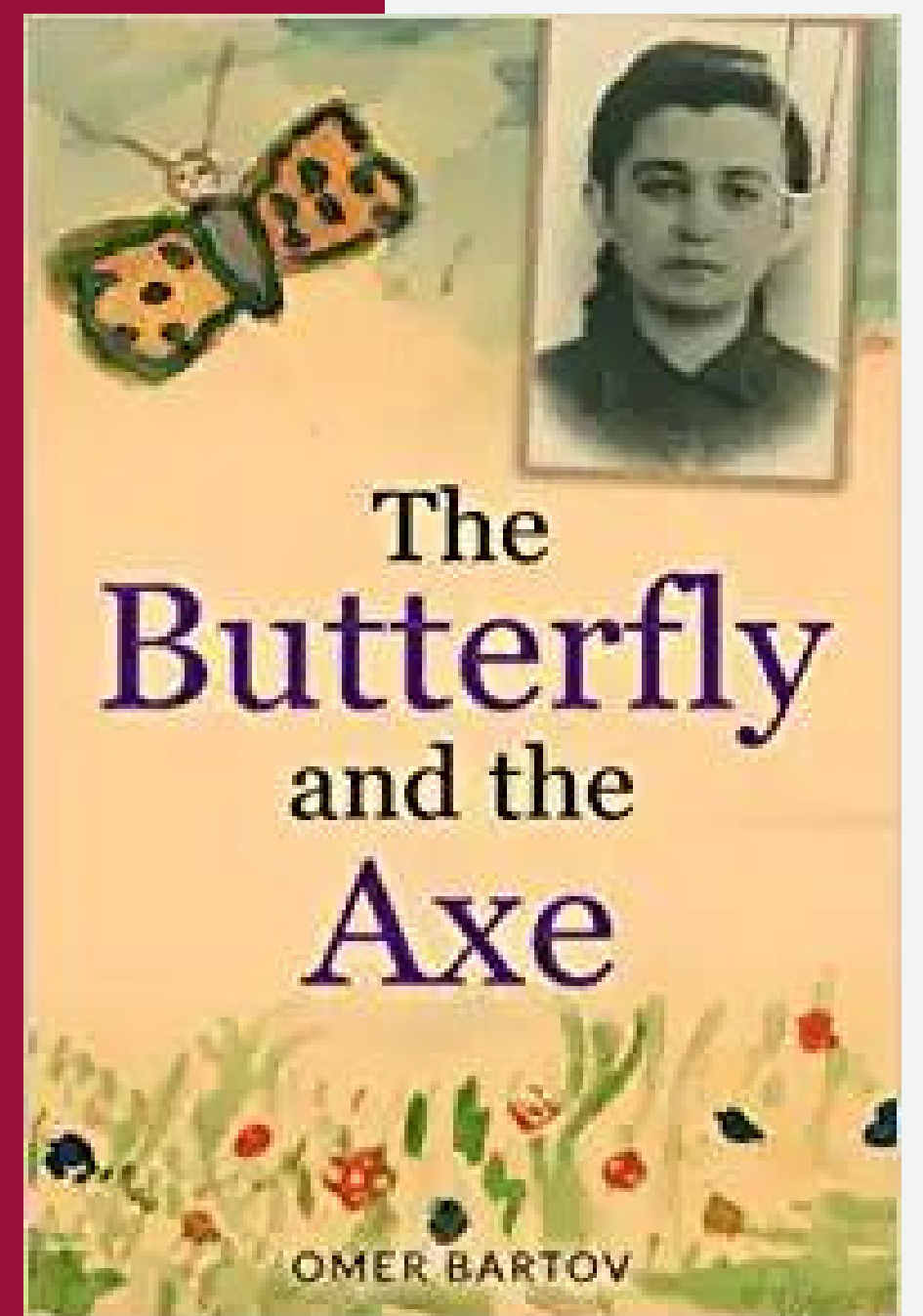
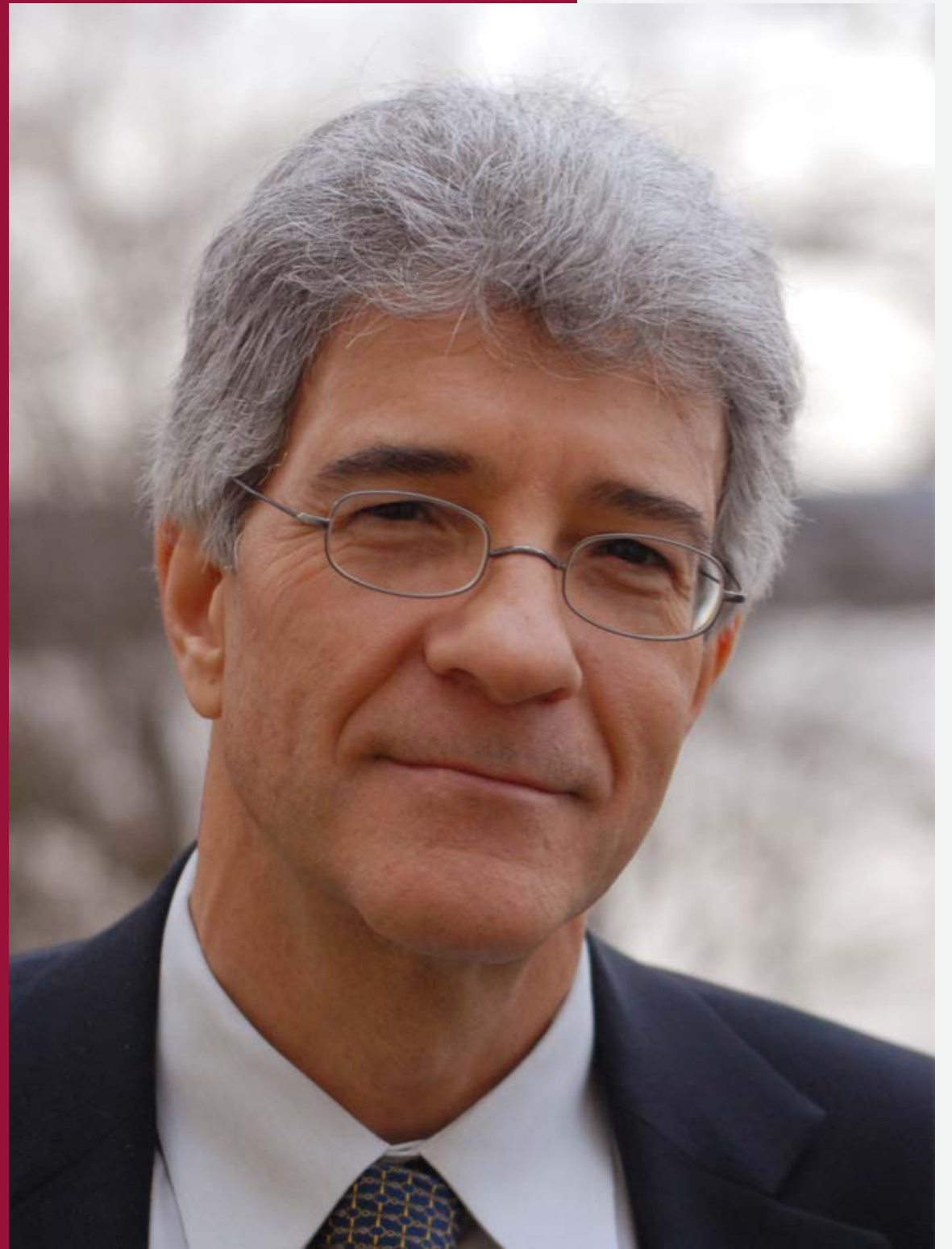
On January 26th, a historian turned to literature: Omer Bartov, the Samuel P. Isaacs Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Brown University, spoke about his new novel, "The Butterfly and the Axe." Spring 1944: A Jewish family is murdered in a remote Ukrainian village. Who were they? Who were the killers? Three generations later, an Israeli woman and a British man of Ukrainian origin set out to find out how their families were implicated in this crime. They also discover how this untold murder has warped their own lives.

