

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**Immigration and Naturalization Service****8 CFR Parts 3, 103, 208, 235, 238, 240, 241, 253, and 507****[INS No. 1976-99; AG Order No. 2207-99]****RIN 1115-AF39****Regulations Concerning the Convention Against Torture****AGENCY:** Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Executive Office for Immigration Review, Justice.**ACTION:** Interim rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This interim rule amends Department of Justice regulations by establishing procedures for raising a claim for protection from torture, as directed by the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998. Section 2242 of that Act requires the heads of appropriate agencies to prescribe regulations for implementing United States obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention Against Torture or Convention). Under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture (Article 3), the United States has agreed not to "expel, return ('refouler') or extradite" a person to another state where he or she would be tortured. The interim rule establishes procedures for ensuring compliance with Article 3 with respect to removal of aliens from the United States by integrating many Convention Against Torture requests into the present scheme governing asylum and withholding determinations before the Immigration Court. For persons subject to reinstatement, administrative removal, expedited removal, or other streamlined proceedings, excluding those relating to aliens inadmissible on security and related grounds, the rule establishes a screening mechanism followed by Immigration Court review that is similar to the screening procedure currently used in determining credible fear under expedited removal. The rule also establishes "deferral of removal," a new, limited form of protection that will be accorded aliens who would be tortured in the country of removal but who are barred from withholding of removal. Finally, this interim regulation serves as notice to the public that, upon the effective date of this rule, the informal procedure currently in place for considering Convention Against Torture requests will end and those persons who have raised a claim under the

informal procedure will be given an opportunity, as prescribed by this rule, to have their cases reviewed under the new procedures.

DATES: *Effective date:* This interim rule is effective March 22, 1999.*Comment date:* written comments must be submitted on or before April 20, 1999.**ADDRESSES:** Please submit written comments in original and three copies to the Director, Policy Directives and Instructions Branch, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 425 I Street, NW, Room 5307, Washington, DC 20536. To ensure proper handling, please reference INS No. 1976-99 on your correspondence. Comments are available for public inspection at the above address by calling (202) 514-3048 to arrange for an appointment.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For matters relating to the Immigration and Naturalization Service: Dorothea Lay, 425 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20536, telephone number (202) 514-2895. For matters relating to the Executive Office for Immigration Review: Margaret M. Philbin, General Counsel, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Suite 2400, 5107 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia, 22041, telephone number (703) 305-0470.**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

On October 21, 1998, the President signed into law legislation which requires that "[n]ot later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the heads of the appropriate agencies shall prescribe regulations to implement the obligations of the United States under Article 3 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, subject to any reservations, understandings, declarations, and provisos contained in the United States Senate resolution of ratification of the Convention." Section 2242(b) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-277, Division G, Oct. 21, 1998).

Obligations under the Convention Against Torture have been in effect for the United States since November 20, 1994. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, G.A. Res. 39/46, Annex, 39 U.N. GAOR Supp. No. 51, at 197, U.N. Doc. A/39/51 (1984) [hereinafter Convention or Convention Against Torture]. On October 21, 1994, President Clinton deposited the United States instrument of ratification of the Convention with the Secretary General

of the United Nations. Consistent with its terms, the Convention Against Torture entered into force for the United States 30 days later. Under Article 3, the United States had agreed not to "expel, return ('refouler') or extradite" a person to another state where he or she would be tortured. The Department of State is responsible for carrying out extradition requests and will promulgate regulations to ensure compliance with Article 3 in those cases. In other cases, the Attorney General is charged with expelling or returning aliens from the United States to other countries. This rule is published pursuant to this mandate to implement United States obligations under Article 3 in the context of the Attorney General's removal of aliens Article 3 provides as follows:

1. No State Party shall expel, return, ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she would be in danger of being subjected to torture.

2. For the purpose of determining whether there are such grounds, the competent authorities shall take into account all relevant considerations including, where applicable, the existence in the State concerned of a consistent pattern of gross, flagrant, or mass violations of human rights.

This Article is similar in some ways to Article 33 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137 (hereinafter Refugee Convention). Article 33 provides that "[n]o Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." The United States currently implements Article 33 of the Refugee Convention through the withholding of removal provision in section 241(b)(3) (formerly section 243(h)) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA or the Act). That provision, as interpreted by the courts, requires the Attorney General to withhold an alien's removal to a country where it is more likely than not that the alien's life or freedom would be threatened on account of one of the five grounds mentioned above. See *INS v. Stevic*, 467 U.S. 407, 429-30 (1984).

However, there are some important differences between withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act and Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture. First, several categories of individuals, including persons who

assisted in Nazi persecution or engaged in genocide, persons who have persecuted others, persons who have been convicted of particularly serious crimes, persons who are believed to have committed serious non-political crimes before arriving in the United States, and persons who pose a danger to the security of the United States, are ineligible for withholding of removal. See INA section 241(b)(3)(B). Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture does not exclude such persons from its scope. Second, section 241(b)(3) applies only to aliens whose life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, and membership in a particular social group or political opinion. Article 3 covers persons who fear torture that may not be motivated by one of those five grounds. Third, the definition of torture does not encompass all types of harm that might qualify as a threat to life or freedom. Thus, the coverage of Article 3 is different from that of section 241(b)(3): broader in some ways and narrower in others.

Until the October 21, 1998 legislation, there was no statutory provision to implement Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture in United States domestic law. When the United States Senate gave advice and consent to ratification of the Convention Against Torture, it made a declaration that Articles 1 through 16 were not self-executing. Recognizing, however, that ratification of the Convention represented a statement by the United States to the international community of its commitment to comply with the Convention's provisions to the extent permissible under the Constitution and existing federal statutes, the Department of Justice sought to conform its practices to the Convention by ensuring compliance with Article 3 in the case of aliens who are subject to removal from the United States.

In order to conform to the Convention before the enactment of implementing legislation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS or Service) adopted a pre-regulatory administrative process to assess the applicability of Article 3 to individual cases in which an alien is subject to removal. Under this pre-regulatory administrative process, upon completion of deportation, exclusion, or removal proceedings and prior to execution of a final order of removal, the INS has considered whether removing an alien to a particular country is consistent with Article 3. If it is determined that the alien could not be removed to the country in question consistent with Article 3, the INS has used its existing discretionary authority to ensure that

the alien is not removed to that country for so long as he or she is likely to be tortured there. See INA § 103(a); 8 CFR 2.1.

In formulating its pre-regulatory administrative process to conform to Article 3 in the context of the removal of aliens, the INS has been careful not to expand upon the protections that Article 3 grants. Only execution of an order of removal to a country where an alien is more likely than not to be tortured would violate the Convention. Therefore, the INS has not addressed the question of whether Article 3 prohibits removal in an individual case until there is a final administrative order of removal to a place where an alien claims that he or she would be tortured, and until all appeals, requests for review, or other administrative or judicial challenges to execution of that order have been resolved. This approach has allowed the INS to address the applicability of Article 3 to a case only when actually necessary to comply with the Convention. It has also allowed an individual alien to exhaust all avenues for pursuing any other more extensive benefit or protection for which he or she may be eligible before seeking the minimal guarantee provided by Article 3 that he or she will not be returned to a specific country where it is likely that he or she would be tortured. At the same time, this approach has allowed the INS, the agency responsible for executing removal orders, to ensure that no order is executed under circumstances that would violate the Convention.

