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HHR Wins Asylum for Persecuted Malian Mother of Three

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January 22, 2020 - The firm secured asylum for a pro bono client who fled her native Mali to escape years of persecution after being forcibly subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM).

As a young girl, Maimouna Dite Yaye Tambadou was the victim of FGM against her will. The experience was traumatic and left her permanently injured and scarred; she has suffered from routine recurrences of gynecological infections and had multiple pregnancy complications. Tambadou remained firmly against the practice of FGM throughout her marriage and the birth of all three of her children, including two daughters.

In a bid to protect her daughters from falling victim to FGM, Tambadou sent them into hiding with a close friend in another Malian village.

As a result of her opposition to FGM and the subservient role of women in her social groups, Tambadou suffered severe domestic violence, including rape, physical assaults, and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband. The Malian government and police repeatedly dismissed Tambadou's complaints and appeared unable or unwilling to protect her from further persecution.

Fearing that she would be beaten, tortured, or even killed, Tambadou escaped to New York in September 2018, applying for asylum in September 2019.

In support of her application, HHR conducted dozens of meetings and calls with Tambadou, obtained a medical examination affidavit from a New York-based physician and accompanying affidavits from her close friend and cousin. In a hearing on Dec. 9, 2019, Tambadou received a final order granting asylum and legal status within the U.S.

The HHR team will continue to represent Tambadou through the administrative procedures that follow a grant of asylum, including derivative asylum applications for her children in Mali.

Ashley Hamilton, Laura Vittet-Adamson and Sophie Moskop worked on this case with supervision from Fara Tabatabai. Vittet-Adamson represented Tambadou at her asylum interview in Newark, New Jersey on Nov. 25, 2019, with logistical support from Moskop.

Related People



Fara Tabatabai



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