Born in Israel and educated at Tel Aviv University and St. Antony's College, Oxford, Omer Bartov's early scholarship concerned the Nazi indoctrination of the Wehrmacht and the crimes it committed in World War II and was analyzed in his books, "The Eastern Front, 1941-1945," and "Hitler's Army."

He then turned to the links between total war and genocide, discussed in his books "Murder in Our Midst," "Mirrors of Destruction," and "Germany's War and the Holocaust." Bartov's interest in representation also led to his study, "The 'Jew' in Cinema," which examines the recycling of antisemitic stereotypes in film. His more recent work has focused on interethnic relations in the borderlands of Eastern Europe.

Recent publications include "Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine," "Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz," winner of the National Jewish Book Award, and "Tales from the Borderlands: Making and Unmaking the Galician Past." His many edited volumes include "Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands," "Voices on War and Genocide: Three Accounts of the World Wars in a Galician Town," and "Israel-Palestine: Lands and Peoples."

Omer Bartov's Athenaeum lecture commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27th).



2022/23 ELBAZ FELLOWS

The Elbaz Family Post-Graduate Fellowship program is open to all graduating CMC seniors who are interested in pursuing a career in human rights, Holocaust, and genocide studies or prevention. The fellowship is awarded for one year following graduation during which the recipient will receive funding for a position within a major human rights organization (to be identified by the fellow or through partnerships maintained by the Mgrublian Center). Ideally the position should focus on one or more of these areas: leadership training; project management skills; field work and research; professional networking; and advocacy work to advance human rights. The fellowship could lead to full time work or preparation for graduate school. The Mgrublian Center awards up to \$50,000 to cover living expenses for the one-year duration of the fellowship. Upon conclusion of the fellowship, the fellow will return to CMC to present a public lecture. This year's fellows are Sydney Heath '22 and Ari Moore '22.

Sydney Heath '22

Xumek — Mendoza, Argentina

"I'm coming up on my fifth month here in Mendoza, Argentina, working for Xumek, a local human rights organization that focuses on women's rights, children's rights, environmental rights, migrant rights, and LGBTQ rights in Mendoza! I have been absolutely loving living here; Mendoza is incredibly beautiful, and everyone I've met has been so friendly. I'm already dreading leaving! So far, I have been working with the children's rights team at Xumek. Up until recently we have been focusing on sex education in Argentina, which is a relatively Catholic country. A few years ago, Argentina passed a sex ed law requiring a certain level of sex education to be taught nationwide. With Xumek we spent months working on a joint report that essentially aimed to determine the extent to which schools have been complying with the sex ed law! My favorite part of this particular project was when we planned a sex ed workshop in a local town with a group of kids aged 9-12. We wanted to both teach them and also see what they already knew. It was lots of fun working with the kids but less fun trying to figure out how to explain certain topics in Spanish!

