

# The Labyrinth of Seeking Asylum

Through this virtual walk through, the participant is able to see how difficult the asylum process is to understand, through a metaphoric approach of a labyrinth. The hope is to create more awareness and empathy for asylum seekers with in our communities, to better support the efforts of **Save the Children**.

Asylum seekers are able to legally seek asylum through an **affirmative** or **defensive** process which includes:




Entering the country with a legal document like a visa or permit, at which point there is a 1 yr deadline to apply for **affirmative asylum**. Upon applying for asylum, a credible fear interview will be scheduled with an asylum officer. If the credible fear interview is granted the case will proceed with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services who will decide their asylum claim.

Requesting asylum upon arriving at a legal port of entry, at which time it is up to the CBP officers' discretion to either (1) detain; or (2) process and release the individual while they wait for their credible fear interview by an asylum officer. If the credible fear interview is granted the case will proceed with an immigration judge who will decide their **defensive** asylum claim.

Entering the country without legal inspection at which point they will either be (1) detected and detained while waiting for a credible fear interview and proceed with a **defensive** claim; (2) processed and released to wait for a credible fear interview and proceed with a **defensive** claim; or (3) will enter undetected at which time they must apply for **affirmative** asylum within a year upon arriving. Upon applying for asylum, a credible fear interview will be scheduled with an asylum officer. If the credible fear interview is granted the case will proceed with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services who will decide their asylum claim.

### Asylum Seeker from Venezuela




- Asylum Seeker "V" is a pregnant woman who fled Venezuela due to the murder of her deceased husband as a result of their political involvement. "V" receives many death threats before deciding to leave Venezuela.
- "V" is a professional and enters the country with a visitor visa and is received by her family in Miami who helps hire an immigration attorney for her.
- "V"'s attorney files her **affirmative** asylum application soon after arriving in the U.S.
- "V" passes her credible fear interview with help from her attorney's preparation, proof of mental anguish from a psychological evaluation, and evidence she was able to locate the murder of her deceased husband.

### Asylum Seeker from El Salvador




- Asylum seeker "E" is a trans woman who was forced to flee El Salvador after a violent sexual assault by members of the El Salvador's military. "E" is repeatedly assaulted for being a trans woman and has received multiple death threats threatening to kill her if she does not leave.
- "E" had applied for a credible fear interview before the ICE. After receiving a credible degree and was approved. She planned to arrive with friends in Los Angeles. CE is asked to apply for asylum at the community college.
- After arriving at the CBP airport, "E" was detained by CBP and received 60 credit hours for her threats to a student who is a close friend of "E" husband. She was questioned for many hours and promised to self-report to her lawyer.
- "E" only has 60 credit hours to report to ICE before she begins her deposition about previous.
- "E" is hospitalized in an immigration detention center before arriving in Chicago, MI where she passes her credible fear interview.
- While detained for over a month, "E" begins to suffer from many medical complications as a result of not having her medication and not having help.
- "E" is eventually recommended to obtain her release as a vulnerable trans woman and ICE has refused to give her all the necessary medication.

