

IMPORTANT: FIND THE NAME OF THE PRO BONO COORDINATOR OF THE FIRM
Or DIRECT THE LETTER TO AN ATTORNEY IN THE FIRM YOU'VE WORKED WITH
You need a particular person who is aware of the firm's asylum work
And someone you can follow up with on a phone call

March 3, 2006

(Insert Name)
Pro Bono Coordinator
Shearman & Sterling
599 Lexington Avenue
Room 1162
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Cohen,

We would like to begin by expressing our deep appreciation for the superb *pro bono* representation that attorneys from (Insert Firm Name) have provided to individuals seeking asylum in the United States. (Insert attorney name if possible) and (insert name) have represented clients from our Program in the past year. As these attorneys can attest, asylum seekers have often endured unspeakable suffering from persecution, imprisonment and torture.

Whenever an individual has received medical or mental health services from our Program, the physician and/or psychologist provides an affidavit documenting this torture and the impact it has had on the individual. Whenever possible, our clinical staff also testifies at the asylum hearing. This documentation can be crucial to the outcome of an asylum application.

We write this letter to request that (Insert Firm Name) make a charitable gift to our Program to support our efforts to provide our clients with documentation for their asylum applications, as well as ongoing medical, mental health and social services.

The Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture provides comprehensive care for survivors of torture, genocide and war trauma from all over the world. Our clients have been forced to flee their homes, leaving all they know and love behind them, to seek safety in the United States. They are now living in the New York City area, struggling to recover from the physical and emotional suffering they endured and attempting to rebuild their lives. Our staff provides

medical, mental health, social and paralegal services to aid them in this process. Since our inception in 1995 we have served over 1,800 survivors from 80 different countries.

In addition to providing medical treatment and mental health care, our physicians and mental health clinicians also provide our Program clients who are seeking asylum with documentation of the physical and psychological scars that torture has inflicted on them. As attorneys representing asylum seekers know, this involves many hours of work in conducting evaluations, preparing affidavits, and testifying at asylum hearings. Although our staff provided this documentation for more than 100 asylum seekers in the past two years, we have no funding that specifically supports this work.

Our clients frequently identify the stress of the political asylum process and separation from their families as the most difficult emotional challenges they face. These painful situations are linked, since in order for families to be reunified, asylum must first be granted. Our mental health staff assists them in addressing these challenges with ongoing individual and group therapy. Last year alone, we provided mental health services for 385 individuals.

(Insert Firm Name) has demonstrated an admirable commitment to the defense of human rights and advocacy for asylum seekers. We hope you will expand your efforts by supporting our Program's work in documenting torture and other human rights abuses in asylum applications and providing ongoing care for these survivors of torture.

I am enclosing three articles about our Program, a recent newsletter, and the 501c3 certification for the Survivor Fund. Further information about our Program and staff can be obtained at www.survivorsoftorture.org. If you have any further questions, please contact me at 212-994-7158 or prendc02@med.nyu.edu.

Thank you for considering our request. And, on behalf of our staff and our clients, thank you for all the work your firm has done for asylum seekers and the advancement of human rights.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Prendergast
Director of Operations

Encl.