

## **Ruth M, Asylum Seeker from Honduras (*Plaintiffs v. Sessions*)**

I came to the United States with my son from Honduras due to violence. My stepfather is in a gang and other gang members tried to rape me.

We entered the United States on June 4, 2018 at Hidalgo, TX. Immigration officers found us. They did not ask us anything or tell us any information. The first time I was called with my son was when we were at the station. They called us and asked us our name, date of birth, took our picture, and they took our fingerprints.

We were taken to a building where we stayed for three days. I was put in a room, and the officials took my son to another room. They told me he could not be with me.

They called me to talk to an official on the second day. He told me I would have a hearing but did not tell me that I could have a lawyer or how to find a lawyer. He gave me a phone number and told me that I could call if I had been separated from my son. I got really scared that they might take my son and I wouldn't be able to find him.

On the fourth day, June 7, I was taken to court. They shackled my hands and feet and put me on a bus with 25 men and women who were all shackled. We were on a bus for two hours. I still did not know where my son was and was terrified.

At the court, they told me that I had the right to a hearing. I was assigned a lawyer for the first time. I only talked to the lawyer for about five minutes before the judge came. The judge told me that I could plead guilty or not guilty, but I would need evidence to show that I was not guilty. They said I was guilty if I crossed the river. I said that I had crossed the river, so I declared myself guilty. All the parents asked about their kids, but the judge said he was not there to handle the children. He was just there to sentence us for the crime of crossing the river. The judge declared us "not guilty" and I was returned to the perrera. Shortly after we got back, a nice official looked to see if my son was still in the perrera. After I found out he was there, he took me to see my son. He was in a cell with other children and he was crying. After that, they allowed me to stay in the same cell as my son.

After the perrera, we were both transferred to Dilley, Texas and we have been here 20 days. I have seen CARA lawyers. I have asked for asylum but my case was denied and CARA lawyers appealed. My case was approved today, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

## Violeta Monterroso, 42, Asylum Seeker from Guatemala ([TIME](#))



*Violeta Monterroso, 42, and her children, Kenia, 12; Isaac, 11; and Yeimi, 9. Monterroso fled Guatemala in mid-October 2018 with her husband, Cándido Calderón, 42. Gang members threatened to kill Calderón and Monterroso's children if they did not pay roughly \$1,200—the equivalent of five months' income from the family's juice stall. Davide Monteleone for TIME*

When Violeta Monterroso and her husband Cándido Calderón arrived in Tijuana in late November with their children, Kenia Jasmin, 12; Isaac, 11; and Yeimi, 9, they added their names to the bottom of a list in a thick book. There were more than 5,000 migrants ahead of them waiting to request asylum in the U.S., and because of recent changes in policy, American authorities were processing only 40 to 100 requests a day. Monterroso and Calderón expected it would take months before their names were called.

But they were willing to do whatever it took. Going back to Guatemala was simply not an option. Monterroso explained that in October, their family was forced to flee after a gang threatened to murder the children if they didn't pay an exorbitant bribe, five months' worth of profits from their tiny juice stall. The family hid for a day and a half in their house and then sneaked away before dawn. "There is nobody that can protect us there," Monterroso said. "We have seen in the other cases, they kill the people and kill their children." Her voice caught. "The first thing is to have security for them," she said of her kids, "that nothing bad happens to them."

## **M.P., 30s, Asylum Seeker from El Salvador ([NY Times](#))**

M. P. and her son, J. G., fled El Salvador in 2014 after the MS-13 gang tried several times to recruit him and vowed to kill the teenager's mother unless he joined. They entered the United States illegally and applied for asylum in 2016 in Utah. A judge denied her request in March on the grounds that claims of gang violence do not qualify for asylum, but M. P. is appealing. She is unable to work and is afraid she could be deported at any moment. Her son is part of the same application.

## **M.C., Asylum Seeker from Honduras ([NY Times](#))**

M. C. was detained in South Texas in 2015 and requested asylum as a victim of domestic violence. She passed her credible-fear interview but then remained in detention for nine months. A judge rejected her application, contending that the Honduran government was instituting policies to address domestic violence. She filed an appeal, which was denied on similar grounds, and is appealing again. The board of immigration appeals sent the case back to the same judge, who has since retired. Her case may be heard again in 2020. M. C. cannot work and is living with her child in New Jersey, relying on family to support them.