

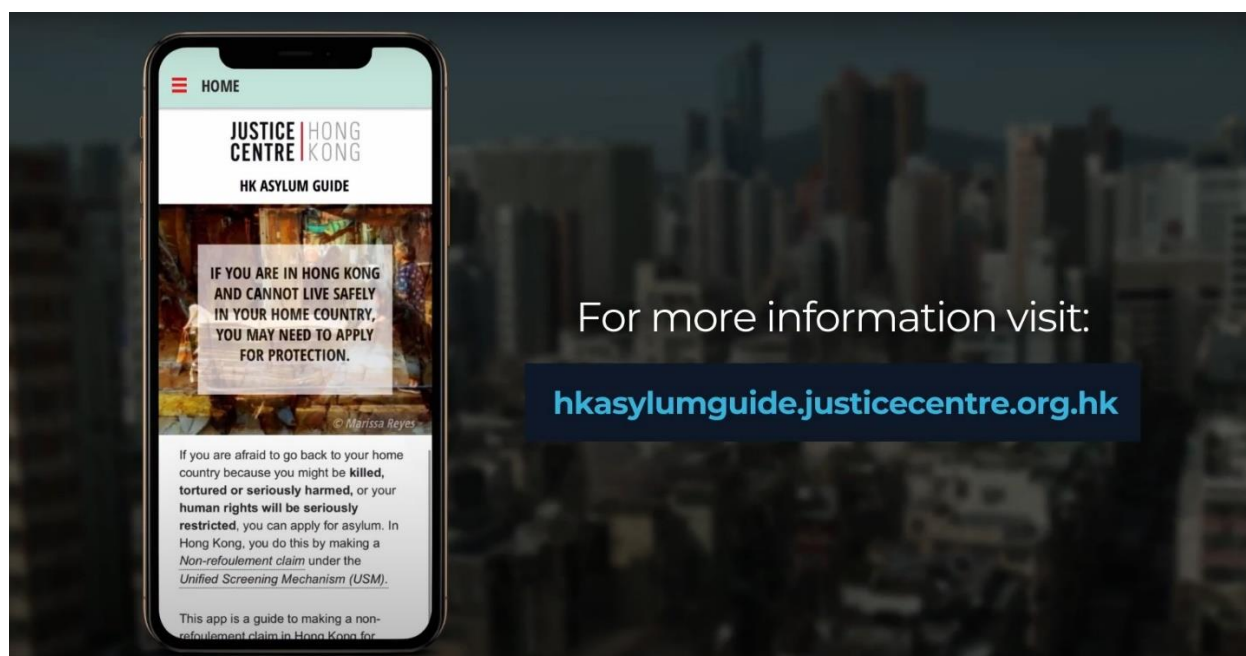
Press Release

For Immediate Release

1 December 2020

Justice Centre Hong Kong and Freshfields unveil ground-breaking new app

Law firm pro bono partner harnesses tech capabilities to support refugees in Hong Kong



HONG KONG – Justice Centre Hong Kong and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer (‘Freshfields’) have joined forces to create a mobile app to help asylum seekers in Hong Kong understand their legal rights.

Launched today, the ‘HK Asylum Guide’ app is a simple, step-by-step guide on the application process for ‘non-refoulement’ protection in Hong Kong. If granted protection, authorities will not return an applicant to his or her country of origin. It is effectively the first step in a process that enables applicants to be referred to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for recognition as refugees and resettled in a third country. Without this protection, applicants may face torture, persecution or serious violations of fundamental human rights.

