



AMERICAN **BAR** ASSOCIATION

Commission on Immigration



**Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.**

# Asylum Toolkit

For Pro Se Afghan Applicants

*Last Updated: March 10, 2022*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>About HIAS and the ABA Commission on Immigration</b> .....	1
<b>About Asylum and Using This Toolkit</b> .....	2
<b>Elements of an Asylum Application</b> .....	4
<b>Common Terms and Acronyms in US Asylum Law</b> .....	4
<b>Common Issues in Asylum Applications</b> .....	5
<b>Sample Annotated Application for Asylum</b> .....	7
<b>Sample Annotated Declaration in Support of Asylum</b> .....	20
<b>Template Declaration in Support of Asylum</b> .....	26
<b>Tips on Writing a Declaration in Support of Asylum</b> .....	27
<b>Gathering Evidence in Support of Asylum</b> .....	28
<b>Sample Asylum Cover Letter</b> .....	34
<b>Template Asylum Cover Letter</b> .....	36
<b>Assembling and Filing the Asylum Application</b> .....	38
<b>Next Steps after Filing the Asylum Application</b> .....	40
<b>Preparing for the Asylum Interview</b> .....	44
<b>Applying for Work Authorization as an Asylum Applicant</b> .....	48
<b>If Asylum is Granted</b> .....	49

## About HIAS

There have never been more people seeking safety and so few places willing to protect and welcome them. Over 80 million people are fleeing persecution. Governments should be taking responsibility to support them, but instead, their responses are unacceptable. Founded in the late 1800s, HIAS is there for refugees when and where they need help most. We are a Jewish humanitarian organization that works in the United States and 15 other countries, providing vital services to refugees and asylum seekers of all faiths so they can rebuild their lives in safety, and with dignity. With the Jewish community beside us, we also advocate for the rights of forcibly displaced people globally. Over our expansive history, we've confronted—and overcome—formidable challenges facing refugees. Today, we are a leader with the expertise, partnerships, and values necessary to respond to the global crisis. Refugees deserve a world in which they find welcome, safety, and freedom. With you, we can create it. Join us.

- **Learn** about the global refugee crisis and how to make our world more safe and welcoming.
- **Visit [HIAS.org](https://www.hias.org)** to learn about our work in the U.S. and 15 countries around the world.
- **Donate to [HIAS](https://www.hias.org)**, or directly to **[HIAS' Legal Team](https://www.hias.org)**. Your gift will make an immediate impact in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers.
- **Take action.** Speak up, show up, or organize your community to advocate for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers everywhere.
- **Volunteer** your time and talents directly to help refugees and asylum seekers near you.
- **Welcome the Stranger.** Learn about the Jewish values we bring to our work and how you can live them out every day.
- **Follow HIAS on social media** ([Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hias) – [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hias) – [Twitter](https://twitter.com/hias)) to stay informed on refugee news and ways to help.

## About the ABA: Commission on Immigration

Guided by resolutions adopted by the American Bar Association House of Delegates, the Commission on Immigration (COI) works to coordinate and strengthen the ABA's response to legal developments and to address the needs of immigrants and newcomers. The ABA Board of Governors has designated immigration to be a legislative priority of the ABA in each Congress since 1992. The Commission works to achieve its goals to ensure fair treatment and full due process rights for immigrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees within the United States through various projects including South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR), Immigration Justice Project of San Diego (IJP), the Children's Immigration Law Academy (CILA), the Detention and LOP Information Hotline, and the COI pro bono, educational, and advocacy efforts.

## About Asylum and Using This Toolkit

### What is Asylum?

Asylum is form of legal protection for people who are physically present in the United States, who suffered and/or fear future persecution in their home country.

Persecution means serious harm, or a threat of serious harm or even death. Persecution often involves serious physical harm, like beatings, kidnapping, torture, or sexual assault. It may also include coercive medical or psychological treatment, like forced sterilization, forced abortion, or severely inadequate medical care. Or it could involve severe discrimination, an unfair and unequal treatment of people of a particular group.

To win asylum, it is not enough that someone fear persecution. The asylum applicant must show that they have been persecuted in the past, or fear they will be persecuted in the future, because of one of five “protected grounds” – something about themselves that they either cannot change, or should not be forced to change.

The five “protected grounds” include: (1) race; (2) religion; (3) nationality; (4) political opinion; or (5) membership in a particular social group. A particular social group is a legal term in U.S. asylum law which describes a group of people who have something in common about themselves that they cannot change, such as being a member of a particular family group, or being a member of the media.

An asylum applicant may seek asylum because they fear that their own government will harm them. The government may include the police, the military, or another branch of government or another government official. The asylum applicant can also seek protection if another person or group that is not the government has harmed them, or will harm them in the future. If it is not the government itself that has persecuted (or will persecute) the asylum applicant, the asylum applicant must show that the government cannot, or will not control the individual or group that wants to harm the asylum applicant.

An asylum applicant must also show that they cannot avoid the persecution they suffered in the past (or fear in the future), and live safely in their home country, simply by moving to a different part of the country.

Finally, an asylum applicant must file their application for asylum within one year of their last entry to the United States. There are some limited exceptions to this rule, but if possible, it is highly recommended to file for asylum within one year of entering the U.S., or if that is not possible, as soon as you can.

Example: Mohamed held a visitor’s visa and traveled to the U.S. twice a year between 2015 and 2020 to visit his family in Virginia. He last entered the U.S. on August 28, 2021. Mohamed should plan to file his asylum application on or before August 27, 2022 to comply with the one-year filing deadline.

## Who Will Adjudicate My Asylum Case?

Most Afghan parolees will apply for asylum affirmatively. You will submit your application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and attend an interview conducted by a trained Asylum Officer. More information about the affirmative asylum process is included below.

## Who can I Include on my Asylum Application?

If you are applying for asylum based on what happened to you or what you fear, you are considered the “principal applicant.” You can include your spouse and your unmarried children under the age of 21, who are in the United States with you, as derivative beneficiaries on your application. As derivative beneficiaries, they will also get asylum status if your case is granted, based on your case. Additional information is included below.

## How Do I Use This Toolkit?

HIAS and the ABA: Commission on Immigration have created this toolkit to empower Afghan asylum seekers like you to apply for asylum, even if you are unable to retain an immigration attorney for legal help. As noted below, however, certain issues may make an asylum applicant’s case more complicated. Especially in those situations, we strongly recommend that you as a prospective asylum applicant consult with an immigration attorney about your case before applying for asylum.

We include in this toolkit some sample pieces of an asylum claim, based on a fictional applicant named “Farhan Ahmadi.” These samples are meant to illustrate what an asylum application *may* look like, but remember: successful asylum claims often look very different. They may be based on different facts, or different arguments in the law. Your asylum claim does not need to look a certain way, and does not need to look like this sample to be successful. In fact, your asylum claim should look very different from this sample!

Asylum claims are very personal, and U.S. immigration authorities consider each case based on its own facts. It is important to tell the truth about your own story so that the asylum officer can properly understand and adjudicate your asylum application.

**For more information on asylum, see the videos below on Asylum 101 for Afghans, available in:**

- English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgFjux9tVeQ>
- Pashto: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcbJxBxdDiE>
- Dari: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS7Tjc3O2KE>

## Elements of an Asylum Application

An asylum claim usually has four main components:

1. A **Cover Letter**, which lets the Asylum Office know who is seeking asylum, and what they can expect to find in the asylum application package.
2. **Form I-589, Application for Asylum**, the **required** form through which applicants can seek asylum.
3. A **Sworn Declaration**, also known as a personal statement or “affidavit,” from the asylum-seeker in support of asylum.
4. **Corroborating Evidence** in support of asylum, which will typically include: (1) personal identity and immigration paperwork, like a copy of the passport, and marriage certificate and/or birth certificates for derivative family members, (2) evidence relating to the asylum-seeker’s personal circumstances, and (3) independent/objective evidence relating to the circumstances of people like the asylum-seeker, who are similarly situated.

We address each of these elements in more detail, below.

## Common Terms and Acronyms in U.S. Asylum Law

<b><i>Asylee (or Principal Asylee)</i></b>	A person who applies for, and is granted asylum in the United States, based on their fear of persecution on account of a protected ground.
<b><i>Asylum seeker</i></b>	A person in the United States who is unable to return to their country of origin because they fear persecution on account of a protected ground.
<b><i>Derivative Asylee (or Asylum Seeker)</i></b>	A person who is included in the asylum application of (or granted asylum based on being included on the asylum application of) an immediate family member (their spouse or parent).
<b><i>Asylum Office</i></b>	A USCIS office that interviews asylum seekers and adjudicates asylum claims.
<b><i>DHS</i></b>	Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. federal agency that oversees most immigration matters. It oversees USCIS, ICE, and CBP.
<b><i>DOJ</i></b>	Department of Justice, the U.S. federal agency that oversees the immigration courts.
<b><i>Particular Social Group (PSG)</i></b>	A legal term used to describe a group of people who have something in common about themselves that they cannot change, such as being lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/queer (LGBTQ), or being HIV+.
<b><i>Persecution</i></b>	The severe harm or mistreatment of someone based on something about themselves that they cannot, or should have to change.
<b><i>Protected Ground</i></b>	To win asylum, an asylum seeker must show that they fear persecution on account of one of five “protected grounds” which include: (1) race; (2) religion; (3) nationality; (4) political opinion; or (5) membership in a particular social group.
<b><i>Torture</i></b>	Any act that intentionally causes severe pain or suffering to obtain information or a confession, or as punishment. Torture must either be inflicted by a government actor (such as the police or the military) acting in an official capacity, or with the consent of a government actor.
<b><i>USCIS</i></b>	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, the agency in charge of adjudicating applications for certain immigration benefits such as asylum.

## Common Issues in Asylum Applications

U.S. asylum law is complex and often difficult to navigate. **If possible, it is best to obtain guidance and legal representation from a reputable immigration attorney, or an accredited representative who works at a reputable legal services organization.**

Certain circumstances can make applying for asylum even more complicated. We have identified below a list of issues that some asylum applicants may face. Having an experience from this list does not necessarily make someone ineligible for asylum, but because it may negatively affect an asylum case, it is important to discuss with an attorney. **If you, your spouse, or your children are seeking asylum and any of the following apply, we strongly recommend that you speak with a reputable immigration attorney, or an accredited representative who works at a reputable legal services organization, before applying for asylum.**

### Having a criminal record, or having committed a crime

Having been involved in criminal activity (even if you were never arrested or convicted), or having a criminal record, regardless of whether it occurred inside the U.S. or outside the U.S., may complicate an asylum claim. Some conduct or convictions make an individual ineligible for asylum altogether, and some impact whether an officer believes the applicant *deserves* asylum. Some conduct has no impact on a case at all. Be sure to discuss any criminal conduct or convictions with an attorney before applying.

### Having lived in another country, or holding legal immigration status in another country (other than Afghanistan) before coming to the U.S.

It is important to know if you resided in another country, with an intention of building your life there, immediately prior to coming to the United States. If you simply transited through another country on your way to the U.S., that alone should not affect your case.

It is also important to know if you ever held legal immigration status in another country at the time you came to the United States. This kind of immigration status could include a temporary (but renewable) permission to stay, a status like permanent residency, or citizenship.

### Having filed for Asylum more than One Year After Entering the U.S.

An asylum application must be filed within the first year after entering the US. There are limited exceptions to this rule, including if the asylum applicant held lawful status during that time. It *may be* the case that parolees (individuals entered the U.S. with parole), will qualify for an exception to this rule and could file for asylum when (or just before) their parole status expires. However, USCIS has not confirmed that it will apply this exception to Afghan asylum applicants, so to be safe, we strongly recommend filing for asylum within one year of entering the U.S.

### Having any associations/interactions with Taliban or another Terrorist Organization.

Not every interaction with the Taliban will harm an asylum claim; some interactions may even make an applicant's case for asylum stronger. However, certain associations or interactions with

terrorist organizations, like the Taliban, may complicate a case, even if the interactions were by force or under threat. Discuss any such interactions with an attorney before applying.

**Having ever harmed, or helped to harm, another person.**

Even if you were forced, under threat, to harm someone else, it may impact your eligibility for asylum. Discuss any such interactions with an attorney before applying.



## Sample Annotated Application for Asylum

Included below are links to the I-589 Application for Asylum and USCIS Instructions to the Application for Asylum. Although we also include translations of each of those documents in Pashto and Dari, the I-589 must be submitted to USCIS in English. If you do not speak English, we recommend completing the I-589 in your native language, and obtaining reputable assistance to translate your responses on the Pashto/Dari version of the I-589 into English, so you may put them on the English version of the form.

### English:

- I-589, Application for Asylum, in English, available [HERE](#), or at: <https://bit.ly/34zx7G5>
- USCIS Instructions to Application for Asylum, in English, available [HERE](#), or at: <https://bit.ly/3qUWqJV>

### Pashto:

- I-589, Application for Asylum, translated to Pashto, available [HERE](#), or at: <https://bit.ly/3HPsZA5>
- USCIS Instructions to Application for Asylum, translated to Pashto, available [HERE](#), or at: <https://bit.ly/3qZRYts>

### Dari:

- I-589, Application for Asylum, translated to Dari, available [HERE](#), or at: <https://bit.ly/3F1qfxv>
- USCIS Instructions to Application for Asylum, translated to Dari, available [HERE](#), or at: <https://bit.ly/3G89XUO>

We also include below a sample, annotated I-589, Application for Asylum. The sample shows how our fictional asylum applicant, Farhad Ahmadi, would have completed his I-589 Application for Asylum. We also include notes, beside the sample form, to explain why the Applicant completed his form this way, and to guide an asylum applicant in how to complete their own application.