Goals of Interim Rule

Pursuant to statutory mandate, the Department of Justice now publishes this rule in order to implement the United States' Article 3 obligations in the context of the removal of aliens by the Attorney General. The rule is published as an interim rule, effective 30 days after the date of publication. This rule is intended to create fair and efficient provisions to implement Article 3 within the overall regulatory framework for the issuance of removal orders and decisions about the execution of such orders.

The primary goals of this rule are to establish procedures that ensure that no alien is removed from the United States under circumstances that would violate Article 3 without unduly disrupting the issuance and execution of removal orders consistent with Article 3. To this end, we have designed a system that will allow aliens subject to the various types of removal proceedings currently afforded by the immigration laws to seek, and where eligible, to be accorded

protection under Article 3. At the same time, we have created mechanisms to quickly identify and resolve frivolous claims to protection so that the new procedures cannot be used as a delaying tactic by aliens who are not in fact at risk.

In cases subject to streamlined, expedited removal processes under current law, the rule employs screening mechanisms to quickly identify potentially meritorious claims to protection and to resolve frivolous ones with dispatch. For example, the rule allows for the screening of aliens arriving at ports of entry to determine whether they establish a credible fear of torture. This screening will be conducted in conjunction with the existing credible fear of persecution screening process, so that it will not complicate or delay the expedited removal process established by Congress for arriving aliens. If an alien passes this threshold-screening standard, his or her claim for protection under Article 3 will be further examined by an immigration judge in the context of removal proceedings under section 240 of the Act. The screening mechanism also allows for the expeditious review by an immigration judge of a negative screening determination and the quick removal of an alien with no credible claim to protection.

Furthermore, the rule establishes a new screening process to rapidly identify and assess both claims for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act and for protection under the Convention by either aliens subject to administrative removal for aggravated felons under section 238(b) of the Act or to reinstatement of a previous order of removal under section 241(a)(5) of the Act. Modeled on the credible fear screening mechanism, this screening process will also allow for the fair and expeditious resolution of such claims without unduly disrupting the streamlined removal processes applicable to these aliens.

The cases of alien terrorists and other aliens subject to administrative removal under section 235(c) of the Act will be handled through the administrative process in which the INS issues and executes the removal order. Cases handled under section 235(c) are only a few each year, and typically involve highly sensitive issues and adjudication based on classified information under tight controls. Thus, by retaining the ability to assess the applicability of Article 3 through the administrative removal process, the INS will both maintain a workable process and ensure U.S. compliance with Article 3 in these unusual cases. Similarly, the regulations

provide that an alien whose removal has been ordered by the Alien Terrorist Removal Court under the special procedures set forth in Title V of the Act shall not be removed to a particular country if the Attorney General determines, in consultation with the Secretary of State, that removal to that country would violate Article 3.

For aliens subject to removal proceedings under section 240 of the Act, exclusion proceedings, or deportation proceedings, a claim to protection under the Convention Against Torture will be raised and considered, along with any other applications, during removal proceedings before an immigration judge. Both the alien and the INS will have the ability to appeal decisions of the immigration judge to the Board of Immigration Appeals (the Board). This will allow the alien to seek review of this important decision, and will also allow the INS to use the review mechanism to ensure that decisions about the applicability of Article 3 are made consistently and according to the high standards of proof required by Article 3 itself. At the same time, the availability of review will not expand the process already available to aliens in proceedings under section 240, who under current law already have the opportunity to seek Board review of decisions of the immigration judge.

Nor does this rule expand the availability of judicial review for aliens who make claims to protection under the Convention Against Torture. The statute requiring regulatory implementation of obligations under Article 3 explicitly provides that it does not authorize judicial review of these regulations. Section 2242(d) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998. The rule restates at § 208.18(e) the statutory mandate that the only available judicial review for Convention Against Torture claims is when such claims are heard as part of the review of a final order of removal pursuant to section 242 of the Act. Such review remains subject to the requirements and limitations of section 242. Where a court has jurisdiction to consider a Convention Against Torture claim, it may not, except as authorized by section 242, consider other claims regarding the alien's removal.

Structure of Rule

Generally, the rule creates two separate provisions for protection under Article 3 for aliens who would be tortured in the country of removal. The first provision establishes a new form of withholding of removal under § 208.16(c). This type of protection is

only available to aliens who are not barred from eligibility for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act. The second provision, under § 208.17(a), concerns aliens who would be tortured in the country of removal but who are subject to the bars contained in section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act. These aliens may only be granted deferral of removal, a less permanent form of protection than withholding of removal and one that is more easily and quickly terminated if it becomes possible to remove the alien consistent with Article 3. Deferral of removal will be granted based on the withholding of removal application to an alien who is likely to be tortured in the country of removal but who is barred from withholding of removal. Section 208.17(d) sets out a special, streamlined procedure through which the INS may seek to terminate deferral of removal when appropriate.

Withholding of Removal Under the Convention Against Torture

Revised § 208.16(c) creates a new form of withholding of removal, which will be granted to an eligible alien in removal proceedings who establishes that he or she would be tortured in the proposed country of removal. This section references new § 208.18(a), which contains the definition of torture, and provides that this definition will be applied in all determinations about eligibility for this new form of withholding, or for deferral of removal.

An alien granted withholding under new § 208.16(c) would be treated similarly to an alien granted withholding of removal under § 208.16(b), the regulatory provision implementing section 241(b)(3) of the Act. The rule provides at § 208.16(c)(2) that, in order to be eligible for withholding of removal under Article 3, an alien must establish that it is more likely than not that he or she would be tortured in the country in question. Imposition of this burden of proof on the alien gives effect to one of the Senate understandings upon which ratification was conditioned, which provides that "the United States understands that the phrase, 'where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture,' as used in Article 3 of the Convention, to mean 'if it is more likely than not that he would be tortured.'" The ratification history makes clear that this understanding was intended to ensure that the standard of proof for Article 3 would be the same standard as that for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act, then section 243(h) of the Act. See,

e.g., Convention Against Torture, submitted to the Senate, May 20, 1988, S. Treaty Doc. No. 100-20, at 6 (1988) (hereinafter S. Treaty Doc. No. 100-20).

Section 208.16(c)(3) also directs that all evidence relevant to the possibility of future torture should be considered when making the determination as to whether the alien is more likely than not to be tortured. It specifically provides that evidence of past torture inflicted on the applicant should be considered, because evidence of past torture may be probative as to whether future torture is likely.

Section 208.16(c)(3) also requires that, in determining whether the applicant has met his or her burden of proof, the decision-maker may consider any evidence that the alien may be able to relocate to an area of the country of removal where he or she is not likely to be tortured. Consideration of this factor is consistent with long-established precedent in the context of the adjudication of requests for asylum and withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act, and is relevant to the likelihood that an alien would be tortured if returned to a specific country. This section also provides that, where applicable, the adjudicator will consider evidence of gross, flagrant, or mass violations of human rights committed within the country in question. This requirement is drawn directly from clause 2 of Article 3. The words "where applicable" indicate that, in each case, the adjudicator will determine whether and to what extent evidence of human rights violations in a given country is in fact a relevant factor in the case at hand. Evidence of the gross and flagrant denial of freedom of the press, without more, for example, may not tend to show that an alien would be tortured if returned to that country. See, *e.g.*, S. Treaty Doc. No. 100-20, at 20. The rule further directs that any other relevant information about country conditions in the country of removal be considered.