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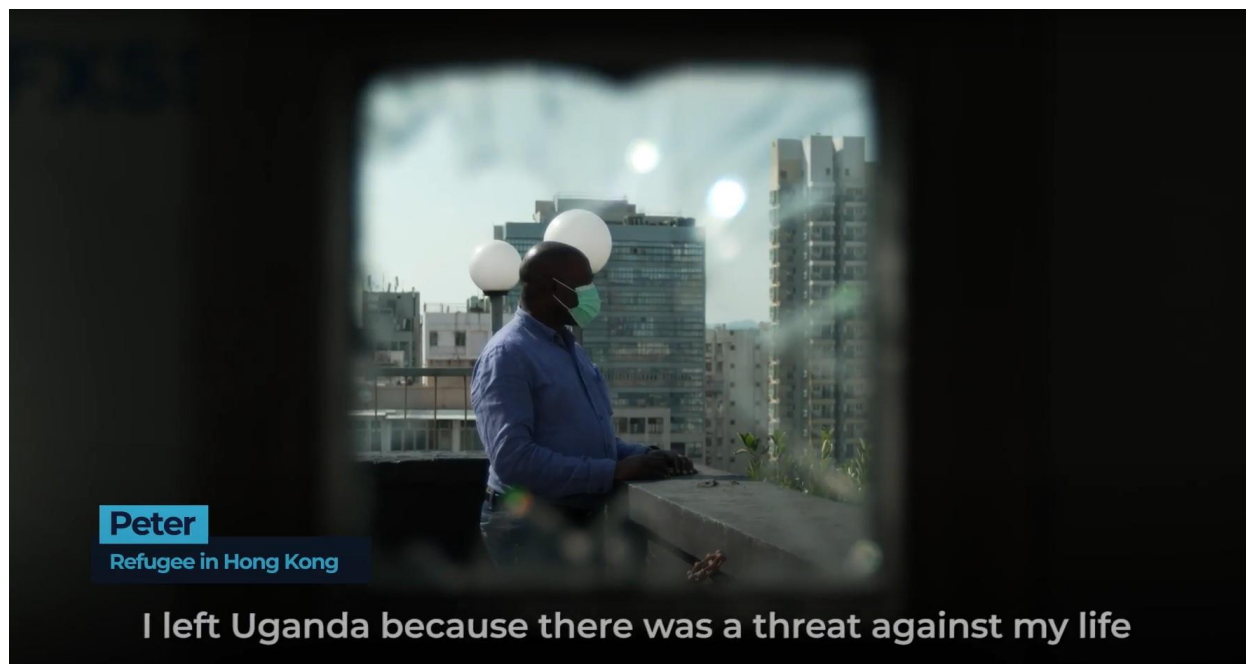


Our Head of Legal Services, Isaac, in the video on how the app helps Justice Centre clients

“Our clients are not lawyers, but are faced with navigating a complex legal process in an alien environment,” said Isaac Shaffer, Head of Legal Services, Justice Centre Hong Kong. “Time and again, we have seen what a huge difference it makes to our clients to be able to quickly get hold of the information they need. We wouldn’t have been able to develop the app without Freshfields’ help, and this initiative shows how NGOs and key members of the legal community can work together to come up with innovative solutions to fundamental human rights problems.”

The app is the result of many months of collaboration between Justice Centre Hong Kong, Freshfields’ lawyers, Innovation team, UX designers and user testing specialists as well as asylum seekers themselves, drawing on Freshfields’ experience of developing client-focused digital tools. It is available for download from Apple’s App Store [LINK], Google Play [LINK] and can be used offline by asylum seekers who may have limited internet access. An online version of HK Asylum Guide is also available at <https://hkasylumguide.justicecentre.org.hk/>.

“The app has been a great opportunity for us to harness the transformative power of technology to assist Justice Centre Hong Kong in a new way, while supporting some of the most vulnerable members in our community,” said Georgia Dawson, Asia managing partner and senior partner-elect, Freshfields. “We’ve been working with Justice Centre Hong Kong for around 13 years now on a range of projects and our partnership is very important to us. Developing the app has been a team effort and a valuable learning experience. We’re keen to explore how we might use similar solutions for other clients in the future.”



One of our refugee clients, Peter, in the video on how the app helps Justice Centre clients

“I was lucky because I was connected to Justice Centre only a few days after my arrival in Hong Kong, but there are people who spent months and years seeking protection here without any ideas about how they can deal with their situations,” said Peter, one of Justice Centre’s refugee clients. “This app is helpful because it actually provides the kind of information that you would get when you are with Justice Centre about putting your protection claim forward with the Hong Kong immigration.”

To watch a short video on how the app is helping clients of Justice Centre Hong Kong, click [here](#).

To read a case study about this *pro bono* project, click [here](#).

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Notes for editors

About Justice Centre Hong Kong

Justice Centre Hong Kong uses direct services and community-centred advocacy to support, defend, and protect those who are most vulnerable to violations of their rights. Founded in 2007, Justice Centre Hong Kong now supports over 300 refugees and asylum seekers annually. We fight alongside the survivors we serve to help them pave the way to a new life, and we challenge inequality with the ultimate aim of benefitting all Hong Kongers as we envision a fair, just, and equitable Hong Kong.

About Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP is a global law firm with a long-standing track record of successfully supporting the world's leading national and multinational corporations, financial institutions and governments on ground-breaking and business-critical mandates. Our 2,800-plus lawyers deliver results worldwide through our own offices and alongside leading local firms. Our commitment, local and multinational expertise, and business know-how means our clients rely on us when it matters most.