***Disclaimer:** The information in the I-589 Application for Asylum below is completely fictional. Please do not copy this information onto your I-589 Application for Asylum. Please complete the I-589 Application for Asylum with your own information and based on your own experiences.*

**I-589, Application for Asylum  
 and for Withholding of Removal**

**Part A.I.:**

*\*If you fear that the government (or someone associated with the government) may torture you if you return, check the box to also apply for Withholding of Removal under the Convention Against Torture.*

*\*Questions 1-3: If you do not have an Alien Registration Number (A-number), a social security number, or a USCIS Online Account Number, you can leave those boxes blank or write "None" or "N/A"*

*\*Question 9: If your mailing address is the same as your residence in the U.S., you can leave these boxes blank or write "N/A"*

*\*Question 19: If you have entered the U.S. more than three times, you can use the space in Supplement B (Page 12 of the I-589 PDF) to detail the dates of your*

**START HERE - Type or print in black ink. See the instructions for information about eligibility and how to complete and file this application. There is no filing fee for this application.**

**NOTE:**  Check this box if you also want to apply for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture.

Part A.I. Information About You			
1. Alien Registration Number(s) (A-Number) (if any) 000000000		2. U.S. Social Security Number (if any) 000-00-0000	
3. USCIS Online Account Number (if any) n/a		4. Complete Last Name Ahmadi	
5. First Name Farhad		6. Middle Name n/a	
7. What other names have you used (include maiden name and aliases)? n/a			
8. Residence in the U.S. (where you physically reside)			
Street Number and Name 123 Maple Ave		Apt. Number n/a	
City Glen Burnie	State MD	Zip Code 21061	Telephone Number ( 551 ) 0000000
9. Mailing Address in the U.S. (if different than the address in Item Number 8)			
In Care Of (if applicable): n/a		Telephone Number ( n/a ) n/a	
Street Number and Name n/a		Apt. Number n/a	
City n/a	State n/a	Zip Code n/a	
10. Gender: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	11. Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed		
12. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) 05/14/1994	13. City and Country of Birth Honeywell, Utopia		
14. Present Nationality (Citizenship) Utopian	15. Nationality at Birth Utopian	16. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group Honeywellian	17. Religion Buddhist
18. Check the box, a through c, that applies: a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I have never been in Immigration Court proceedings. b. <input type="checkbox"/> I am now in Immigration Court proceedings. c. <input type="checkbox"/> I am not now in Immigration Court proceedings, but I have been in the past.			
19. Complete 19 a through c.			
a. When did you last leave your country? (mm/dd/yyyy) 07/02/2019		b. What is your current I-94 Number, if any? 00000000001	
c. List each entry into the U.S. beginning with your most recent entry. List date (mm/dd/yyyy), place, and your status for each entry. (Attach additional sheets as needed.)			
Date 07/03/2019	Place JFK Airport	Status B1/B2 Visitor	Date Status Expires 11/02/2019
Date 10/12/2018	Place JFK Airport	Status B1/B2 Visitor	
Date	Place	Status	
20. What country issued your last passport or travel document? Utopia	21. Passport Number 000000000 Travel Document Number n/a		22. Expiration Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 05/14/2025
23. What is your native language (include dialect, if applicable)? Utopian	24. Are you fluent in English? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	25. What other languages do you speak fluently? None	
For EOIR use only.	For USCIS use only.	Action: Interview Date: _____ Asylum Officer ID No.: _____	Decision: Approval Date: _____ Denial Date: _____ Referral Date: _____

*other entries and the status you held at that time.*

*\*Question 21: You may not have a travel document number. That is okay. You can put "N/A" or leave the box blank.*

**Part A.II. Information About Your Spouse and Children**

Your spouse  I am not married. (Skip to Your Children below.)

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) <i>(if any)</i>	2. Passport/ID Card Number <i>(if any)</i>	3. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	4. U.S. Social Security Number <i>(if any)</i>
000000001	111111111	07/02/1995	111-11-1111
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Other names used (include maiden name and aliases)
Ahmadi	Zohal	n/a	Azal
9. Date of Marriage (mm/dd/yyyy)	10. Place of Marriage	11. City and Country of Birth	
08/23/2017	Honeywell, Utopia	Merryville, Utopia	
12. Nationality (Citizenship)	13. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	14. Gender	
Utopian	Honeywellian	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female	
15. Is this person in the U.S.? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete Blocks 16 to 24.) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Specify location):			
16. Place of last entry into the U.S.	17. Date of last entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)	18. I-94 Number (if any)	19. Status when last admitted (Visa type, if any)
JFK Airport	07/03/2019	0000000002	B1/B2 Visa
20. What is your spouse's current status?	21. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? (mm/dd/yyyy)	22. Is your spouse in Immigration Court proceedings?	23. If previously in the U.S., date of previous arrival (mm/dd/yyyy)
None	11/02/2019	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	10/12/2018
24. If in the U.S., is your spouse to be included in this application? (Check the appropriate box.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (Attach one photograph of your spouse in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

Your Children. List all of your children, regardless of age, location, or marital status.

I do not have any children. (Skip to Part A.III., Information about your background.)

I have children. Total number of children: 1

(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement A or attach additional sheets of paper and documentation if you have more than four children.)

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) <i>(if any)</i>	2. Passport/ID Card Number <i>(if any)</i>	3. Marital Status (Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed)	4. U.S. Social Security Number <i>(if any)</i>
000000002	222222222	Single	222-22-2222
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
Ahmadi	Mohammad	Farhan	09/03/2018
9. City and Country of Birth	10. Nationality (Citizenship)	11. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	12. Gender
Honeywell, Utopia	Utopian	Honeywellian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Is this child in the U.S. ? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete Blocks 14 to 21.) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Specify location):			
14. Place of last entry into the U.S.	15. Date of last entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)	16. I-94 Number (If any)	17. Status when last admitted (Visa type, if any)
JFK Airport	07/03/2019	0000000003	B1/B2 Visa
18. What is your child's current status?	19. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? (mm/dd/yyyy)	20. Is your child in Immigration Court proceedings?	
None	11/02/2019	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
21. If in the U.S., is this child to be included in this application? (Check the appropriate box.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (Attach one photograph of your child in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

**Part A.II.:** If you do not have a spouse or children, check the relevant box and skip all of the questions relating to spouse/children.

**\*Questions 1 and 4:** If your spouse or child does not have an Alien Registration Number (A-number), a social security number, or a USCIS Online Account Number, you can leave those boxes blank or write "None" or "N/A"

**\*Question 2:** If your spouse/child does not have a passport, put "None." If they have a passport but you do not know the number, put "Unknown"

**\*Questions 13-21:** If your spouse/child is not in the U.S., check the "No" box, indicate where they are (city/country) and skip questions 14-21.

**Part A.II. Information About Your Spouse and Children (Continued)**

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) <i>(if any)</i>	2. Passport/ID Card Number <i>(if any)</i>	3. Marital Status ( <i>Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed</i> )	4. U.S. Social Security Number <i>(if any)</i>
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Date of Birth ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )
9. City and Country of Birth	10. Nationality ( <i>Citizenship</i> )	11. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	12. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Is this child in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Complete Blocks 14 to 21.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No ( <i>Specify location:</i> _____)			
14. Place of last entry into the U.S.	15. Date of last entry into the U.S. ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )	16. I-94 Number ( <i>If any</i> )	17. Status when last admitted ( <i>Visa type, if any</i> )
18. What is your child's current status?	19. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )	20. Is your child in Immigration Court proceedings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21. If in the U.S., is this child to be included in this application? ( <i>Check the appropriate box.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Attach one photograph of your spouse in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) <i>(if any)</i>	2. Passport/ID Card Number <i>(if any)</i>	3. Marital Status ( <i>Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed</i> )	4. U.S. Social Security Number <i>(if any)</i>
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Date of Birth ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )
9. City and Country of Birth	10. Nationality ( <i>Citizenship</i> )	11. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	12. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Is this child in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Complete Blocks 14 to 21.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No ( <i>Specify location:</i> _____)			
14. Place of last entry into the U.S.	15. Date of last entry into the U.S. ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )	16. I-94 Number ( <i>If any</i> )	17. Status when last admitted ( <i>Visa type, if any</i> )
18. What is your child's current status?	19. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )	20. Is your child in Immigration Court proceedings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21. If in the U.S., is this child to be included in this application? ( <i>Check the appropriate box.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Attach one photograph of your spouse in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) <i>(if any)</i>	2. Passport/ID Card Number <i>(if any)</i>	3. Marital Status ( <i>Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed</i> )	4. U.S. Social Security Number <i>(if any)</i>
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Date of Birth ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )
9. City and Country of Birth	10. Nationality ( <i>Citizenship</i> )	11. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	12. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Is this child in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Complete Blocks 14 to 21.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No ( <i>Specify location:</i> _____)			
14. Place of last entry into the U.S.	15. Date of last entry into the U.S. ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )	16. I-94 Number ( <i>If any</i> )	17. Status when last admitted ( <i>Visa type, if any</i> )
18. What is your child's current status?	19. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? ( <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> )	20. Is your child in Immigration Court proceedings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21. If in the U.S., is this child to be included in this application? ( <i>Check the appropriate box.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>Attach one photograph of your spouse in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

*\*If you have one child or less, you will not need to complete this page, and can just cross the whole section off.*

**Part A.III:**

**Part A.III. Information About Your Background**

1. List your last address where you lived before coming to the United States. If this is not the country where you fear persecution, also list the last address in the country where you fear persecution. (List Address, City/Town, Department, Province, or State and Country.)  
(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or additional sheets of paper, if necessary.)

Number and Street (Provide if available)	City/Town	Department, Province, or State	Country	Dates	
				From (Mo/Yr)	To (Mo/Yr)
Apple Valley Road	Honeywell	Silver Lake Province	Utopia	05/1994	07/2019

2. Provide the following information about your residences during the past 5 years. List your present address first.  
(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or additional sheets of paper, if necessary.)

Number and Street	City/Town	Department, Province, or State	Country	Dates	
				From (Mo/Yr)	To (Mo/Yr)
123 Maple Ave.	Glen Burnie	Maryland	USA	07/2019	Present
Apple Valley Road	Honeywell	Silver Lake Province	Utopia	05/1994	07/2019

3. Provide the following information about your education, beginning with the most recent school that you attended.  
(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or additional sheets of paper, if necessary.)

Name of School	Type of School	Location (Address)	Attended	
			From (Mo/Yr)	To (Mo/Yr)
Honeywell High School	High School	555 Blue Ln. Honeywell	08/2011	06/2015
Acacia Middle School	Secondary	434 Acacia Rd. Honeywell	08/2008	06/2011
Whittier Elementary School	Primary	323 Flora St. Honeywell	08/2002	02/2008

4. Provide the following information about your employment during the past 5 years. List your present employment first.  
(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or additional sheets of paper, if necessary.)

Name and Address of Employer	Your Occupation	Dates	
		From (Mo/Yr)	To (Mo/Yr)
Rancho Healthcare Call Center Merryville Utopia	Customer Support Specialist	12/2015	02/2019

5. Provide the following information about your parents and siblings (brothers and sisters). Check the box if the person is deceased.  
(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or additional sheets of paper, if necessary.)

Full Name	City/Town and Country of Birth	Current Location	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	
Mother Hazel Ahmadi	Venus, Utopia	<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	Honeywell Utopia
Father Amin Ahmadi	Venus, Utopia	<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	Honeywell Utopia
Sibling Samira Ahmadi	Honeywell, Utopia	<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	Honeywell Utopia
Sibling Rashid Ahmadi	Honeywell, Utopia	<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	Honeywell Utopia
Sibling		<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	
Sibling		<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased	

**\*Question 1:** If you traveled directly to the U.S. from your country of origin, just put your last address in your country on the first line and leave the second line blank. If your address does not typically include a number, just write the street information. If there is no street information, put the name of the village. If you traveled to and resided in another country after leaving your home country, but before coming to the U.S., put that address on the first line, and on the second line, put your last address in your country second.

**\*Question 2:** List your addresses only for the past five years (inside or outside of the US), with your present address on the first line, going backwards chronologically.

**\*Question 3:** List all of the places where you studied, with the most recent school first. If you don't remember the address of the school, list the city/province/country. Be sure to list any universities, technical schools, or military schools you attended.

**\*Question 4:** List your employment history, only for the past five years (inside or outside

the US). If you are currently unemployed, put that on the first line, and put the last job you held on the second line, and continue backwards chronologically.

**\*Question 5:** List all of your siblings (including half-siblings and step-siblings, living or deceased). If you need more space, use the Supplement B page (page 12 of the PDF)

**Part B. Information About Your Application**

(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or attach additional sheets of paper as needed to complete your responses to the questions contained in Part B.)

When answering the following questions about your asylum or other protection claim (withholding of removal under 241(b)(3) of the INA or withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture), you must provide a detailed and specific account of the basis of your claim to asylum or other protection. To the best of your ability, provide specific dates, places, and descriptions about each event or action described. You must attach documents evidencing the general conditions in the country from which you are seeking asylum or other protection and the specific facts on which you are relying to support your claim. If this documentation is unavailable or you are not providing this documentation with your application, explain why in your responses to the following questions.

Refer to Instructions, Part I. Filing Instructions, Section II., Basis of Eligibility, Parts A. - D., Section V., Completing the Form, Part B., and Section VII. Additional Evidence That You Should Submit, for more information on completing this section of the form.

