

# Haynes Boone Wins Asylum for Garifuna Family Facing Deportation to Honduras

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May 15, 2023 Tania Khatibifar, Fernando Mendez

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PRACTICES Real Estate

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Haynes Boone New York Associates [Tania Khatibifar](#) and [Fernando Mendez](#) successfully represented a Honduran mother and three of her children in deportation proceedings. In April, the family won asylum in New York Immigration Court.

The family are Garifuna, an Afro-indigenous group that faces severe discrimination, violence and persecution in Honduras. Tania first met the family in 2019 and has worked on the case pro bono for four years. Fernando joined the firm in October and began working on the case right away.

“I am so glad we could help the family,” said Tania, who practices in Haynes Boone’s Real Estate Group. “Our client endured years of unspeakable torture and maltreatment on account of her race and gender. Both the Garifuna and women are severely marginalized in Honduras, and she is both.

“Asylum laws were created to protect people just like our client and her children. The news made me really proud that, in her case, our asylum laws worked, and their lives will be forever changed for it.”

Tania and Fernando gathered nearly 700 pages of declarations of witnesses to the persecution, forensic evidence, expert reports, and other evidence. In April, after reviewing the record, the Department of Homeland Security agreed to a joint stipulation to a grant of asylum for the family. At the hearing, the immigration judge issued an order granting asylum, bringing years of meetings, interviews, evidence collection, legal research, legal brief preparation and hearing preparation to a close.

Tania and Fernando were mentored and assisted by their co-counsel, Patrick Taurel of Grossman Young & Hammond, who provided invaluable feedback and litigation support.

Pro bono work is a particular focus for Tania, who earlier this year was given the New York State Bar Association’s 2023 [Outstanding Young Lawyer Award](#), which recognizes a lawyer who has actively practiced fewer than 10 years and has a distinguished record of public service and professional activities.

Haynes Boone has long been committed to providing pro bono legal aid, believing that a meaningful professional career is much more than just handling major business transactions or trying complex commercial lawsuits. The firm’s lawyers focus their pro bono efforts on helping those who need it most but are least able to afford legal services.

Haynes Boone is an international corporate law firm with 19 offices spanning Texas, New York, California, Charlotte, Chicago, Denver, Virginia, Washington, D.C., London, Mexico City and Shanghai, providing a full spectrum of legal services in energy, technology, financial services and private equity. With about 650 lawyers, Haynes Boone is ranked among the largest U.S.-based firms by *The National Law Journal*, *The American Lawyer* and *The Lawyer*. It was recognized in the

BTI Consulting Group’s 2022 “A-Team” report, which identifies the law firms that in-house counsel commend for providing superior client service.