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DENYING RELIEF TO THE PERSECUTOR:
AN ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF ADOPTING
THE DISSENTING OPINION OF
NEGUSIE V. HOLDER

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I. INTRODUCTION

The evidence introduced at trial showed that the defendants filed numerous asylum applications containing fictitious stories of persecution that the clients had supposedly suffered in their home countries on ethnic, religious, or political grounds. The applications were often supported by doctor's letters, medical certificates, affidavits and other documents that were counterfeit or fraudulent. As a result, scores of . . . clients fraudulently obtained lawful status as asylees in the United States.¹

A. Paying for Persecution

When fraudulent asylum claims are granted, the integrity of the asylum system is jeopardized.² These individuals are allowed

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1. Press Release, Acting U.S. Attorney Lawrence G. Brown, Eastern District of California, Department of Justice, Three Attorneys and Two Interpreters Convicted in Long-Running Asylum Fraud Scheme (June 25, 2009). Three attorneys and two interpreters were convicted before a federal court jury in Sacramento after a three and a half month trial for filing hundreds of fraudulent asylum applications from 2000 to 2004. Id. The convictions were a result of an extensive investigation by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Id. Many of the documents submitted in support of these claims were purported to be notarized declarations or doctor statements, when in reality they were fictitious and based on the false asylum stories. Id. The lead prosecutor, Benjamin Wagner, described it as "an audacious scheme . . . [I]t was an assembly line fraud factory that turned out hundreds of false claims." Dennis Walsh, Big Asylum Fraud Case is up to Jury, THE SACRAMENTO BEE, June 20, 2009, at B1. The government has not decided whether it will seek to reopen these claims. Martha Neil, 3 Lawyers Guilty in 'Assembly-Line Fraud Factory' Calif. Asylum Scam, A.B.A. JOURNAL, June 26, 2009, at 1, http://www.abajournal.com/news/3_lawyers_convicted_in_asylum_scam/.

2. U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-08-935 U.S. ASYLUM
to remain in the United States and take advantage of benefits reserved for those who are lawfully present in this country.\(^3\) The use of false documents to enter the United States is especially concerning after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, which intensified fears that terrorists would enter the United States illegally and become "embedded" in the population.\(^4\)

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) denies an alien asylum if he or she has persecuted others on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.\(^5\) This is referred to as the "persecutor bar" because it bars those aliens from admission to the United States.\(^6\) In \textit{Fedorenko v. United States},\(^7\) the Supreme Court interpreted this statute and determined that it did not contain a duress exception: the statute applies to aliens regardless of whether the persecution was performed voluntarily or involuntarily (under duress).\(^8\)

Part II of this Comment will give a brief history of the source of asylum law. This section will also include summaries of the portions of both the INA and the REAL ID Act that pertain to the persecutor bar. Part III will further discuss the \textit{Fedorenko}\(^9\) case

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\(^{3}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{4}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{5}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{6}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{7}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{8}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{9}\) \textit{Id.}
and the circuit court split that now exists on how to apply the resulting test. This section will analyze *Negusie v. Holder* and whether there should be an implied duress exception to the persecutor bar.

Part IV will propose that the dissenting opinion in *Negusie*, which holds that the INA should not be read to contain a duress exception, should be followed on remand. Funding, workforce, and training programs should be increased in order to allow asylum interviews to be conducted in the native country of the applicant. This would allow officers to conduct more thorough investigations and would also help combat asylum fraud.

II. BACKGROUND

As a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, immigration law has taken center stage as the United States has tightened entrance requirements for aliens seeking legal status in the United States. Immigration law allows for aliens who enter this country, whether legally or illegally, to be granted protection in the form of asylum if they are able to demonstrate an inability to return to their native country because of a well-founded fear of persecution.

A. Source of Asylum Law

Establishing a history of the INA helps to understand the asylum application process. After World War II, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was established in response to the massive number of people displaced and in need of resettlement. The IRO was meant to be a temporary agency, but by 1950 it was...
recognized that the refugee problem was not temporary.\(^{16}\) The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees was established as a permanent body in response to this need.\(^{17}\)

Subsequently, the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the “Convention”) was enacted to establish a definition of “refugee” that would provide assistance to persons who lacked a home after World War II.\(^{18}\) The United States responded by enacting the INA in 1952.\(^{19}\) In 1967, the United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (the “Protocol”) was enacted, and it incorporated key elements from the Convention.\(^{20}\) The Protocol broadened the definition of “refugee” by eliminating the time and geographic limitations contained in the Convention.\(^{21}\) Assisting war torn Europe was no longer the focus; rather, protecting refugees from all over the world was now the primary goal.\(^{22}\)

The United States became a signatory to the Protocol in 1968.\(^{23}\) In 1980, the United States enacted the Refugee Act that incorporated the provisions of the Protocol into its domestic law, including the definition of “refugee.”\(^{24}\) Whether an alien is considered a refugee is one of the threshold matters to be considered in the asylum process.

**B. Applying for Asylum**

Asylum is a discretionary form of relief and is based on an evaluation of all the facts and circumstances in the particular case.\(^{25}\) An alien must be physically present in the United States to

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16. Id.
17. Id.
18. Id. at 575-76.
19. Id. at 576.
20. Hughes, supra note 5, at 307. Both the Convention and the Protocol also included the principle of non-refoulement. Id. This principle prohibits the return of refugees to countries where they would face persecution. Id. Article I of the Convention Against Torture also allows for an alien to remain in the United States upon a showing that it is more likely than not that he or she would be tortured if removed. 8 C.F.R. § 208.16 (2009). Protection under the Convention Against Torture, like asylum, is a form of relief available to aliens in the United States. Hughes, supra note 5, at 308, 332, 336.
21. Id. at 307.
22. Durland, supra note 13, at 576.
24. Hughes, supra note 5, at 307.
25. Id. at 307, 313, 330. In contrast, withholding of removal is a mandatory form of relief if the alien meets the statutory standard. Mark von Sternberg, Outline of United States Asylum Law: Substantive Criteria and Procedural Concerns, 190 PLI/ NY 39, 42 (2009). Withholding of removal is a much stricter standard because the alien must show a clear probability of persecution as
apply for asylum.\textsuperscript{26} Once present, he must meet the definition of refugee to be eligible for asylum.\textsuperscript{27} The INA defines a refugee as,

\begin{quote}
[A]ny person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion . . . .\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