1. Why are you applying for asylum or withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the INA, or for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture? Check the appropriate box(es) below and then provide detailed answers to questions A and B below.

I am seeking asylum or withholding of removal based on:

- Race
- Political opinion
- Religion
- Membership in a particular social group
- Nationality
- Torture Convention

A. Have you, your family, or close friends or colleagues ever experienced harm or mistreatment or threats in the past by anyone?

- No
- Yes

If "Yes," explain in detail:

1. What happened;
2. When the harm or mistreatment or threats occurred;
3. Who caused the harm or mistreatment or threats; and
4. Why you believe the harm or mistreatment or threats occurred.

I have been threatened and physically harmed by members of the Traditional Republic political party in Afghanistan due to my membership in the opposing political party, Independent People's Alliance ("IPA"). I was first threatened by members of the Traditional Republic party in February of 2019 after being an active member of IPA for several years. They threatened my life. I was stopped again about a week later by one of the same men, who beat me up and threatened to kill me if he saw me again, because I am a member of the IPA party.

Please see my attached statement for more details.

B. Do you fear harm or mistreatment if you return to your home country?

- No
- Yes

If "Yes," explain in detail:

1. What harm or mistreatment you fear;
2. Who you believe would harm or mistreat you; and
3. Why you believe you would or could be harmed or mistreated.

Prior to leaving Utopia, I moved to another city called Camino with my family. In June of 2019, I attended an IPA rally with my neighbor. When the sun went down, several armed, Traditional Republic party members invaded the rally. I saw one of the armed men punch a teenager wearing an IPA shirt and tear gas began to explode everywhere. People were arguing and fighting and I knew that my life was in danger. Since I arrived in the United States, my mother informed me that Traditional Republic party members have come to our family farm on three occasions and demanded a monthly "rent" to guarantee my family's safety and show their allegiance to the Traditional Republic party, which has taken over my home province. I fear that if I return to Utopia, I will be harmed or killed by members of the Traditional Republic party because of my work with IPA.

**Part B:**

*\*Question 1: Consider why you believe you would be harmed in your home country. Check as many or as few boxes apply. For the "Membership in a Particular Social Group" category, this is usually based on something about you that you either cannot change (like race or nationality) or that you could change but should not have to change to avoid being harmed (like religion or political opinion). An example of this is being part of a particular family group (being a particular person's family member).*

*\*Question 1.A: If you, your family, or your close friends or colleagues were ever harmed or threatened in the past, check "yes" and add 1-2 sentences to explain in the box. You can also write "See my attached statement for details" if you are including a statement in support of your case. If you, your family, or close friends or colleagues were not harmed or threatened in*

*the past, even if you think you will be in the future, check "No" here; you will have an opportunity to explain your fear of returning in the next question.*

*\*Question 1.B.: If you fear that you will be harmed or threatened if you return to your home country, check "Yes" here. You do not need to prove that you will definitely be harmed or threatened if you return. What is most important is explaining what kind of harm or threats you fear will occur, who you believe would harm or threaten you, and why you think they would want to harm or threaten you. You can keep your explanation here short, and can also write "See my attached statement for details" if you are including a statement in support of your case.*

**Part B. Information About Your Application (Continued)**

2. Have you or your family members ever been accused, charged, arrested, detained, interrogated, convicted and sentenced, or imprisoned in any country other than the United States (including for an immigration law violation)?

No  Yes

If "Yes," explain the circumstances and reasons for the action.

3.A. Have you or your family members ever belonged to or been associated with any organizations or groups in your home country, such as, but not limited to, a political party, student group, labor union, religious organization, military or paramilitary group, civil patrol, guerrilla organization, ethnic group, human rights group, or the press or media?

No  Yes

If "Yes," describe for each person the level of participation, any leadership or other positions held, and the length of time you or your family members were involved in each organization or activity.

My family and I have been members of the Independent People's Alliance (IPA) for several years. My parents were supporters of the IPA party before I was born and from a young age, I was exposed to their ideology. I have personally assisted in coordinating campaign events for IPA, attended IPA rallies, helped direct the public to voting booths, handed out gifts with the party logo, and voiced my support for IPA on social media. In 2018, I canvassed neighborhoods in support of the IPA mayoral candidate. Additionally, my uncle, Betal Ahmadi, is very active in the IPA party and organizes meetings and campaigns in the province where my family resides. He also worked in the town hall during an election year.

3.B. Do you or your family members continue to participate in any way in these organizations or groups?

No  Yes

If "Yes," describe for each person your or your family members' current level of participation, any leadership or other positions currently held, and the length of time you or your family members have been involved in each organization or group.

Although my parents have been unable to participate in IPA events recently, due to the takeover of our hometown by the Traditional Republic, my uncle Betal continues to be active in the IPA party and is vocal about his support. I continued to support the IPA party until my departure from Utopia and now that I am in the United States, I have felt safe enough to continue to support the party through social media channels that remain available worldwide.

4. Are you afraid of being subjected to torture in your home country or any other country to which you may be returned?

No  Yes

If "Yes," explain why you are afraid and describe the nature of torture you fear, by whom, and why it would be inflicted.

I fear I will be tortured or killed by members of the Traditional Republic party, who have already identified me as an IPA supporter and have threatened and harmed me because of this. Many of them are in power in the Utopian government, and they could harm me with government support, or at least use their government ties to any avoid punishment. Please see my attached statement for more details.

*\*Question 2: If you (or any of your family members) have ever been arrested or detained in a jail or prison, or charged with a crime, regardless of whether you were guilty or innocent, or ultimately convicted, check "Yes" here and provide a short explanation. Include approximate dates (month/year) if you can.*

*\*Questions 3.A., 3.B.: If you (or any of your family members) have ever been members of a group or organization in your home country, like a political party, labor union, military or paramilitary group, the press/media, or a church group, provide a short explanation here of who it was, what the group was, how involved they were, and for what dates (approximately).*

*\*Question 4: If you fear you may be tortured if you return to your country, by the*

*government, government officials, or other people acting with the consent of the government, check "Yes" here and explain what you fear will happen, who you fear will torture you, and why you think they will torture you.*

**Part C. Additional Information About Your Application**

(NOTE: Use Form I-589 Supplement B, or attach additional sheets of paper as needed to complete your responses to the questions contained in Part C.)

1. Have you, your spouse, your child(ren), your parents or your siblings ever applied to the U.S. Government for refugee status, asylum, or withholding of removal?

No  Yes

If "Yes," explain the decision and what happened to any status you, your spouse, your child(ren), your parents, or your siblings received as a result of that decision. Indicate whether or not you were included in a parent or spouse's application. If so, include your parent or spouse's A-number in your response.

If you were previously denied asylum by USCIS, an immigration judge, or the Board of Immigration Appeals, describe any change(s) in conditions in your country or your own personal circumstances since the date of the denial that may affect your eligibility for asylum.

2.A. After leaving the country from which you are claiming asylum, did you or your spouse or child(ren) who are now in the United States travel through or reside in any other country before entering the United States?

No  Yes

2.B. Have you, your spouse, your child(ren), or other family members, such as your parents or siblings, ever applied for or received any lawful status in any country other than the one from which you are now claiming asylum?

No  Yes

If "Yes" to either or both questions (2A and/or 2B), provide for each person the following: the name of each country and the length of stay, the person's status while there, the reasons for leaving, whether or not the person is entitled to return for lawful residence purposes, and whether the person applied for refugee status or for asylum while there, and if not, why he or she did not do so.

3. Have you, your spouse or your child(ren) ever ordered, incited, assisted or otherwise participated in causing harm or suffering to any person because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or belief in a particular political opinion?

No  Yes

If "Yes," describe in detail each such incident and your own, your spouse's, or your child(ren)'s involvement.

**Part C:**

*\*Question 1: If you, your spouse, your children, your parents, or your siblings ever applied for asylum or refugee status in the U.S., mark "Yes" and explain who it was, their A# (if you know it), and what happened with their application.*

*\*Questions 2.A., 2.B.: If, after you left your country for the last time, you traveled to a different country before entering the U.S., check "Yes" to Question 2.A. and explain in the box below. For example, if you took a bus to a neighboring country, got a 14-day visitor visa, and stayed for 10 days before flying to the U.S., you should check "Yes" and explain.*

*If you, your spouse, children, parents, or siblings ever applied for or received any immigration status in another country (like citizenship, permanent*

*residency, or another type of renewable visa) aside from your home country, check "Yes" and explain in the box below. For example, if your brother obtained refugee status in Germany in 2018, or your parent is a Lawful Permanent Resident in the U.S. since 2020, you should check "Yes" and explain.*

*\*Question 3: If you, your spouse, or your children have ever been involved in harming another person because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, even if such involvement was forced or under threat, check "Yes" here and explain briefly in the box below.*



**Part C. Additional Information About Your Application (Continued)**

4. After you left the country where you were harmed or fear harm, did you return to that country?

No  Yes

If "Yes," describe in detail the circumstances of your visit(s) (for example, the date(s) of the trip(s), the purpose(s) of the trip(s), and the length of time you remained in that country for the visit(s).)

5. Are you filing this application more than 1 year after your last arrival in the United States?

No  Yes

If "Yes," explain why you did not file within the first year after you arrived. You must be prepared to explain at your interview or hearing why you did not file your asylum application within the first year after you arrived. For guidance in answering this question, see **Instructions, Part 1. Filing Instructions, Section V. Completing the Form, Part C.**

6. Have you or any member of your family included in the application ever committed any crime and/or been arrested, charged, convicted, or sentenced for any crimes in the United States (including for an immigration law violation)?

No  Yes

If "Yes," for each instance, specify in your response: what occurred and the circumstances, dates, length of sentence received, location, the duration of the detention or imprisonment, reason(s) for the detention or conviction, any formal charges that were lodged against you or your relatives included in your application, and the reason(s) for release.

If you have been arrested in the United States, you must submit a certified copy of all arrest reports, court dispositions, sentencing documents, and any other relevant documents.

*\*Question 4: If, after you already started to fear harm in your home country, you left for some time and then returned, check "Yes" here and explain. Be sure to provide the date you left, where you went, the date you returned, the purpose of your return to your country, and what (if anything) happened when you returned.*

*\*Question 5: If you are filing this application more than one year after the date of your most recent entry to the U.S., check "Yes" here and explain why you did not file sooner.*

*\*Question 6: If you or your spouse or children were ever arrested or*

*criminally charged or convicted for any crime in the U.S., check "Yes" here and explain the circumstances, date of the arrest, and the ultimate outcome of the case.*

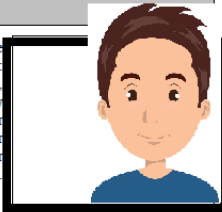
**Part D:**

Staple one passport-size (2" by 2") color photograph of yourself in the box in the upper right corner.

You will submit an extra copy of your Form I-589 for each derivative family member (spouse and children under 21 in the U.S. with you). If your wife and three children are in the U.S., with you, you will submit your original I-589 (with your picture attached) and four extra copies. You should staple one family member's picture to each copy of your Form I-589.

**Part D. Your Signature**

I certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, that this application and the evidence submitted with it are all true and correct. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1546(a), provides in part: Whoever knowingly makes under oath, or as permitted under penalty of perjury under Section 1746 of Title 28, United States Code, knowingly subscribes as true, any false statement with respect to a material fact in any application, affidavit, or other document required by the immigration laws or regulations prescribed thereunder, or knowingly presents any such application, affidavit, or other document containing any such false statement or which fails to contain any reasonable basis in law or fact - shall be fined in accordance with this title or imprisoned for up to 25 years. I authorize the release of any information from my immigration record that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking.



If your native language uses a different alphabet than English, write your name in that language in the top right box.

If a family member (spouse, parent, or child) helped you prepare your application, check "Yes" and write their name and their relationship to you. Otherwise, check "No."

**WARNING:** Applicants who are in the United States unlawfully are subject to removal if their asylum or withholding claims are not granted by an asylum officer or an immigration judge. Any information provided in completing this application may be used as a basis for the institution of, or as evidence in, removal proceedings even if the application is later withdrawn. Applicants determined to have knowingly made a frivolous application for asylum will be permanently ineligible for any benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act. You may not avoid a frivolous finding simply because someone advised you to provide false information in your asylum application. If filing with USCIS, unexcused failure to appear for an appointment to provide biometrics (such as fingerprints) and your biographical information within the time allowed may result in an asylum officer dismissing your asylum application or referring it to an immigration judge. Failure without good cause to provide DHS with biometrics or other biographical information while in removal proceedings may result in your application being found abandoned by the immigration judge. See sections 208(d)(5)(A) and 208(d)(6) of the INA and 8 CFR sections 208.10, 1208.10, 208.20, 1003.47(d) and 1208.20.

Print your complete name. Farhad Ahmadi	Write your name in your native alphabet. Farhad Ahmadi
--	---

Did your spouse, parent, or child(ren) assist you in completing this application?  No  Yes (If "Yes," list the name and relationship.)

(Name)	(Relationship)	(Name)	(Relationship)
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If someone other than a family member helped you complete your application, check "Yes" and put their information in Part E, below. Otherwise, check "No."

Did someone other than your spouse, parent, or child(ren) prepare this application?  No  Yes (If "Yes," complete Part E.)

Asylum applicants may be represented by counsel. Have you been provided with a list of persons who may be available to assist you, at little or no cost, with your asylum claim?  No  Yes

Be sure to sign the application next to the black arrow on the left, and date the application.

