What do we do?
The Atlanta Asylum Network (AAN) provides physical and psychological evaluations for asylum seekers in the Southeast. In keeping with the mission of Emory’s Institute for Human Rights, the AAN strives to promote the rights of people who have suffered human rights abuses. Asylum seekers who have experienced torture and abuse are referred to the Network to be evaluated by healthcare providers, who then correlate any physical and psychological findings with the torture and abuse that the asylum seekers report. These findings are documented in affidavits for the Asylum Court.

What is the health professional’s role?
- To receive training to work with torture survivors and recognize torture-related physical and psychological sequelae.
- To be available to perform at least one evaluation a year.
- When possible, to conduct an evaluation and form an opinion as to whether a client’s persecution claims are consistent with physical or psychological findings.
- To write an affidavit to report your findings from the evaluation.
- To consider giving in-person or telephone testimony when the case is heard in the Asylum Court.

Why?
Medical or psychological affidavits are known to assist in the approval of asylum cases, but the services are unaffordable or inaccessible for many applicants. According to TRAC Immigration, the grant rate for the city of Atlanta from 2000 through the early months of 2005 was 12.5%. To date, 41% of our past clients for whom we have records have been granted asylum by the Atlanta court—an increase of 29%.

Who is an asylum seeker?
Any individual who has been in the US for less than one year and can demonstrate a credible fear of persecution can apply for asylum through the Department of Homeland Security—US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Individuals must meet the US Refugee Act Criteria: “Any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”

Additionally, the President of the United States has included acts of forced sterilization and forced termination of pregnancy as grounds for asylum applications.
Contact Information:

Atlanta Asylum Network  
c/o Institute of Human Rights  
1525 Clifton Road, #103F  
Atlanta, GA 30322

Phone: 404-727-4609  
Fax: 404-727-8769  
Email: atlantaasylum@yahoo.com

“We live in a world of continual conflict and challenge. Working with brave individuals who are seeking asylum in our country to escape the torture, persecution, cruelty and injustice from their native lands is an awesome and humbling experience. Their strength and courage is an inspiration and an insight into many social conditions and how they impact health. I learned that saving lives is not only about heroic procedures in the ER on a Saturday night. It astonishes me how an act as simple as a physical examination can touch a stranger’s life so immensely and result in such moral fulfillment for myself.”

- Jason Prystowsky, MD, MPH

Want to Get Involved?

Atlanta Asylum Network is in need of volunteer physicians, psychologists, and gynecologists from the community to perform evaluations for asylum seekers. As an evaluator, you are an essential part of our organization and the asylum process. Evaluators have the opportunity to build upon their own experience in their field of care while providing an invaluable service to someone in desperate need.

It is easy to get involved. Email us at atlantaasylum@yahoo.com in order to be added to our database of medical and/or psychological evaluators.