In accordance with this definition, an alien must be able to demonstrate that he has suffered persecution or that he has a well-founded fear of being subjected to persecution if returned to his native country.\textsuperscript{29} Past persecution and a well-founded fear of future persecution are independent bases for asylum.\textsuperscript{30} The applicant has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he qualifies as a refugee under the INA, and that his membership in one of the five protected classes will be the reason for his persecution.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{26} 8 U.S.C. § 1158(a)(1). "Any alien who is physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States . . . irrespective of such alien's status, may apply for asylum in accordance with this section or, where applicable, section 1225(b) of this title." \textit{Id.}

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Id.} § 1158(b)(1)(A). The INA gives the conditions for granting asylum:

The Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General may grant asylum to an alien who has applied for asylum in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General under this section if the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General determines that such alien is a refugee within the meaning of section 1101(a)(42)(A) of this title. \textit{Id.} See also Hughes, supra note 5, at 307 (stating that both asylum and withholding of removal require an alien to establish that he is a refugee); Matter of Acosta, 19 I. & N. Dec. 211, 213 (BIA 1985), overruled in part by Matter of Mogharrabi, 19 I & N. Dec. 439, 439 (BIA 1990) (overruling Acosta in so far as it held that the clear probability of persecution standard and the well founded fear of persecution standard were not meaningfully different and, in practical application, converged), and \textit{disapproved of} by INS v. Cardoza-Fonseca, 480 U.S. 421, 432 (1987) (holding that language used by Congress indicates that it meant for the standards for asylum and withholding of removal to differ from each other).


\textsuperscript{29} Durland, supra note 13, at 577.

\textsuperscript{30} Hughes, supra note 5, at 311.

\textsuperscript{31} 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(i). "To establish that the applicant is a refugee within the meaning of such section, the applicant must establish that race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion was or will be at least one central reason for persecuting the applicant." \textit{Id.} See also Zhang Jian Xie v. INS, 434 F.3d 136, 139 (2d Cir. 2006) (stating that if evidence suggests that the applicant was a persecutor, then he will have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that he did
The INA does not contain a definition of “persecution,” nor is there a universally accepted definition. The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) has defined persecution as “a threat to the life or freedom of, or the infliction of suffering or harm upon, those who differ . . . in a way regarded as offensive.” It should be noted, however, that not all treatment qualifies as persecutory under the BIA. The BIA has held that persecution does not include all treatment that our society might consider unfair, unjust, or even unlawful or unconstitutional. Harsh conditions that are shared by many people will not satisfy the persecution requirement. Furthermore, in order to be considered persecution, the conduct must rise above the level of simple harassment.

32. Durland, supra note 13, at 577; Lerescu, supra note 23, at 1879.
34. See Acosta, 19 I. & N. Dec at 222 (holding that the definition of persecution prior to enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980 should be applied to the term as it appears in section 101(a)(42)(A) of the INA); see also Matter of Maccaud, 14 I. & N. Dec. 429, 434 (BIA 1973) (noting that “[w]hile there is no precise definition in the statute, [persecution] has been defined by the courts as ‘the infliction of suffering or harm upon those who differ (in race, religion, or political opinion) in a way regarded as offensive.’”); Kovac v. INS, 407 F.2d 102, 107 (9th Cir. 1969) (stating that “persecution is too strong a word to be satisfied by proof of the likelihood of minor disadvantage or trivial inconvenience” and that the term persecution maintains its ordinarily conveyed meaning of “the infliction of suffering or harm upon those who differ (in race, religion, or political opinion) in a way regarded as offensive.”); Pavlovich v. Gonzales, 476 F.3d 613, 616 (8th Cir. 2007) (defining persecution as “the infliction or threat of death, torture, or injury to one’s person or freedom on account of a statutorily protected ground.”)
35. Lerescu, supra note 23, at 1880. It has generally been held that an asylum claim will not “succeed where a foreign sovereign is making a neutral application of its criminal statutes.” Sternberg, supra note 25, at 56.
36. Matter of V-T-S., 21 I. & N. Dec. 792, 798 (BIA 1997) (quoting Fatin v. INS, 12 F.3d 1233 (3d Cir. 1993)). “If persecution were defined that expansively, a significant percentage of the world’s population would qualify for asylum in this country—and it seems most unlikely that Congress intended such a result.” Fatin, 12 F.3d at 1240.
37. Fatin, 12 F.3d at 1240 (quoting Acosta, 19 I. & N. Dec. at 222). In Matter of Chang, the court held that a respondent’s violation of the coercive family planning policies of China (namely the “One Child Policy”) would not give rise to a claim for asylum. 20 I. & N. Dec. 38, 47 (BIA 1989). This policy was not designed to punish individuals, but to deal with the overwhelming population crisis in that country. Sternberg, supra note 25, at 56. However, the refugee definition in the INA was later amended and the court held that this amendment overturned its decision in Chang. In re X-P-T., 21 I. & N. Dec. 634 (BIA 1996).
38. Balazoski v. INS, 932 F.2d 638, 642 (7th Cir. 1991); see also Borca v. INS, 77 F.3d 210, 215 (7th Cir. 1996) (holding that being interrogated twice,
While the definition of persecution varies throughout the circuit courts, it must be on account of one of the five protected grounds enumerated in the statute: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The connection between the persecution and the applicant’s membership in a protected class requires the applicant to provide some evidence of the persecutor’s motivation. The applicant must show that the persecutor had some level of intent to cause harm that the applicant fears “in order that the persecutor may overcome a belief or characteristic of the applicant.”

An applicant’s testimony alone can be sufficient to establish his claim if his testimony is credible, persuasive, and refers to specific facts of his claim. If the trier of fact determines that
additional evidence is needed, he or she may request that an applicant provide evidence that substantiates the claim. The REAL ID Act, enacted in 2005, codified a list of several factors the trier of fact can use in determining whether the applicant is credible. Such factors include the applicant’s demeanor, candor, responsiveness during testimony, plausibility of the applicant’s claim, consistency between any oral and written statements, and any falsehoods in such statements.