Signature of Applicant (The person in Part A.I.)  
➔ [ Farhad Ahmadi ]      03/10/2020  
Sign your name so it all appears within the brackets      Date of signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

**Part E. Declaration of Person Preparing Form, if Other Than Applicant, Spouse, Parent, or Child**

I declare that I have prepared this application at the request of the person named in Part D, that the responses provided are based on all information of which I have knowledge, or which was provided to me by the applicant, and that the completed application was read to the applicant in his or her native language or a language he or she understands for verification before he or she signed the application in my presence. I am aware that the knowing placement of false information on the Form I-589 may also subject me to civil penalties under 8 U.S.C. 1324c and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. 1546(a).

**Part E:**

If no one assisted you in preparing your application for asylum, you can leave this section blank.

Signature of Preparer	Print Complete Name of Preparer		
Daytime Telephone Number ( )	Address of Preparer: Street Number and Name		
Apt. Number	City	State	Zip Code
To be completed by an attorney or accredited representative (if any).	<input type="checkbox"/> Select this box if Form G-28 is attached.	Attorney State Bar Number (if applicable)	Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any)

**Part F. To Be Completed at Asylum Interview, if Applicable**

**NOTE:** You will be asked to complete this part when you appear for examination before an asylum officer of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

I swear (affirm) that I know the contents of this application that I am signing, including the attached documents and supplements, that they are  all true or  not all true to the best of my knowledge and that correction(s) numbered \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ were made by me or at my request. Furthermore, I am aware that if I am determined to have knowingly made a frivolous application for asylum I will be permanently ineligible for any benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and that I may not avoid a frivolous finding simply because someone advised me to provide false information in my asylum application.

Signed and sworn to before me by the above named applicant on:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Write Your Name in Your Native Alphabet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Asylum Officer

**Part G. To Be Completed at Removal Hearing, if Applicable**

**NOTE:** You will be asked to complete this Part when you appear before an immigration judge of the U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), for a hearing.

I swear (affirm) that I know the contents of this application that I am signing, including the attached documents and supplements, that they are  all true or  not all true to the best of my knowledge and that correction(s) numbered \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ were made by me or at my request. Furthermore, I am aware that if I am determined to have knowingly made a frivolous application for asylum I will be permanently ineligible for any benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and that I may not avoid a frivolous finding simply because someone advised me to provide false information in my asylum application.

Signed and sworn to before me by the above named applicant on:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Write Your Name in Your Native Alphabet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Immigration Judge

**Part F:**

Leave this blank. You will be asked to sign Part F in person at your asylum interview.

**Part G:**

Leave this blank. You will be asked to sign Part G if your case is referred to the Immigration Court, once you are in person at your asylum hearing.

**\*This entire page should be left blank at the time you file your application\***

A-Number (If available) 00000000	Date 03/10/2020
Applicant's Name Farhad n/a Ahmadi	Applicant's Signature

**List All of Your Children, Regardless of Age or Marital Status**  
(NOTE: Use this form and attach additional pages and documentation as needed, if you have more than four children)

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)	2. Passport/ID Card Number (if any)	3. Marital Status (Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed)	4. U.S. Social Security Number (if any)
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
9. City and Country of Birth	10. Nationality (Citizenship)	11. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	12. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Is this child in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete Blocks 14 to 21.) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Specify location):			
14. Place of last entry into the U.S.	15. Date of last entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)	16. I-94 Number (If any)	17. Status when last admitted (Visa type, if any)
18. What is your child's current status?	19. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? (mm/dd/yyyy)	20. Is your child in Immigration Court proceedings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21. If in the U.S., is this child to be included in this application? (Check the appropriate box.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Attach one photograph of your child in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any)	2. Passport/ID Card Number (if any)	3. Marital Status (Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed)	4. U.S. Social Security Number (if any)
5. Complete Last Name	6. First Name	7. Middle Name	8. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)
9. City and Country of Birth	10. Nationality (Citizenship)	11. Race, Ethnic, or Tribal Group	12. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Is this child in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete Blocks 14 to 21.) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Specify location):			
14. Place of last entry into the U.S.	15. Date of last entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)	16. I-94 Number (If any)	17. Status when last admitted (Visa type, if any)
18. What is your child's current status?	19. What is the expiration date of his/her authorized stay, if any? (mm/dd/yyyy)	20. Is your child in Immigration Court proceedings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21. If in the U.S., is this child to be included in this application? (Check the appropriate box.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Attach one photograph of your child in the upper right corner of Page 9 on the extra copy of the application submitted for this person.) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

Use this page only if you have more than four (4) children, and need more space than is provided on Page 3. If you have four (4) children or fewer, leave this page blank.

If you do not use this page, you do not need to submit it.

If you do use this page, be sure to date the top right box (under "Date") and sign in the second box from the top right (under "Applicant's Signature")

**Additional Information About Your Claim to Asylum**

A-Number (if available) 000000000	Date 03/10/2020
Applicant's Name Farhad n/a Ahmadi	Applicant's Signature

NOTE: Use this as a continuation page for any additional information requested. Copy and complete as needed.

Part   
Question

If you need additional space to provide your answers to the questions in Parts B or C, you can use this page. You can either print this page out multiple times and use it each time you need more space for your answer, or you can put multiple answers in this same space.

Write the part number and question number before providing your answer, so USCIS knows which question you are answering.

If you do use this page, be sure to date the top right box (under "Date") and sign in the second box from the top right (under "Applicant's Signature")

For example:

"Part B. Question 1.B.:

*I am also afraid to return to my country because Joe Smith, a member of the Utopian National Guard, threatened me. He used to work with another uncle of mine, Zahir, in the Honeywellian police force. Zahir found out that Joe was stealing money and drugs from the evidence room, and threatened to harm our whole family unless Zahir quit the police force and never got involved in the government again. But recently, my uncle Zahir re-joined the police force and Joe threatened our family again. I am afraid that Joe – or other members of the Utopian National Guard – will harm or kill me because of my family relationship to my uncle."*

## Sample Annotated Declaration in Support of Asylum

A declaration in support of asylum is not required for an asylum application, but it can be very useful for the asylum officer in considering your claim.

Included below is an example of a declaration in support of asylum, prepared for our sample (fictional) asylum applicant. We also include some explanations, highlighted in yellow, of why the asylum applicant wrote the information he did. Below this sample Declaration, you can find a template you may want to use to prepare your own Declaration in support of asylum.

### SWORN DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF ASYLUM

I, Farhad Ahmadi, swear under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I file this statement in support of my application for asylum.

*It is important to include the section above, before your statement, so that the Asylum Office knows that you have promised to tell the truth about what happened to you, and/or what you are afraid would happen to you if you return to your country.*

1. My name is Farhad Ahmadi and I am 25 years old and a citizen of Utopia. I arrived in the United States at the JFK International Airport in NYC on July 3, 2019. I fled Utopia because I was threatened due to my political beliefs. I live with my wife, Zohal Ahmadi, and our son, Mohammad Ahmadi, at 123 Maple Avenue, Glen Bernie, Maryland 21061.

#### My Background

2. I grew up in the town of Honeywell, Utopia, with my parents Hazel and Amin Ahmadi, and my two siblings. My family owns a farm on the outskirts of Honeywell; my father is a farmer and my mother is a housewife. After I graduated high school, I worked as a customer support specialist at a call center the nearby town of Merryville. While working there, I met my wife, Zohal. We were married in August 2017 and had our son, Mohammad, in September 2018.
3. After we married, Zohal and I lived together with my family on our farm, and I traveled by bus about 45 minutes each way to get to my job at the call center. Even though it was a long commute, I loved my job because I was able to speak to people from all over the world and I helped them resolve the issues they were facing. I worked with Rancho Healthcare until I left Utopia and came to the United States.

*This Applicant is providing some background information about his background and upbringing, but not everything about his life; only a little bit of information that provides some context to his story about why he is applying for asylum. Here, the applicant describes a bit about where he grew up, where he worked, and how he met his wife.*

#### My Support of the IPA Party

*In this next section, the Applicant provides more specific information about his family, including the parts of his upbringing that made him who he is today: his family's values and political beliefs. This context is important because, as we will see later in his*

*Declaration, these political beliefs and involvement in politics eventually may have put him in danger, which forced him to flee to the U.S. and seek asylum.*

4. My family has always supported the political party Independent People’s Alliance (IPA) and from a young age I was exposed to their ideology. IPA advocates for democracy in Utopia and is built on a peaceful existence for all citizens. It also places great importance on education. My family and I believe strongly in these values, we all want to see a better life for our children.
5. Before I was born, my parents lived in a different part of Utopia called Venus. A guerilla group, known as Traditional Republic provoked a conflict with the residents and local government there. Traditional Republic is now a mainstream political party in Utopia, and is the opposing political party to the IPA. They seek to hold Utopia to “traditional” values, and they use violence to convince people to join their party. Leaders of Traditional Republic had taken up residence in Venus when my parents lived there and began to threaten members of the IPA. After Traditional Republic took over the government of Venus, my parents feared staying there. They left to rebuild their lives in another part of the country, and joined some family members in Honeywell, where the IPA party was the majority party.
6. My father’s brother, Betal Ahmadi, is very active in the IPA party in Honeywell, and organizes meetings and campaigns locally. He worked in the Honeywell town hall during a recent election year, when the IPA ended up winning control over the Silver River province (where Honeywell is located). Because of his work, he became well-known throughout the province.
7. Around 2015, I began to participate more actively in the IPA. I helped coordinate events when IPA candidates ran for office in the Silver River province. I attended IPA rallies with my family, and also helped direct the public to voting booths, handed out gifts with the party logo, and voiced my support for IPA on my social media accounts. In 2018, I went door to door to encourage support for the IPA mayoral candidate Fazul Abdul. It was then that I realized just how hostile members the Traditional Republic party could be. Multiple Traditional Republic party members threatened me in person for the canvassing work, so I decided not to do it again. I hoped that if I avoided canvassing work in particular, that I would be safe. But I was wrong.

### **Opposition Political Party Members Threaten Me**

*In this section, the Applicant connects the background and context he previously provided with why he is seeking asylum: he details the threats made against him because of his political beliefs and membership in a specific political party.*

8. In February 2019, at around six in the evening, I was getting off the bus that I take home from work when four strange men wearing Traditional Republic bandanas stopped me. That day, I happened to be wearing a shirt that identified me as a supporter of the IPA party’s “youth group.” One of the men must have recognized me, either due to my shirt or from my work coordinating a forum for Fazul Abdul during the mayoral election.

*The Applicant provides enough details about this event to give the reader a good idea of what happened, but does not provide too many precise details. It is good to provide details, but be careful about how much detail you provide. This Applicant does not list the exact day of the attack, and he describes the attack as occurring at “around six in the evening.” It is useful to provide specifics and details because it helps the officer understand what happened, but if you are too specific, you run the risk of mistaking these*

*details later on, when you re-tell your story in the interview at the Asylum Office. If there is a difference between your written statement and what you say during the interview, the Asylum Officer may think that parts of the story are not true.*

9. The men told me that I was forbidden to walk by that area because Traditional Republic was going to take control of that zone (including the area where our family farm was located). They said they did not want to see me, or any other IPA supporters, there again. They showed me the guns they were carrying, to intimidate me and prove that they were serious. I responded that I was just coming back from work and wanted no trouble. They threatened to kill me if they saw me there again, and laughed as I ran away, down the road leading to our family farm.
10. When I got home, I told my family about the threat. I was terrified because I knew that my parents had fled Venus due to the violence they had witnessed by Traditional Republic party members. I was also at a loss for what to do because they were threatening to take over the area where we lived, and they prohibited me from even walking by there. But I had no choice. That was the only road I could take to catch the bus that I needed to take to work.
11. My father called my uncle, Betal, and informed him of what happened. Betal told us that he had concerns too, because of the influx of Traditional Republic party members and sympathizers in the Silver Lake province. After a long discussion, they decided that we should not let the Traditional Republic party prevent us from living our lives and supporting the IPA.
12. I continued to take the same route to work for the next few days. As I got closer to the center of Honeywell, I noticed several people I had not seen before. Several of them were wearing items of clothing known to be worn by members and supporters of the Traditional Republic party. In particular, the men were wearing military-style jackets with a patch that bore the logo of the Traditional Republic party. I tried to keep my head down and get on and off the bus quickly so that I wouldn't run into any more trouble, but that did not last very long.

*Next, the Applicant provides information about another attack. Again, he provides enough details so the Asylum Officer has a good idea of what happened ("less than a week [later]", "the sun had just set"), but not so many details that he may forget and misstate it at his interview.*

13. Less than a week after the Traditional Republic members threatened me, a man wearing a military jacket stopped me again as I was coming home from work. I remembered him as one of the men who threatened me previously. The sun had just set, and it was dark but he somehow recognized me. He told me he had already warned me once that I was not to be seen again because I was a supporter of the IPA party. I told the man that to get home from work, I had to walk on that particular road. He called me a traitor and pushed me onto the ground. He kicked me several times and said that if he saw me on that road one more time, he would kill me. I was bleeding and my body hurt all over. I limped home and told my family what had happened. My mother helped me to care for the cuts, and put ice on my bruises.
14. The next day I did not go to work. I was still in pain, and afraid to walk the route to the bus stop. I feared that Traditional Republic members would carry through on their threat to kill me. Around the time I was threatened, my uncle Betal told us that local government officials (IPA party members) were also threatened by Traditional Republic members, who sought to gain control of Silver Lake province by "whatever means necessary."



