

Fulfilling U.S. humanitarian obligations to assist refugees

The Washington Post

October 25, 2011 Tuesday, Suburban Edition

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Distribution: Every Zone

Section: METRO; Pg. B04

Length: 301 words

Byline: - From the Partnership;for Public Service

Body

Molly Groom

Chief, **Refugee** and Asylum Law Division, Office of the Chief Counsel, **U.S.** Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Department of Homeland Security

Best known for: For the past 15 years, Groom has dedicated her career to helping **refugees**. She oversees a team of 12 lawyers, who provide legal advice on **humanitarian** issues for people inside and outside the **United States**. This includes those who have been displaced by war, famine, and civil and political unrest, or have been forced to flee their countries to escape the risk of death and torture. Groom and her team work on a variety of legal issues, including those involving **refugee** and asylum status, victims of human trafficking or other violent crimes, and battered spouses, children and parents.

Government service: Groom has been the chief of the USCIS **refugee** and asylum law division since 2002. She previously served as an associate general counsel with the Justice Department's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and spent a year working as a legal adviser with the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor, gathering evidence of and prosecuting war crimes and abuses. Groom began her career as an INS trial lawyer in New York.

Biggest challenge: Groom says the biggest challenge of her job is addressing the misperception that providing protection for **refugees** comes at the expense of ensuring national security when "disciplined attention to our **humanitarian obligations** and commitments is not only consistent with, but also advances, our national security."

Quote: "I feel so lucky to be able to work on providing protection to those in need. To be able to describe your job as helping the government do the right thing in the field of protection is an amazing thing."

- From the Partnership

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Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: IMMIGRATION (90%); CITIZENSHIP (90%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (90%); **REFUGEES** (90%); LAWYERS (90%); POLITICAL ASYLUM (90%); NATIONAL SECURITY (89%); CORPORATE COUNSEL (78%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (78%); DISPLACED PERSONS (78%); TORTURE (78%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (78%); SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE FORCES (78%); WAR CRIMES (76%); EVIDENCE (74%); CHILD TRAFFICKING (74%); CHILDREN (74%); FAMINE (73%); UNITED NATIONS (73%); UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONS (73%); CRIMINAL OFFENSES (69%); HUMAN TRAFFICKING (54%)

Organization: US CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES (93%); US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (84%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (56%); UNITED NATIONS MISSION OF SUPPORT IN EAST TIMOR (55%)

Industry: LAWYERS (90%); CORPORATE COUNSEL (78%); FAMINE (73%)

Geographic: NEW YORK, USA (79%); **UNITED STATES** (92%); TIMOR-LESTE (79%)

Load-Date: October 25, 2011