If an alien is deemed credible, and can show either that he has suffered persecution or fears future persecution based on one of the five protected classes, then he must show that he is not subject to any statutory bars to the grant of asylum. There are nine statutory bars to asylum, but only the persecutor bar is

applicants may not be able to provide documentation if they fled the country where they were persecuted without these documents. ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT, supra note 2, at 2. This lack of documentation requires the asylum officer to make decisions without any supporting documentation to either support or refute the claim of the applicant. Id. During a hearing, a judge may find an alien to be especially credible where his claims of persecution are supported by reports of the current country conditions. Sternberg, supra note 25, at 49. One could argue that this is an insufficient basis to determine credibility because the public has access to these reports on the State Department’s website, and they could easily give an alien the foundation he or she needs to establish an asylum claim.

46. 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(iii). A trier of fact can consider written or oral statements made by the applicant, whether or not they were made under oath, and may consider the circumstances in which they were made. Id. In addition, the inconsistencies, falsehoods, and inaccuracies do not need to go toward the heart of the applicant’s claim in order to be considered. Id. There is no presumption of credibility; however, where an explicit adverse credibility finding is made, the applicant has a rebuttable presumption of credibility on appeal. Id. See also Kaur v. Gonzales, 418 F.3d 1061, 1066 (9th Cir. 2005) (stating that if an inconsistency is accompanied by other indications of dishonesty, an adverse credibility finding can be justified). For an interesting take on falsehoods in an applicant’s claim, see Rodriguez Galicia v. Gonzales, 422 F.3d 529, 537 (7th Cir. 2005) (holding that false information given to immigration authorities by the applicant may be consistent with a fear of persecution).
47. Hughes, supra note 5, at 323-24.
48. These statutory bars include: (1) persecution of others; (2) conviction of a particularly serious crime and a determination that the alien constitutes a danger to the community of the United States; (3) commission of a serious nonpolitical crime outside of the United States; (4) if the alien is a danger to the security of the United States; (5) terrorism-related grounds; (6) firm resettlement in another country; (7) if removal to a safe third country is possible; (8) if the alien fails to file an application within one year of his arrival to the United States; (9) if the alien has had a previous asylum
C. The Persecutor Bar

The persecutor bar, which has its roots in the Constitution of the IRO, denied refugee status to those who assisted the enemy in persecuting civil populations or had helped the enemy forces voluntarily.49 In 1948, the United States enacted the Displaced Persons Act (DPA) which included a similar provision as that of the IRO Constitution.50 The Refugee Relief Act—enacted in 1953—barred status to anyone who had assisted in the persecution of another because of race, religion, or national origin.51 In 1978, the Holtzman Amendment added persecution based on political opinion to the INA.52 The 1980 amendments to the INA created the current language of the persecutor bar.53

Pursuant to Section 208(b)(2)(A)(i) of the INA, asylum is not available as a means of relief for an alien who “ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a...
particular social group or political opinion." A court will most likely find that an alien participated in persecution if he or she actively participated in conduct that negatively impacted a victim. Merely being associated with a group that participates in persecution, however, is not sufficient to raise the effects of the persecutor bar. There must be a link between the alien's actions and the persecution. An alien is not required to prove that he or she did not participate in persecution unless there is evidence that

54. Id. § 1158(b)(2)(A)(i). This statutory bar also applies to the relief of withholding of removal. Id. § 1231(b)(3)(B)(i). The persecutor bar can also be found within the definition of refugee. Id. § 1101(a)(42).

55. See Xie, 434 F.3d at 143 (stating that by driving captive women to undergo forced abortions, the respondent assisted in persecution because his actions contributed directly to the persecution of the victims). The court in Maiga v. Holder considered four factors in determining whether the respondent's actions triggered the persecutor bar:

1. whether the alien was involved in persecution, under the same definition used to define a refugee; (2) whether the persecution was on account of the victim's protected status-i.e., whether a nexus [was] established; (3) whether the alien's conduct "assisted" in the persecution . . .; and (4) whether the alien had sufficient knowledge that his actions may have assisted in persecution.


56. Xu Sheng Gao v. U.S. Atty. Gen., 500 F.3d 93, 99 (2d Cir. 2007); see also Maikovskis v. INS, 773 F.2d 435, 446 (2d Cir. 1985) (holding that an alien's inactive membership in a group who persecuted others based on political opinion or his "tangential provision of services to such an organization" is insufficient to show that the alien assisted in the persecution as defined in the statute). The court in Xu Sheng Gao used as precedent the seminal case of Fedorenko in which the court stated,

[An individual who did no more than cut the hair of female inmates in concentration camps] before they were executed cannot be found to have assisted in the persecution of civilians. On the other hand, there can be no question that a guard who was issued a uniform and armed with a rifle and a pistol, who was paid a stipend and was regularly allowed to leave the concentration camp to visit a nearby village, and who admitted to shooting at escaping inmates on orders from the commandant of the camp, fits within the statutory language about persons who assisted in the persecution of civilians. Other cases may present more difficult line-drawing problems but we need decide only this case.

Fedorenko, 449 U.S. at 512 n.34. The Supreme Court held that the "solution to the problem" did not lie in reading a voluntariness requirement into the statute, but rather in focusing on whether the alien's particular conduct can be considered assisting in the persecution of others. Id.

57. See Xu Sheng Gao 500 F.3d at 101-02 (holding that the link between the respondent's actions and the persecution was too attenuated to find that he had assisted in the persecution). As an inspector for the Culture Management Bureau in China, the respondent in the case was responsible for confiscating books from book stores that were prohibited by the Chinese government. Id. at 95-97. There was no evidence that any of the book sellers were ever "arrested, detained, charged, prosecuted, or imprisoned" for violating the cultural laws and, thus, the respondent could not be held personally responsible for any acts of persecution. Id. at 100.
such persecution took place.\textsuperscript{58} While it is difficult enough to define persecution, the analysis becomes even more difficult when determining whether duress should be allowed as an exception to the rule.

III. ANALYSIS

The difficulty in applying the persecutor bar arises when an alien claims that his participation in persecution was the result of duress. This section analyzes the current state of the law regarding the definition of duress and whether there is a duress exception to the persecutor bar. It will also discuss the various ideas that have been put forth to remedy the seemingly unequal application of the law.

