GIBSON DUNN

Gibson Dunn Secures Asylum for Afghan Refugee and Assists in Reuniting His Family in the U.S.

Pro Bono | September 25, 2025

Gibson Dunn, in partnership with Williams & Connolly, secured a life-changing victory for an Afghan client, who was granted asylum following a merits hearing.

Our client's case stems from profound tragedy: his father, who provided vital security services to the U.S. in Afghanistan, was assassinated by the Taliban just two weeks before receiving approval of his Special Immigrant Visa. The Taliban had targeted him for years due to his outspoken support of education for women, free speech, and the rights of religious and ethnic minorities — values that our client also supports. After his father's death, refusing to remain silent, our client shared his father's story publicly, and it was reported in international news outlets. Our client fled in April 2023 to the U.S., where Williams & Connolly took on his representation, and that of his brother and grandmother, pro bono.

The team assembled a compelling case for asylum, supported by an extensive record. The team retained a former Afghan diplomat as a country conditions expert and obtained an expedited hearing date more than a year ahead of schedule. The preparation paid off: after testimony and argument, the immigration judge granted asylum from the bench. The judge acknowledged our client's fear of persecution based on his political beliefs and affiliations and found a likelihood of persecution if he were to return to Afghanistan. Our client can now remain in the U.S. without fear of removal and continue his work as a case manager at a refugee resettlement organization. He supports his mother and younger sister, a high school student who aspires to become a lawyer, and he has reunited with two other members of his family who were left behind in Afghanistan.

Our client's brother and grandmother fled to Pakistan after the death of their father and son, respectively. Both have now arrived safely in the U.S., the brother traveling on a Special Immigrant Visa that the firm helped prepare and push forward based on his own and his father's service to the U.S., and the 88-year-old grandmother entering on a humanitarian parole visa successfully obtained by the firm based on urgent health and caregiving needs.

Gibson Dunn associate Janae Staicer wrote the asylum brief, compiled the various applications, and represented our client at his merits hearing, with supervision by Century City partner Diana M. Feinstein and Janae's former colleagues at Williams & Connolly. The team continues to represent the grandmother in her claim for asylum.

This multi-year effort across three countries by two law firms underscores the power of advocacy and collaboration in ensuring protection for those who have sacrificed so much in support of American efforts abroad.

Related People

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