



Community Legal Services of Ottawa Services juridiques communautaires d'Ottawa

Downtown/Centreville: 422 - 1 rue Nicholas St, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7 Tel. (613)733-0140 Fax (613)733-0401

February 26, 2025

Dear Dr. Mehlman-Orozco,

I wanted to extend to you my deep gratitude for the two excellent detailed expert reports that you provided in support of my clients' claims for refugee protection in Canada. Your reports provide valuable educational information on trafficking for the Members of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) responsible for deciding whether my clients are Convention refugee.

Your report for my client, a minor from Azerbaijan who was subjected to human trafficking both in Azerbaijan and Canada, contextualized her experiences. As a result, your opinion on the risks of persecution that my client would face should she be forced to return to Azerbaijan was detailed, thorough and, most importantly, highly persuasive and my client was granted refugee protection

Your other report, contextualized the experiences of my client, a young woman from Guinea Conakry who, in order to flee a forced marriage, was trafficked to Kuwait where she found her working as a domestic and in debt. Your expert report provided an understanding on human trafficking and how forced marriage is also a form of human trafficking. More importantly, you explained how victims are often misidentified, leading to their removal to a country where they would be at risk of persecution and/or victimization. Your report was detailed, thorough and, most importantly, highly persuasive. In fact, the IRB Board member who decided in my client's favour, thanked me for having submitted your report into evidence and cited your report in her decision.

I have worked with many experts over the years and can truly say that your expertise, professionalism, commitment and dedication to support survivors of human trafficking is unparalleled. It is exceptional to find an expert who is willing to dedicate so much of her time, and produce such exceptional work on a pro bono basis. Your passion and generosity for victims of human trafficking are remarkable.

As you know, we are a not for profit organization and as such, have limited funds to assist our clients in gathering crucial evidence and, as a result, we are often unable to obtain expert reports. The fact that you were able to provide your expertise on a pro bono basis, thanks to funding from Freedom Light, is extremely appreciated.

Downtown/Centreville
422 - 1, rue Nicholas Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7

South/Sud
406 - 1355, rue Bank Street
Ottawa, ON K1H 8K7

West/Ouest
1299, ch. Richmond Road
Ottawa, ON K2B 7Y4

It was a pleasure to work with you and I look forward to collaborating with you on future cases. I would also recommend you highly to any lawyer who assists survivors human trafficking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laïla Demirdache". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Laïla Demirdache (*she/her/elle*)
Lawyer/Avocate