In 1948, the DPA was enacted by Congress to allow the thousands of European refugees driven from their homes to immigrate to the United States.\textsuperscript{59} However, persons found to have "assisted the enemy in persecuting civil populations" or who had "voluntarily assisted the enemy forces . . . in their operations" were excluded from the definition and, thus, denied a visa under the DPA.\textsuperscript{60}

A. United States v. Fedorenko\textsuperscript{61}

In \textit{Fedorenko v. United States}, Feodor Fedorenko, a member of the Russian army, was captured by the Germans and forced to serve as an armed guard for a Nazi concentration camp in Treblinka, Poland throughout 1942 and 1943.\textsuperscript{62} Feodor then applied for admission to the United States in 1949 under the DPA, but lied on his application about his wartime activities.\textsuperscript{63} He indicated that he was a farmer in Sarny, Poland, and never mentioned serving as an armed guard at Treblinka.\textsuperscript{64} Fedorenko also lied on his naturalization papers and in his testimony to

\begin{tabular}{l}
58. \textit{Acosta}, 19 I. & N. Dec. at 218-19 n.4. \\
59. DPA; \textit{Fedorenko}, 449 U.S. at 495. The DPA incorporated the definition of "displaced person" that was contained in the constitution of the IRO. DPA § 2(b). The IRO constitution describes a "displaced person" as a person who was deported from or forced to leave his country of nationality as a result of the actions of the authorities of the Nazi, fascist, and Falangist regimes. IRO CONST. annex I, pt. I, 62 Stat. 3037. \\
60. \textit{Fedorenko}, 449 U.S. at 495 (quoting the IRO Constitution). \\
61. \textit{Id.} at 490. \\
62. \textit{Id.} at 494. It has been estimated that eight hundred thousand people were killed at the Treblinka concentration camp. \textit{Id.} at 494 n.2. "It contained only living facilities for the SS and the persons working there. The thousands who arrived daily on the trains had no need for barracks or mess halls: they would be dead before nightfall." \textit{Id.} \\
63. \textit{Id.} at 496. \\
64. \textit{Id.} Fedorenko also lied about his nationality: stating he was born in Poland when he was actually born in the Ukraine. \textit{Id.} at 496 n.8.
\end{tabular}
examiners when he became a citizen in 1970.65

In 1979, the government brought an action to revoke his citizenship because he willfully misrepresented material facts on his visa and citizenship applications.66 The district court declined to revoke his citizenship because it found his actions to be involuntary, and therefore, he should not be excluded from immigration.67 The Fifth Circuit reversed the district court and the Supreme Court upheld the decision.68 The Supreme Court held that Fedorenko’s actions, whether voluntary or involuntary, made him ineligible for a visa.69 The Court held that Congress was perfectly capable of inserting a “voluntariness” limitation into the statute where it felt one was necessary.70 The district court was concerned that every Jewish prisoner would be excluded from immigration.71 The court’s solution to this problem was to focus on whether the particular conduct assisted in the persecution of civilians, rather than interpret the statute to include a voluntariness requirement.72

_Fedorenko_73 has been the most discussed case in interpreting the persecutor bar of the INA.74 The test of whether conduct assisted in the persecution of civilians has proven difficult to apply and has resulted in a split of the circuit courts.75

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65. Id. at 497.
66. Id. at 497-98. The representations were considered material because: the omissions would have made him ineligible to receive a visa under either § 2(a) or (b) of the DPA because he had assisted in the persecution of civilian populations, or under § 10 of the DPA because he had made a willful misrepresentation. DPA §§ 2(b), 10.
67. United States v. Fedorenko, 455 F. Supp. 893, 913 (S.D.Fla. 1978). The court noted that reading the statute to exclude persons who assisted in persecution involuntarily would exclude even the camp inmates forced to lead others to their death. Id.
68. United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F.2d 946 (5th Cir. 1979); _Fedorenko_, 449 U.S. at 490.
69. Id. at 512.
70. Id. Section 2(a) contains no reference to the action being voluntary or involuntary, while § 2(b) does. Id. “Under traditional principles of statutory construction, the deliberate omissions of the word ‘voluntary’ from § 2(a) compels the conclusion that the statute made all those who assisted in the persecution of civilians ineligible for visas.” Id.
71. Id. at 512 n.34.
72. Id.
73. Id. at 490.
74. See Lerescu, _supra_ note 23, at 1882 (providing that all analyses of the persecutor bar under the INA include a discussion of _Fedorenko_). The BIA adopted the ruling of _Fedorenko_ in the context of asylum cases in Matter of Rodriguez-Majano, 19 I. & N. Dec. 811 (BIA 1988). _Id._ at 1883. The reason for applying the _Fedorenko_ analysis to the INA is that the DPA and the persecutor bar in the INA “seek to exclude the same people: persecutors.” Durland, _supra_ note 13, at 585.
75. Durland, _supra_ note 13, at 585.
B. The Circuit Court Split

1. Considering the Applicant’s Personal Culpability

The First Circuit has held that prior or contemporaneous knowledge of persecution is required even though an applicant may have objectively participated in persecution.\(^76\) The court in *Castaneda-Castillo v. Gonzales* reasoned that although the statute contains no explicit reference to a scienter requirement, precedent as well as the definition of “persecution” imply both scienter and illicit motivation.\(^77\) The court rejected the government’s argument that the objective effect of the respondent’s actions was dispositive.\(^78\) It also held that in considering the “totality of the relevant conduct” the court must also consider the moral culpability of the applicant.\(^79\)

Similarly, in the Eighth Circuit, an applicant’s personal culpability must be considered in determining whether he assisted in persecution.\(^80\) The court in *Hernandez v. Reno* interpreted *Fedorenko*\(^81\) to mean that courts must scrutinize the entire record to establish whether the respondent should be held personally culpable for his or her conduct.\(^82\)

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76. *Castaneda-Castillo v. Gonzales*, 488 F.3d 17 (1st Cir. 2007). The respondent was a Peruvian military officer assigned to an antiterrorism unit, which was responsible for searching for members of the Shining Path. *Id.* at 19. During a search of a village in 1985, the respondent had to block escape routes as the other patrol searched for Shining Path members. *Id.* The search resulted in a massacre of innocent villagers, including many women and children. *Id.* The respondent claimed that while he was in contact with his commander, he did not know that the search resulted in such a massacre. *Id.*

77. *Id.* at 20.

78. *Id.* at 20-21.

