

Winston Secures Asylum for Guatemalan Domestic Abuse Victim and Her Child

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A Winston & Strawn team recently secured asylum for a Guatemalan mother and her child who were seeking refuge in the United States to escape recurring domestic violence. This victory was a joint effort among members of Winston's Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles offices, including Partner Michael Mayer; Associates Kevin Goldstein, and Anthony Baker; WRC Supervisor Ivette Garcia; Immigration Pro Bono Supervisory Attorney Nareeneh Sohbatian; and Paralegal Laurence Legall.

"Protecting people fleeing persecution, like our client and her family, is some of the most important and rewarding work we can do as attorneys," said Kevin Goldstein. "The entire Winston team could not be happier that she and her family will now have a chance to live safely and build their lives in the United States."

Winston's client fled with her son from Guatemala after suffering years of abuse from male figures in her life, including severe domestic abuse and multiple violent attacks by her son's father. Because it is widely accepted in Guatemala for men to claim ownership over women, there is no recourse for mistreatment, even the extreme violence she endured. When she fled to the United States, her former partner continued to send texts threatening her and her children's lives if she were to return.

In one of the first in-person trials since COVID-19 began, the IJ ruled from the bench after our client's gripping testimony, and reviewing the voluminous record developed by the Winston team—including texts, medical records, psychologist expert reports, and country conditions reports—supporting the claim for asylum. Acknowledging the strength of Winston's case, opposing counsel waived appeal, making the asylum grant final and complete on the day of the trial.

"There are no letters or words that can express my gratitude; I know you worked very hard so that we could be safe and have a peaceful life and that is priceless," she said. "My children and I will be eternally grateful."



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