### Asylum Seeker from Sudan

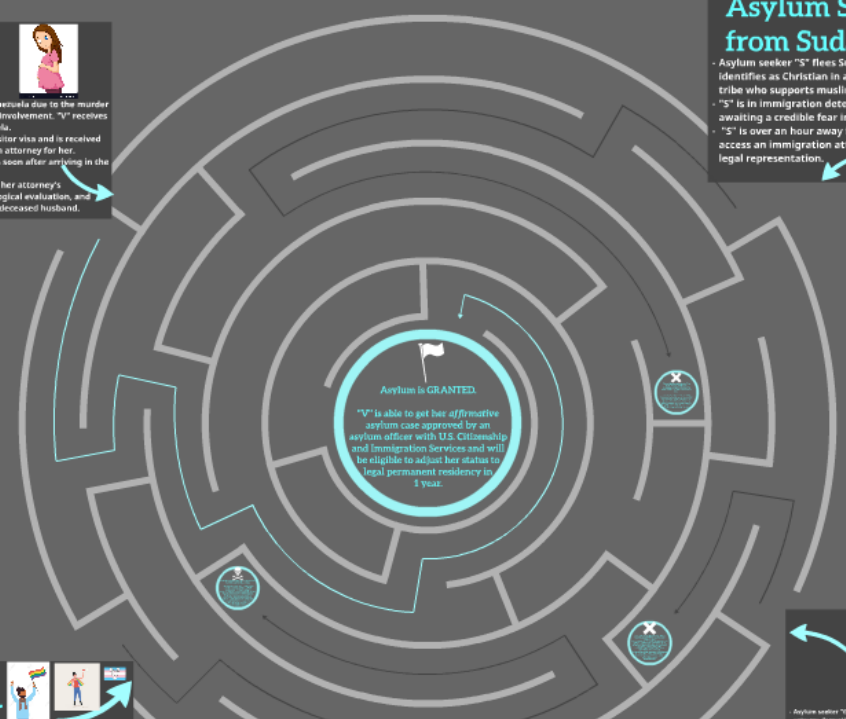


- Asylum seeker "S" flees Sudan due to religious persecution, as he identifies as Christian in a village dominated by an indigenous tribe who supports muslim beliefs.
- "S" is in immigration detention in Sierra Blanca, TX while awaiting a credible fear interview.
- "S" is over an hour away from El Paso, TX, the closest city to help access an immigration attorney and is unable to obtain legal representation.

### Asylum Seeker from Guatemala



- Asylum seeker "G" is an indigenous Guatemalan who is forced to leave Guatemala as a result of the corrupt, violent abuse by her husband, whose cousin is the municipal chief of police. "G" is beaten and brutally assaulted, leaving her for dead until she is taken to the hospital with her children.
- "G" presented at a U.S. port of entry with her 2 infant children. CBP processed and release "G" and her children to an immigration shelter in El Paso.
- "G" passed her credible fear interview and is being in El Paso, TX where she will continue her defensive asylum claim.
- "G" has no family or social support in El Paso and has been unable to reunite with family in Guatemala, the opportunity to see the shelter struggling to register and find much needed support.
- "G" is unable to hire an attorney due to lack of financial support and no legal representation can run from \$5,000 - \$20,000 per case due to her difficult asylum case in El Paso, TX.



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### Asylum Seeker from Venezuela



- Asylum Seeker "V" is a pregnant woman who fled Venezuela due to the murder of her deceased husband as a result of their political involvement. "V" receives many death threats before deciding to leave Venezuela.
- "V" is a professional and enters the country with a visitor visa and is received by her family in Miami who helps hire an immigration attorney for her.
- "V" attorney files her **affirmative** asylum application soon after arriving in the U.S.
- "V" passes her credible fear interview with help from her attorney's preparation, proof of mental anguish from a psychological evaluation, and evidence she was able to locate the murder of her deceased husband.

### Asylum Seeker from Sudan




- Asylum seeker "S" flees Sudan due to religious persecution, as he identifies as Christian in a village dominated by an indigenous tribe who supports muslim beliefs.
- "S" is in immigration detention in Sierra Blanca, TX while awaiting a credible fear interview.
- "S" is over an hour away from El Paso, TX, the closest city to help access an immigration attorney and is unable to obtain legal representation.