79. *Id.* at 21. In *Castaneda-Castillo*, the court ultimately held that the persecutor bar did not apply if the respondent did not have any knowledge of the persecution. *Id.* at 22. The circuit court remanded the case to the BIA to determine whether the respondent had knowledge of the persecution. *Id.* at 22.

80. *Hernandez v. Reno*, 258 F.3d 806 (8th Cir. 2001). The Guatemalan respondent in this case was a member of the Organization for People in Arms (ORPA). *Id.* at 808. Members of the group misrepresented the nature of the organization, and the respondent was forced to join after receiving death threats. *Id.* at 808-09. The members stated that the organization used non-violent activities to protest government injustices to improve the lives of citizens. *Id.* at 809. However, the ORPA was in fact a guerilla group that used “violent means in pursuit of its goal.” *Id.* at 808. Hernandez testified that during a raid on a village, he was forced to shoot suspected government informants. *Id.* at 809. At one point, Hernandez asked to be let go, but the commander refused. *Id.* Hernandez managed to escape during a battle with government forces, but was shot in the leg as he was fleeing. *Id.* at 810.


82. *Hernandez*, 258 F.3d at 814. The court held that the BIA omitted many of the facts from its legal analysis and, thus, failed to take into consideration the respondent’s testimony that his participation was involuntary and that he
In considering the same issue, the Ninth Circuit in *Miranda Alvarado v. Gonzales* held that determining whether the respondent assisted in persecution "requires a particularized evaluation of both personal involvement and purposeful assistance in order to ascertain culpability." Specifically, this can be established by showing two requirements. First, the respondent's individual culpability must be established. Second, surrounding circumstances must be evaluated "to determine whether the applicant had assisted or otherwise participated in persecution." The court held that while the statute does not require direct involvement in the persecution, a respondent's membership in an organization does not itself amount to assisting in persecution; rather, there must be some act to further the persecutory goals.

The First, Eighth, and Ninth Circuits all interpreted *Fedorenko* to include a particularized evaluation of the respondent's conduct in determining whether he or she has assisted in persecution. Other circuits have taken a different approach and interpreted the statute to preclude an analysis of the respondent's personal motivation.

2. Considering the Objective Effects of the Applicant's Conduct and the Plain Language of the Statute

The Second Circuit took the view that neither the relevant statutes nor case law allows for an "involuntariness" exception to the persecutor bar. The court did not consider if the person's participated in many of the actions out of fear for his life. *Id.*

83. *Miranda Alvarado v. Gonzales*, 449 F.3d 915, 927 (9th Cir. 2006). The applicant in this case was a citizen of Peru who joined the Peruvian Civil Guard in Lima. *Id.* at 918. He was responsible for protecting government officials and banks from attacks by guerrilla organizations, which included the Shining Path. *Id.* His duties involved acting as an interpreter for other officers who interrogated suspected members of the Shining Path. *Id.* These persons were subjected to electric shock torture and also beaten with rubber batons. *Id.* The respondent interpreted these interrogations two to three times a month for seven years. *Id.* The court held that his actions constituted assistance in persecution because his acts were material to the interrogations. *Id.* at 932-33. In addition, the respondent was personally culpable because he did not perform the actions out of self-defense, nor were there any acts of noncompliance with the group or attempts to escape. *Id.* at 933.

84. *Id.* at 926.

85. *Id.*

86. *Id.*

87. *Id.* at 927.


90. See *Bah v. Ashcroft*, 341 F.3d 348, 351 (5th Cir. 2003) (stating that "[t]he syntax of the statute suggests that the alien's personal motivation is not relevant").

91. *Xie*, 434 F.3d at 140. The respondent in this case was a native of the People's Republic of China and served as a driver for the Changle County
actions were voluntary, but instead looked to whether the conduct was active and had direct consequences for the victims.\textsuperscript{92} If the acts were merely passive in nature and "tangential to the acts of oppression" the respondent will not be found to have assisted in persecution.\textsuperscript{93}

Similarly, in \textit{Bah v. Ashcroft}, the Fifth Circuit held that the plain language and sentence structure of the persecutor bar insinuate that the respondent's personal motivation is not relevant in determining whether he assisted in persecution.\textsuperscript{94} The court reasoned that Congress could have worded the statute in a way to allow for personal motivation to be a factor, but that it chose not to do so.\textsuperscript{95} If the objective effects of a person's actions amount to persecution, this is enough to bar them from relief under the INA.\textsuperscript{96}

The Seventh Circuit cited to the Fifth Circuit case \textit{Bah v. Ashcroft} when it determined that it is necessary to draw a line between "genuine assistance in persecution and inconsequential association with persecutors."\textsuperscript{97} The court agreed with the Ninth Department of Health. \textit{Id.} at 137. In his capacity as a driver, the respondent was responsible for driving pregnant women in the back of his locked van to hospitals so that county officials could perform forced abortions. \textit{Id.} at 138. The respondent maintained this job for purely economic reasons, but was free to leave at any time. \textit{Id.} at 137. The court concluded that the respondent's actions constituted "assistance in persecution." \textit{Id.} at 143.

\textsuperscript{92} \textit{Id.} at 142-43.

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Id.} at 143. \textit{See} \textit{Weng v. Holder}, 562 F.3d 510 (2d Cir. 2009) (stating that the respondent's post-surgical care of women who were given forced abortions was "tangential" to the persecutory act and did not facilitate directly or in an active way to the persecution). The respondent also guarded a locked room where women were kept while waiting for their abortions, but the court found that while this conduct was closer to actual assistance, it only happened on one occasion and her conduct as a whole did not support a finding of assistance in persecution. \textit{Id.} at 515. \textit{See also} Balachova v. Mukasey, 547 F.3d 374 (2d Cir. 2008) (holding that while the respondent participated in the search of a house that resulted in two adolescent girls being kidnapped and raped, his failed attempt at apprehending them was not sufficient to amount to assisting in persecution).

\textsuperscript{94} 341 F.3d at 351. Bah's family was killed after his hometown was attacked by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. \textit{Id.} at 349. Bah was transported to another city and given the option of joining the RUF or being killed. \textit{Id.} Bah was trained to use an AK-47 and shot a female prisoner when he was ordered to do so. \textit{Id.} at 350. Bah also admitted that, as part of his duties, he had to cut the hands, legs, and heads off of innocent civilians. \textit{Id.} Bah was able to escape after two failed attempts and arrived in the United States in November 1997. \textit{Id.} The court held that Bah participated in persecution, and that the persecution occurred on account of political opinion. \textit{Id.} at 351.