Applicants for withholding under § 208.16(c) will be subject to the mandatory bars to withholding contained in section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act. Section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act bars from withholding of removal aliens: who have assisted in Nazi persecution or engaged in genocide; who have ordered, incited, assisted or otherwise participated in the persecution of others; and who, having been convicted of a particularly serious crime, pose a danger to the community of the United States. The section 241(b)(3)(B) bar also applies when there are serious reasons to believe that the alien has committed a serious non-political crime outside the

United States before arriving in the United States or there are reasonable grounds to believe that the alien is a danger to the security of the United States. The legislation implementing Article 3 provides that “[t]o the maximum extent consistent with the obligations of the United States under the Convention, subject to any reservations, understandings, declarations, and provisos contained in the United States Senate resolution of ratification of the Convention, the regulations described in subsection (b) [mandating promulgation of regulations to implement Article 3] shall exclude from the protection of such regulations aliens described in section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1231(b)(3)(B)).” Section 2242(c) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998. Thus, consistent with the statutory directive, the advantages of a grant of withholding of removal will not be available to such aliens. Rather, their protection from return to a country where they would be tortured, as required by the Convention, will be effected through a less extensive form of protection, i.e., deferral of removal, established in § 208.17(a).

Deferral of Removal Under the Convention Against Torture

Although aliens who are barred from withholding of removal under § 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act are not eligible for withholding under 208.16(c), the Article 3 implementing statute directs that any exclusion of these aliens from the protection of these regulations must be consistent with United States obligations under the Convention, subject to United States reservations, understandings, declarations, and provisos conditioning ratification. Section 2242(c) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998. Article 3 prohibits returning any person to a country where he or she would be tortured, and contains no exceptions to this mandate. Nor do any of the United States reservations, understandings, declarations, or provisos contained in the Senate’s resolution of ratification provide that the United States may exclude any person from Article 3’s prohibition on return because of criminal or other activity or for any other reason. Indeed, the ratification history of the Convention Against Torture clearly indicates that the Executive Branch presented Article 3 to the Senate with the understanding that it “does not permit any discretion or provide for any exceptions * * *.” Convention Against Torture: Hearing Before the Senate Comm. on Foreign Relations, 101st Cong., 18 (1990)

(statement of Mark Richard, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, DOJ).

Wherever possible, subsequent acts of Congress must be construed as consistent with treaty obligations. See e.g., *Cook v. United States*, 288 U.S. 102, 120 (1933) (“[a] treaty will not be deemed to have been abrogated or modified by a later statute, unless such purpose on the part of Congress has been clearly expressed.”). Here, Congress has not indicated an intent to modify the obligations imposed by Article 3. In fact, Congress has clearly expressed its intent that any exclusion of aliens described in section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act from the protection of these regulations must be consistent with Article 3. The obligation not to return such an alien to a country where he or she would be tortured remains in effect. Thus, while this rule does not extend the advantages associated with a grant of withholding of removal to aliens barred under section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act, it does ensure that they are not returned to a country where they would be tortured.

To this end, the rule creates a special provision under § 208.17(a) for deferral of removal when an alien described in section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act has been ordered removed to a country where it has been determined that he or she would be tortured. The process is as follows: Before determining whether the bars described in section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act apply to withholding removal of an alien under the Convention Against Torture, the immigration judge is required to find whether the alien is likely to be tortured in the country of removal. Only after this finding is made does the immigration judge decide, as required by § 208.16(d), whether the statutory bars to withholding of removal apply. If the bars do not apply, the immigration judge will grant withholding of removal to an alien who has been determined to be likely to be tortured in the country of removal. If the immigration judge finds that the bars apply, § 208.17(a) requires the immigration judge to defer removal of an alien to a country where the alien is likely to be tortured. The alien need not apply separately for deferral because this form of protection will be accorded automatically, based on the withholding application, to an alien who is barred from withholding but is likely to be tortured in the country of removal. While the order of deferral is in effect, the alien will not be returned to the country in question.

Section 208.17(a) is subject to the same standard of proof and definitional provisions as § 208.16(c). This will

ensure that compliance with Article 3 is complete and consistent in the cases of aliens who are barred from withholding as well as in the cases of aliens who are not barred from withholding. However, an order of deferral provides a much more limited form of protection than does a grant of withholding of removal. An order of deferral would not confer upon the alien any lawful or permanent immigration status in the United States and would be subject to streamlined and expeditious review and termination if it is determined that it is no longer likely that the alien would be tortured in the country to which he or she has been ordered removed. Further, like withholding, deferral of removal is effective only with respect to the particular country in question and does not alter the government’s ability to remove the alien to another country where he or she would not be tortured. The rule requires the immigration judge to inform the alien of the limited nature of the deferral order at the time such order is entered.

In addition, an order deferring removal to a particular country will not alter INS authority to detain an alien who is otherwise subject to detention. Section 241(a)(6) of the Act provides a variety of grounds for INS in its discretion to detain beyond the removal period an alien under a final order who cannot be removed. These include, most importantly, the discretion to detain an alien granted deferral of removal under Article 3 who is removable based on security grounds, based on certain criminal offenses, or who has been determined to pose a risk to the community. This is consistent with the Article 3 implementing statute, which provides that “[n]othing in this section shall be construed as limiting the authority of the Attorney General to detain any person under any provision of law, including, but not limited to, any provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act.” Section 2242(e) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998. Section 208.17(c) of the interim rule provides that decisions about the detention of detainable aliens who have been granted deferral of removal will be made according to standard procedures under 8 CFR part 241.

Termination of Deferral of Removal

The most important distinction between withholding of removal and deferral of removal is the mode of termination. Section 208.17(d) will provide for a streamlined termination process for deferral of removal when it is no longer likely that an alien would be tortured in the country of removal.

Under existing regulations, withholding can only be terminated when the government moves to reopen the case, meets the standards for reopening, and meets its burden of proof to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the alien is not eligible for withholding. The termination process for deferral of removal is designed to be much more accessible, so that deferral can be terminated quickly and efficiently when appropriate.

At any time while the order of deferral is in effect, the INS District Counsel for the district with jurisdiction over an alien granted deferral of removal may move the immigration court to schedule a hearing to determine whether the deferral order can be terminated. The INS motion will not be subject to the normal motion to reopen requirement that the moving party seek to offer evidence that was previously unavailable (i.e., could not have been discovered and presented at the previous hearing) and that establishes a *prima facie* case for termination. Rather, the Service's motion will be granted and a termination hearing will be scheduled on an expedited basis if the Service meets a lower threshold, which requires only that the evidence was not considered at the previous hearing and is relevant to the possibility that the alien would be tortured in the country of removal. This will allow the Service to monitor cases in which an order of deferral is in effect, and to bring such cases for termination hearings when it appears that the alien may no longer face likely torture in the country in question.

