

Female Victims of Sexual Violence & Abuse by a Family Member

Membership in a Particular Social Group for Victims of Sexual Violence & Abuse by a Family Member

Membership in a Particular Social Group (PSG) - PSGs cannot be circular and “must have existed independently of the alleged persecutory acts.”

FGM/C was recognized as a basis for asylum in *Matter of Kasinga*, in which the cognizable PSG was “Young women who are members of the TchambaKunsuntu Tribe of northern Togo who have not been subjected to FGM, and who oppose it.”

Subsequently, many cases involving IPV have been brought by members of PSGs defined in part by elements of domestic abuse itself; eg, Matter of A-C-R-G: "Married women in Guatemala who suffer domestic abuse but are unable to leave their marriages due to cultural and legal constraints." Neither PSG would be acceptable under the rule.

Matter of W-Y-C & H-O-B was a PSG proposed as "single Honduran women age 14 to 30 who are victims of sexual abuse within the family and who cannot turn to the government."

- **Rationale:** While "Women who are in general too poor, unable to leave, and lack state protection for a PSG. This formulation attempts to narrow the group based on age, gender, the relationship to the abuser (male family member), and show the inability to escape the situation, which might speak to the "immutable" nature of their vulnerability and lack of state protection.

POTENTIAL PSG FORMULATIONS

Combined Family and Vulnerability Characteristics:

- **Rationale:** This formulation combines the vulnerability characteristics of the family relationship with the specific vulnerability tied to the abuser's gender and identity.

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Considerations for Any Proposed PSG:

immutable). Because of this, it is not possible to prove, especially for groups defined by private relationships or vulnerabilities).

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