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Id.}

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Lerescu}, supra note 23, at 1884.

\textsuperscript{97} Singh v. Gonzales, 417 F.3d 736, 739 (7th Cir. 2005). Singh was a member of the Punjab police department in Punjab, India. \textit{Id.} at 737. As a head constable, Singh was present during the arrest, detention, and torture
Circuit that being a member of an agency or organization that persecutes others does not, in and of itself, amount to assisting in persecution. But the court also agreed with the Fifth Circuit that personal motivation does not play a role in determining what constitutes assistance in persecution.

The Second, Fifth, and Seventh Circuits precluded any consideration of the respondent's personal motivation in the persecutory acts and instead focused on the objective effect of the actions.

The circuit courts are anything but consistent in their application of the Fedorenko standard for determining what constitutes assistance in persecution. The First, Eighth, and Ninth Circuits take the approach of considering all the facts and circumstances of the applicant's case and look for a level of personal culpability. The Second, Fifth, and Seventh Circuits, however, hold that consideration of the applicant's personal motivation is precluded by the plain language of the statute. This split in the circuit courts finally came to bear in the case of Negusie v. Holder.

C. The Ambiguity of the Persecutor Bar

In Negusie v. Holder, the Supreme Court considered whether an alien who was forced to assist in persecution is eligible for relief. Daniel Negusie, a citizen of both Ethiopia and Eritrea, was conscripted into the Eritrean army. For four years he was forced to work as a prison guard in a place where the prisoners were being persecuted on the basis of one of the five protected grounds. He prevented their escape, guarded them to keep them

98. Id. at 739-40.  
99. Id. at 740.  
100. Fedorenko, 449 U.S. at 490.  
102. Id. at 1163.  
103. Id. at 1162.  
104. Id. These protected grounds include "race, religion, nationality,
in the sun, and kept them from taking showers. The Immigration Judge held that Negusie's role as an armed guard in a place where he had reason to know persecution was taking place constituted as assistance in persecution. Both the BIA and the Fifth Circuit upheld the immigration judge's decision. The Supreme Court, however, disagreed.

The Supreme Court stated that the lower courts' reliance on the ruling of Fedorenko was misplaced because the statutory structure of the DPA, interpreted in Fedorenko, is not the same as the INA, which contains the persecutor bar. The Court determined that rather than exercising its interpretive authority, the BIA relied on the rule in Fedorenko. The Supreme Court held that the BIA must use its authority to interpret the statute in order to conclude whether the persecutor bar contains a duress exception. The Court did not answer the question itself, but instead stressed the importance of the BIA's interpretation of the statute. Currently, the case is awaiting a decision from the BIA.

It has been suggested that a limited duress exception should be adopted and certain persecutory acts should be excused. Applicants who would otherwise be barred from asylum should be excused if their conduct was in response to threats of imminent death to themselves or family members. Proponents of this

membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(2)(A)(i). Prior to being forced into this position, Negusie was beaten and imprisoned for two years after he refused to fight against Ethiopia, one of his native countries. Negusie, 129 S. Ct. at 1162.

105. Id. at 1162-63.
106. Id. at 1163.
107. Id.
108. Id. at 1159.
111. Id. at 1167; Fedorenko, 449 U.S. at 512.
112. Negusie, 129 S. Ct. at 1167. “The BIA is not bound to apply the Fedorenko rule that motive and intent are irrelevant to the persecutor bar at issue in this case. Whether the statute permits such an interpretation based on a different course of reasoning must be determined in the first instance by the agency.” Id. Because the BIA has not yet interpreted the statute, the Supreme Court concluded that the proper course of action was to remand the case in order to for additional investigation or explanation. Id.
113. Id. “This remand rule exists, in part, because ‘ambiguities in statutes within an agency's jurisdiction to administer are delegations of authority to the agency to fill the statutory gap in reasonable fashion. Filling these gaps . . . involves difficult policy choices that agencies are better equipped to make than courts.’” Id. (quoting Nat'l Cable & Telecomm. Ass'n v. Brand X Internet Services, 545 U.S. 967, 980 (2005)). The deference accorded to the BIA in interpreting ambiguous INA statutes is required under Chevron U.S.A. Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 467 U.S. 837, 842-43 (1984).
114. See Lerescu, supra note 23, at 1901 (suggesting that a limited duress exception may be applied if the situation meets the requisite circumstance).
115. Id.
position make sure to explain that the exception should be limited so that only the most compelling cases would warrant excusing the persecution. Advocates on the other side of the issue feel that allowing a duress exception would only further complicate asylum cases.

Those opposed argue that the persecutor bar should not be read to include a duress exception because of the "undefined nature of the element of duress." The ambiguity in what constitutes duress would certainly ensure that the current lack of continuity in asylum cases would continue. Instead, courts should adopt the purposeful culpability standard that is contained in the Model Penal Code. The language of the statute itself as well as international law supports this conclusion. This would require a focus on the applicant’s intent, rather than on the actions of others—as a duress exception would allow.

Undoubtedly the debate will continue until the BIA interprets the statute as directed by the Supreme Court.

IV. PROPOSAL

Efforts by the appellate courts to weigh the voluntariness of person’s conduct by way of a “particularized evaluation” are

116. Id. “To be excused, persecutory acts must be (1) in response to credible threats (2) of imminent death or severe bodily injury (3) to oneself or another.” Id. Alleging simple disagreement with other persecutors' intent will not satisfy the test; the applicant needs to show that the threats made against him or her entailed infliction of severe bodily harm. Id. It is argued that requiring both a subjective and objective element be proven will ensure that the exception is applied in only the most extreme cases of physical or psychological coercion. Id.

117. Durland, supra note 13, at 596.

118. Id. The lack of uniformity would result from the varied interpretations of how immediate the duress situation needs to be in order to constitute a defense. Id. Some courts hold that the person must be held at gunpoint the entire time while others hold that a threat to kill family members would be sufficient. Id.

119. Durland, supra note 13, at 598. But see Negusie, 129 S. Ct. at 1182 (Thomas, J., dissenting) (stating that “the decision to admit an alien is a matter of legislative grace, for which judicial review has been ‘consistently classified’ as civil in nature.”). The dissent in Negusie finds it unnecessary to read a criminal law requirement into a statute that is “nonpunitive in purpose and effect.” Id.

