

Asylum Declaration Guide

Your declaration is your personal story in your own words. It is the most important part of your case. Remember: This is your voice. Be truthful, be clear, and tell your story so the judge or asylum officer understands why you need safety in the U.S.

It explains:

- Who you are
- What happened to you
- Why you cannot return to your country

Step 1: Basic Information

- Full name, A-number (if you have one), date of birth
- Country of origin
- Title: *“Declaration in Support of Form I-589 Application for Asylum”*
- Signature and date at the end
- Page numbers on each page

Step 2: Start with Your Background

- Introduce yourself: name, age, hometown, family background
- Describe your town/community so the reader understands your situation
- Include:
 - Who you grew up with
 - Where you grew up
 - School history
 - Family religion or political beliefs
 - Traditions or customs
 - Groups you belonged to (student, political, religious, social)

Step 3: Tell Your Story in Order

Write your story step by step (chronological order).

Include:

- **Background:** life before problems began
- **Past Harm:** what happened (who, what, when, where, why)
- **Why Targeted:** explain why you were harmed (race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group)
- **Government Role:** explain why your government could not or would not protect you
- **Fear Today:** why you are still afraid to return now

Step 4: Be Detailed

- Include dates, places, and names (if you can remember)
- Describe what was said or done and how you felt
- Write about emotional, physical, or financial harm
- If you don't remember exact dates, say "around June 2019" instead of guessing
- Be honest and consistent with your asylum application (Form I-589)

Step 5: Describe Persecution Clearly

- What happened
- Who was there
- Who harmed you
- When and where it happened
- Why it happened (the reason connected to your identity/group)
- What happened after the harm
- Why the government couldn't or wouldn't protect you (corruption, police involved, too weak, or you knew it was useless to report)

Step 6: Explain Leaving Your Country

- Why you left when you did
- How you left and your journey
- If you returned after leaving, explain why
- If you were detained/arrested anywhere, explain
- If you applied more than 1 year after entering the U.S., explain why (medical issues, trauma, new dangers in your country)

Step 7: Country Conditions & Relocation

- Explain why you couldn't move safely inside your country
- Connect your story to country reports or news about violence, discrimination, or persecution
- If you went to another country before the U.S., explain:
 - Where you went, how long you stayed
 - Why you couldn't stay there permanently
 - Whether you felt safe there or faced harm

Step 8: Add Supporting Evidence

Your declaration is stronger when supported by documents:

- Medical or police reports
- Photos, texts, or letters showing threats

Witness statements from family/friends

News articles or human rights reports

If not in English, documents **must be translated with a certificate of translation**

Step 9: Emotional Impact

How persecution affected you (fear, anxiety, trauma, loss)

How your life changed after the events

Your feelings: fear of return, shame, resilience, hope

Step 10: Family Members (if included)

How family members were also harmed or affected

Why they too would be at risk if returned

Specific incidents that impacted them (schooling, health, therapy, ongoing medical needs)

Step 11: End Your Declaration

Finish with:

- Why you are afraid to return
- What you hope for if allowed to stay in the U.S.
- A respectful request for protection

End with this sentence:

“I declare under penalty of perjury that this statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.”

Sign and date your declaration