15. I contemplated whether I should report the Traditional Republic member's attack and threats to the local police. However, after speaking to my uncle, I believed it was best to say nothing. He told me that it was becoming increasingly hard to know who to trust within our local government agencies, even though our local government was supposedly run by IPA members. Around that time, several news articles were published reporting that members of the Traditional Republic party were obtaining jobs in local government and posing as IPA supporters to report back information to government officials in the Traditional Republic party.

*For an applicant who was threatened or harmed in the past, it is useful to provide information about if they reported the threats or harm to the police. If they did report the threats or harm, what happened after that? If they did not report the threats or harm, why not?*

### **I relocate to Camino to avoid harm and threats**

16. After some discussion, we thought it would be safest for my wife, son, and I to move away from Honeywell. We went to stay with my mother's sister, Neda, near the capital city of Camino, Utopia. Members of the IPA party made up the majority of our National government at that time and although there were several Traditional Party members holding National government offices, Camino seemed more stable and safe. I also thought it might be safer because people did not know me there, so I would not be recognizable as an IPA party member. I also decided to limit my involvement with the IPA party until it was safe to continue again.
17. We lived with my aunt peacefully for a few months. Camino seemed safer than Honeywell, and the community upheld the progressive ideals of the IPA party. I missed being involved in the IPA, so in June 2019 I decided to attend an IPA. My wife was also an IPA supporter, but I asked her to stay home, just in case something went wrong. I attended the rally with a neighbor of mine, Raman. I will forever be grateful that I asked my wife to remain at home that day.

*If an applicant tried to find safety and live somewhere else in their country, that is important and useful information to provide. If the applicant faced danger even after moving somewhere else, those details are important too.*

### **I am attacked at an IPA rally in Camino**

18. The rally started in the late afternoon and there was live music and speeches made by IPA party members. I used my mobile phone to record some of the event, and I posted some of these videos on my social media. Everyone seemed to be in very good spirits, but that changed when the sun went down. Raman and I were near the stage where the speeches were being delivered when we heard someone scream. We looked to the edge of the crowd and saw several armed men in Traditional Republic military-style jackets walking toward the rally. Some of the men had bullhorns and began to yell things like, "we will never let tradition die!" and called everyone traitors. What happened next is somewhat of a blur. I saw one of the armed men punch a teenager wearing an IPA shirt, and then tear gas began to explode everywhere. I heard people arguing and fighting. After the threats I had received in Honeywell, I knew that Raman and I were in immediate danger. I grabbed his arm and told him to run. Raman and I were some of the luckier IPA supporters, because we were able to escape that attack unharmed. Ultimately, more than 30 IPA supporters were injured, and according to news reports, five more lost their lives.

19. We returned home shocked and in profound fear. After that rally, I knew there was about to be a great shift in Utopia. My wife and I decided it was best for us to leave, at least temporarily. I felt defeated. Utopia had been my home all of my life but I felt that it was no longer safe. I feared that our lives could be taken away at any moment because of my political beliefs.

### **We flee to the United States**

20. My wife, son, and I arrived in the United States on July 3, 2019 on tourist visas. We previously obtained tourist visas and visited the U.S. after my son was born, and our visas were still valid. I had hoped that things in Utopia would settle down soon, so we could return home. Unfortunately, things have only gotten worse.

21. Since I arrived in the U.S., my mother informed me that Traditional Republic party members have visited our family farm on three separate occasions and demanded that my parents pay a monthly “rent” to show their allegiance to Traditional Republic and guarantee their safety. It has been reported in the national news that the Traditional Republic party has taken over the Silver River province and they are pushing to control Camino, where we lived with my aunt.

*In the end of an asylum Declaration, it is useful to provide some information about things that happened after the applicant left their country, either to the applicant’s family members or other people in a similar situation to the applicant. Here, the Applicant has provided some information about threats that his remaining family members have endured since he fled, which provides some insight about the kind of danger he would be in, too, if he had to return.*

22. I fear that if we return to Utopia, my family and I will be harmed or killed by members of the Traditional Republic party because of my work with IPA. Traditional Republic members have already identified me, and threatened and harmed me because of this. The situation in Utopia has become even more unstable and dangerous for IPA members than before.

23. Since I arrived in the United States, I have felt a profound sense of safety I did not feel the last few years in Utopia. I feel free and safe to express my opinions and my support for IPA. I currently work as a delivery driver and have come to love our new community in the U.S. I finally feel at ease and do not fear for my life and the lives of my wife and child daily. We cannot return to Utopia as we would be recognized as IPA party members and our lives would be in great danger in our home country. Thank you for considering my application.

Farhad Ahmadi  
Farhad Ahmadi

11/25/2019  
Date

## Template Declaration in Support of Asylum

This template can be downloaded [here](#).

### **SWORN DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF ASYLUM**

I, [INSERT FULL NAME], swear under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I file this statement in support of my application for asylum.

1. My name is [name] and I am [age] years old. I am a citizen of Afghanistan. I arrived in the U.S. at [location] on [date of arrival]. I make this declaration in support of my application for asylum.
2. I am married to [name]. We married in [location] on [date]. I have [number] children. We currently live at [address].

### **My Background**

3. [Provide information on your background/schooling, and your work experience, especially if relevant to why you are afraid to return].
4. [If you are/were politically active in Afghanistan, discuss your political beliefs and activities.]

### **What Happened to Me**

5. [Consider what it is about you that makes you fear that you would be harmed if you returned to Afghanistan. Use this space to give some detail of what your life was like before you fled Afghanistan. It's useful to write this section in chronological order, if possible.]
6. [If you were harmed or threatened, detail that in this section. Be sure to include the *first* incident that occurred, the *worst* incident that occurred, and the *last* incident that occurred before you decided to leave.]
7. [Be sure to include some details about any times that your family members, your co-workers, or your friends were either harmed or threatened, if it was a similar reason to why you fear returning to Afghanistan.]

### **Why I Cannot Return to Afghanistan**

8. [Describe why you believe you, or your family members/colleagues/friends, were harmed or threatened. Explain why you think *you* would be in danger if you had to return to Afghanistan now. Include what you believe would happen if you had to return.]

[SIGNATURE]  
[INSERT FULL NAME]

[DATE]  
Date

## Tips on Writing a Declaration in Support of Asylum

### When Telling Your Story

- Explain in detail any events that occurred in Afghanistan that make you afraid to return there, even if the incidents did not happen to you, or only to you. Be sure to include incidents when the government or another person or group harmed or threaten to harm you and WHY you believe they chose to do so.
- You can also explain a time when someone in a situation similar to yours was harmed.
- Be sure to mention it was the government, or whether it was another person or group who harmed you or your family members, or threatened to do so.
- Questions to consider are: How were you harmed? By whom? What did the person(s) say? When did the harm occur? Why did it happen?

### Considering Specific Dates

- If you cannot remember the exact date that something happened, do not guess. Guessing a date may cause issues later on in your case when you attend your asylum interview. A good alternative is to give the month or year or the time of year an event occurred.

### Describing Changes and Current Conditions in your Country

- If the situation in Afghanistan has changed or worsened, as it relates to your case, since you came to the United States, explain what happened and why it is still not safe for you to go back.

### Describing Whether the Government can Protect you, or Whether you could Relocate Elsewhere in your Country

- If a political party, the government of your country, or a government official is the reason you are afraid to return, include these details in your statement.
- If you fear harm from a person or group that is not the government, explain who or what you fear and why you believe your government cannot protect you. If you tried to report any harm you experienced in the past and did not receive help from the person or office you reported it to include details about what happened in your statement.
- If you tried to move to another part of the country, be sure to explain when, why, and what happened. If not, include a short explanation of why you could not live safely in any other part of your country.

## Gathering Evidence in Support of Asylum

### What is Evidence and Why Do We Submit It?

It is possible for an asylum applicant to win asylum based only on their credible and consistent telling of their story (*testimony*), but the claim is ***much stronger*** if the applicant can provide additional documentation (*evidence*) that establishes (1) that they are telling the truth about their experiences and their fear of going back to their country, and (2) that their fear is reasonable, given the circumstances in that country.

When an asylum applicant tells their story, and promises to tell the truth, that is called their *Testimony*. Testimony can include what the asylum applicant writes on their Form I-589 Application for Asylum, and what they write in their Declaration in Support of Asylum, and what they tell the asylum officer in-person at their interview.

*Evidence* is any documentation that would help prove that the asylum applicant's story is true. individual's case.

Showing that an asylum applicant's story is true is critical because asylum officers are concerned about an applicant's honesty, and will not approve asylum if there are concerns that there is fraud or an applicant is not being truthful. By submitting supporting evidence, an applicant is more likely to be found to be believable.

**Remember: An applicant should only submit copies of their evidence to USCIS; never submit an original document.** If you submit an original document to USCIS, you risk permanently losing that document. After you submit the copy of the document with your application, bring the original document with you to the interview so that the asylum officer can look at it and make sure it's real, but you should always keep all original documents.

### What Kinds of Evidence is Important?

#### *Proof of Identity*

As an asylum applicant, you must prove that you are who you say you are. To do this, you should include a copy of your national passport, or another form of photo identification like a national identity card (*Tazkera*). If you do not have a copy of your passport, you can submit another form of identification, like your birth certificate.

If you have any family members (your spouse and/or unmarried children under age 21) with you in the U.S., who you would like to be granted asylum if your case is granted, you should also include proof of that relationship, like a marriage certificate (*Nekah Khat* or *Sharaei Waseqa Khat*) to show the relationship to your spouse, or a birth certificate (*Kart Tawalod* or *Da Zokry Sanad*) to show the relationship to your child). If you or your spouse was previously divorced, you should also submit a divorce certificate (*Talaq Khat*) to show that your current marriage is a lawful marriage.

### *Proof of Entry to the U.S.*

If you entered the U.S. lawfully (either with a visa, or on parole), submit your I-94 record to document your entry and the date of your one-year filing deadline.

If you do not have a copy of your I-94, ORR recently released guidance on how to access it electronically. That guidance is available [HERE in English](#), [HERE in Dari](#), and [HERE in Pashto](#).

### *Proof of Past Persecution or Fear of Future Persecution*

Very rarely does an asylum applicant have *direct* proof (like a statement from the person who harmed them, or will harm them) of the persecution they suffered or fear. That is normal. In the absence of such proof, you as an asylum applicant should provide other documentation about the harm you suffered in the past, or the harm you fear could occur in the future.

#### **A. Applicant's Declaration in Support of Asylum**

As described above, perhaps the single most important piece of evidence you as an applicant can provide is your own personal statement, detailing your experiences in your home country and why you fear returning. An asylum officer will refer to this statement during the asylum interview for two reasons (1) to decide whether you, the applicant, are believable, and (2) to decide whether your situation makes you eligible for asylum.

Although the Form I-589 must be completed in English, your statement can be written in your native language, if that is easier. If your statement is written in your native language, it must be accompanied by a certified English translation (see below).

#### **B. Witness Statements**

Another strong piece of evidence may be statements from family members, colleagues, or friends who have first-hand knowledge of *your* experiences. The witness' statement should include the same swearing language, and be signed and dated by the witness. If possible, include a photocopy of that person's identification (passport or national identity document).

A witness statement should generally include *that person's* experiences and observations in Afghanistan, *and* explain why they believe the *applicant* fears (or would face danger) returning to their home country. If the individual writing a statement gives an opinion (for example: "Leena is right to fear that she will be killed if she returns to Afghanistan."), it is important to explain *why* the writer has that opinion ("Because the Taliban came to my home looking for her. This happened after she started teaching mathematics to girls in her home.").

A witness' statement should be consistent with the rest of you as the asylum applicant's story. For example, if you say, "I was attacked on February 29, 2021," it would be problematic if a witness' statement says that the applicant "was attacked on June 29, 2021." If a witness is unsure about details of an event (for example, the exact date), it is much better for them to give a general description or estimate ("I believe the attack occurred in early 2021").

If a potential witness is not in the U.S. to provide their statement, they can prepare it abroad and either scan it, or take a clear photograph and send it via email or text. Remember, any statement prepared in a language other than English must be accompanied by a Certified English translation.

### **C. Official Records**

In some situations, official documents, like police records or medical records, may be used to support the applicant's account of the harm that occurred in the past. For example, if an asylum applicant previously sought medical care after being harmed, records from a doctor or hospital would help corroborate that incident and the harm. As another example, if a family member or another similarly situated individual was killed, an applicant may want to include a copy of that person's death certificate with their application. Remember, any statement prepared in a language other than English must be accompanied by a Certified English translation.

Some other examples of official documents that may support an applicant's case may include: military records; political party, organization, or union membership documents; employment records or professional licenses; or police, court, or prison records.

### **D. Communications**

Certain communications may help prove your story of the harm or threats you suffered or fear. Such communications may include: letters, notes, e-mails, texts, WhatsApp or other virtual messages, call records, voicemail or voice messages, social media posts, or videos.

If a communication cannot be printed (like voice messages), obtain a written transcript of the speech/sound on the recording, and submit a copy of the recording on a Compact Disc (CD).

### **E. Photographs**

If you have access to photographs that document aspects of your claim, you may want to include those photographs. For example, an asylum applicant who participated in political rallies may want to submit photos of themselves at such rallies. An individual who suffered beatings or torture may include photographs of their injuries.

Any photographs should be accompanied by a short explanation of the photograph, and the date the photograph was taken.

