

BATTERED, BROKEN, BRUISED, OR ABANDONED: DOMESTIC STRIFE PRESENTS FOREIGN NATIONALS ACCESS TO IMMIGRATION RELIEF

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This article is intended to raise general and family-law practitioners' awareness of a type of access to immigration relief that is available to foreign nationals who are victims of domestic violence or are abandoned, abused, or neglected juveniles.<sup>1</sup> While negotiating the domestic arena involving divorce or juvenile neglect, practitioners must be concerned as to the impact the domestic situation may have on a foreign national's immigration status. The information contained in this article is a rudimentary introduction to immigration relief available to foreign nationals who are subjected to unsavory domestic affairs. This article does not cover every facet of immigration law that may apply to the foreign national. For that reason, both the foreign national and family-law practitioner are well advised to consult with an attorney who focuses on immigration law for choreographing the domestic and immigration cases.<sup>2</sup>

I. VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Undoubtedly, victims of domestic violence suffer profound untold drama. Such abuse is multiplied when the victim is a foreign national. All too often, the victim may be isolated by the abuser and further handicapped

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1. The terms "foreign national" or "alien" are used interchangeably to identify an individual who was born in a foreign country. In this article, the terms are used to imply that the individual is neither a United States citizen nor a lawful permanent resident.

2. In addition to seeking a private-practice attorney, there are countless non-profit organizations nationwide that are established solely to assist economically-disadvantaged individuals in need of immigration assistance. Some organizations, through grant funding or otherwise, have personnel specifically dedicated to assisting victims of domestic violence in traversing the immigration process.