### Asylum Seeker from El Salvador

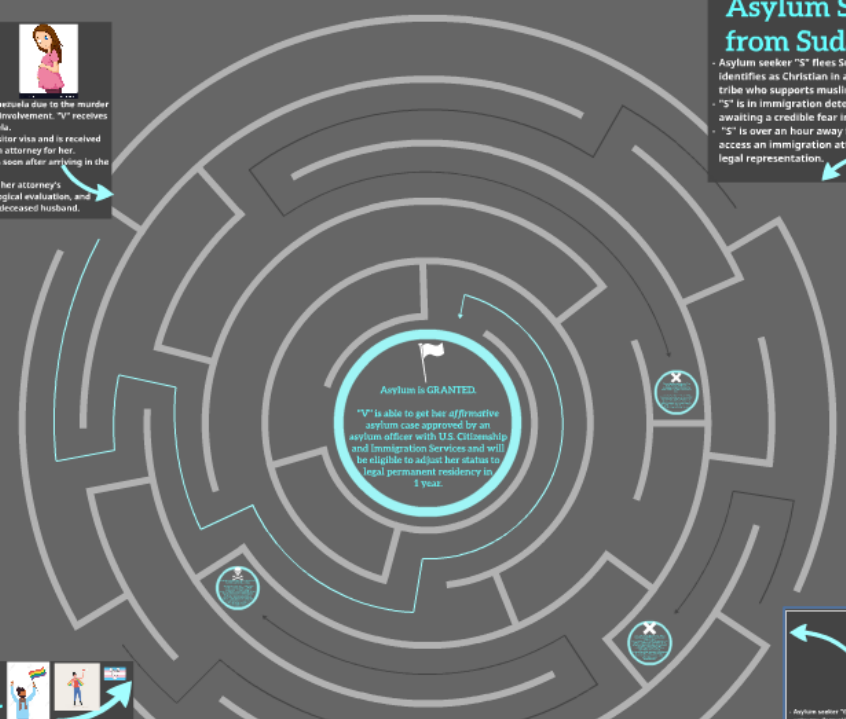


- Asylum seeker "E" is a trans woman who was forced to flee El Salvador after a violent sexual assault by members of the El Salvador's military. "E" is repeatedly assaulted for being a trans woman and has received multiple death threats threatening to kill her if she does not leave.
- "E" had applied for a credible fear interview in the US, then in having a pending asylum claim she approached the consulate for arrival with Mexico in Los Angeles. CE is asked to apply for asylum at the consulate in El Paso.
- After arriving at the CBP port of entry, "E" was detained by CBP and received 10 credible fear interviews. It is unclear whether "E" was granted a credible fear interview or not. "E" was questioned for many hours and pressured to self-deport. CE has been in El Paso for 10 days, but still has not been granted a credible fear interview. "E" is awaiting her credible fear interview.
- "E" is hospitalized in an immigration detention center before arriving in El Paso, TX where she passes her credible fear interview.
- While detained for over a month, "E" began to suffer from many medical complications as a result of not having her medication and not having food.
- "E" is currently in immigration detention and is requesting her release as a vulnerable trans woman and ICE has refused to give her all the necessary medication.

### Asylum Seeker from Guatemala



- Asylum seeker "G" is an indigenous Guatemalan who is forced to leave Guatemala as a result of the corrupt, violent abuse by her husband, whose cousin is the municipal chief of police. "G" is beaten and brutally tortured, leaving her for dead until she is taken to the hospital with her children.
- "G" presented at a U.S. port of entry with her 2 infant children. CBP processed and released "G" and her children to an immigration shelter in El Paso.
- "G" passed her credible fear interview and is being in El Paso, TX where she will continue her defensive asylum claim.
- "G" has no family or social support in El Paso and has been unable to reunite with family in Guatemala, the opportunity to see the shelter struggling to register and find much needed support.
- "G" is unable to hire an attorney due to lack of financial support and no legal representation can run from \$5,000 - \$20,000 per case due to her difficult asylum case in El Paso, TX.



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# Asylum Seeker from Sudan



- Asylum seeker "S" flees Sudan due to religious persecution, as he identifies as Christian in a village dominated by an indigenous tribe who supports muslim beliefs.
- "S" is in immigration detention in Sierra Blanca, TX while awaiting a credible fear interview.
- "S" is over an hour away from El Paso, TX, the closest city to help access an immigration attorney and is unable to obtain legal representation.