### **F. Expert Medical or Psychological Evaluation**

If you suffered physical harms in the past, you may seek an evaluation by a medical professional in the U.S., usually called a "forensic medical evaluation," which can help document injuries or scars, and help show that the injuries or scars could likely have been caused by the incident that you described. A forensic medical exam usually includes a physical examination by a doctor as well as the applicant discussing with the doctor how they sustained the injuries that caused the injury or scar. The physician will then provide a statement to document the injuries or scars, and give an opinion about whether they believe those injuries or scars are likely to have been caused by the incidents of harm that the applicant described. Many large hospitals offer forensic medical evaluation services at little or no cost to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Alternatively, Physicians for Human Rights may be able to help; submit a request for a forensic medical evaluation [here](#).

If you have been suffering mentally or emotionally due to the harm or threats, you may consider obtaining a psychological evaluation from a licensed mental health professional. A psychological evaluation may help document and prove the impact of the persecution you suffered, which may help establish that your testimony is truthful. Psychological evaluations can also be costly, however some organizations, like Physicians for Human Rights, offer low-cost or free psychological services and evaluations.

Forensic medical exams and psychological exams may take several months to complete. If you think one of these exams will help your asylum case, consider speaking with an attorney about questions of timing.

### *Proof of Protected Ground*

As explained above, to establish an asylum claim, an applicant must show that the reason they suffered harm/threats in the past, or fear harm/threats in the future, is at least one of the following “protected grounds”: race; religion; nationality; political opinion; or membership in a particular social group.

If possible, an asylum applicant should also submit documentation of their “protected ground.” For example, an asylum applicant who fears that they will be harmed because of their political opinion may want to submit proof of their membership in a particular political party, or photographs showing their participation at political events or rallies. An asylum applicant who suffered harm because of their religion may want to submit documentation of their completion of certain religious rites, or a letter from their local religious leader, confirming their regular attendance at their place of worship. An asylum applicant who fears they will be harmed because of their family relationship to a certain person (membership in a particular social group of family members of NAME) may submit birth or marriage certificates, to show the family relationship.

### *Proof that a Protected Ground is [Why](#) you Suffered or Fear Persecution*

#### **Asylum Applicant’s Declaration**

For most asylum applicants, the easiest proof that you suffered/fear persecution because of a protected ground will be your own testimony in your Declaration. As detailed above, it is important to explain in the Declaration why you think the persecutor wanted/wants to harm you.

#### **Country Conditions Evidence**

Another important piece of evidence to demonstrate that an asylum applicant has a reasonable fear of persecution in their home country are reports or news stories to document what is currently happening in their country to people in a similar situation. For example, if an individual worked closely with the U.S. Military and fears being harmed by the Taliban on that basis, it would be useful to submit news stories or other reports of American allies being harmed or killed by the Taliban in Afghanistan on this basis. This kind of documentation can



help to show that the applicant, who is in a similar situation, may face similar harm if he returns to Afghanistan.

You should only include reports or news stories that are relevant to your particular asylum case. Additionally, you should read all of the documents before submitting them, to make sure that they agree with what is written, and that the reports support your claim. We include below links to resources and articles that may be useful in certain asylum cases. Again, be sure to read any document before you submit it. The documents provided are not exhaustive, so you may want to conduct your own research to find country condition reports that best support your case.

### **Women, Feminists, and/or Survivors of Gender Based Violence**

- The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI), U.K. Home Office, *Country Policy and Information Note: Afghanistan: Fear of the Taliban* (Oct. 2021), available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1023533/AFG\\_CPIN\\_Fear\\_of\\_the\\_Taliban.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1023533/AFG_CPIN_Fear_of_the_Taliban.pdf) (see pages 32-36)
- Heather Barr, For Afghan Women, the Frightening Return of ‘Vice and Virtue’, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Sept. 29, 2021), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/afghan-women-frightening-return-vice-and-virtue>.
- Claire Press, Female Afghan Judges Hunted by the Murderers They Convicted, BBC NEWS (Sept. 28, 2021), available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58709353>
- Sune Engel Rasmussen, Trapped in Kabul, Prominent Afghan Women Fear Retribution Under Taliban Rule, WALL STREET JOURNAL (Sept. 24, 2021), available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trapped-in-kabul-prominent-afghan-women-fear-retribution-under-taliban-rule-11632475917>

### **Individuals with Ties to the U.S. or former Afghan Governments**

- Erin Cunningham and Claire Parker, “Taliban hunting for ‘collaborators’ in major cities, threat assessment prepared for United Nations warns,” The Washington Post, August 20, 2021 (available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/20/taliban-hunt-collaborators-united-nations/>)
- Jon Levine, “Taliban death squads ramping up hunt for Afghan collaborators,” New York Post, August 21, 2021 (available at [https://nypost.com/2021/08/21/taliban-death-squads-ramping-up-hunt-for-afghan-collaborators/?utm\\_campaign=iphone\\_nyp&utm\\_source=mail\\_app](https://nypost.com/2021/08/21/taliban-death-squads-ramping-up-hunt-for-afghan-collaborators/?utm_campaign=iphone_nyp&utm_source=mail_app))
- Yogita Limaya, “Amid violent reprisals, Afghans fear the Taliban’s ‘amnesty’ was empty,” BBC News, August 31, 2021 (available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58395954>)
- Human Rights Watch: “No Forgiveness for People Like You: Executions and Enforced Disappearances in Afghanistan under the Taliban,” November 30, 2021 (available at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/11/30/no-forgiveness-people-you/executions-and-enforced-disappearances-afghanistan>)

## Journalists and Members of the Media

- Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Beat Journalists, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Sept. 8, 2021) available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/08/afghanistan-taliban-severely-beat-journalists>
- Arezou Rezvani, Fazelminallah Qazizai, “Under the Taliban, it’s harder than ever to be an Afghan journalist,” NPR (October 13, 2021), available at <https://www.wbur.org/npr/1045234373/afghanistan-journalists-taliban>
- Kim Willsher, “Afghanistan: fewer than 100 out of 700 female journalists still working,” The Guardian (September 1, 2021), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/01/afghanistan-only-handful-of-female-journalists-still-working>

## Human Rights Defenders

- Ewelina U. Ochab, A Whole Generation of Human Rights Defenders May Perish in Afghanistan, FORBES (Sept. 12, 2021), available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2021/09/12/the-whole-generations-of-human-rights-defenders-may-perish-in-afghanistan/?sh=224d11582d5e>
- Zahra Nader & Amie Ferris-Rotman, They stayed to fight the Taliban. Now the protesters are being hunted down, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/nov/04/they-stayed-to-fight-the-taliban-now-the-protesters-are-being-hunted-down>
- Afghanistan: Human rights defenders living under ‘climate of fear’ - UN expert, UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (OHCHR) (Nov. 3, 2021), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27762&LangID=E>

## Harazas

- Amnesty International, Afghanistan: 13 Hazara killed by Taliban fighters in Daykundi province – new investigation. Oct. 5, 2021, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/10/afghanistan-13-hazara-killed-by-taliban-fighters-in-daykundi-province-new-investigation/>
- Time Magazine, 'My Future Is Now.' An Afghan Woman from a Threatened Minority Wrestles with What Happens When the U.S. Withdraws, Knox Thames, June 28, 2021, available at <https://time.com/6075566/hazara-shia-afghanistan/>
- Al Jazeera, Why the Hazara people fear genocide in Afghanistan, Sitarah Mohammadi and Sajjad Askary, October 27, 2021, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/10/27/why-the-hazara-people-fear-genocide-in-afghanistan>

## Submitting Documents in a Foreign Language

Any document that is written in a language other than English (except passports) must be submitted along with a certified English translation. The translation does not need to be conducted by a professional translator but should be prepared by someone other than the applicant or their spouse/child. A template certificate of translation may be downloaded [here](#), and a sample is included below.

### **CERTIFICATION OF TRANSLATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), certify that I am competent to translate the attached document from \_\_\_\_\_ (language) to English, and that the above is a correct and true translation to the best of my knowledge and belief. I certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1746.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

Name:

Address:

## Sample Cover Letter for Asylum Application

*This Sample Cover Letter is intended as a guide only. Asylum applicants should incorporate their specific information into their Cover Letter when filing their application with USCIS. You may want to use the template, included below.*

[USCIS Address / Find the correct filing address based on your location [here](#)]

January 22, 2022

### Re: **I-589 Application for Asylum**

**APPLICANT: Farhad AHMADI, A#000-000-000**

**DERIVATIVES: Zohal AHMADI, A#000-000-001 (Spouse)**

**Mohammad AHMADI, A#000-000-002 (Minor Child)**

Dear USCIS Officer:

Please accept my enclosed asylum application seeking protection in the United States on account of my fear of persecution in Utopia.

Enclosed please find the following Forms:

### **Form(s)**

1. Completed and signed Form I-589 (Original) with my passport style photo attached on page 9, *plus one copy*;
2. Copy of my completed and signed Form I-589 for Zohal Ahmadi, with her passport style photo attached on page 9;
3. Copy of my completed and signed Form I-589 for Mohammad Ahmadi, with his passport style photo attached on page 9;

I am also enclosing the following documentation, *plus one full copy for myself, and one additional copy for each derivative*:

### **Identity Documentation**

4. Copy of my most recent passport photo page and stamped pages;
5. Copy of my birth certificate with certified English translation;
6. Copy of my I-94;
7. Copy of my current Employment Authorization Card;
8. Copy of my marriage certificate with certified English translation;
9. Copy of my wife's most recent passport photo page and stamped pages;
10. Copy of my wife's I-94;
11. Copy of my child's birth certificate with certified English translation;

12. Copy of my child's I-94;

**Supporting Documentation**

- 13. Sworn statement in support of my application for asylum;
- 14. Sworn statement from my wife, detailing her fear of returning to Utopia;
- 15. Letter from my uncle, Betal Ahmadi, detailing what he knows about my fear of returning to Utopia, with certified English translation;
- 16. Letter from my mother, Hazel Ahmadi, describing my injuries after members of the opposing political party, Traditional Republic, attacked me;
- 17. Proof of my involvement in the Independent People's Alliance political party; and
- 18. Other personal evidence in support of my fear of returning to Utopia;

**Country Conditions**

- 19. Select country conditions documentation regarding my fear of returning to Utopia.

Thank you for your kind assistance in processing my application. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (111) 111-1111 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Farhad Ahmadi

## Template Cover Letter for Asylum Application

A version of this cover letter may be downloaded [here](#) to be modified for your application.

USCIS Address [Find the correct filing address based on your location [here](#)]

DATE

Re: **I-589 Application for Asylum**

**APPLICANT:** Your Name (A#, or Date of Birth if A# not yet assigned)

**DERIVATIVES:** Names of Family Members to be Included in the Application (their A#s or Dates of Birth, and your relationship to them)

Dear USCIS Officer:

Please accept my enclosed asylum application for protection in the United States based on my fear of persecution in Afghanistan.

Enclosed please find the following Forms:

**Form(s)** (Note to applicant: Delete 2 & 3 if filing on your own. If you have more than 2 derivatives, add in additional lines for each derivative. See the Pro Se Packet for additional information)

1. Completed and signed Original Form I-589, with one recent passport-style color photograph attached to page 9, plus one copy
2. Copy of Completed and signed Form I-589 for **Derivative 1**, with their passport-style color photograph attached on page 9
3. Copy of Completed and signed Form I-589 for **Derivative 2**, with their passport-style color photograph attached on page 9

I am also enclosing the following documentation, plus one full copy for myself, and one additional copy for each derivative:

**Identity Documentation** (Note to applicant – you need to include evidence of your identity, nationality, and proof of relationship to your derivatives. Review the Pro Se Packet and Sample Cover Letter for information about what documentation is required, and suggestions on what to include here)

- 4.
- 5.

**Supporting Documentation** (Note to applicant – you need to include evidence in support of your asylum claim. Refer to the packet for suggestions on what to include here)

- 7.
- 8.

**Country Conditions**

9. Select country conditions documentation regarding my fear of returning to Afghanistan.

Thank you for your kind assistance in processing my application. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [insert your phone number here] should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name here and sign your name above]

## Assembling and Filing the Asylum Application

Once you have prepared your application for asylum, written a cover letter, and collected the evidence, you can assemble a package for filing and submit the entire submission. Keep in mind that USCIS requires asylum applicants to submit their original, signed form, as well as copies of the form and additional copies of the evidence they submit. This is described in detail in the USCIS I-589 instructions (see above for translations, and [accessible here in English](#)).

### Preparing the Asylum Application Packet

The asylum application should be prepared and assembled in the following order:

1. Cover letter
2. I-589 Application for Asylum with Applicant's original signature.
  - On the original I-589 application for asylum, the applicant should staple a passport-style photograph (color photograph, 2" by 2" in size) in the **upper right side box on page 9** of the application. The staple should not block the applicant's face. Before affixing the photograph, the applicant should gently write their name and A number (or if they do not have an A number, write their Date of Birth, Month / Day / Year) on the back of the photograph.
  - Include any additional Supplement A or Supplement B pages from the I-589 (pages 11 and 12 of the I-589) with original signatures.
3. Evidence supporting the claim for asylum, **including the Applicant's original signed Declaration**, and any statements or letters from witnesses.
4. *If including family members (spouse and/or children under 21, in the U.S.) as derivative beneficiaries*: One Copy of the applicant and family members' identification, proof of the applicant's relationship to the spouse and unmarried children under 21 included in the application (i.e. National Identity Document, Marriage Certificate, Birth Certificates, Passports, etc.)
5. *If ever arrested*: include copies of court dispositions of the criminal charge(s).
  - As discussed above, if the applicant has been arrested, they should discuss the matter with an immigration attorney or accredited representative before submitting the application.
6. One extra copy of item numbers 2-5 (above), for the Applicant's file.
7. *If including family members (spouse and/or children under 21, in the U.S.) as derivative beneficiaries*: In addition to the extra copy submitted for the applicant, include one additional copy of item numbers 2-4 (above) for each family member
  - Example: The applicant's husband and a 10-year-old daughter are in the U.S. with her and included as derivative beneficiaries on her application. The asylum applicant should make two additional copies of items 2-4: one copy for her husband and one copy for her daughter.
  - Attach one passport-style photograph (with the name and A number, or Date of Birth, Month / Day / Year, if no A number on the back) of the family member on Page 9 of their copy of the I-589.



