

# Asylum Granted for Nicaraguan Mother and Daughter

## News

January 31, 2022

A Jenner & Block team secured a life-saving result in a pro bono asylum case before the Chicago Immigration Court. The team included Partner Thomas S. O'Neill; Associates Jonathan A. Enfield and Brian B. Druchniak; Staff Attorney Edmundo Cuevas; Paralegals Charlotte M. Stretch and Sharlean T. Perez; and GCM Grosvenor's Managing Director Girish Kashyap as co-counsel. The clients were a Nicaraguan political activist and local opposition party official and her 14-year-old daughter. In retaliation for our adult client's leadership within her community in support of a national movement protesting the authoritarian regime of President Daniel Ortega, she and her family were subject to a series of escalating threats by police and other government agents.

Those threats culminated with a group of heavily armed parapolice coming to our clients' home with warrants for the arrest of our adult client and her husband. She escaped detention – and the near certainty of violent abuse, torture, death, or disappearance – only because one member of the parapolice took pity on her other infant daughter, who was home alone with our adult client.

Despite that miraculous reprieve, our adult client knew that arrest would follow and inevitably lead to torment, possibly death. Our clients and their family decided to go into hiding elsewhere in Nicaragua. But when the government continued to hunt them, it became clear that hiding would not work, and they had no choice but to flee to the United States. Our clients went first, followed by other family members. Because the journey to the United States was so dangerous, our adult client had to make the heart-rending decision to leave her infant daughter with family in Nicaragua.

The team obtained affidavits from several witnesses after conducting multiple interviews with each, including the client's former neighbor who is currently in hiding after surviving a brutal machete attack from a pro-government paramilitary fighter. Mr. Enfield was the primary point of client contact, and Mr. Cuevas and Ms. Stretch provided invaluable help as interpreters and translators.

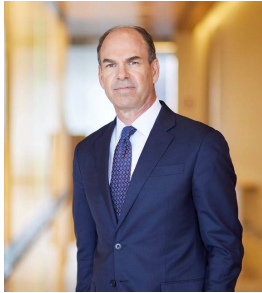
With support from Mr. Enfield, Mr. Druchniak prepared a well-written and comprehensive legal brief that earned praise from the judge and the government attorney. Ms. Perez offered crucial last-minute assistance, putting in long nights to get the brief's copious exhibits organized and annotated.

The team overcame tremendous obstacles when, two days before the hearing, the court announced that the hearing would be remote rather than in-person. To make matters more complicated, both

clients and another key witness fell seriously ill just before the filing deadline.

Despite these obstacles, Mr. Druchniak delivered a compelling direct examination of our adult client – so much so that, during a recess, the government attorney volunteered that the client was clearly credible. The judge agreed, granting both clients asylum, with the government waiving appeal.

## Related Attorneys



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## Related Locations

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