

Winston Pro Bono Team Secures Victory for Congolese Asylum Seeker

MAY 8, 2019

Winston & Strawn Partner Kurt Mathas and Associates DaWanna McCray and Tom Neuner recently obtained asylum for our client and his firm who fled the Republic of Congo after being imprisoned, tortured, and threatened with death. As a paralegal in the Republic of Congo, our client's firm represented the families of three men who peacefully protested the outcome of a government election, but were instead accused of trying to overthrow the government. Because of their involvement, their law office was destroyed by fire and our client's wife, family, and law partner were all murdered. While trying to flee the country, our client was arrested, and was imprisoned, tortured, and threatened to be murdered. He managed to escape and fled to the United States, and his asylum case was referred to Winston by the National Immigrant Justice Center in 2013.

After his asylum interview in 2016, our client's case was referred to removal proceedings and scheduled for an asylum hearing before the immigration court. At the April 2019 hearing, DaWanna conducted the direct examination and, after cross-examination by the government, the judge found our client to be credible and granted him asylum while commending him for his perseverance and courage and praising DaWanna for her excellent lawyering.

The team's outstanding advocacy has ensured that our client is protected from future harm. When he arrived to the U.S. our client was injured, traumatized, spoke virtually no English, and was homeless and sleeping on CTA trains. Today, he works in the oil fields of North Dakota and has a goal of owning his own trucking business.



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