We *strongly recommend* that asylum applicants print (and if possible, scan) and save a full copy of the submission for the applicant’s records, and to review before the asylum interview.

## Mailing the Application for Asylum

Applications for asylum must be submitted by mail. The application can be mailed through the following carriers: U.S. Postal Service (USPS), FedEx, United Parcel Service (UPS), or DHL. Addresses that contain Post Office Box information (P.O. Boxes) can *only* receive mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service; if you send your application by FedEx, UPS, or DHL, be sure to use the proper address, not the P.O. Box address.

It is advisable to send the application with tracking information. This will give the applicant the opportunity to confirm when the application was delivered to USCIS. Where the asylum applicant sends their application depends on where the applicant is living.

Check the [USCIS website](#), under “Where to File,” for the most up-to-date information about filing addresses.

## Derivative Beneficiaries Filing as Principals

*(If Both Spouses are Filing for Asylum and Including Each Other as Derivative Beneficiaries, or a Minor Child is included as a Derivative Beneficiary but is also submitting their own claim)*

In some cases, a person included as a derivative beneficiary to their spouse/parent’s asylum claim may also want to file their own separate application for asylum.

*Example 1: a husband files for asylum and includes his wife as a derivative beneficiary, but the wife has her own claim for asylum.*

*Example 2: a mother files for asylum and includes her 19-year-old daughter as a derivative beneficiary, but the daughter also has her own basis to claim asylum.*

The subsequent application should be mailed to the USCIS Asylum Vetting Center, which is a different USCIS office at a different address than where the first application was mailed.

As of November 29, 2021, the address to file a spouse’s asylum application is:

<b><i>If by US Postal Service:</i></b>	<b><i>If by FedEx, UPS, or DHL:</i></b>
USCIS Asylum Vetting Center P.O. Box 57100 Atlanta, GA 30308-0506	DHS-USCIS Asylum Vetting Center 401 W. Peachtree St. NW, Suite 1000 Atlanta, GA 30308

\*Check the [USCIS Website](#), under “Special Instructions,” to verify that this is still the current filing address for the Asylum Vetting Center.

## Next Steps after Filing the Asylum Application

### Notices from USCIS

Once you have filed your asylum application and it has been accepted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), you will receive three notices, in the following sequence:

1. **First, you will receive a Receipt Notice**- USCIS will send a receipt notice to the address listed on your asylum application. The notice states that your application has been received and accepted, and is currently in process.
2. **Then, you will receive a Biometrics Notice (Fingerprint Notice)**- this notice will set an appointment for you and any derivative family members (under age 14) included in your asylum application to have your fingerprints taken at a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC). The notice will include the time, date, and location of the appointment. USCIS schedules a biometrics appointment for almost anyone who applies for an immigration benefit in the U.S., not just asylum seekers. A biometrics appointment is very routine, and short; they will simply take your photo and fingerprints. They should not ask you any questions about your asylum case. The purpose of this appointment is to allow U.S. immigration authorities to conduct a background check and ensure you are eligible for immigration benefits in the U.S.

**WHEN YOU GO TO THE APPLICATION SUPPORT CENTER TO HAVE YOUR BIOMETRICS TAKEN, YOU MUST BRING:**

- 1. THIS APPOINTMENT NOTICE, and**
- 2. PHOTO IDENTIFICATION** (e.g. passport, valid driver's license, national ID, military ID, State-issued photo ID, or USCIS-issued photo ID). **If you do not have photo identification, please expect a delay.**

Customers may not use cameras and recording capable devices (including cell phones) at an ASC. Cell phones should be silenced while in the waiting area and any conversations should be kept to a low level so as not to disrupt others. Customers must completely turn off all phones during biometrics processing.

**NOTE:** USCIS may use your fingerprints to check the criminal history records of the FBI. You may obtain a copy of your own FBI identification record using the procedures outlined within Title 28 C.F.R Section 16.32. The procedures to change, correct, or update your FBI identification record are outlined within Title 28 C.F.R. Section 16.34. Your fingerprints and photograph may also be used in an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) if you apply for, and are eligible to receive, an EAD.

**NOTE:** If USCIS ASC is **closed** due to inclement weather or for other unforeseeable circumstances, USCIS will **automatically reschedule** your appointment for the next available appointment date and mail you a notice with the new date and time.

**WARNING:** Failure to appear at this biometrics appointment, without good cause, may affect your eligibility for employment authorization. It may also result in dismissal of your asylum application or referral of your asylum application to an immigration judge if you are not currently in removal proceedings. If you are an applicant or eligible dependent in removal proceedings, failure to provide DHS with biometrics as required, except for good cause, may result in a delay in deciding your application or in your application being deemed abandoned and dismissed by the immigration judge.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** You **must** notify USCIS of any change of address within 10 days. Please see the USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov/addresschange](http://www.uscis.gov/addresschange) for instructions to change your address online or to mail a completed Form AR-11, *Alien's Change of Address Card*, to USCIS. This form is also available at any U.S. Post Office or any USCIS office. If you are in removal proceedings, you **must** also notify the Immigration Court within five working days of any change of address or telephone number by filing a completed Form EOIR-33, *Alien's Change of Address Form/Immigration Court*, in accordance with accompanying instructions, available at [www.justice.gov/eoir/form-eoir-33-eoir-immigration-court-listing](http://www.justice.gov/eoir/form-eoir-33-eoir-immigration-court-listing).

**WARNING:** You must update your mailing address with USCIS, and, if applicable, EOIR. Failure to do so may result in dismissal of your asylum application, referral of your asylum application to an Immigration Judge, or if you are already in removal proceedings, an entry of a removal order in your absence if you fail to appear at a hearing before an immigration judge.

**REQUEST FOR RESCHEDULING**

**Please reschedule my appointment.** Make a copy of this notice for your records, then mail the original with your request to the Biometrics Processing Unit (BPU), Alexandria ASC, Suite 100, 8850 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, VA 22309-1586. Once USCIS receives your request, you will be sent a new ASC appointment notice.

- 3. Several weeks later, you will receive an Interview Notice- this notice will provide the date, time, and place of your interview with an asylum officer at the asylum office located nearest to the address listed on your application.**

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

**Form I-797C, Notice of Action**

**THIS NOTICE DOES NOT GRANT ANY IMMIGRATION STATUS OR BENEFIT.**

Receipt Number ZAR [REDACTED]		Case Type I589 - APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM AND FOR WITHHOLDING OF REMOVAL	
Received Date 01/28/2020	Priority Date	Applicant [REDACTED]	
Notice Date 10/27/2021	Page 1 of 3		
[REDACTED] 1300 SPRING ST STE 500 SILVER SPRING MD 20910		<b>Please come to:</b> 1525 Wilson Blvd. Suite 300 MS 2500 Arlington, VA 20598-2500 <b>On (Date):</b> Thursday, December 02, 2021 <b>At (Time):</b> 01:00PM	
We have mailed an official notice about this case (and any relevant documentation) according to the mailing preferences you chose on Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative. <b>This is a courtesy copy, not the official notice.</b>			
<b>What the Official Notice Said</b>			
You and your dependent family members on your Form I-589 (if any) are scheduled for an asylum interview on the date and time shown above. Please read this interview notice in its entirety, as it contains important information about your asylum interview. USCIS asylum offices are open with additional precautions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). USCIS will conduct office cleaning and ensure social distancing, including by using video or other technology for interviews. In Department of Homeland Security-controlled spaces, such as USCIS asylum offices, the COVID-19 guidance below supersedes state, local, tribal, or territorial rules and regulations regarding face coverings.			
The COVID-19 guidance below was published on the USCIS.gov website on September 7, 2021. For any subsequent updates to this guidance, please refer to the website at: <a href="http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-visitor-policy">www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-visitor-policy</a> and also at: <a href="http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-to-covid-19">www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-to-covid-19</a> .			

***I. You must appear for this interview unless*** you, your dependent family members, other members of your household, your attorney or representative, or interpreter:

- Have COVID-19 or any symptoms of COVID-19 per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including, but not limited to, a recently developed cough, fever, difficulty breathing, new loss of smell or taste, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, congestion, sore throat, or vomiting (list is not all-inclusive);
- Have been in close contact (within six feet for a total of 15 minutes or more) with anyone known to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days (unless you are fully vaccinated or if you are a health care worker and consistently wear an N95 respirator and proper personal protective equipment (PPE) or equivalent when in contact with COVID-19 positive individuals);
- Have returned from domestic air, international air, or cruise ship travel in the past 10 days (unless you are fully vaccinated);
- Have been instructed by a health care provider, public health authority, or government entity to self-isolate or self-quarantine in the past 14 days (unless you have been cleared to end isolation or quarantine); or
- Refuse to wear a face covering or mask in accordance with USCIS policy.

Fully vaccinated means it has been at least two weeks since you received your second dose in a two-dose series, or at least two weeks since you received a single-dose vaccine.

You may request to reschedule your appointment due to illness or heightened risk of severe COVID-19 infection due to age or underlying medical conditions, and the delay will not be attributed to you. **Contact your asylum office in writing by mail or e-mail as soon as possible to reschedule your interview.** For asylum office contact information, visit the Asylum Office Locator page at [egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asy](https://egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asy). Failure to appear for your interview without good cause may result in immediate referral to an immigration judge.

***II. Who should come with you to your interview?***

Only the following people may come with you to your interview:

- ***Dependents:*** All family members included in your application as dependents must come to your interview.

Receipt Number ZAR [REDACTED]		Case Type 1589 - APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM AND FOR WITHHOLDING OF REMOVAL
Received Date 01/28/2020	Priority Date	Applicant [REDACTED]
Notice Date 10/27/2021	Page 3 of 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Minor Applicants:</i> If you are a minor, a <u>trusted adult</u> may come with you.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>III. What to Bring to Your Interview:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If available, bring a written form of identification for you and each of your dependent family members on your Form I-589 (if any) which indicates name, date of birth, place of birth, and nationality.</li> <li>• If available, bring the original and one copy of evidence of your relationship to your family members on your Form I-589 (such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, or affidavits).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>IV. COVID-19 Safety Precautions:</u></b></p> <p>In areas of high or substantial transmission (<a href="#">CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker County View</a>), all federal employees, contractors, and visitors <b>must wear a mask inside federal buildings.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may not enter the facility more than 15 minutes before your appointment.</li> <li>• USCIS will provide hand sanitizer at entry points.</li> <li>• There will be markings and physical barriers in the facility; you should pay close attention to these signs to ensure that you and other individuals accompanying you to your interview can follow social distancing guidelines.</li> <li>• You may have to answer health screening questions before entering a facility.</li> <li>• Bring your own <b>black ink</b> or <b>blue ink</b> pen to your interview.</li> </ul> <p>All interview participants who are not part of the same household will be asked to participate in the interview from separate rooms, through videoconference or telephone. You will be in a separate room from the interviewing officer. If you bring an attorney or representative, or an interpreter, they will be asked to participate in a room separate from you and separate from the interviewing officer, unless you and the attorney or representative or you and the interpreter (if permitted per section II above) assume the risk and consent to share the same interview room.</p> <p>If you wish to submit additional evidence not previously submitted with your Form I-589, you should submit it to the asylum office by email, fax, or mail <b>at least</b> 7 to 10 days before the interview. You may not drop off the evidence in person before the interview, as the asylum office will only be admitting individuals with confirmed interviews or appointments. If you do not submit your additional evidence before the day of your interview, USCIS may reschedule your interview.</p>		

## Scheduling the Asylum Interview

After USCIS receives your application and ensures it is complete, it will send your application to the local asylum office near you, to schedule an interview. The purpose of the interview is make sure that the applicant qualifies for asylum.

Congress has instructed the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to interview Afghan evacuees within 45 days after they file an asylum petition, and to generally issue a final decision within 150 days.\*

*\*This deadline is what USCIS hopes to achieve, but how quickly the asylum application is processed will depend on capacity of each asylum office.*

## Rescheduling the Asylum Interview

It is best to attend the asylum interview on the time and date assigned by the asylum office. However, issues arise and in certain circumstances, you may need to reschedule the interview. The process for rescheduling varies for each local asylum office, so please refer to your interview notice for specific instructions on how to reschedule your interview date.

## Preparing for the Asylum Interview

### Bring Originals of Evidence Documents Submitted

If you submitted copies of certain documents with your asylum application, be sure to bring the original version of those documents to your interview, so that the asylum officer can compare them and make sure the copy is true. This may include birth certificates, passports, or government ID cards. Please refer to your interview notice for further instructions related to original documents.

### Bring an Extra Copy of Evidence Already Submitted

If possible, it is strongly recommended that you bring an extra copy of the evidence packet you previously submitted by mail, just in case any documents were misplaced by the asylum office.

