

WHAT IS A CREDIBLE FEAR INTERVIEW?

A Credible Fear Interview (“CFI”) is a part of the asylum process whereby an asylum seeker establishes a credible fear of returning to their home country. When asylum seekers arrive at the border will be met by immigration officials and will be questioned about their fear of being returned to their home country in a process known as “Expedited Removal.”

Asylum seekers who express a “fear of return” will be given a Credible Fear Interview. In a CFI, an officer will ask questions to determine whether they have a “credible fear of persecution or torture” and if they have a “significant possibility” of winning a case for asylum in front of an immigration judge. There are two types of Credible Fear Interviews:

- **Credible Fear of Persecution** - A “significant possibility” that you can establish in a hearing before an Immigration Judge that you have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of your race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion if returned to your country.
- **Credible Fear of Torture** - A “significant possibility” that you can establish in a hearing before an Immigration Judge that you would be subject to torture if returned to your country. Torture is an “extreme form of cruel and inhuman punishment” that causes severe physical or mental pain or suffering intentionally inflicted by the government or with the consent of the government.

QUESTIONS OFTEN ASKED IN A CFI:

- Your background information (birthday, country of origin, etc.).
- Why are you afraid of returning to your country?
- Have you experienced persecution, torture, or other harms in the past?
- Do you fear you will be persecuted or tortured in the future?
- Who are you afraid of? Why?
- Can you safely live somewhere else in your country?
- How was the government of your country involved or a part of your persecution?

TIPS TO PREPARE FOR A CFI:

- Keep detailed notes about your story and be consistent in your testimony throughout the entire process.
- If you need an interpreter or if you’re not understanding the interpreter, let the immigration official know immediately.
- Try not to miss important details about your experience of persecution—omitting important details may be used against you in the future.
- If you have a fear of return or experienced persecution, make sure you tell the immigration officer.
- It is very important that you tell the truth during this interview. If you pass the CFI and are able to apply for asylum, you will be asked similar questions in the future.

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