

Perkins Coie Pro Bono Team Secures Asylum for Former Afghan Air Force Pilot

NEW YORK (March 7, 2024)—Perkins Coie announced a significant pro bono victory today, successfully securing a grant of asylum for a former Afghan Air Force pilot. The firm's pro bono team was led by senior counsel Andrew Lucas, associate Marcus Hernandez, and pro bono immigration counsel Sarah Deri Oshiro.

The client, referred to as AP, served in the Afghan Air Force as a pilot at a joint U.S.- Afghan air base, transporting cargo and personnel critical to the operations of both the U.S. and Afghan militaries. Due to his involvement with the U.S. military, AP witnessed the assassinations of some of his fellow Afghan pilots by the Taliban and, after becoming an assassination target himself, sought asylum in the United States. When the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in 2021, the stakes of his case increased dramatically, as he faced the possibility of being sent back to Afghanistan.

The firm's pro bono team presented a compelling argument that the Taliban represented a significant threat to AP's life, which led to agreement from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on critical elements of his asylum case. Subsequently, a trial concerning the remaining aspects of his claim was conducted before the New York Immigration Court in February 2024, culminating in the granting of asylum. AP will now be able to reunite with his wife who has been hiding abroad and whom he has not seen in over five years.

Perkins Coie collaborated with and had mentorship from [Make the Road New York](#) (MRNY), a membership-based organization that builds the power of immigrant and working-class communities to achieve dignity and justice. MRNY represented AP in his immigration proceedings for multiple years prior to securing pro bono counsel from Perkins Coie.

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