The Immigration Court will provide the alien with notice of the time, place, and date of the termination hearing, and will have the opportunity to submit evidence to supplement his or her initial application for withholding, which was the basis for the deferral order. As is the case with initial asylum and withholding applications, the original application, along with any supplemental information submitted by the alien, will be forwarded to the Department of State, which may comment on the case at its option. At the termination hearing, it will be the alien's burden to establish that it is more likely than not that he or she would be tortured in the country of removal. The immigration judge will make a *de novo* determination about the alien's likelihood of torture in the country in question. If the immigration judge determines that the alien is more likely than not to be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred, the order of deferral shall remain in place. If the alien fails to meet

the burden of proof, the deferral order will be terminated. If the alien establishes that he or she still requires protection under the Convention Against Torture, the deferral order will remain in effect. Appeal of the immigration judge's decision shall lie to the Board.

Deferral of removal may also be terminated at the alien's written request under § 208.17(e). For termination on this basis, the rule requires that the immigration judge determine whether the alien's request is knowing and voluntary. If necessary, the immigration judge may conduct a hearing to make this determination. If it is determined that the alien's request for termination is not knowing and voluntary, deferral will not be terminated on this basis.

Implementation of the Convention Against Torture

Section 208.18 sets out a number of provisions governing the implementation of the Convention Against Torture provisions. This section contains the definition of torture that will apply in both the withholding and deferral contexts, rules about the applicability of the new provisions, and a section clarifying that this rule does not expand the availability of judicial review to aliens who assert claims to protection under the Convention Against Torture.

Definition of Torture

Section 208.18(a) provides the definition of torture and of terms within that definition. Initially, consistent with the statute, it provides that the regulatory definition of torture incorporates the definition in Article 1 of the Convention, as interpreted and modified by United States reservations, understandings, declarations and provisions. The remainder of the definition section is drawn directly from the language of the Convention, the language of the reservations, understandings and declarations contained in the Senate resolution ratifying the Convention, or from ratification history.

Section 208.18(a)(1) contains the first sentence of Article 1, providing the basic contours of the definition of torture. It does not attempt to list the types of acts that would constitute torture, but rather expresses basic elements that must be present in order for an act to be torture: It must be an act causing severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, intentionally inflicted on a person. Article 16, which refers to "other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, which do not amount to

torture," confirms that, as provided in § 208.18(a)(2), torture is an extreme form of cruel and inhuman treatment. See, e.g., S. Treaty Doc. No. 100-20 at 23.

Section 208.18(a)(3) provides that torture "does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions." This is drawn from the second sentence of Article 1. The Senate adopted an understanding providing that "with reference to article 1 of the Convention, the United States understands that 'sanctions' includes judicially-imposed sanctions and other enforcement actions authorized by United States law or by judicial interpretation of such law. Nonetheless, the United States understands that a State Party could not through its domestic sanctions defeat the object and purpose of the Convention to prohibit torture." 136 Cong. Rec. 36198 (1990). Therefore § 208.18(a)(3) also provides that "[l]awful sanctions include judicially imposed sanctions and other enforcement actions authorized by law, including the death penalty, but do not include sanctions that defeat the object and purpose of the Convention Against Torture to prohibit torture." This paragraph does not require that, in order to come within the exception, an action must be one that would be authorized by United States law. It must, however, be legitimate, in the sense that a State cannot defeat the purpose of the Convention to prohibit torture.

Senate understandings also provide that "the United States understands that international law does not prohibit the death penalty, and does not consider this Convention to restrict or prohibit the United States from applying the death penalty consistent with the Fifth, Eighth, and/or Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, including any constitutional period of confinement prior to the imposition of the death penalty." This understanding is embodied in § 208.18(a)(3)'s inclusion of the death penalty in the description of lawful sanctions that do not constitute torture. The purpose of the Senate's understanding on the death penalty is to clarify that the Convention does not prohibit the United States from applying the death penalty consistent with United States constitutional standards. This concept will likely have limited application in the context of Article 3 implementation. It means simply that the constitutionally sufficient imposition of the death penalty in the United States is not torture. The understanding does not mean, however, that any imposition of the death penalty by a foreign state that fails to satisfy United States

constitutional requirements constitutes torture. Any analysis of whether the death penalty is torture in a specific case would be subject to all requirements of the Convention's definition, the Senate's reservations, understandings, and declarations, and the regulatory definitions. Thus, even if imposition of the death penalty would be inconsistent with United States constitutional standards, it would not be torture if it were imposed in a legitimate manner to punish violations of law. Similarly, it would not be torture if it failed to meet any other element of the definition of torture.

The definition of torture can, in limited circumstances, include severe mental pain and suffering. Section 208.18(a)(4) provides a detailed and restrictive definition of the type of severe mental harm that can constitute torture. This language is drawn directly from the Senate's understandings. See 136 Cong. Rec. 36198.

Section 208.18(a)(5) requires that, in order to qualify as torture, an act must be specifically intended to inflict severe pain or suffering, a requirement clearly imposed by United States understandings. *Id.* Thus, an act that results in unanticipated or unintended severity of pain and suffering is not torture. See, e.g., S. Treaty Doc. No. 100-20, at 19.

Section 208.18(a)(6) provides that, for an act to constitute torture, the victim of the act must be in the custody or physical control of the perpetrator. Thus, harm, even severe pain and suffering, inflicted on a person who is not within the perpetrator's custody or physical control, would not qualify as torture. Again, the language of this regulatory provision is taken directly from the Senate understandings. See 136 Cong. Rec. 36198.

Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture requires that torture must be inflicted "by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity." Senate understandings provide that "the term 'acquiescence' requires that the public official, prior to the activity constituting torture, have awareness of such activity and thereafter breach his legal responsibility to intervene to prevent such activity." 136 Cong. Rec. 36198. Section 208.18(a)(7) mirrors this requirement. Thus the definition of torture includes only acts that occur in the context of governmental authority. See, e.g., S. Treaty Doc. No. 100-20, at 19.

Section 208.18(a)(8) provides that noncompliance with applicable legal procedural standards does not *per se*

constitute torture. Again, this provision mirrors Senate understandings. 136 Cong. Rec. 36198.

Applicability of New Provisions

Section 208.18(b)(1) provides that aliens who are in exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings as of the effective date of this rule may seek withholding under the Convention Against Torture, and if applicable be considered for deferral under the Convention, through the procedures established by this rule. Section 208.18(b)(2) also establishes special procedures to provide a reasonable opportunity to request consideration for protection under Article 3 for aliens who were either ordered removed prior to the effective date of this rule, or whose removal orders become final prior to the effective date of the rule. Such aliens will be given a 90-day window of time in which to file a motion to reopen before the immigration court or before the Board of Immigration Appeals, to apply for protection under this rule. Any motion filed by such an alien within 90 days of the effective date of this rule, March 22, 1999, will not be subject to the normal requirement that the motion must seek to present new evidence that was unavailable and could not have been presented at the previous hearing. Nor will such a motion be subject to the normal time and numerical limitations on motions to reopen under §§ 3.2 and 3.23. Such a motion will, however, be subject to the other requirements set out in the regulations for a motion to reopen. Therefore it will not be granted unless the evidence sought to be offered establishes a *prima facie* case that the alien's removal would violate Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture. Similarly, like other motions to reopen, such a motion will not automatically stay the alien's removal. Rather, the alien must request a stay of removal at the time of filing the motion to reopen.