Since I have my afternoons free, I found another great opportunity here in Mendoza. I am working part time at a museum called "Espacio de la Memoria". It is a former clandestine detention center that was active during the military dictatorship in Argentina between 1976 and 1983 that has been converted into a museum with the goal of educating future generations on the devastating military dictatorship. I've been doing some translation work for them as well as a project we just started where we are putting together biographies of the approximately 300 people from Mendoza who were either assassinated or "disappeared" during the dictatorship. One of these is actually an American who happened to be living in Mendoza during that 7 year period. It has been really interesting working at a human rights organization in a country where the work I've been doing would have had me arrested just 40 years ago. I'm actually headed to Buenos Aires this week in part for the 40th anniversary of democracy in Argentina!

My Spanish has certainly improved but I still find it a bit mentally exhausting having to work all day in a foreign language. Nevertheless, I genuinely feel so lucky everyday to be able to spend this year in Argentina, especially since I was never able to study abroad due to COVID. If anyone has any questions about the Elbaz fellowship, send me an email to sheath22@cmc.edu."



Sydney Heath '22, above at a Xumek event and left at the 40th anniversary of democracy march in Buenos Aires

Ari Moore '22

Conectas Direitos Humanos — São Paulo, Brazil

Conectas is a Brazilian human rights NGO that was initially created to give Brazil a voice in the international human rights space. Today, having acquired international legitimacy, Conectas has three main focuses: preventing state violence, strengthening democratic spaces in Brazil, and ensuring socio-environmental rights. They accomplish these goals through strategic litigation, consciousness building op-eds, reports on the Brazilian human rights landscape, and collaborative actions with other NGOs.

"My time working for Conectas Direitos Humanos in São Paulo, made possible by the Elbaz Fellowship, has been exciting, confusing, meditative, and everything in between. The beginning of this process was marked by seemingly infinite layers of bureaucracy: finding the right visa to apply for, finding the right way to apply for it, learning how many documents I needed, figuring out how to make an appointment at a São Paulo police station, learning which documents allow me to get a subway card, or open a bank account, and on and on. Many months later, I found myself living in São Paulo, finally working for Conectas. The work I have done so far has been both challenging (professionally and linguistically) and immensely rewarding.

Knowing that the research I do plays a part in ensuring the human, labor, and environmental rights of people in Brazil makes all the aforementioned challenges worth it. My coworkers are energetic, committed, and immensely knowledgeable of the issues that Conectas seeks to resolve and the human rights standards for which we advocate.

Apart from the professional experience of working in a Brazilian human rights office, the experience of living in Brazil has been its own adventure. My Portuguese has greatly improved, and with it, so has my ability to actively engage with the culture around me. Brazilians are far and away the friendliest people on the planet, and the friends I've made here are just one of many reasons I intend on staying connected to Brazil after the fellowship has ended. I'm looking forward to more to come."



Panel about recent climate litigation led by a few of Ari's coworkers



Ari Moore '22



A view of São Paulo from the window of a school where Ari is taking Portuguese classes to sustain his visa

The 2023 DC Networking Trek

Over Spring Break, the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights collaborated with the Soll Center for Career Services to send students to Washington D.C. to learn more about careers in politics, government, and public policy. The Mgrublian Center sponsored human rights-related visits at The Sentry, Amnesty International, Constitutional Accountability Center, and Women in International Security (WIIS).



During the trek, the Mgrublian Center sponsored a dinner at a local Greek café, Zorba's, which included employees affiliated with the aforementioned human rights organizations as well as young alumni of the Center (from the classes of 2018-22). Over dinner, students enjoyed casual conversation and the opportunity to learn more about living and working in DC.



The trip has sparked further discussions of bringing more human rights clubs to campus and kick-starting the Amnesty International chapter at CMC. Students have also already gotten connected with employees at WIIS and The Sentry to explore summer internship opportunities in DC.



2023 DC Networking Trek students

On the first day, students visited The Sentry and Amnesty International- two powerful organizations rooted in fighting for the rights of disadvantaged communities. The Sentry is an investigative and policy organization that seeks to disable networks of corruption in countries where governments profit off of conflict. They conduct financial investigations and work in tandem with International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF to ensure that governments are held accountable for their actions. Amnesty International is an NGO that advocates for human rights around the world and covers a plethora of issues ranging from women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, to migrant and refugee rights. The Mgrublian Center has worked with Amnesty International for years and has even established the Amnesty Chapter here at CMC. Students on the trek were able to speak with employees of both organizations including CMC alumna Laleh Ahmed '20 who is currently employed at The Sentry as a research analyst.



The next stop was the Constitutional Accountability Center, which is a think tank, law firm and action center. We met with the president, Elizabeth Wydra, who is a '98 CMC alumna. The company works in courts, through the government and with research scholars to preserve the rights and freedoms of all in America. The organization plans to take a progressive approach to constitutional law, as they argue the values of the whole Constitution to resolve disputes over its meaning. Their staff work in our courts, through our government, and with legal scholars to preserve the rights and freedom of all in America to protect our judiciary from politics and special interests.

Wydra provided students with advice on how to reclaim your space and stand your ground being a woman in the field. She also noted her extensive mentorship experiences that began all the way back in her CMC years. Hearing the stories of her extraordinary cases, including ones against Former President Trump, and those advocating for the legality of same-sex marriage, was truly inspiring for students to hear.



At WIIS (Women in International Security), students met with Larissa Abaunza who is a CMC '18 alumna. It was helpful to not only hear her experience with WIIS but with Amnesty International and her work at the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights. She was very insightful in telling students about her journey through research. She helped draw a distinction between the purposes of research, and emphasized the passion that goes behind researching for a cause. Her CMC senior thesis on rape as a weapon in genocide drew the students' attention to feminist perspectives in history and how to protect sensitive information. With Larissa's inspiring words, many students look forward to revitalizing the Amnesty International Chapter at CMC. It was refreshing to consult with a recent alumna.





