



Weill Cornell Medical College

# The Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights

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Issue No. 20 | April 2017

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## Statistics

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We have conducted **361** evaluations for **310** clients from **60** countries.

**92.9 percent** of our clients who have been to court have been granted asylum.

We have trained **551** medical students to evaluate clients for signs of physical and psychological trauma.

## Upcoming Events

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### Networking Luncheon

Saturday, May 20, 11:30AM - 2PM

Lunch will be served  
Griffis Faculty Club  
1300 York Ave.

## WCCHR Position Statement

**Written by Tasher Losenegger**

As of April 29, 2017, Donald Trump has been the president of the United States of America for 100 days. In this time, President Trump has issued a flurry of executive orders demonstrating his positions on immigration, asylum, and healthcare. In particular, he has set a tone of harsh immigration policy: President Trump has attempted to limit travel to the United States from Muslim-majority countries, to severely reduce the number of refugees permitted to enter the country annually, and to indefinitely suspend entry of refugees from Syria through Executive Orders 13769 and 13780. In both cases, judges issued restraining orders enjoining the government from enforcing the executive orders. President Trump has also threatened to withhold federal funding from Sanctuary Cities that do not fully cooperate with immigration officials, although this, too, has been blocked in court.

Despite these legal injunctions, President Trump's actions have empowered the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and engendered speculation regarding the future rights and statuses of non-citizens. These concerns have only been exacerbated by the recent detention of two individuals granted deferred action from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy. As providers of forensic medical evaluations to asylum seekers, the members of the Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights have met with hundreds of asylum seekers and heard the stories of those who will be affected by these policies. We see that those seeking asylum in the United States are fleeing violence, not creating it, and we remain steadfastly committed to advocating for our clients' rights.

Our clinic recently evaluated an individual from one of the six countries that would have been banned under Executive Order

*(Continued on next page)*

## WCCHR Position Statement (continued from pg. 1)

13780. In her home country, she was involved in peaceful protests for an open democracy, volunteered as an aid worker for a humanitarian organization, and advocated for the rights of women. Because of this work, she faced threats, kidnappings, an assault, and finally an attempt on her life. With her life in jeopardy, she fled to the United States and sought asylum. Our client demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the values that we view as central to our identity as Americans – freedom, equality, and democracy. To deny her and others like her the chance to even apply for asylum in the United States is not only unjust, but fundamentally weakens the values on which our country has been built and for which our client fought.

The United States has an extensive vetting process for refugees and asylum seekers and it frequently takes years for an individual to make it through. Placing further restrictions on these individuals serves only to subject innocent people to further atrocities. We, the leaders of the Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights, affirm that asylum seekers are entitled access to justice, including the opportunity to stake their claim for asylum and a fair evaluation of their application.

*Join us for the...*

**Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights  
Annual Networking Luncheon**

“Immigration and Asylum in the First 100  
Days of the New Administration and Beyond”



May 20th, 2017  
11:30AM-2:00PM

Weill Cornell Medical College  
1300 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Registration is now open at:  
<https://goo.gl/forms/clIA9Zk0LXdEC3Jn2>

[www.WCCHR.com](http://www.WCCHR.com)  Weill Cornell Medicine

**Andrew Milewski**  
Co-Executive Director

**Nicholas Hernandez**  
Co-Executive Director

**Tasher Losenegger**  
Director of  
Clinical Operations

**Lynne Rosenberg**  
Director of  
Organizational Operations

**Kelsey Young**  
Director of  
Continuing Care

## In the News

### The Trauma of Facing Deportation

—The New Yorker, April 3, 2017

*“[The child] was given a diagnosis of *uppgivenhetssyndrom*, or resignation syndrome, an illness that is said to exist only in Sweden, and only among refugees. The patients have no underlying physical or neurological disease, but they seem to have lost the will to live. The Swedish refer to them as *de apatiska*, the apathetic. “I think it is a form of protection, this coma they are in,” Hultcrantz said. “They are like Snow White. They just fall away from the world.”*

**Link to article:** <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/03/the-trauma-of-facing-deportation>

## Spotlight on...

### Francesca Voza, MD

**Francesca Voza**, Born and raised in Martinique as a dual French-American citizen, Francesca Voza pursued her higher education in Paris and received her master's degree in Pharmacology from the University of Paris 5 -René Descartes. Since then, she has joined research teams internationally in France, Germany, and in New York City at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine and at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. This experience has led her to co-author several peer-reviewed publications and reinforced her interest in Oncology and Developmental Biology. Francesca pursued her post-baccalaureate studies at CUNY-Hunter College as a psychology major and is now an MD Candidate in Weill Cornell's class of 2020. Francesca's Caribbean heritage and international background contribute to her passion towards fighting against racism and advocating for human rights.



### Anna Suessbrick, PhD

**Anna Suessbrick** is a faculty member with the NYU Langone Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry. She completed her doctorate at the New School for Social Research in New York, NY, and trained at the Portland (Oregon) VA Medical Center, where she worked with veterans with PTSD. For most of her career, she has maintained a specialty in psychological assessment for the purposes of public safety suitability, legal consultation, neuropsychological function, and psychiatric diagnosis. In addition, from 2007–2012, she was a member of a practice in Seattle, WA, that specialized in the LGBTQ population. Currently, she is involved in research at NYULMC that aims to identify biomarkers of posttraumatic stress disorder. In this role, she conducts comprehensive diagnostic interviews with combat veterans and civilian survivors of trauma.

