

ASYLUM FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1 Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, has historically sought to ensure that the
2 United States provide a safe haven to all who flee persecution. Hadassah also has a rich
3 tradition of acting against all forms of gender-based violence.

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5 Current U.S. immigration policy does not recognize gender-based violence as a basis for asylum,
6 thus denying a safe haven for women fleeing extreme incidents of abuse. Moreover, under the
7 current system, the guidelines for treatment and evaluation of asylum seekers are applied variably
8 and arbitrarily, and discrimination is common.

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10 Hadassah calls upon the United States Government to:

- 11 ● Recognize gender-based violence as grounds for asylum;
- 12 ● Adapt the asylum process to accommodate women fleeing gender-based violence, including
13 providing female officers to hear their cases, and training immigration officers and judges
14 on issues relating to gender-based violence;
- 15 ● Create a high-level office within the Department of Homeland Security to oversee all issues
16 relating to asylum and expedited removal;
- 17 ● Allow all asylum applicants to appeal their claims to an immigration judge in order to reduce
18 the risk that those claiming asylum are deported unjustifiably;
- 19 ● Establish detention standards appropriate for asylum seekers and seek alternatives to detention;
- 20 ● Promulgate regulations to promote consistent implementation of parole criteria;
- 21 ● Eliminate the arbitrary one-year deadline for filing asylum claims; and
- 22 ● Reject further erosions of asylees' rights in the United States.