

CHARANYA KRISHNASWAMI

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EDUCATION

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JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP

Hon. Raymond C. Fisher, U. S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Pasadena, CA, 2014-15

EXPERIENCE

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Amnesty International USA (Washington, D.C.) Feb. 2019 – present

Direct Amnesty's U.S.-based advocacy on human rights in the Americas, with a focus on U.S. asylum and migration policy and human rights in technology. Designated as a "Level 6 – Senior Manager/Director," which entails "managing all aspects of a full program."

- **Policy research, analysis, and development:** Rapidly analyze, assess, and communicate fast-moving policy developments in the immigration, asylum, foreign policy, and tech and human rights spaces, including the Trump administration's regulatory attack on asylum and immigration; craft and advocate for rights-respecting policies. Representative examples of this work include:
 - Planning and executing 7 organizational missions to U.S. immigration detention centers in Texas, the Mexico-U.S. border (including San Ysidro, El Paso, and the Rio Grande Valley), southern Mexico, and Guatemala to address the impact of U.S. border externalization policies, including the "Remain in Mexico" policy and unlawful "safe third country" agreements with Central American countries. Findings from these missions spurred congressional and agency oversight and media coverage and served as the basis for Amnesty's amicus efforts in legal challenges to these policies.
 - Leading a coalition of dozens of organizations in crafting administrative asylum and humanitarian protection recommendations for a new presidential term, including identifying priorities, researching policy changes, managing drafting process and organizing a series of Hill briefings with key staff to disseminate and build support for recommendations.

- **Advocacy:** Lead Amnesty’s advocacy strategy, including (1) contributing to robust congressional oversight, policymaking, and appropriations efforts (including testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on border and asylum issues); (2) advancing administrative policy recommendations; and (3) coordinating amicus strategy in U.S. court cases with precedential effect on migration and asylum issues. Representative examples include:
 - Researching and authoring amicus brief supporting challenge to “Remain in Mexico” policy, which was cited in the Ninth Circuit’s ruling to illustrate harms faced by asylum seekers forcibly returned to Mexico under the policy.
 - Leading Amnesty’s efforts regarding rights-respecting pandemic surveillance, including publishing analysis about the risk of using data mining companies to collect health data, which instigated and was cited in multiple congressional oversight efforts into the issue.
 - Crafting Amnesty’s advocacy strategy on its priority campaign to limit the use of detention during the COVID-19 pandemic, including six state-based campaigns as well as federal advocacy, which helped contribute to inclusion of provisions limiting immigration detention in the 2020 House HEROES Act and the FY21 House omnibus appropriations bill.
 - Drafting a bill limiting immigration enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic, which garnered the endorsement of 70+ organizations as well as the sponsorship of key legislators, including Sen. Kamala Harris.
- **Public outreach:** As the organization’s primary spokesperson on border, migration, and asylum issues, regularly communicate publicly, including providing analysis and insight on the human rights impact of migration policy with print outlets such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and broadcast outlets such as BBC News, Telemundo, and Univision.

(b)(6) (Washington, D.C.) Oct. 2016 – Jan. 2019

- **Asylum adjudication:** As the Refugee Status Determination Associate, managed all aspects of (b)(6) under-mandate refugee status determination in 23 countries and territories in the Caribbean region, which is largely characterized by a lack of domestic asylum protections.
 - Developed and implemented a regional strategy for asylum adjudication; interviewed hundreds of asylum-seekers (in English and Spanish) on frequent missions to Caribbean countries; drafted and reviewed first-instance and appeal assessments.
 - Provided technical assistance to several Caribbean governments via advisory opinions in individual cases advocating for domestic recognition of individuals granted refugee status under (b)(6) mandate.
 - Conducted regular trainings for new (b)(6) refugee status determination staff and deployees from U.S. government agencies on the international refugee protection framework and the basics of under-mandate asylum adjudication.
- **Advocacy and work with local partners:**
 - Promoted local integration policies in Caribbean countries by analyzing barriers to protection and conducting advocacy with state governments to ensure that recognized refugees could enjoy the social and economic rights per international law, including through provision of work and stay permits.
 - Initiated cross-U.N. agency collaboration on specific issues, including education and health.
 - Oversaw, coordinated, and negotiated project partnership agreements, including defining budgets and scope of work, with several (b)(6) local partners (including Red Cross societies and other organizations) to ensure refugees’ access to livelihoods in-country.

- Managed (b)(6) submissions of dozens of country-specific reports to U.N. human rights treaty bodies reflecting the nexus between refugee protection and international human rights guarantees.
- **Detention:** Formulated the region’s immigration detention monitoring strategy, identifying priority countries based on detention population and designing a workplan to achieve the goals of (1) improving screening mechanisms to identify detained asylum-seekers, human trafficking survivors, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence; (2) sensitizing officials to the needs and vulnerabilities of detained people and countering the narrative of “illegality”; and (3) promoting rights-respecting detention alternatives.
- **Capacity-building:** Conducted frequent trainings on various aspects of international protection with dozens of government and civil society counterparts, including asylum screening, the fundamentals of asylum adjudication, the importance of vulnerability-sensitive approaches, and cash-based interventions for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- **Management:** Regularly managed an affiliate workforce of employees (and secondees from U.S. government agencies, including USCIS), (b)(6) workforce on temporary appointments, legal fellows, and interns, including recruitment and hiring.

(b)(6) (Los Angeles, CA) Oct. 2015 – Sep. 2016

- **Child protection:** Awarded the Peter and Patricia Gruber Fellowship in Global Justice to advocate for protections for immigrant children through appellate litigation.
- **Strategic litigation:** Co-counseled the interlocutory appeal in *J.E.F.M. v. Lynch*, a groundbreaking lawsuit challenging the government’s denial of appointed counsel to children in immigration proceedings, before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
- **Appellate litigation:** Litigated individual appeals before the Ninth Circuit and California Court of Appeal; provided amicus support in immigration cases at the administrative and federal levels. Obtained California Supreme Court review in a case challenging a superior court’s refusal to issue a guardianship to a vulnerable youth eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

(b)(6) (Denver, CO) Sep. 2013 – Aug. 2014

- **Detention:** Awarded the Yale Public Interest Fellowship to help launch a project providing direct representation to detained immigrants in bond hearings and individual merits cases (including applications for cancellation of removal, T- and U-visas, and asylum).
- **Policy advocacy:** Led and managed a team of students in conducting a systemic study assessing barriers to effective legal representation for the region’s detained immigrants, the results of which were published in the 2015 symposium edition of the *Denver Law Review*.

BAR ADMISSIONS

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- *Title VII and Caste Discrimination*, HARVARD LAW REVIEW Forum (forthcoming 2021) (with Guha Krishnamurthi).
- *Why are we trusting a company with ties to ICE and intelligence agencies to collect our health information?*, WASHINGTON POST, May 21, 2020 (with Michael Kleinman).
- *Immigration Detention in the Rocky Mountain Region: Can Emerging Models of Reform Solve Our Regional Problem?*, 92 DENVER U. L. REV. 791 (2015) (with Lisa Graybill).
- *U.N. Hypocrisy in Haiti*, WASHINGTON POST, Mar. 21, 2013 (with Muneer Ahmad).
- Book Review, *Shaping Foreign Policy in Times of Crisis: the Role of International Law and the State Department Legal Adviser*, 36 YALE J. INT'L L. 513 (2011).

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

- House Foreign Affairs Committee, "Humanitarian Aspects of the United States Migratory Crisis," Nov. 2019, <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2019/11/humanitarian-aspects-of-the-united-states-migratory-crisis>

LANGUAGES

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