**The credible fear interview for "S" is DENIED and he is DEPORTED.**

**"S" continues to live in hiding from his persecutors in a neighboring country of Sudan.**

Denials can happen as a result of not understanding the process and properly due to lack of legal support, not being able to articulate a fear of returning to country of origin, not having proper interpretation or being able to hear the processes, suffering PTSD, among many other reasons.

# Asylum Seeker from Guatemala



- Asylum seeker "G" is an indigenous Quiche woman who is forced to leave Guatemala as a result of the extreme domestic abuse by her husband, whose cousin is the municipal chief of police. "G"s husband brutally beat her, leaving her for dead which is when she escaped with her children.
- "G" presented at a U.S.-MX port of entry with her 2 infant children. CBP processed and released "G" and her children to an immigrant shelter in the U.S.
- "G" passes her credible fear interview and is living in El Paso, TX where she will continue her defensive asylum claim.
- "G" has no family or social support in El Paso and has been unable to reunite with family in New York, she continues to live in the shelter struggling to integrate and find much needed support.
- "G" is unable to hire an attorney due to lack of financial support where asylum representation can run from \$1,100 - \$20,000 per case due to how difficult asylum cases are in El Paso, TX.



"G" attends her *defensive* asylum hearing in immigration court with her children and is **DENIED** asylum

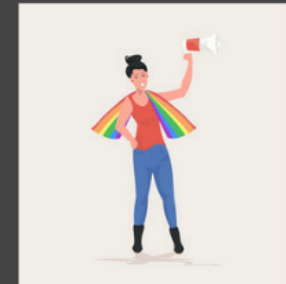
due not having an attorney or legal representation to assist her in filling out the necessary forms and gathering evidence to formulate a legal argument.

"G" and her children are detained in a family detention center in Dilley, TX and **DEPORTED** back to Guatemala.

"G" has not been located since leaving and there are fears that she may have forced to return with her husband where her life and those of her children are in imminent danger



# Asylum Seeker from El Salvador



- Asylum seeker "E" is a trans woman who was forced to flee El Salvador after a violent sexual assault by members of MS 13 where she contracted HIV. "E" is repeatedly attacked for being a trans woman and has received multiple death threats threatening to kill her if she does not leave.
- "E" had applied for a student visa to come to the U.S., due to having a nursing degree and was approved. She planned to arrive with friends in Los Angeles, CA to attend English classes at the community college.
- Upon arriving at the LAX airport "E" was detained by CBP and accused of fraud due to how difficult it is to obtain student visas from El Salvador. She was questioned for many hours and pressured to self deport. In fear for her life, "E" tells the officer she is afraid to return to El Salvador and begins her *defensive* asylum process.
- "E" is transferred to an immigration detention center twice before arriving in Cibola, NM where she passes her credible fear interview.
- While detained for over 6 months, "E" begins to suffer from many medical complications as a result of not having her medication and now having AIDS.
- "E"'s attorney is unsuccessful in obtaining her release as a vulnerable trans woman and ICE has refused to give her all the necessary medication.



**"E" dies in federal detention after not receiving her HIV medication for over 5 months.**

- Since March of 2020 over 10 adult detained immigrants have died due to COVID-19 complications that were investigated.**

**From 2013-2018 there were over 22 deaths of adult detained immigrants that were investigated.**

**There have been many more who have died in federal detention including recent deaths of children which have not been fully investigated. There has been little training to change this and no accountability to date.**



# Asylum Seeker from Venezuela



- Asylum Seeker "V" is a pregnant woman who fled Venezuela due to the murder of her deceased husband as a result of their political involvement. "V" receives many death threats before deciding to leave Venezuela.
- "V" is a professional and enters the country with a visitor visa and is received by her family in Miami who helps hire an immigration attorney for her.
- "V"'s attorney files her *affirmative* asylum application soon after arriving in the U.S.
- "V" passes her credible fear interview with help from her attorney's preparation, proof of mental anguish from a psychological evaluation, and evidence she was able to locate of the murder of her deceased husband.



