

FREE CASE PREPARATION ROADMAP

Asylum & Refugee Evidence Checklist

What to gather before you meet your lawyer, prepare for review,
or enter Immigration Court

01 ORGANIZE FACTS Put your story into a clear timeline.	02 FIND EVIDENCE Connect important facts to support.	03 SPOT GAPS Know what is missing before review.
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Know what to collect. Find the gaps. Organize your evidence before the pressure is on.

The goal is not to collect the biggest pile of documents. The goal is to connect each important fact in your story to the best evidence you can reasonably obtain.

LAST SOURCE REVIEW: AUGUST 10, 2026

START HERE How to Use This Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you collect the facts, records, witnesses, and country information that may be important in an asylum or refugee-protection matter. It is not meant to decide your case for you. Its purpose is to help you arrive prepared, organized, and able to show your attorney exactly what you have and what is still missing.

Work from facts first. Write down what happened, what you know, what you are unsure about, and what support exists. Do not force the story to fit the evidence - organize the evidence around the facts.

Your 8-Step Evidence Roadmap

01 Build your timeline Write the important events in date order, including what happened before and after each major incident.	02 Separate the incidents Treat each threat, attack, arrest, detention, report, relocation, or other major event as its own evidence problem.
03 Identify the reason Record why you believe you were targeted and what facts support that belief.	04 Identify witnesses List who saw, heard, treated, investigated, documented, or later learned about each event.
05 Find documents Collect personal records, messages, photographs, reports, memberships, medical records, police records, and other corroboration.	06 Research country conditions Find reliable sources that support the specific conditions relevant to your story - not just general bad news about the country.
07 Mark gaps and inconsistencies Do not hide them. Write down what is missing, what dates are uncertain, and what documents appear to conflict.	08 Build the attorney handoff Organize everything into a summary, timeline, evidence index, witness list, missing-evidence list, and questions for counsel.

CHECKLIST 1 OF 2 The Core Evidence Categories

Check each category as you review your records. A checked box means you have reviewed the category - not that every possible document must exist.

[] 1. Identity and family Passports, national IDs, birth certificates, marriage/divorce records, children's records, family relationship evidence.	[] 2. Immigration and travel history Entry documents, visas, I-94 records, prior applications, notices, court papers, travel routes, prior status in other countries.
[] 3. Personal chronology A full date-ordered history of where you lived, worked, studied, participated in groups, and experienced threats or harm.	[] 4. Incident evidence Records connected to attacks, threats, arrests, detention, harassment, extortion, disappearance, surveillance, or other claimed harm.
[] 5. Medical or psychological evidence Medical records, treatment records, prescriptions, injury photographs, evaluations, or other health documentation related to events.	[] 6. Police and government evidence Police reports, complaints, court filings, government correspondence, refusals, threats, or proof that authorities were involved or did not provide protection.

Tip: Save copies in a consistent naming system, for example: 03_Incident_2019-06-12_PoliceReport.pdf. A clear file name can save hours later.

CHECKLIST 2 OF 2 The Core Evidence Categories

Check each category as you review your records. A checked box means you have reviewed the category - not that every possible document must exist.

[] 7. Membership or activity evidence Political, religious, ethnic, professional, union, community, military, media, advocacy, social, or other records relevant to the reason you were targeted.	[] 8. Digital evidence Texts, WhatsApp/Signal messages, emails, social-media posts, call logs, voice notes, screenshots, metadata, cloud backups.
[] 9. Witness evidence Names, contact information, relationship to you, what they personally know, and whether they can provide a statement or testify.	[] 10. Country conditions Human-rights reports, government reports, reputable journalism, NGO reports, expert material, and country-specific research tied to the facts of your claim.
[] 11. Continuing risk Recent threats, inquiries about you, harm to relatives or similarly situated people, ongoing monitoring, warrants, summonses, new laws or enforcement patterns.	[] 12. Missing evidence Documents you cannot obtain, people you cannot contact, destroyed records, unsafe requests, and your explanation for why the evidence is unavailable.

Do not throw away an item simply because it seems weak or incomplete. Mark what it is, where it came from, and what questions you have about it for your attorney.

WORKSHEET Incident-by-Incident Quick Sheet

Complete one sheet for each major event. Keep the answers factual and specific. If you do not know an exact date or detail, say so and give your best estimate.

QUESTION	YOUR NOTES
What happened?	
Date or best estimate?	
Where did it happen?	
Who was involved?	
What was said or done?	
Why do you believe you were targeted?	
Who witnessed it?	
What documents or digital evidence exist?	
Did you report it? What happened?	
What evidence is still missing?	

RESEARCH Country Conditions: What to Look For

Country research is most useful when it corroborates a fact that matters in your own story. Start with the question you need the source to help answer.

