

PREFACE

What a difference two and one-half years make in the field of asylum law. The years 2005, 2006, and 2007 have brought a number of positive changes along with new obstacles for asylum-seekers in the United States. At the time the last edition went to press, the REAL ID Act had just gone into effect, increasing the already heavy burden of proof shouldered by asylum-seekers. At the same time, the REAL ID Act removed the asylee adjustment cap and the long waiting periods asylees endured before they could obtain their permanent residency. It's a mixed and ever-changing bag we thrust upon refugees arriving on our shores.

Recent changes at the time of this edition show us that modest gains for asylum-seekers can be erased with the stroke of a pen by the Board of Immigration Appeals. The lesson boils down to this: there are sweet victories from time to time, but also much work that still needs to be done.

Whether you are tackling your very first asylum claim, or your 100th, I hope you will keep in mind:

- You are the voice for the voiceless. Your representation ensures that refugees are afforded due process. You are a Godsend to your client and the asylum system.
- DHS attorneys have a duty to uphold international refugee law and ensure that justice is done. Sometimes they forget this, and when they do, a gentle reminder never hurts.
- The law is a mighty weapon and a shield. Use it fully and wisely. Re-read the statute, re-read the regulations, negotiate, object, make arguments no one has ever made before, find the perfect country expert, give openings and closings, file motions, and appeal when you have to.
- Take good care of yourself. Representing asylum-seekers is hard work. Harder than you may have ever dreamed. Exercise, meditate, and commiserate with others. Enjoy your life. You will be a better advocate.

Regina Germain
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