

Haque Helps Persecuted Three Secure Asylum

Jenner & Block Associate Shahid U. Haque has won U.S. asylum for seven refugees since he first started with the Firm as a summer associate, including three victories in the last year.

"While the need for technical legal expertise in these cases is not always great, the stakes are very high," says Mr. Haque, a member of the Firm's Litigation Department as well as its Class Action Litigation and Arbitration: Domestic and International Practices. "It's important that these individuals are adequately represented throughout the whole process."

Language barriers, administrative delays, limited evidence, and the physical and mental trauma that refugees have endured pose unique challenges in every asylum case that Mr. Haque is involved in, he says.

In these cases, his clients seeking asylum must prove that they have a "well-founded fear of persecution" in their home country. However, because

many refugees have come to the United States with little or no documentation of their background and history in their homeland, this standard of proof must typically be met through the individual's testimony.

As a means of supplementing a client's testimony, Mr. Haque pieces together as much additional evidence as possible to persuade the Immigration Officer that asylum should be granted. This involves preparing affidavits of individuals who personally know the client and support asylum, and in-depth research of the home nation's political landscape.

In his first asylum case at the Firm, Mr. Haque and Associate Reena R. Bajowala, represented a client whose family had been falsely accused of treason and repeatedly tortured by the government officers of Togo.

In another case, Mr. Haque successfully represented a client who had been persecuted for her political

activities in her native country of Togo. Among other things, government soldiers beat the client for distributing pamphlets on behalf of an opposition political party.

In his most recent asylum victory, Mr. Haque represented a client who was detained, interrogated, and threatened with physical harm by the Togolese government for protesting the results of the country's presidential election. He is currently working on a new case, representing a client from Eritrea.

"These are the neediest of people — they have escaped from horrible persecution, spent every penny they had to get here, and are still essentially fighting for their lives," Mr. Haque said. "When you help someone overcome all of that it's incredibly rewarding."



Shahid U. Haque