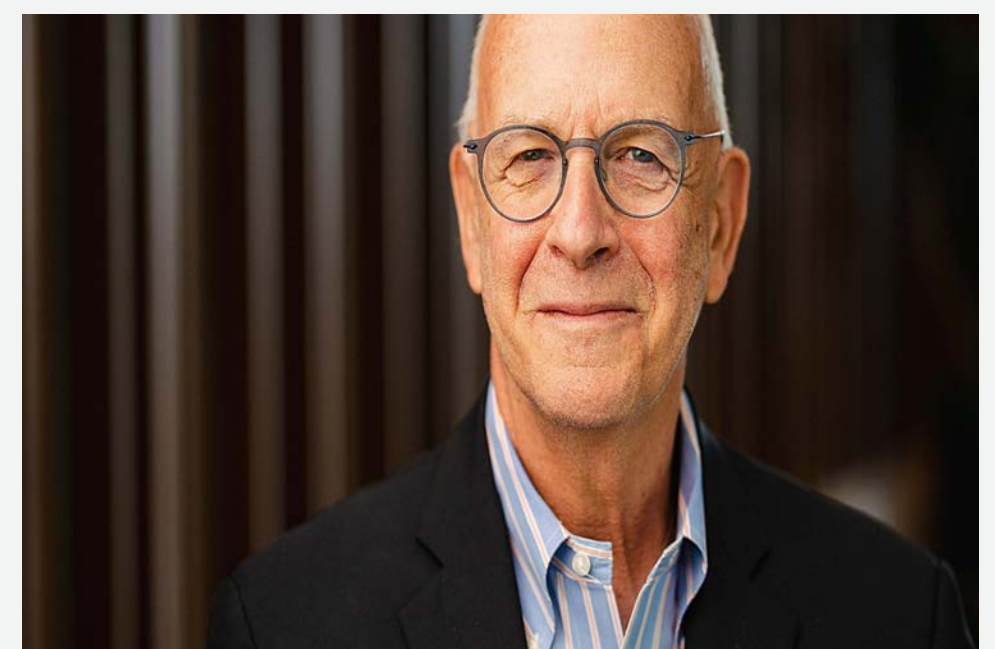
COUNTERTERRORISM SIMULATION

Global Perspectives on Counterterrorism:

China, Colombia, India, Israel, Russia, Spain, and the United States

This spring, 24 students (pictured above) from the Gould Center for Humanistic Studies, Keck Center for International & Strategic Studies, Kravis Leadership Institute, Mgrublian Center for Human Rights, and the Salvatori Center for Individual Freedom participated in a counterterrorism simulation symposium. Led by Amos Guiora (at right, and below with students during one of the mini-simulations), Professor of Law at the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law, the symposium included students from different disciplines who learned about counterterrorism from a global perspective.

Drawing on Prof. Guiora's textbook, *Global Perspectives on Counterterrorism*, students started the first session in January with an enhanced understanding of terrorism: what defines terrorism and how to conduct counterterrorism strategies in a lawful, moral, yet effective way? In later sessions, participants furthered their knowledge in intelligence source gathering and analysis, policy, and operational dilemmas as they engaged in mini-simulations of what real decision-makers go through. Students were presented with scenarios in which they made prompt decisions and provided sound reasons as to why they decided to pursue such decisions; in this way, the mini-simulations modeled the types of decisions made in real-life scenarios and the gravity of those verdicts.



Student teams were given a collection of facts or "intel" and had to decide the reliability and stability of the information based on its sources, national security interests, and potential geopolitical consequences. Student teams discussed their options for 2-5 minutes in order to rapidly decide a course of action or counterterrorism strategy.

When asked if the symposium gave a new or refreshed perspective on counter-terrorism, one student commented "the way Professor Guiora was open to us asking about his choices, his alternatives, and his rationale for his actions really gave us the perspective on how difficult counterterrorism is and the various factors/balancing acts that decision makers have to consider."

Jacob Detrinidad '25 said "this is definitely a workshop that pushed my own ethics to their limits and made me reexamine things that I may have taken for granted. Not only did we get to analyze international state policy and roleplay as major superpowers, but we also got to determine just how far we would go to prevent violence."



Kwibuka: A Walk to Remember

The 29th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

On April 7th, the Rwandan community at the Claremont Colleges held the 29th commemoration event of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. This year's event was a commemorative walk starting at Pomona College followed by an intimate gathering held in the Green Room at Harvey Mudd. The event provided an opportunity for everyone to come together and remember the lives lost during this tragic period in history.

During the event, the community had a walk to remember, a vigil and moment of silence, as well as screening of The 600 Soldiers documentary.

Natasha Agasaro '25 invited the CMC community to the event and believes "it is important to tell a different story that isn't filled with traumatic imagery, but rather emphasizing the importance of promoting peace and preventing atrocities around the world. By coming together to honor and remember those who have passed, we can strengthen our community and work towards a more just and equitable world."



The Importance of Commemoration

Commemorating the lives lost during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi is not just about remembering the past, but it is also about reflecting on the present and working towards a better future. The genocide serves as a stark reminder of the horrific consequences of hate and division, and the importance of promoting unity and understanding. By coming together to commemorate this event, we acknowledge the pain and suffering of those affected and reaffirm our commitment to building a more peaceful world.

