

"Save Regina"

Update (part 1) - February 25, 2006

It's still a cliff-hanger, but... the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) has ruled on the asylum portion of David's case (Regina's husband). Their decision surprised us - they are reopening his case, too. If David gets asylum, Regina gets asylum.

Background: David, Regina's husband, was smuggled out of an underground torture chamber Nov. 14, 1997. He arrived in America the next day, seven months after a new immigration law took effect, requiring anyone seeking asylum to apply within one year. David knew nothing of the new law, nor did Regina since it had not applied to her case.

During his first months, he was too terrified to leave their Greensboro, NC, apartment or even to talk to another Congolese lest someone betray him to Kabila, Congo's brutal dictator. His fear pushed them to move in late 1999 to Wisconsin. He filed for asylum in 2000. To get asylum, he then had to provide a credible reason why he did not file for 22 years. (Ignorance of the law holds no weight.) Dr. Collins, who diagnosed David as suffering Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, wrote a three-page report matching each symptom to David's struggles.

The judge granted David AWithholding of Removal, allowing him to stay, but he denied asylum, claiming the final sentence of Dr. Collin's diagnosis was not conclusive enough. Attorney Block appealed. The BIA sided with the judge. Block countered with an explanatory letter from Collins and the argument that a judge does not have authority to counter an expert witness, only another expert witness can. The BIA decided to reopen the case, remanding it back to Judge Brahos.

Remember, Regina's case was reopened on the very narrow finding of imputed persecution based on David's claim of political persecution, not on hers. It seems logical then to consolidate the two cases, but we are waiting to hear how our attorneys will proceed.

We feel the effect of your prayers! Thank you from **Regina** and **David**, **Atty. Mary Sfasciotti** and from **me**, too. (My book is sailing along - first draft is 2/3 finished.) Would you please pray also for **Mary Sfasciotti's mother who's been very ill, Hal Block and Judge Brahos**, plus - here's a biggie - the **Save Regina Committee's fundraising efforts**. The Regina Bakala Fund is for legal fees. Right now we are \$10,000 in the hole. We need to keep these excellent attorneys working for Regina. Every little bit helps. You and three of your closest friends can donate at any M&I Bank or directly by credit card (through PayPal) at www.SaveRegina.org. Thank you!

Lastly, I am honored to be one of 23 recipients of the 2006 US Postal Service Award, Women Putting Their Stamp on Metro Milwaukee, primarily for my work on behalf of Regina. The award will be presented at an 11:30 a.m. luncheon on Friday, March 24, at the Midwest Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee. Regina and David will also be there. You are welcome to come. See Update (part 2) for reservation information.

Sister Josephe Marie Flynn, SSND

jflynn@saveregina.org