Aliens Who Requested Protection Under the Convention Through the INS Pre-regulatory Administrative Process To Ensure Compliance With Article 3

As explained previously, the INS has, prior to the effective date of this rule, conducted a pre-regulatory administrative process to comply with Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture until implementing legislation was enacted and obligations under that Article could be implemented by this rule. Section 208.18(b)(3) of this rule provides that, after the effective date of this rule, the INS pre-regulatory administrative process for ensuring compliance with Article 3 will end.

After the effective date of this rule, except as otherwise provided, the INS will no longer stay an alien's removal based only on a request for protection under Article 3, nor will it consider the applicability of Article 3 to an individual case under its pre-regulatory administrative process.

Section 208.18(b)(4) provides that the new procedures established by this rule to provide for the consideration of claims to protection under the Convention Against Torture do not apply to cases in which the Service, prior to the effective date of this rule, has made a final administrative determination about the applicability of Article 3. This section provides that, if the Service has determined under its pre-regulatory administrative process that an alien cannot be removed to a particular country consistent with Article 3, the alien be considered to have been granted withholding of removal under § 208.16(c), unless the alien is subject to mandatory denial of withholding under § 208.16(d) (2) or (3). If such an alien is barred from withholding of removal, he or she will be considered to have been granted deferral of removal under § 208.17(a). Similarly, if an alien was determined under the pre-regulatory administrative process not to require protection under Article 3, that alien will be considered to have been finally denied withholding of removal under § 208.16(c) and deferral of removal under § 208.17(a). This paragraph applies only to cases in which the Service actually reached a final determination about the applicability of Article 3 to an individual case.

A different regime will apply to aliens who requested protection under the pre-regulatory administrative process but did not receive a final determination from the Service. The Service will provide notice about the end of the pre-regulatory administrative process to such aliens. This notice will inform the alien of the new regulatory process through which Article 3 claims will be processed. The notice will also explain that an alien who was ordered removed or whose removal order became final prior to the effective date of this rule may obtain consideration of a claim under Article 3 only through the procedures set out in this rule. An alien under a final removal order issued by EOIR may obtain consideration of the Article 3 claim by filing a motion to reopen with the immigration court or the Board of Immigration Appeals. In order to provide a reasonable opportunity to file such a motion, an alien who has a request for Article 3 protection pending with the Service on

the date this rule becomes effective will be granted a stay of removal effective until 30 days after the notice is served on the alien. Any motion filed by such an alien will not be subject to the normal requirements for motions to reopen. The immigration judge or the Board shall grant such a motion if it is accompanied by a copy of the notice provided by the Service or by other convincing evidence that the alien requested protection under Article 3 from the Service through the pre-regulatory administrative process and did not receive a final administrative determination prior to the effective date of this rule. The filing of such a motion shall extend the stay of removal pending the adjudication of the motion. This special provision ensures that those who requested protection under the INS pre-regulatory administrative process and did not get a ruling will have a full and fair opportunity to pursue their claims for protection under the new regulatory process.

For an alien under a removal order issued by the Service under section 238(b) of the Act or an alien under an exclusion, deportation, or removal order that has been reinstated by the Service, the Service will consider any claim to protection that is pending on the effective date of this rule through the process set out in section 208.31. For an alien ordered removed by the Service under section 235(c) of the Act, the Service will decide under section 235.8(b)(4) any Article 3 claim that is pending on the effective date of this rule. Such a claim will not be subject to the procedures set out for consideration of Article 3 claims by an immigration judge, the Board of Immigration Appeals, or an asylum officer.

Cases in Which Diplomatic Assurances Are Considered

Section 208.18(c) sets out special procedures for cases in which the Secretary of State forwards to the Attorney General assurances that the Secretary has obtained from the government of a specific country that an alien would not be tortured if returned there. In some cases, it may be possible for the United States to actually reduce the likelihood that an alien would be tortured in a particular country. The nature and reliability of such assurances, and any arrangements through which such assurances might be verified, would require careful evaluation before any decision could be reached about whether such assurances would allow an alien's removal to that country consistent with Article 3. This paragraph sets out special procedures under which the Attorney General, in

consultation with the Secretary of State, will assume responsibility for assessing the adequacy of any such assurances in appropriate cases. Cases will be handled under this provision only if such assurances are actually forwarded to the Attorney General by the Secretary of State for consideration under this special process. It is anticipated that these cases will be rare.

In cases in which the Secretary has forwarded assurances under this provision, the procedures for administrative consideration of claims under the Convention Against Torture set out elsewhere in this rule will not apply. Further, the rule provides that the Attorney General's authority to make determinations about the applicability of Article 3 in such a case may be exercised by the Deputy Attorney General or by the Commissioner, but may not be further delegated. Thus the rule ensures that cases involving the adequacy of diplomatic assurances forwarded to the Attorney General by the Secretary of State will receive consideration at senior levels within the Department of Justice, which is appropriate to the delicate nature of a diplomatic undertaking to ensure that an alien is not tortured in another country. Under § 208.17(f), these special procedures may also be invoked in appropriate cases for considering whether deferral of removal should be terminated.

Cases Involving Aliens Ordered Removed Under Section 235(c) of the Act

Section 208.18(d) provides, as discussed previously in the supplementary information, that an alien ordered removed pursuant to section 235(c) of the Act will not be removed under circumstances that would violate section 241(b)(3) of the Act or Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture. Any claim by an alien for protection against removal to a country where the alien claims he or she would be tortured will be considered by the Service under the standards applicable to protection under the Convention Against Torture, in light of the special circumstances of each case.

Because these determinations will be made by the Service, the procedural provisions in Part 208 for consideration or decision of an alien's claims by an immigration judge, the Board, or an asylum officer do not apply in such cases. Thus, although this rule amends 8 CFR 253.1(f) to provide that an alien removable under section 235(c) of the Act may apply for protection under the Convention Against Torture under 8 CFR Part 208, such an alien's claim

would be considered by the Service as provided in § 208.18(d), and not by an immigration judge or asylum officer.

Similarly, although § 208.2(b)(1)(C)(v) provides that an immigration judge shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any asylum application filed on or after April 1, 1997, by an alien who has been ordered removed under section 235(c) of the Act, that provision by its express terms is only applicable "[a]fter Form I-863, Notice of Referral to Immigration Judge, has been filed with the Immigration Court." When the alien is found to be removable as provided in section 235(c)(2)(B) of the Act, the Service issues a removal order without referring the case to an immigration judge. Thus this provision relating to the authority of the immigration judge will apply to an alien who is subject to removal under section 235(c) of the Act only if the Service makes a determination to refer the case to an immigration judge for consideration as provided in sections 235.8(b)(2)(ii) and (d).