The Role of Education

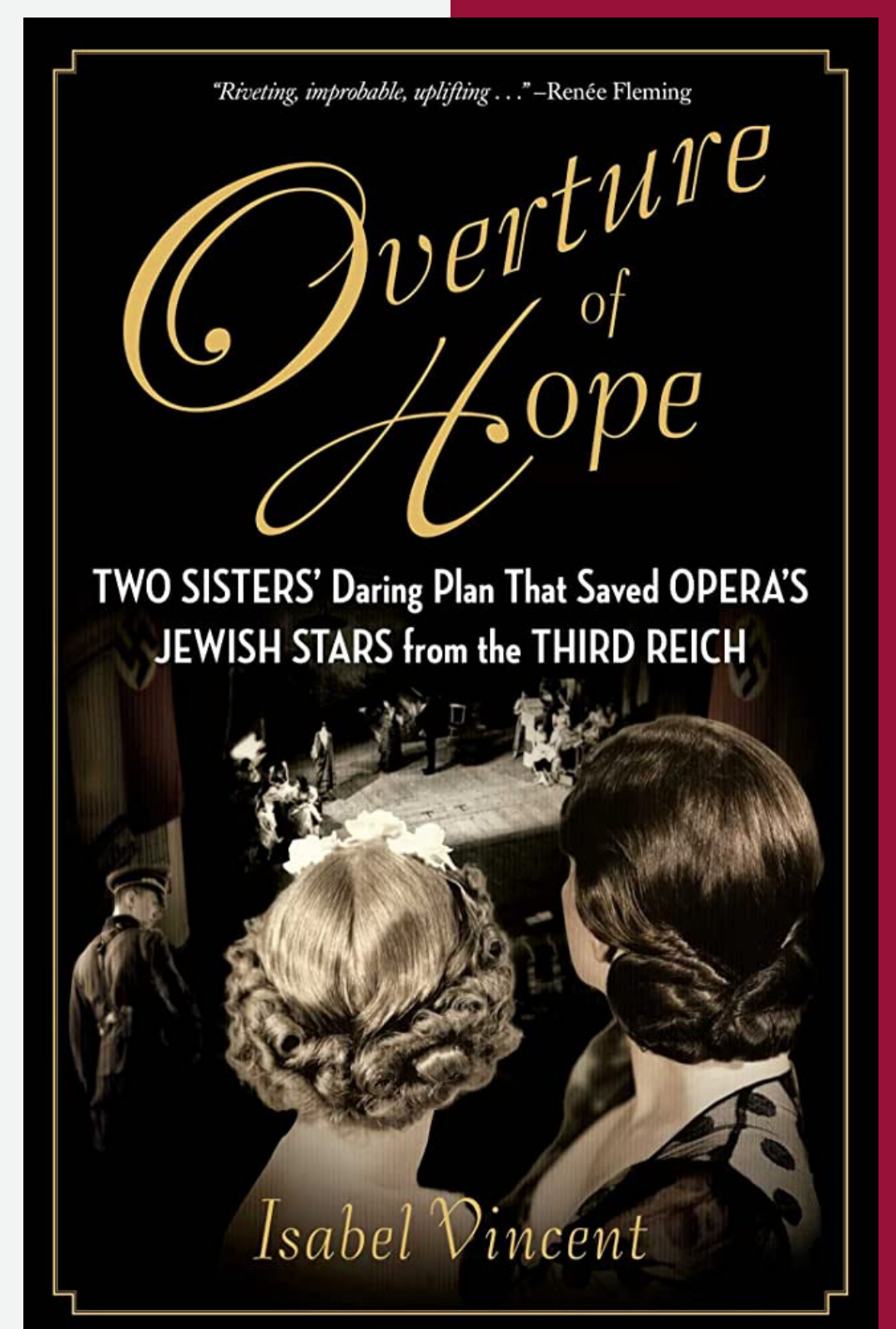
Education is a powerful tool in the fight against hate and division. By taking the time to educate students on the history of the genocide and the impacts it had on Rwandans, we can better understand the long-lasting effects of violence and hate. Through education, we can also learn about the steps that can be taken to prevent atrocities from happening again in the future.

In addition, Natasha encourages the community to continue learning about the importance of promoting peace and preventing atrocities around the world. There are plenty of resources provided by the college such as courses or organizations that raise awareness for similar events. Finally, she asks to "remember that commemoration is only one part of the journey towards building a more just and equitable world. We must also take action to prevent hate and division in our everyday lives, work towards understanding and respect among all communities, and recognize the value of diversity."

Isabel Vincent: Overture of Hope

Overture of Hope tells the tale of two British sisters in 1930s Europe, one a dowdy typist, the other a soon-to-be-famous romance novelist. Yet, both share a passion for opera, which takes them on frequent trips to Germany and Austria to see their favorite stars perform. But as clouds of war gather, the stars of Continental opera, many of whom are Jewish, face dark futures under the Nazis. Packed with original research and vividly told with suspense, hope, and wonder by award-winning New York Post investigative journalist Isabel Vincent, this singular tale reveals many new details of the seemingly naïve and oblivious Cook sisters' surreptitious bravery, daring, and passionate commitment as the two mount a successful rescue mission that saves dozens of lives and preserves the opera they love for another generation.

Isabel Vincent, award-winning investigative journalist for the New York Post, is the author of the bestselling memoir, *Dinner with Edward*, the biography *Gilded Lily: The making of One of the World's Wealthiest Widows*, the sex trafficking exposé *Bodies and Souls*, and *See No Evil*, an investigation into Latin America's biggest kidnapping case. Her account of the Swiss bank accounts left dormant after the Nazi era, *Hitler's Silent Partners*, won the Yad Vashem Award for Holocaust History. A native of Canada, Vincent covered South American drug cartels for the *Globe and the Mail* and later reported on conflicts in Kosovo and the civil war in Angola. For many years, she has reported on the madness, mayhem, and corruption of the New York City for the Post and a host of other publications.