## Asylum is GRANTED.

"V" is able to get her *affirmative* asylum case approved by an asylum officer with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and will be eligible to adjust her status to legal permanent residency in 1 year.

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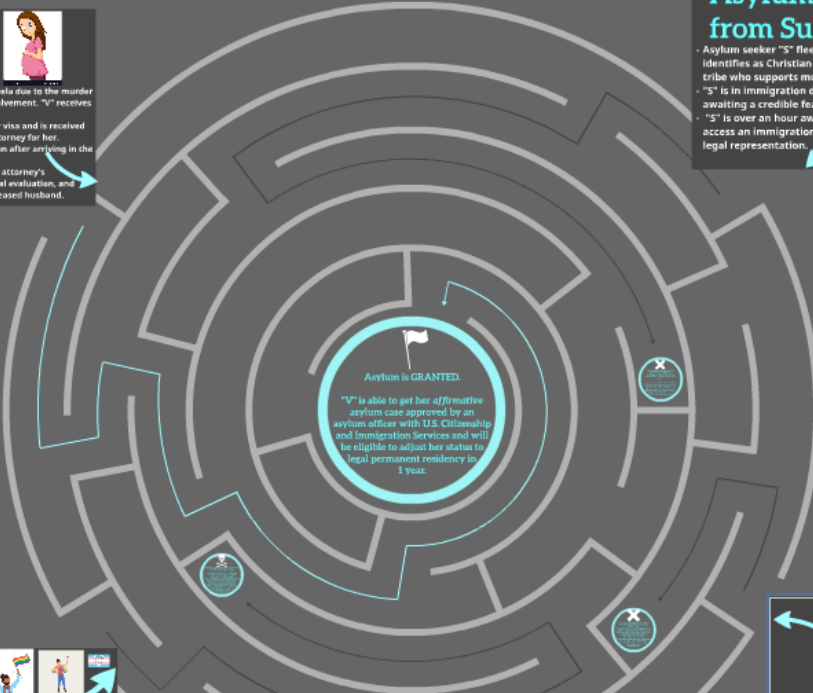


Asylum seeker "E" is a 30 year woman who was forced to flee El Salvador after a violent assault by members of the El Salvador's contraforce (EC). "E" is frequently assaulted for being a 30 year woman and has received multiple death threats threatening to kill her if she does not leave. "E" had applied for a credible fear interview in the US. "E" was having a terrible flight and was approached the plane for arrival with March in Los Angeles. CE is asked English classes at the community college. After arriving on the CBP system "E" was detained by CBP and received 100 death threats in 10 weeks which she had to endure. She was questioned for many hours and pressured to self report. CE has to live for 100 days. CE often has to sleep in a tent in the shelter and she has to sleep in a tent. "E" is hospitalized in an immigration detention center before arriving in El Paso, TX where she passes her credible fear interview. While detained for over a month, "E" begins to suffer from many medical complications as a result of not having her medication and not having help. "E" is hospitalized in a detention center and ICE has refused to give her all the necessary medication.

## Asylum Seeker from Guatemala



Asylum seeker "G" is an indigenous Guatemalan who is forced to leave Guatemala as a result of the corrupt, tyrannical abuse by her husband whose cousin is the municipal chief of police. "G" is hospitalized because of her husband's death which is when she escapes with her children. "G" presented at a U.S. port of entry with her 2 infant children. CBP processed and released "G" and her children to an immigration shelter in El Paso, TX. "G" passed her credible fear interview and is living in El Paso, TX where she will continue her defensive asylum claim. "G" has no family or social support in El Paso and has been unable to reunite with family in Guatemala. She continues to live in the shelter struggling to register and find much needed support. "G" is unable to hire an attorney due to lack of financial support and no legal representation can run from \$5,000 - \$20,000 per case due to her difficult asylum case in El Paso, TX.



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