Expedited Removal and the Credible Fear Process

The credible fear screening provisions at § 208.30 are amended to ensure that arriving aliens who are subject to the statutory provisions for expedited removal at ports of entry will, when necessary, be considered for protection under Article 3 as well as for asylum under section 208 of the Act and withholding under section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act. Under current procedures, an alien subject to expedited removal who expresses a fear of persecution in his or her country of origin is interviewed by an asylum officer to determine whether the alien has a credible fear of persecution. Under the amended procedures, an alien who expresses such a fear will also be examined to determine whether he or she has a credible fear of torture. An alien will be found to have a credible fear of torture if the alien shows that there is a significant possibility that he or she is eligible for withholding of removal or deferral of removal under the Convention Against Torture. If the alien has a credible fear of torture, he or she will be referred to an immigration judge for removal proceedings under section 240 of the Act, just as in the current credible fear of persecution process. In these proceedings, the alien will be able to assert a claim to withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture or under section 241(b)(3) of the Act, or to deferral of removal in the case of an alien barred from withholding, or to asylum under section 208 of the Act. Similarly, consistent with current

procedures in the expedited removal context, upon the alien's request, an asylum officer's negative credible fear of torture determination will be subject to expeditious review by an immigration judge, with no appeal of this screening review. Thus, the interim rule provides for fair resolution of claims to protection under the Convention Against Torture in the expedited removal context, without disrupting the streamlined process established by Congress to circumvent meritless claims.

Reasonable Fear Screening Process for Aliens in Administrative Removal Proceedings for Aggravated Felons and Aliens Subject to Reinstated Orders

Section 208.31 creates a new screening process to evaluate torture claims for aliens subject to streamlined administrative removal processes for aggravated felons under section 238(b) of the Act and for aliens subject to reinstatement of a previous removal order under section 241(a)(5) of the Act. This new screening process is modeled on the credible fear screening process, but requires the alien to meet a higher screening standard. Similar to the credible fear screening process, § 208.31 is intended to provide for the fair resolution of claims both to withholding under section 241(b)(3) of the Act, and to protection under the Convention Against Torture without unduly disrupting the operation of these special administrative removal processes.

Unlike the broad class of arriving aliens who are subject to expedited removal, these two classes of aliens are ineligible for asylum. They may, however, be entitled to withholding of removal under either section 241(b)(3) of the Act, or under the Convention Against Torture, or to deferral of removal under § 208.17(a). Because the standard for showing entitlement to these forms of protection (a probability of persecution or torture) is significantly higher than the standard for asylum (a well-founded fear of persecution), the screening standard adopted for initial consideration of withholding and deferral requests in these contexts is also higher. In fact, the "reasonable fear" screening standard is the same standard of proof used in asylum eligibility determinations. That is, the alien must show that there is a "reasonable possibility" that he or she would be persecuted or tortured in the country of removal.

Under the new screening process, aliens in these streamlined administrative removal proceedings who express a fear of persecution or torture will be interviewed by an asylum officer to determine whether

they have a reasonable fear of persecution or torture. If they are determined to have such a fear, they will be referred to an immigration judge for a determination only as to their eligibility for withholding of removal under either section 241(b)(3) of the Act or under the Convention Against Torture, or for deferral of removal. Either the alien or the Service may appeal the immigration judge's decision about eligibility for withholding or deferral of removal to the Board of Immigration Appeals. The Board will have jurisdiction to review only the issue of eligibility for withholding or deferral of removal and may not review issues related to the administratively issued order of removal or to the reinstatement of the previous order of removal.

If the asylum officer determines that the alien does not have a reasonable fear of persecution or torture, the alien will be afforded the opportunity for an expeditious review of the negative screening determination by an immigration judge. A new form I-898, Record of Negative Reasonable Fear Finding and Request for Review by the Immigration Judge, will be created on which the alien may request review of a negative asylum officer screening determination. If the immigration judge upholds the negative screening determination, the alien may be removed without further review. If the immigration judge reverses the asylum officer's screening determination, however, the immigration judge will proceed to a determination only as to eligibility for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act or under the Convention Against Torture, or if applicable, deferral of removal. Again, either the alien or the INS may appeal the immigration judge's decision about withholding or deferral to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

This reasonable fear screening process provides a formal mechanism, previously unavailable, to make determinations under section 241(b)(3) of the Act for aliens who are subject to administrative removal as aggravated felons under section 238(b) of the Act, but who were sentenced to an aggregate term of imprisonment of less than five years, and thus are not conclusively barred from withholding under section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act. This same mechanism will provide for consideration of applications for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture, and for consideration for deferral of removal when necessary, in these cases. Thus the new screening process will unify any consideration of applications for

withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act and under the Convention Against Torture in these cases.

Similarly, the new reasonable fear of persecution or torture screening process will ensure proper consideration of applications for withholding under section 241(b)(3) of the Act and under the Convention Against Torture, and of deferral of removal when appropriate, in cases subject to reinstatement of a previous removal order. Thus it replaces current regulatory provisions at § 241.8(d) for the consideration of applications for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act.

Form I-589 as application form for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture

The Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, will serve as an application form for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture, as well as for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act. Supplemental instructions for the Form I-589 will be issued to explain how an alien may use this form to seek withholding of removal under the Convention. Under this rule, consideration for deferral of removal must be undertaken when an alien's application for withholding has been denied because of a bar to withholding. Therefore, the Form I-589 will automatically trigger deferral of removal where appropriate.

Use of the Form I-589 will avoid confusion by allowing aliens who believe they are at risk of harm to apply for asylum, as well as these other risk-based forms of protection, at the same time, using the same form. It will also help to ensure that these claims are presented at one time, thereby allowing resolution of these issues in the normal course of proceedings.

Additionally, use of the Form I-589 will obviate the need for two separate forms that, in many cases, will elicit similar information. In many cases in which the alien applies both for asylum and withholding of removal under the Act and for withholding under the Convention Against Torture, the underlying facts supporting these claims will be the same. Thus use of the I-589 will reduce the burden on the applicant while also simplifying the adjudication process for the Service and EOIR. In all cases, the same biographical background information will be necessary. Additionally, the Form I-589 already contains questions that would elicit the facts underlying an alien's fear of torture as well as his or her fear of persecution.

For example, the form specifically asks the applicant whether he or she fears torture upon return to a country, and also asks open-ended questions designed to elicit any information about past mistreatment or fear of mistreatment in the future. Thus the existing form can easily be used for the adjudication of claims to protection under the Convention Against Torture.

