

## **MY CLIENT WAS GRANTED CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE RELIEF... NOW WHAT?**

Congratulations on obtaining Convention Against Torture (“CAT”) Relief for your client, she can now safely remain in this country. However, an order of CAT relief prohibits removal only to the designated country of removal; it does not prohibit removal to another country where torture is not a risk. In reality, the United States government almost never locates a country willing to accept the client; however, it is technically a possibility. Now that the application has been approved, you and your client likely have many questions about the rights and responsibilities of an individual granted CAT Relief. The following is a brief overview of issues that may arise:

### **DOCUMENTATION**

Your client will receive only the final order issued by the Immigration Judge once her application for CAT Relief is approved. That original order will serve as proof of her ability to remain in the United States legally. It will also allow her to apply for employment authorization.

### **WORK AUTHORIZATION**

Your client may apply for an Employment Authorization Document by submitting the form I-765 available on the USCIS website ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)). Her Employment Authorization Document will then be sent to her most recent address on file with USCIS. It is therefore important to make sure that not only the court, but also USCIS, is informed of any change in her address through use of the form AR-11 (also available on the USCIS website). The EAD is only issued for one year at a time and should be renewed with ample time—at least three months—to allow for processing and avoid a lapse in status.

### **DERIVATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES & OVERSEAS**

Unfortunately, individuals granted CAT Relief are not allowed to petition for any family members.

Family members in the United States may be eligible for independent applications for asylum or withholding of removal. Please consult with your Tahirih mentor attorney about this possibility.

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## **PUBLIC BENEFITS**

Individuals granted CAT Relief are eligible for some public benefits. They are eligible for a social security card once they obtain a work permit<sup>1</sup>. They will need to take their work permit and additional identification to their local Social Security office to apply for a social security card (the office locations can be found via: [www.socialsecurity.gov/locator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/locator)).

Additionally, they can obtain Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Emergency Medicaid and full-stop Medicaid as well as Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) benefits.

## **TRAVEL**

A grant of CAT Relief includes a removal order, and therefore, clients **CANNOT** travel.

## **ADJUSTMENT TO PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS**

Individuals granted CAT Relief are not eligible to adjust their status (i.e., obtain a Green Card) based on that form of immigration relief. Should your client have any relatives who are United States citizens or lawful permanent residents she should consult with an immigration attorney in order to explore other avenues for obtaining permanent resident status.

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals granted CAT relief are eligible for a Social Security card grant for the first 7 years of their withholding of removal.