YOUR CLAIM / FACT	WHAT OUTSIDE EVIDENCE MIGHT SUPPORT IT?
People like me are targeted	Reports documenting treatment of the same group, activity, belief, family, community, or profile.
Authorities would not protect me	Reports on police conduct, corruption, impunity, discrimination, enforcement failures, or state involvement.
The threat reaches beyond my hometown	Evidence about national reach, networks, tracking, state systems, organized groups, or conditions in other regions.
The danger is continuing	Recent reports, new incidents, recent laws, current enforcement patterns, or recent harm to similarly situated people.
My account matches known conditions	Independent reports describing similar methods, events, perpetrators, locations, or patterns.

Research rule: save the source, publication date, title, author/organization, URL, and the exact pages or paragraphs that matter. Your attorney should not have to search a 200-page report to find the two paragraphs you meant.

Your Attorney Handoff Checklist

☐ One-page case summary written in factual language	☐ Chronological timeline
☐ Separate incident summaries	☐ Witness list with contact details and what each witness knows
☐ Evidence inventory with file names or exhibit numbers	☐ Country-conditions source list with exact relevant pages/sections
☐ Missing-evidence list and why each item is unavailable	☐ List of uncertain dates, conflicts, or possible inconsistencies
☐ Copies of immigration notices, court papers, prior filings, and government correspondence	☐ Questions you need the lawyer to answer

SELF-CHECK 10-Question Evidence Readiness Check

Mark one answer for each question. This is a preparation check, not a decision about whether you have a case.

#	QUESTION	YES	NOT YET
1	Can you tell your major events in date order without changing the sequence?	☐	☐
2	For each major incident, can you identify who was involved and what happened?	☐	☐
3	Can you explain why you believe you were targeted using facts, words, actions, or circumstances?	☐	☐
4	Have you listed every person who could corroborate an important part of your story?	☐	☐
5	Have you collected your immigration and travel documents?	☐	☐
6	Have you saved digital evidence in a way that preserves context, dates, names, and full conversations where possible?	☐	☐
7	Can you point to reliable country information that supports the specific conditions relevant to your story?	☐	☐
8	Have you identified evidence you cannot obtain instead of pretending it does not exist?	☐	☐
9	Have you compared names, dates, places, and events across your forms, statements, messages, and official documents?	☐	☐
10	Could a lawyer understand your case file in 15 minutes without asking where every document came from?	☐	☐

If several answers are "Not yet," that does not automatically mean you do not have a case. It means you have preparation work to do before your evidence file is ready for a serious legal review.

WHAT IS STILL MISSING?	WHAT DO I NEED TO ASK MY LAWYER?

KEEP THESE LINKS Official & Research Starting Points

Use current official pages rather than relying on old copies of forms or outdated filing instructions. Save these links with your case file.

USCIS Form I-589 - Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal [Open link](#)

Current form page, edition information, filing instructions, and related notices.

USCIS Asylum [Open link](#)

Current USCIS asylum information and procedure updates.

USCIS Refugees [Open link](#)

Current refugee-program information and policy updates.

EOIR Forms [Open link](#)

Official forms used in Immigration Court and before the BIA.

EOIR Immigration Court Practice Manual [Open link](#)

Current court filing and hearing procedures.

EOIR Respondent Access information [Open link](#)

Information about electronic access and filing for eligible respondents.

EOIR Country Conditions Research [Open link](#)

EOIR starting point for country-condition research and Department of State reports.

Immigration Justice Campaign - Country Conditions Research [Open link](#)

Attorney-training resource listing research databases, examples, and research guides.

Immigration Justice Campaign - Corroborating Your Client's Claim [Open link](#)

Attorney-training resource on corroborating evidence in asylum, withholding, and CAT cases.

What the Complete \$47 Workbook Adds

- Step-by-step personal chronology and incident worksheets
- Government involvement/protection evidence worksheet
- Country-conditions research planner and source log
- Digital evidence preservation and indexing checklist
- Attorney handoff packet templates
- Current official forms and resource links
- Protected-ground and "why me" evidence mapping
- Future-risk and relocation evidence worksheets
- Witness and affidavit preparation worksheets
- Consistency audit across dates, names, places, forms, and supporting documents
- Three quizzes with detailed answer explanations

The free checklist tells you WHAT to collect. The complete workbook walks you through HOW to build, organize, test, and hand off the evidence file.

Interested in the Private Evidence Organizer?

A private desktop evidence organizer may be available as an optional companion. If you would like to use it, contact us or the developer directly so we can assist with availability, installation, setup, and any API connections you choose to use. The PDF workbook remains fully usable without the software.