Good Cause Exception

The interim rule is effective 30 days from the date of publication in the **Federal Register**, although the Department invites public comment for 60 days from the date of publication. For the following reasons, the Department finds that good cause exists under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) and (d)(3) for implementing this rule as an interim rule without the prior notice and comment period ordinarily required under that provision. First, section 2242(b) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 requires that "[n]ot later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the heads of the appropriate agencies shall prescribe regulations to implement the obligations of the United States under Article 3 of the [Convention Against Torture]." In order to comply with this statutory requirement, it was necessary to dispense with the usual period of public notice and comment; however, the Department will consider carefully all public comments submitted in the course of preparation of a final rule. Second, this rule provides a formal mechanism for requesting protection from torture, and must be implemented expeditiously in order to allow aliens who may require protection under the Convention Against Torture to seek such protection under a regulatory system. While the current informal procedure will remain in place during the next 30 days, it allows for consideration of such requests only at the end of the removal process, after all other avenues of appeal have been exhausted. The interim rule will permit most aliens to raise their claims during the course of regular removal proceedings, and thus many individuals currently in proceedings before the immigration court will have the opportunity to have their request for protection resolved more expeditiously than under the current informal procedure. Therefore, early implementation will be advantageous to those persons seeking protection under the Convention Against Torture, and it is contrary to the intent of the statute and the public interest to delay the implementation of this rule until after a notice and comment period.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Attorney General, in accordance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 605(b)), has reviewed this regulation and, by approving it, certifies that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because of the following reason: This rule involves the process for adjudication of certain requests for withholding of removal. This process affects individuals and not small entities.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995

This rule will not result in the expenditure by State, local and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$100 million or more in any one-year, and it will not significantly or uniquely affect small governments. Therefore, no actions were deemed necessary under the Provisions of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996

This rule is not a major rule as defined by section 251 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Act of 1996, 5 U.S.C. 804. This rule will not result in an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more; a major increase in costs or prices; or significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or on the ability of the United States-based companies to compete with foreign-based companies in domestic and export markets.

Executive Order 12866

This rule is considered by the Department of Justice to be a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review. Accordingly, this regulation has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review.

Executive Order 12612

The regulation adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the National Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibility among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

Executive Order 12988—Civil Justice Reform

This interim rule meets the applicable standards set forth in sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988.

Paperwork Reduction Act

The information collection requirement contained in this rule has been approved for use by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the Paperwork Reduction Act. The OMB control number for this collection is contained in 8 CFR part 299.5, Display of control numbers.

List of Subjects

8 CFR Part 3

Administrative practice and procedure, Immigration, Organization and functions (Government agencies).

8 CFR Part 103

Administrative practice and procedure, Authority delegations (Government agencies), Freedom of information, Privacy, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Surety bonds.

8 CFR Part 208

Administrative practice and procedure, Aliens, Immigration, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

8 CFR Part 235

Administrative practice and procedure, Aliens, Immigration, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

8 CFR Part 238

Air Carriers, Aliens, Government contracts, Maritime carriers.

8 CFR Part 240

Administrative practice and procedure, Immigration.

8 CFR Part 241

Aliens, Immigration.

8 CFR Part 253

Air carriers, Airmen, Aliens, Maritime carriers, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Seamen.

8 CFR Part 507

Aliens, Terrorists.

Accordingly, chapter I of title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations is amended as follows:

PART 3—EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW

1. The authority citation for part 3 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 301; 8 U.S.C. 1103, 1252 note, 1252b, 1324b, 1362; 28 U.S.C. 509, 510, 1746; sec. 2 Reorg. Plan No. 2 of 1950; 3 CFR, 1949–1953 Comp., p. 1002; section 203 of Pub. L. 105–100.

2. In § 3.23, revise the paragraph heading and the first sentence in paragraph (b)(4)(i) to read as follows:

§ 3.23 Reopening or Reconsideration before the Immigration Court.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(4) * * *

(i) *Asylum and withholding of removal.* The time and numerical limitations set forth in paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall not apply if the basis of the motion is to apply for asylum under section 208 of the Act or withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act or withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture, and is based on changed country conditions arising in the country of nationality or the country to which removal has been ordered, if such evidence is material and was not available and could not have been discovered or presented at the previous proceeding. * * *

3. In § 3.42, revise paragraphs (d) and (f) to read as follows:

§ 3.42 Review of credible fear determination.

* * * * *

(d) *Standard of review.* The immigration judge shall make a *de novo* determination as to whether there is a significant possibility, taking into account the credibility of the statements made by the alien in support of the alien's claim and such other facts as are known to the immigration judge, that the alien could establish eligibility for asylum under section 208 of the Act or withholding under section 241(b)(3) of the Act or withholding under the Convention Against Torture.

* * * * *

(f) *Decision.* If an immigration judge determines that an alien has a credible fear of persecution or torture, the immigration judge shall vacate the order entered pursuant to section 235(b)(1)(B)(iii)(I) of the Act. Subsequent to the order being vacated, the Service shall issue and file Form I-862, Notice to Appear, with the Immigration Court to commence removal proceedings. The alien shall have the opportunity to apply for asylum and withholding of removal in the course of removal proceedings pursuant to section 240 of the Act. If an immigration judge determines that an alien does not have a credible fear of persecution or torture, the immigration

judge shall affirm the asylum officer's determination and remand the case to the Service for execution of the removal order entered pursuant to section 235(b)(1)(B)(iii)(I) of the Act. No appeal shall lie from a review of an adverse credible fear determination made by an immigration judge.

* * * * *

PART 103—POWERS AND DUTIES OF SERVICE OFFICERS; AVAILABILITY OF SERVICE RECORDS

4. The authority citation for part 103 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552, 552(a); 8 U.S.C. 1101, 1103, 1201, 1252 note, 1252b, 1304, 1356; 31 U.S.C. 9701; E.O. 12356; 47 FR 14874, 15557; 3 CFR, 1982 Comp., p 166; 8 CFR part 2.

5. In § 103.12, revise paragraph (a)(5) to read as follows:

§ 103.12 Definition of the term "lawfully present" aliens for purposes of applying for Title II social security benefits under Public Law 104–193.

(a) * * *

(5) Applicants for asylum under section 208(a) of the Act and applicants for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act or under the Convention Against Torture who have been granted employment authorization, and such applicants under the age of 14 who have had an application pending for at least 180 days.

* * * * *

PART 208—PROCEDURES FOR ASYLUM AND WITHHOLDING OF REMOVAL

6. The authority citation for part 208 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 8 U.S.C. 1103, 1158, 1226, 1252, 1282; 8 CFR part 2.

7. Revise § 208.1 to read as follows:

§ 208.1 General.

(a) *Applicability.* Unless otherwise provided in this chapter, this subpart shall apply to all applications for asylum under section 208 of the Act or for withholding of deportation or withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act, or under the Convention Against Torture, whether before an asylum officer or an immigration judge, regardless of the date of filing. For purposes of this chapter, withholding of removal shall also mean withholding of deportation under section 243(h) of the Act, as it appeared prior to April 1, 1997, except as provided in § 208.16(d). Such applications are hereinafter referred to as "asylum applications." The

provisions of this part shall not affect the finality or validity of any decision made by a district director, an immigration judge, or the Board of Immigration Appeals in any such case prior to April 1, 1997. No asylum application that was filed with a district director, asylum officer, or immigration judge prior to April 1, 1997, may be reopened or otherwise reconsidered under the provisions of this part except by motion granted in the exercise of discretion by the Board of Immigration Appeals, an immigration judge, or an asylum officer for proper cause shown. Motions to reopen or reconsider must meet the requirements of sections 240(c)(5) and (c)(6) of the Act, and 8 CFR parts 3 and 103, where applicable.

(b) *Training of asylum officers.* The Director of International Affairs shall ensure that asylum officers receive special training in international human rights law, nonadversarial interview techniques, and other relevant national and international refugee laws and principles. The Director of International Affairs shall also, in cooperation with the Department of State and other appropriate sources, compile and disseminate to asylum officers information concerning the persecution of persons in other countries on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, torture of persons in other countries, and other information relevant to asylum determinations, and shall maintain a documentation center with information on human rights conditions.