120. Durland, supra note 13, at 598.

121. Id. at 600.

Reading a purposeful mens rea into the statute is distinguishable from reading in the term “voluntary,” or in other words allowing a duress defense, because a purposeful mens rea focuses solely on the intent of the applicant. In contrast, “voluntariness” and duress consider the actions of others which may have compelled an applicant to act. Id.
misguided.\textsuperscript{122} Creating a generally applicable rule and allowing the judge wide discretion to consider the facts of each case will only result in continued unequal application of the law.\textsuperscript{123} The BIA should follow the dissent in \textit{Negusie}\textsuperscript{124} because it concludes that the persecutor bar should not include a duress exception.\textsuperscript{125} Attention should be focused on changing the asylum application process to require that asylum interviews be conducted overseas. This would ultimately help reduce the prevalence of asylum fraud in the United States.

\textbf{A. Statutory Interpretation}

\textit{1. Congressional Intent}

The statute does not contain any reference to the term “voluntary,” nor does it include any exception for involuntary or coerced conduct.\textsuperscript{126} As the dissent in \textit{Negusie}\textsuperscript{127} correctly noted: the ordinary meaning of the words “assist” and “participate” do not suggest voluntariness.\textsuperscript{128} These terms only require that an individual take part in some way and even if participation or assistance is coerced, “it remains participation or assistance just the same.”\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{122} Lerescu, \textit{supra} note 23, at 1898. By applying this kind of a test, applicants, such as Hernandez, would be found not to have persecuted anyone when he or she lined up innocent villagers and shot at them. \textit{Id.} at 1899; \textit{see supra} note 75 and accompanying text (discussing the BIA and its adoption of \textit{Fedorenko}).

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{See supra} note 75 and accompanying text (discussing the BIA and its adoption of \textit{Fedorenko}).

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{See Negusie}, 129 S. Ct. at 1176 (Thomas, J., dissenting) (explaining why the persecutor bar does not and should not contain a duress exception).

\textsuperscript{125} The majority determined that the BIA did not exercise its interpretive authority, but instead relied on the decision of \textit{Fedorenko}. \textit{Id.} (majority opinion). The dissent puts forth several reasons, other than the decision in \textit{Fedorenko}, for not allowing a duress exception to the persecutor bar. \textit{Id.} at 1176-85 (Thomas, J., dissenting). The majority states whether other reasoning supports this conclusion of the statute is something the BIA must determine in the first instance. \textit{Id.} at 1167 (majority opinion). By adopting the dissenting opinion, the BIA would be precluding a duress exception to the persecutor bar without relying on \textit{Fedorenko}.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Id.} at 1178-79 (Thomas, J., dissenting). The relevant portion of the statute is codified at 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(2)(A)(i). This point is also acknowledged by the majority opinion. \textit{Id.} at 1164-65 (majority opinion).

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Id.} at 1159.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Id.} at 1179 (Thomas, J., dissenting opinion). “Assist” is defined: “to give support or aid” or “to help.” \textit{Id.} (quoting \textit{WEBSTERS NINTH COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY} 877 (1991) and \textit{OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY} 36 (1980)). “Participate” means “to take part” or “to have a share, to take part in something.” \textit{Id.} (quoting \textit{WEBSTER'S NINTH COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY} 858 and \textit{OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY} 487).

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Id.} In addition, the term “persecute” contains no intrinsic mens rea. \textit{Id.} “Persecute” means “to harass in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or
In addition, the structure of the INA itself gives great weight to the conclusion that the persecutor bar should apply regardless of whether the conduct was voluntary or not. Specifically, other provisions of the INA require voluntary conduct and exclude involuntary conduct.

For instance, totalitarian party members were barred from the United States unless their membership was involuntary. In another section, the INA also provides that termination of asylum is allowed if the applicant "voluntarily availed himself" of another country's protections. Where Congress has included a specific term in one part of a statute and has not included it elsewhere in the same act, it is generally presumed that Congress acted intentionally and purposely to include or exclude the particular language. Congress intentionally excluded involuntary conduct as an exception to the persecutor bar and the court should not read one into it now.

2. Forgetting the Persecutor's Victims

To allow a persecutor to claim that he or she lacked the motive to persecute others, or did so involuntarily, would diminish the pain and suffering inflicted upon his or her victims. Those who would allow for an applicant to claim a limited duress exception where there is a threat of imminent death or severe bodily harm to oneself or another do not account for the difficulty of disproving such claims. Overseas investigations into

afflict." Id. (quoting WEBSTER'S NINTH COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY 877). The dissent goes on to state that the majority made no attempt to apply the traditional tools of statutory interpretation before determining that the statute was ambiguous. Id. at 1183.

130. Id.

131. Id.

132. See 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3)(D)(ii) (2006) (stating that "clause (i) shall not apply to an alien because of membership or affiliation if the alien establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer when applying for a visa . . . that the membership or affiliation is or was involuntary . . . ").

133. Id. § 1158(c)(2)(D).


135. "If the text of a statute governing agency action 'directly addresse[s] the precise question at issue, then that is the end of the matter; for the court as well as the agency, must give effect to the unambiguously expressed intent of Congress.' Negusie, 129 S. Ct. at 1178 (Thomas, J., dissenting) (quoting Nat'l Ass'n of Home Builders v. Defenders of Wildlife, 551 U.S. 664 (2007)).

136. See Lerescu, supra note 23, at 1899 (stating that such an approach would be "morally repugnant" when considering the victims of such persecution).

137. See id. at 1899-1901 (advancing the argument that a limited duress exception would increase the predictability and ultimately the legitimacy of the asylum system).
claims made by an applicant are difficult to conduct because of the confidentiality issues associated with asylum.\textsuperscript{138} Rather than insert a duress exception into the statute, there should be a reformation of the asylum system and the way asylum interviews are conducted.