TURKISH GENOCIDE DENIAL AS A NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT

Over an Athenaeum dinner program on April 19th, Taner Akçam, the inaugural director of the Armenian Genocide Research Program at the Promise Institute at UCLA, discusses the national security implications of Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide on stability and reconciliation efforts in the region today.

Previously, Professor Akçam was the Kaloosdian and Mugar Chair in Modern Armenian History and Genocide in the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University.

Akçam grew up in Turkey, where he was imprisoned for editing a political youth journal and was subsequently adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International in 1976. Akçam later received political asylum in Germany. In 1996 he received his doctorate from the University of Hanover with a dissertation on *The Turkish National Movement and the Armenian Genocide Against the Background of the Military Tribunals in Istanbul Between 1919 and 1922*.

Akçam is widely recognized as one of the first Turkish scholars to write extensively on the Ottoman-Turkish Genocide of the Armenians in the early twentieth century. He is the author of more than ten scholarly works as well as numerous articles in Turkish, German, and English on Armenian Genocide and Turkish nationalism. As well, he is the founder of Krikor Guerguerian Online Archive.

Professor Akçam's most well-known books are *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (Metropolitan Books, 2006, received the 2007 Minnesota Book Award for General Nonfiction) and *Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2012; awarded the 2013 Hourani Book Prize of The Middle East Studies Association; selected as one of Foreign Affairs' Best Books on the Middle East for 2012). Akçam's latest book is *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide* (Palgrave 2018). Because of the findings in this book, Akçam was introduced by the New York Times as "Sherlock Holmes of the Armenian Genocide."

Taner Akçam's presentation commemorates the 20th anniversary of the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights and is the Center's annual lecture dedicated to Armenian Studies.



TANER AKÇAM



Summer Israel-Palestine Trip

The Institute for Global/Local Action & Study (IGLAS) at Pitzer College is bringing a small group of students to Israel/Palestine this May 16-27th. The Mgrublian Center for Human Rights is sponsoring CMC student, Melanie Kallah '25, to participate in this program alongside CMC Professor of History, Heather Ferguson. Following the trip, Melanie will share highlights of the trip through a brief write-up, photos, and presentation to the Mgrublian Center advisory board this summer.



PROFESSOR HEATHER FERGUSON

Professor Ferguson is helping IGLAS run the Israel/Palestine trip for a faculty and student research and study tour. The components of the tour directly relate to Professor Ferguson's research and focus on archives and archival memory (fragility and the politics of preservation in the region).

The trip is also directly linked to her pedagogical practices of multiperspectivalism - how to address controversial topics in productive ways—which is also linked to her larger research agenda: thinking and working “beyond binaries”.

2022-23 MGRUBLIAN STAFF

Research Fellows



Sasha Shunko '25 - Secrets of the Kremlin: An Investigation of Strategic Narratives in Russian Propaganda Against Ukraine

As someone who sees the effects of Russian propaganda (especially throughout the Ukrainian war) amongst her own distant family and a majority of the Russian population, Sasha wants to deep dive into why so many people are influenced by the lies the Kremlin is spreading. Why do people support a war that is causing massive human rights abuses? The portrayal of Ukrainians as Nazis has evolved rapidly throughout the war, and makes for a very interesting media case study. She hopes to continue studying misinformation throughout her academic career because it ties in her two majors: Psychology and international relations.



Emma Pan '25 - An Investigation of Human Trafficking in Asia

Through the fellowship, she will examine how historical, cultural, and economic factors lead to the current sex trafficking and organ trafficking problem in Asia. Having lived most of her life in Asia, she has been exposed to the human trafficking issue since a young age. It was disheartening to see how severe and deep-rooted the problem was when she worked for NGOs in related areas. As someone with access to information in both the west and the east, she has the means and determination to investigate the issue in depth. She hopes this experience helps her understand more about human rights work and further her expected career in law and social justice.



Jose Chiquito '24 - Mexicanidad y Negritud: The Systemic Invisibilization of a Black Cultural Identity and its Implications for Afro-Descendants in Mexico

Although born in the United States, José lived in México until the age of twelve when he moved to the United States. His experiences as a foreign-born Mexican and as a migrant U.S. citizen have presented José with questions about his identities and how they provide him with certain privileges, including legal rights. These questions constitute the basis for many of José's research interests - he is interested in studying how conceptions of a national identity determine the treatment of people living within a nation-state. This has served as an inspiration for his research project at the Mgrublian Center, which explores the systemic erasure of a Black identity within the Mexican national identity - Mexicanidad - and the Mexican state's treatment of Afro-Mexicans. Additionally, his project analyzes the implications of the recent Constitutional recognition of Afro-descendant communities as part of Mexico's pluricultural composition.



Joshua Morganstein '25 and Joseph Zhong '25 - The Watchtower Podcast: Shining a Light on Human Rights Topics

Joseph and Josh are excited to start an official podcast for the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights to shed light on global human rights issues. Previously, they co-hosted Democracies, sponsored by the Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, which looked at democracies and civil rights issues in Latin America. They hope their previous experience in addressing fundamental human rights in a podcast will help elevate the work that the Mgrublian Center and its affiliated researchers already conduct on a consistent basis. They are eagerly looking forward producing their Podcast, The Watchtower, on behalf of the Center in 2022-23.



