

Asylum for Battered Women -- a Question Raised by a San Francisco Case a Decade Ago -- Gets Obama Administration as an Advocate

By Lauren Smiley in [Law & Order](#)

Friday, Jul. 17 2009 @ 4:59PM



The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has paved the way for battered women from countries where such abuse is widely accepted to be granted asylum in the United States.

The DHS declared its opinion in a [court filing](#) of an asylum case of a Mexican woman only referred as L.R., who was denied by a San Francisco-based immigration judge some years back. The filing advocates that the case be further examined by the asylum appellate body, the Board of Immigration Appeals.

San Francisco's starring role in the domestic abuse asylum question dates back to 1996, when Rody Alvarado, a Guatemalan woman was granted asylum by a San Francisco immigration judge.

Three years later, the Board of Immigration Appeals, overturned the decision saying battered women didn't constitute a persecuted group under American asylum law, and the case had been used as precedent to deny many cases like it. She was represented by Karen Musalo, now the director of the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies at U.C. Hastings, which continues to advocate for her case. See more information on Alvarado's case [here](#).

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