### How to Submit Any New/Additional Evidence

While the asylum office prefers that you submit evidence in support of your asylum application with your initial application, you may obtain new evidence after you file. If you obtain anything new after filing your application, bring that documentation to your interview; be sure that you bring two (2) copies of each document. When you arrive for your interview, inform the asylum office staff member at the front window that you have additional documents to show the asylum officer. They will instruct you on whether those documents should be turned in to the front desk or handed directly to the officer at the start of your interview.

### Preparing for Interpretation at the Interview

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asylum Office is providing interpreters for asylum applicants through a telephone interpretation service. If a government-provided interpreter is not available, the asylum office may reschedule your interview.

***NOTE:** This guidance is currently in effect through March 16, 2022 and will be subject to change after this date at the discretion of USCIS.*

### Arriving at the Asylum Office and “Check-In” Process

***NOTE:** BRING YOUR INTERVIEW NOTICE WITH YOU TO YOUR INTERVIEW AND WEAR A MASK!*

Arrive at the asylum office approximately 15 minutes before the scheduled time for your asylum interview. Due to COVID-19 protocols, if you arrive more than 15 minutes before your interview, you may be asked to wait outside the office until 15 minutes prior to your scheduled interview time. When you arrive at the asylum office, you will be required to pass through security, which includes a metal detector.

After you enter the asylum office, check-in for your interview at the window indicated. The clerk will ask you for your interview notice and your photo identification. Then, the clerk will make a copy of your photo identification document, and will keep your interview notice. You will then be asked to take digital fingerprints and a digital photograph to confirm your identity. Once the check-in process is complete, you will be asked to wait in the lobby for your asylum officer to call

you back to an office for your interview. Keep in mind that you may need to wait a few hours at the Asylum Office. You should plan to spend most of the day there.

## Bring Derivative Family Members

If you included any immediate family members in the U.S. as derivative beneficiaries to your application for asylum, you must also bring them with you in person to your asylum interview. These individuals will also need to “check-in” at the front window at the same time you do. In most cases, derivative family members will be asked to wait in the lobby of the asylum office during most of your interview. They will not be present for your testimony.

The asylum officer may request to speak with derivative applicants as well. It is not likely that the asylum officer will ask your derivative family members questions related to your asylum claim. However, derivative applicants may be required to answer questions related to the possible bars to receiving asylum status. Examples of the asylum bars include:

- If you have been convicted of a “particularly serious crime,” one that would make immigration authorities believe you are a danger to the United States
- If you have committed a “serious nonpolitical crime” outside the United States, even if you were never arrested or convicted of any wrongdoing
- If you pose a danger to the security of the United States
- If you have been firmly resettled in another country before arriving in the United States

## Preparing for the Interview

When it is time for your interview, the asylum officer assigned to your case will escort you from the lobby to the asylum officer’s private office. The officer will then contact an interpreter by phone, if an interpreter is necessary. Once the interpreter has been contacted, the officer will ask you to swear that you will tell the truth during the interview. You may need to sign a form, swearing to tell the truth.

Then, the asylum interview will proceed in three phases:

1. **First**, the asylum officer will begin by reviewing your identity documents and your I-589 application for asylum form with you. If there are any changes or corrections to make since the time you filed your application, the officer will write those changes on the form in pen. After reviewing the whole form, they will review each of the changes and ask you to confirm that you understand the changes made, and that your application is true and complete. You will swear it is true by signing the form.
2. **Second**, the asylum officer will ask you to explain why you are applying for asylum. The asylum officer may ask you a general question such as “Why are you afraid to return to your country?” or she may begin by asking specific questions about information included in your application or supporting documents. Always be honest when answering the officer’s questions.

3. **Finally**, the asylum officer will ask you a few additional questions to make sure that none of the bases to deny an applicant asylum apply to you. A few examples of the questions you may be asked are:

- Have you ever engaged in terrorist activity, or are you likely to engage in terrorist activity in the future?
- Have you ever been a member of a terrorist organization, or have you ever persuaded others to support terrorist activity or a terrorist organization?
- Have you ever provided any support to a terrorist organization?
- Have you ever received any military or weapons training from any organization that, at the time the training was received, was considered a terrorist organization?

#### *Additional Considerations for the Interview*

If you do not understand a question that the officer is asking you, whether it is because of a language/interpretation problem or another issue, ask the officer to clarify the question. Do not try to guess at the answer. You can say, “I’m sorry, I do not understand. Can you please repeat the question?” or “I’m sorry, I do not understand. Could you please ask the question a different way?”

Keep in mind that the asylum officer’s job is to protect the U.S. government by making sure that only people who qualify for asylum receive asylum status. To do their job, they must do their best to understand your story, and make sure that you are telling the truth, and not making up a story just to win asylum. Do not be discouraged if you are asked the same question several times or in different ways. The asylum officer is just doing their job, and trying to make sure you are telling the truth.

### **Receiving a Decision from the Asylum Office**

The asylum office will not give you a decision about your application on the day of your interview. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all decisions about asylum applications are mailed to the asylum applicant. It is very important to make sure that the asylum officer has your best mailing address, so you can receive the decision. For Afghan asylum applicants, Congress has ordered the asylum office to issue decisions within 150 days of filing the asylum application. If you do not receive a decision and more than six months have passed since you filed your asylum application, you may want to talk to an attorney.

The possible decisions that the Asylum Office may issue are explained below:

#### *Approval Letter*

If you receive an approval letter, you have been granted asylum. One year from the date of your approval, you can file for lawful permanent resident status for a “green card.” For more information about asylee benefits, review the relevant section in this toolkit, below.

#### *Recommended Approval Letter*

If you receive a recommended approval, it means that the Asylum Officer is planning to approve your case, but is waiting for the results of your background check, to make sure that



you do not have a criminal record or are otherwise still eligible. Once that clearance comes through, if no negative information is revealed on your background check, you will receive an approval letter.

### *Referral Letter*

If the asylum office decides not to grant your case, and you are either (1) not currently in lawful immigration status (like parole) or (2) you are in lawful immigration status but are otherwise subject to removal, due to a criminal or other issue, you will receive a referral letter. The referral letter will include a Notice to Appear before an Immigration Judge in Immigration Court. This document commences removal proceedings, and once this document is also received by the Immigration Court, you will be at risk of deportation. Once you appear for your hearing before the Immigration Court, you will have the opportunity to present your asylum case anew, in front of an Immigration Judge. If you receive a referral letter, you should **consult with an attorney immediately**.

### *Denial*

If you are still in a valid status (like parole) and the asylum office decides not to grant your case for asylum, the asylum office may issue a denial in your case. You will remain in your current, valid status until that status expires. If you receive a denial letter, you should **consult with an attorney immediately to explore other possible forms of relief**.

## Applying for Work Authorization as an Asylum Applicant

### Disclaimer about Employment Authorization for Afghan Applicants

On November 8, 2021, [USCIS announced](#) its intention to streamline the processing of asylum applications for Afghans. According to this announcement, for an Afghan asylum applicant, USCIS plans to schedule an initial asylum interview within 45 days of filing the application, and aspires to issue a final decision in the asylum case within 150 days of filing the application.

If USCIS does expedite consideration of these asylum applications, it may impact whether and when an Afghan asylum applicant needs to apply for work authorization. It may be that the asylum case is adjudicated first, and if the Asylum Office grants asylum, the individual will not need to apply for work authorization based on a *pending* asylum case; they will be eligible to work based on their *approved* asylum status and will be automatically issued work authorization by USCIS based on that asylum status.

If the Asylum Office does *not* grant the asylum, the case may be referred to the immigration court. If the asylum claim is referred to the immigration court, the applicant may be eligible later to file their application for employment authorization based on the *pending* asylum claim.

### Rules about Applying for Employment Authorization

An asylum applicant who is eligible to apply for work authorization in the United States must wait 150 days *after* filing their asylum application before they may apply for work authorization.

The first EAD for an asylum-seeker is free, but subsequent renewals require a \$410 filing fee (or fee waiver). The first EAD for an asylee is free.

Afghan parolees are eligible for work authorization based on their parole status, and on November 8, 2021, [USCIS announced that Afghan parolees applying for EADs are exempt from paying the parole-based EAD filing fee.](#)

### How do I apply for Work Authorization?

The application for Work Authorization is submitted using [Form I-765](#).

The application should also include a form of identification (passport biographic page or copy of birth certificate, with certified English translation), two passport-size (2" by 2") color photos, and proof that the applicant has a pending asylum case (like the USCIS receipt notice).

## If Asylum is Gr

If your asylum application is granted, you may have questions about what comes next. We include below a few important considerations:

### Documentation

If you applied for asylum *affirmatively* (meaning with the USCIS Asylum Office), due to COVID-19 protocols, the Asylum Office will not give you a decision on your case in person. They will mail a decision letter to the preferred mailing address designated on your asylum application.

If the asylum office grants you asylum, you will receive in the mail an **Asylum Approval Letter** from USCIS along with a new **Form I-94**. This Form I-94 replaces the one you may have received when you entered the U.S. (if you entered the United States through the airport or another port of entry). The I-94 document is very important: it is proof of your valid asylum status. You can use it to show your eligibility to seek and accept employment in the U.S., and later, to apply for your green card (called Adjustment of Status).

If you previously obtained a social security card based on a parole-based work authorization, you may notice that the social security card has “restrictions” on it; it says that you are only allowed to work “with DHS authorization.” Once you have both a **Form I-94** that shows your asylum status and your **Asylum Approval Letter**, you may obtain an “**unrestricted**” **Social Security card**. An unrestricted Social Security card may make it easier to complete required pre-employment paperwork, apply for benefits, and obtain a job. To obtain the card, you should contact the Social Security office nearest you using the Social Security Office Locator [tool](#) on the Social Security Administration’s (“SSA”) website. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the process for obtaining an updated Social Security card has varied from office to office. You should call, explain the situation to a representative, and ask them the appropriate course of action.

### Work Authorization

If you were granted asylum by an Asylum Office, you will receive a new Employment Authorization Document (“EAD”) in the mail following your grant of asylum. However, an asylee is automatically eligible to work in the United States just based on their status as an asylee, they are not required hold an EAD to demonstrate that they are authorized to work in the U.S. Asylees can show employers that they are authorized to work in the U.S. by showing: (1) their Form I-94 (showing asylum status), (2) an unrestricted Social Security Card, and (3) a valid photo ID.

However, having a valid EAD can help.<sup>1</sup> Many employers do not understand the other documents which establish asylum status, and some asylees struggle to obtain other U.S. government documents (like a driver’s license, for example) without an EAD. We strongly encourage asylees to obtain state-issued photo ID if possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Some employers may state that you are *required* to present an EAD as proof of employment eligibility. This may constitute document abuse. Please contact the [Immigrant and Employee Rights](#) Section of the Department of Justice for more information.

## Asylum Status for Derivative Family Members

If your immediate family members (your spouse or unmarried child under the age of 21) are already in the United States and were listed on your asylum application, in most situations, they should automatically be granted asylum status too, and will be included on your asylum approval. They will not get their own asylum approval letters; their names will be listed on your asylum approval letter. However, a derivative asylee will get their own Form I-94.

If your immediate family members are in the United States but were not included in the asylum application, or are abroad, you can file an **I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition** with USCIS to confer derivative asylum status to the family member(s). If your family members are abroad, after USCIS adjudicates this petition, USCIS will then forward the case to the appropriate U.S. consulate abroad. Then, consulate will process the application and issue visas to your qualifying family members. The spouse and/or children will be admitted into the United States as asylees with benefits and rights like yours.

If you believe you need to file an I-730 petition, we recommend that you contact an immigration attorney to assist you in this process.

## Travel

An asylee **SHOULD NOT** use, obtain, or renew their passport from their country of origin. Doing so could potentially jeopardize their asylum status. If an asylee wishes to travel abroad (and has not yet become a U.S. Citizen), they should apply for a passport-like document from USCIS called a **Refugee Travel Document**. Please review this USCIS [webpage](#) for more information. We strongly suggest anyone seeking a travel document consult with an attorney before traveling outside the country.

**Importantly, an asylee SHOULD NOT return to their country of origin;** doing so may cast doubt on the validity of the client's claim of a fear of persecution, and may prompt DHS to initiate the process to terminate asylum status.

## Adjustment of Status (Applying for a Green Card)

An asylee must demonstrate that they have been physically present in the United States for at least one year after their grant of asylum to adjust status to lawful permanent residence. The form for the application (Form I-485) is available on this USCIS webpage. Fee waivers are available for certain applicants. Because asylum status can be terminated, we encourage eligible asylees to apply to adjust status as soon as they are able. If you have questions about the adjustment of status process, contact an immigration attorney for assistance.

## Benefits

Asylees are eligible for several federal public benefits including Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income. Asylees are also eligible for the various benefits and services funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement ("ORR"). ORR's programs, which are offered by HIAS affiliates and other refugee resettlement agencies across the country, include health

screening programs, employment services, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and more. Asylees are also eligible for case management, which provides a range of services, from help applying for public benefits to assistance obtaining documents (an updated Social Security card, for example) to referrals to other service providers to address specific concerns you may have. For many asylees, receiving asylum is both liberating and exciting, but it can also feel overwhelming—there is a lot to learn and figure out. A good case manager can help you find answers to their questions and serve as a great resource.

Certain ORR-funded programs are only available for a limited period following an asylum grant (for the first eight months following a grant, for example), so it is important for a new asylee to contact an asylee benefits provider as soon as possible. More information is available at [www.asyleeoutreach.org](http://www.asyleeoutreach.org) or you can contact the HIAS Asylee Outreach Project at [asyleeoutreach@hias.org](mailto:asyleeoutreach@hias.org) for assistance getting in touch with a provider near you.