Michelle Ramirez '23 - Closing the Achievement Gap?: Examining the Equity of California's School Finance System Using Student Outcomes

For her honors Public Policy senior thesis, Michelle is analyzing the current structure of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the formula used by California to fund public schools. In her research, she will answer the following question: Has the LCFF reduced the racial and socioeconomic achievement gap in districts with high concentrations of underserved students? To answer this question, she will analyze and compare data from districts just above and below the threshold used by the LCFF to determine if districts qualify for a concentration grant, and will interview stakeholders to understand the effect that this funding (or lack thereof) has on student experiences, specifically with Latinx and Black students. As someone who attended public schools in Los Angeles her whole life, she is passionate about improving the state of California public education through the lens of education policy. She hopes this research engages students, parents, teachers, school officials, and policymakers with looking at education equity through a quantitative and qualitative lens.



Valentina Gonzalez '23- Cruzando La Frontera: Why the United States and Mexico Should Review Immigration and Labor Policy to Address the Challenges Experienced by Work-Commuters on the U.S.-Mexico Border

Being from the border town of El Paso, Texas, Valentina was exposed to injustices in immigration at an early age. This multicultural community is home to one of the largest Latinx populations in the United States as thousands of migrants pour in from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico every year. Bordertown communities consist of an overlooked group that is integral to sustaining both sides of the border: day-workers. Her research highlights the experiences of authorized and unauthorized day-laborers living in Mexico and working in American border cities, and provides a human rights-oriented policy analysis and recommendation. As she partakes in this privileged academic space, she hopes she can honor her community by documenting these experiences, through their lens.



Miriam Farah '23 - Criminalizing Girls' Mental Illness: Race, Gender, and Politics in Traditional Juvenile Courts and Collaborative Courts, 1899-Present

For her honors senior thesis in history, Miriam hopes to delve into the experiences of girls, especially girls of color, in juvenile mental health courts and girls' courts/commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) courts. Girls have unique histories of trauma and abuse, and she hopes to understand if and how these courts address girls' physical and mental health needs. She has been studying children's experiences in state hospitals, reformatory schools, and juvenile detention centers throughout the 20th and 21st centuries and looks forward to exploring this topic thoroughly through her fellowship and senior thesis.

2022-23 MGRUBLIAN STAFF

Justice League



Kristen Lu '24 - A junior from Los Angeles majoring in Environmental Analysis and Government, Kristen is passionate about legal advocacy and its role in protecting human rights and the environment. She has spent the last two years running a nonprofit that successfully lobbied for the passage of international climate policy. In addition to being a Mgrublian Legal Research Assistant, she is the Chair of the ASCMC Environmental Affairs Committee and a CMC Advocate for Survivors of Sexual Assault. After graduating from CMC, she hopes to pursue a career in environmental law. She enjoys running, surfing, and going to the beach in her free time.



Genevieve McCloy '24 - A junior from San Francisco studying Government, she recently transferred to CMC and is excited about all the opportunities offered in the humanities. At her former college, Genevieve developed an interest in criminal justice and advocated for increased academic resources for incarcerated populations in Massachusetts. She hopes to continue learning how law can be utilized to achieve meaningful justice and prison reform. Even though she loves Southern California, she is forever a San Francisco Giants fan and dislikes the Dodgers. She loves listening to the Go-Gos, playing pickleball, and eating phở with friends.



Jameson Mitrovich '24 - A junior from Los Angeles, majoring in Government and Economics, Jameson is interested in political philosophy and law and plans to attend law school after graduation. On campus, he is also the managing editor of the Claremont Independent. He has interned on a few political campaigns and a political non-profit. In his free time, he enjoys reading and watching sports.



Jasmine Perales '23 - A senior majoring in Government and Chicana Latinx Studies. She has been working for the Mgrublian Center as part of the legal research team since her sophomore year. She is very passionate about human rights and hopes to pursue it as a lawyer.

2022-23 MGRUBLIAN STAFF

Student Assistants



Bhanu Cheepurupalli '25 - A sophomore majoring in Environment, Economics, and Politics from Princeton, New Jersey. On campus, she is involved with CMC Advocates for Sexual Assault Survivors and the Amnesty International task force. Off-campus, Bhanu has worked with Oxfam and Amnesty International as she explores her interests in climate rights. In her free time, she enjoys walking with her cat and playing Solitaire.



Labiba Hassan '25 - A sophomore from Queens, New York, who is dual majoring in Government and Philosophy. She devotes most of her time to education, whether it be through humanitarian organizations or classes she holds at her tutorial. Her interests in human rights roots from her experiences with students and manifests itself in her passion for political journalism. On campus, you can find her at the CARE Center, or giving a tour. She also spends time on the Mock Trial team.



Savannah Grier '25 - A sophomore from Fresno, California majoring in International Relations at CMC. On campus, she works as a student staff manager with CMS Recreation at Roberts Pavilion. She is very excited to be a student assistant with Mgrublian because it aligns with her interests in working with nonprofits and an overall interest in international human rights affairs.



Sara Taghizadeh '26- A freshman from Wellesley, Massachusetts, majoring in Public Policy. On-campus, she is also involved with Every Vote Counts and the 5C Refugee Advocacy Network. As the daughter of immigrants, she is very passionate about immigrant and refugee rights, especially in the Middle East. Sara looks forward to getting more involved with human rights activism alongside other students through the Mgrublian Center.



Esther Ge '26 - A freshman from Beijing, China, who is hoping to dual major in Politics, Philosophy and Economics and International relations with a sequence in legal studies. Her passion in exploring the roles of law in securing human rights is what primarily directs her here. In high school, she was involved in research related to the humanitarian needs of climate refugees, the Srebrenica Genocide, and minority rights in the criminal justice system in American cities. As a student assistant, she is looking forward to further exploring the role of international justice in global human rights issues and contributing to making positive social impacts on human rights.