\textbf{B. Protection under the Convention Against Torture}

Under the Convention Against Torture (CAT), it is the "policy of the United States not to expel, extradite, or otherwise effect the involuntary return of any person to a country in which there are substantial grounds for believing the person would be in danger of being subjected to torture . . . ."\textsuperscript{139} Deferral of removal (under CAT) is available even to those who would be inadmissible because of the persecutor bar.\textsuperscript{140} Federal law has clearly provided relief for those applicants who have participated in persecution and a form of relief that has intentionally been omitted should not be read into the INA.\textsuperscript{141} Interpreting the INA to include a duress exception would conflict with the present form of relief available under the CAT.\textsuperscript{142}

Furthermore, public policy decisions "pertaining to the entry of aliens and their right to remain in the United States" are exclusively entrusted to Congress and codified in the INA.\textsuperscript{143} It is the responsibility of the courts to enforce the immigration policy

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138} See 8 C.F.R. § 208.6 (2009) (providing that "information contained in or pertaining to any asylum application" is confidential and can only be released to third parties under limited circumstances). Information may not be disclosed to a foreign government if the information would allow the third party to link the identity of the applicant to: (1) the fact that the applicant has applied for asylum; (2) specific facts or allegations pertaining to the individual asylum claim contained in an asylum application; or (3) facts or allegations that are sufficient to give rise to a reasonable inference that the applicant has applied for asylum.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Negusie, 129 S. Ct. at 1162 (stating that the persecutor bar applies to those seeking asylum or withholding of removal, but it does not disqualify an alien from seeking deferral of removal under the CAT). Deferral of removal was created to comply with Congress' direction and is a less permanent form of relief. \textit{Id.} at 1178 (Thomas, J., dissenting). This form of relief is more quickly and easily terminated if removal becomes possible consisted with the CAT. \textit{Id.} at 1178 n.1.
\item \textsuperscript{141} \textit{Id.}
\item \textsuperscript{142} \textit{Id.}
\item \textsuperscript{143} \textit{Id.} at 1180 n.2.
\end{itemize}
decisions of Congress that have been set forth in the INA.\textsuperscript{144} The
majority opinion in \textit{Negusie}\textsuperscript{145} admitted that the Attorney
General’s decision about whether to exclude an alien who has
persecuted others is of special importance.\textsuperscript{146} These decisions may
affect the nation’s relationships with foreign countries, and the
judiciary is not well positioned to bear the responsibility of such
decisions.\textsuperscript{147} The majority, however, stated that the BIA did not
properly address the “ambiguous statutory terms”\textsuperscript{148} and glossed
over the highly relevant policy decisions considered by Congress
when it enacted the persecutor bar of the INA.

\textbf{C. Reformation of the Asylum System}

The asylum process should be reformed to mirror that of the
refugee resettlement process. The Refugee Resettlement Program
requires refugees to go through fingerprinting, background checks,
and interviews before they are allowed to leave for their new
country.\textsuperscript{149} The affirmative asylum process conducts these same
procedures after the alien has arrived in the U.S.\textsuperscript{150} If all aliens
who wish to seek the protection of the United States were
interviewed in their native country, several issues currently facing
the asylum system would be addressed.

One such issue is the inability to investigate an alien’s
allegations of persecution. Overseas investigations into such

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item These decisions must be enforced even if “Congress has chosen to
  forbid the entrance of foreigners within its dominions altogether.” \textit{Id.}
  \footnote{Id.} (quoting \textit{Fong Yue Ting v. United States}, 149 U.S. 698, 705 (1893)).
  “Where Congress has made a judgment about which persons to admit and exclude from
  the country, it is not for this Court to question the wisdom of that choice.” \textit{Id.}
  \item \textit{Negusie}, 129 S. Ct. at 1162-68.
  \item \textit{Id.} at 1164. The Attorney General has been charged by Congress
  administer the INA. \textit{Id.} at 1163.
  \item \textit{Id.} at 1164. “Judicial deference in the immigration context is of special
  importance, for executive officials exercise especially sensitive political
  functions that implicate questions of foreign relations.” \textit{Id.}
  \item The Court implies that the BIA did not address the ambiguous
  statutory terms and the ordinary rule of the court is to remand the issue back
  to the BIA in order to give it the opportunity to address the matter in the first
  instance. \textit{Id.} Remand rule exists partially because filling statutory gaps in
  statutes within the agency’s jurisdiction are better handled by the agency
  itself than by the court. \textit{Id.} at 1167.
  \item Erin Patrick, \textit{The US Refugee Resettlement Program}, \textit{Migration Info. Source}, June 2004,
  http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=229#. The U.S. works closely with the United Nations High
  Commissioner of Refugees in resettling refugees. \textit{Id.} Resettlement is one of
  three of the UNHCR’s “durable solutions” for refugees. \textit{Id.}
  \item The Affirmative Asylum Process, U.S. \textit{CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION
  SERVICES} (Aug. 23, 2010), http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis (search “the
  affirmative asylum process;” then follow the hyperlink: “The Affirmative
  Asylum Process”). Aliens have one year to file their asylum applications once
  they arrive in the U.S. Sternberg, \textit{supra} note 25, at 52.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
allegations are difficult to conduct because once an alien has arrived in the United States and applied for asylum, confidentiality restrictions apply and must be followed. This severely limits the government’s capabilities in conducting an investigation because information can only be disclosed under very limited circumstances. If interviews were done overseas, officers could obtain information firsthand rather than going through foreign officials. This would directly address the difficulties faced in conducting overseas investigations. Interviews done overseas by trained officers would maintain confidentiality and would also produce a more thorough and complete record.

Moreover, more thorough investigations would reduce unsubstantiated claims and help combat fraud currently present in the asylum system. Officers who are trained in the conditions of the respective countries would be better suited to determine what claims are false from those that are valid. A reformation of the asylum system, rather than implying a duress exception, should be the focus of legislators and courts alike.

V. CONCLUSION

Immigration law is anything but settled. Courts have consistently struggled with the interpretation and application of the persecutor bar contained in the INA. While some courts believe a particularized evaluation of the alien’s conduct is necessary, other courts preclude any consideration of the alien’s personal motivation. As stated in the dissenting opinion in Negusie, the plain language of the statute does not allow for a duress exception. Moreover, the INA already provides a form of relief for those aliens who have participated in persecution. Therefore, time and effort should be focused on a reformation of the asylum system

151. 8 C.F.R. § 208.6. See also Interoffice Memorandum, supra note 138 (providing an outline of the regulation and the situations in which information can and cannot be released).
152. See 8 C.F.R. § 208.6(c)(1)-(2) (stating under what circumstances information contained in or pertaining to an asylum application can be disclosed).