Angela Gushue '25 - A pre-medicine sophomore interested in the intersection of public health and human rights. In fifth grade, she founded her first organization and since then, her activism has continued and expanded. Now, as a student assistant, Angela is particularly passionate about Curis, the Mgrublian global poverty and public health task force. When she isn't working at the Center, Angela runs cross country and track, mentors young musicians, and studies at local coffee shops.



Nicole Jonassen '24 - A junior from New York studying Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) and Legal Studies. Nicole has developed a passion for human rights, and specifically migrant rights, due to the role of immigration in her family history, the ethical questions she encounters in her studies for PPE, and her research on Mexican migrant workers in the US through the Keck Center. Nicole is currently a Refugee and Migrant Rights intern on the Government Relations team at Amnesty International USA, where she works on a wide array of projects, including drafting federal appropriations language, researching and writing policy memos, and lobbying Congressional staffers to advance Amnesty International USA policy goals.



Saneen Khan '23 - A senior studying Government and History with a sequence in Data Science. On campus, Saneen is a member of the Student Philanthropy Council, the 5C Refugee Advocacy Network, and Amnesty International. Saneen intends to eventually study law and is particularly interested in human rights and immigration law. Saneen's passion for human rights work stems from her experiences volunteering abroad, particularly her experience working with Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. Having grown up in the UAE, Saneen hopes to eventually use her experience and knowledge back home in the Middle East.



Daniel Kroshchuk '24 - A junior from San Diego, California studying Neuroscience and Economics. He is specifically interested in raising awareness for war crimes committed against Ukrainians as a result of the Russian invasion. This topic is close to his heart as most of his relatives reside in Ukraine. On campus, he is a part of Claremont Curis, a global health and poverty task force, as well as the CMS football team. In his free time, Daniel enjoys camping with friends and surfing the beaches of So-Cal.



Tara Dawood '25 - A sophomore from Las Vegas, Nevada, currently majoring in Government and Middle Eastern Studies. She is involved with the Kravis Lab for Social Impact as a Core Skills Mentor, a research assistant on the Ukraine Engagement Project, and a part of ASCMC's Events Staff Team. Upon the completion of her internship in Iraq last summer, she realized the great necessity of ensuring that Middle Eastern voices are heard. After seeing the amount of refugee camps that still exist even after ISIS has been defeated, she knows that there is still so much work that needs to be done to get people into homes. As Iraq is her home country, she hopes to be able to contribute to the change in this region.



Maram Sharif '26 - A freshman from Manama, Bahrain. She intends to major in Economics with a Finance Sequence. She is currently an RLCIE fellow candidate and holds a few positions at ASCMC. She is also the Director of Arts Programming at CPB. Maram is excited to get more involved on campus through the Mgrublian Center. Interested in journalism, she is eager to share the values of the Center with the community through social media and the newsletter. She cannot wait to make an impact during her time at CMC and believes this role will be a great way to start.



Ilma Turcios '25 - A sophomore on a pre-law track. She was born in Honduras but grew up in Miami. Despite leaving her country at a really young age, she has always had a strong connection to home and stays as informed as she can on relevant issues in Honduras. The main issue that has always called her attention is women's rights and gender-based violence. Given how rampant this is in Honduras and around the world has sparked her interest in the intersections between gender and human rights and how both function independently and with each other. This prompted her to carry out an internship last summer in Honduras, in which she worked closely with women victims of violence at a non-profit organization.



Kyra Variyava '25 - A sophomore from Mumbai, majoring in International Relations and Economics. Since high school, she has played an active role in human rights advocacy from organizing local movements, establishing her own grassroots initiatives, and conducting detailed research studies with a regional focus of South Asia. Outside of the Mgrublian, she loves anything to do with music from composing her own music to a cappella and is a strong believer that music too can have an impact on politics and identity.



Yulissa Sanchez '24 - A junior from California dual majoring in Government and History. On campus, she is involved in CMC's mock trial team as she hopes to one day attend law school to become a lawyer. Yulissa's passion for law stems from a young age when she realized the shortcomings laws sometimes possess when protecting the rights of others. During her time at the Mgrublian, Yulissa is excited to further her research about the development of international law and why it is so important today.

LOOKING AHEAD

Spring

April 20th, 4pm - *The War in Ukraine: One Year In*. An interview with Professor Wendy Lower and Mgrublian Research Affiliate, Anna Romandash, Zoom.

April 22, 11am-1pm - InsideCMC Day, welcoming admitted students from the class of 2027.

April 22nd, 8pm - *For the Love of the Glove*, a musical theater production, followed by Q&A with the Director. Co-sponsored by Leigh Crawford '94, life member, Mgrublian Center Advisory Board. Carl Sagan & Ann Druyan Theater, Los Angeles.

May 4th, 12-2pm - 2022-23 Mgrublian Center Research Fellowship Presentations. Kravis 321.

May 16-27th: IGLAS Israel-Palestine faculty and student research and study tour.

Summer

Follow us on Instagram (@mgrubliancenter) to learn more about this year's summer interns as they work with our partnered programs in New York, Uganda, Poland, Los Angeles, Argentina, Washington, DC and more!

Fall

September (date TBD): Campus Engagement Fair, Parents Field.

September 29-30th: ImpactCMC weekend, Fall advisory board meeting.

October 3rd: "Celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Ms. Magazine*" featuring executive editors from the magazine (Free copies of the forthcoming book will be provided). CMC Athenaeum.



Student employees representing the Center at outreach events on campus

The Fall Campus Engagement Fair (at left and right) and the Spring InsideCMC day, welcoming admitted students from the class of 2027 (center)



MGRUBLIAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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For more information: please visit <https://human-rights.cmc.edu>



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The Watchtower



Claremont McKenna College

The Kravis Center, 3rd Floor

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