8. In § 208.2, revise paragraphs (a), (b)(1)(ii), and (b)(3), to read as follows:

§ 208.2 Jurisdiction.

(a) *Office of International Affairs.* Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the Office of International Affairs shall have initial jurisdiction over an asylum application filed by, or a credible fear determination pertaining to, an alien physically present in the United States or seeking admission at a port-of-entry. The Office of International Affairs shall also have initial jurisdiction to consider applications for withholding of removal under § 208.31. An application that is complete within the meaning of § 208.3(c)(3) shall either be adjudicated or referred by asylum officers under this part in accordance with § 208.14. An application that is incomplete within the meaning of § 208.3(c)(3) shall be returned to the applicant.

(b) * * *

(1) * * *

(ii) An alien stowaway who has been found to have a credible fear of

persecution or torture pursuant to the procedures set forth in subpart B of this part;

(3) *Other aliens.* Immigration judges shall have exclusive jurisdiction over asylum applications filed by an alien who has been served Form I-221, Order to Show Cause; Form I-122, Notice to Applicant for Admission Detained for a Hearing before an Immigration Judge; or Form I-862, Notice to Appear, after a copy of the charging document has been filed with the Immigration Court. Immigration judges shall also have jurisdiction over any asylum applications filed prior to April 1, 1997, by alien crewmembers who have remained in the United States longer than authorized, by applicants for admission under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, and by aliens who have been admitted to the United States under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program. Immigration judges shall also have the authority to review reasonable fear determinations referred to the Executive Office for Immigration Review under § 208.31.

9. In § 208.4, revise paragraph (a) introductory text and paragraph (b)(2) to read as follows:

§ 208.4 Filing the application.

(a) *Prohibitions on filing.* Section 208(a)(2) of the Act prohibits certain aliens from filing for asylum on or after April 1, 1997, unless the alien can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Attorney General that one of the exceptions in section 208(a)(2)(D) of the Act applies. Such prohibition applies only to asylum applications under section 208 of the Act and not to applications for withholding of removal under § 208.16 of this part. If an applicant submits an asylum application and it appears that one or more of the prohibitions contained in section 208(a)(2) of the Act apply, an asylum officer or an immigration judge shall review the application to determine if the application should be rejected or denied. For the purpose of making determinations under section 208(a)(2) of the Act, the following rules shall apply:

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(2) *With the asylum office.* Asylum applications shall be filed directly with the asylum office having jurisdiction over the matter in the case of an alien who has received the express consent of the Director of Asylum to do so or in the case of an alien whose case has been referred to the asylum office for purposes of conducting a reasonable

fear determination under § 208.31 of this part.

* * * * *

10. In § 208.5, revise paragraph (b)(1) introductory text to read as follows:

§ 208.5 Special duties toward aliens in custody of the Service.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) If an alien crewmember or alien stowaway on board a vessel or other conveyance alleges, claims, or otherwise makes known to an immigration inspector or other official making an examination on the conveyance that he or she is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality or last habitual residence (if not a national of any country) because of persecution or a fear of persecution in that country on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or if the alien expresses a fear of torture upon return to that country, the alien shall be promptly removed from the conveyance. If the alien makes such fear known to an official while off such conveyance, the alien shall not be returned to the conveyance but shall be retained in or transferred to the custody of the Service.

* * * * *

11. In § 208.11, revise paragraph (b)(2) to read as follows:

§ 208.11 Comments from the Department of State.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(2) Information about whether persons who are similarly situated to the applicant are persecuted or tortured in his or her country of nationality or habitual residence and the frequency of such persecution or torture; or

* * * * *

12. In § 208.12, revise paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 208.12 Reliance on information compiled by other sources.

(a) In deciding an asylum application, or in deciding whether the alien has a credible fear of persecution or torture pursuant to § 208.30 of this part, or a reasonable fear of persecution or torture pursuant to § 208.31, the asylum officer may rely on material provided by the Department of State, the Office of International Affairs, other Service offices, or other credible sources, such as international organizations, private voluntary agencies, news organizations, or academic institutions.

* * * * *

13. Section 208.13 revise paragraph (c)(1) to read as follows:

§ 208.13 Establishing asylum eligibility.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) *Applications filed on or after April 1, 1997.* For applications filed on or after April 1, 1997, an applicant shall not qualify for asylum if section 208(a)(2) or 208(b)(2) of the Act applies to the applicant. If the applicant is found to be ineligible for asylum under either section 208(a)(2) or 208(b)(2) of the Act, the applicant shall be considered for eligibility for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act. The applicant shall also be considered for eligibility for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture if the applicant requests such consideration or if the evidence presented by the alien indicates that the alien may be tortured in the country of removal.

14. Section 208.16 is amended as follows:

- A. Revise the section heading;
- B. Revise paragraph (a);
- C. Revise paragraph (b) introductory test;
- D. Redesignate paragraphs (c) and (d), as (d) and (e) respectively;
- E. Add a new paragraph (c);
- F. Revise newly redesignated paragraphs (d) and (e); and
- G. Add a new paragraph (f) to read as follows:

§ 208.16 Withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act and withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture.

(a) *Consideration of application for withholding of removal.* An asylum officer shall not decide whether the exclusion, deportation, or removal of an alien to a country where the alien's life or freedom would be threatened must be withheld, except in the case of an alien who is otherwise eligible for asylum but is precluded from being granted such status due solely to section 207(a)(5) of the Act. In exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings, an immigration judge may adjudicate both an asylum claim and a request for withholding of removal whether or not asylum is granted.

(b) *Eligibility for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act; burden of proof.* The burden of proof is on the applicant for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act to establish that his or her life or freedom would be threatened in the proposed country of removal on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The testimony of the applicant, if credible, may be sufficient to sustain the burden

of proof without corroboration. The evidence shall be evaluated as follows:

* * * * *

(c) *Eligibility for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture.*

(1) For purposes of regulations under Title II of the Act, "Convention Against Torture" shall refer to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, subject to any reservations, understandings, declarations, and provisos contained in the United States Senate resolution of ratification of the Convention, as implemented by section 2242 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681, 2681-821). The definition of torture contained in § 208.18(a) of this part shall govern all decisions made under regulations under Title II of the Act about the applicability of Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture.

(2) The burden of proof is on the applicant for withholding of removal under this paragraph to establish that it is more likely than not that he or she would be tortured if removed to the proposed country of removal. The testimony of the applicant, if credible, may be sufficient to sustain the burden of proof without corroboration.

(3) In assessing whether it is more likely than not that an applicant would be tortured in the proposed country of removal, all evidence relevant to the possibility of future torture shall be considered, including, but not limited to:

- (i) Evidence of past torture inflicted upon the applicant;
- (ii) Evidence that the applicant could relocate to a part of the country of removal where he or she is not likely to be tortured;
- (iii) Evidence of gross, flagrant or mass violations of human rights within the country of removal, where applicable; and
- (iv) Other relevant information regarding conditions in the country of removal.

(4) In considering an application for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture, the immigration judge shall first determine whether the alien is more likely than not to be tortured in the country of removal. If the immigration judge determines that the alien is more likely than not to be tortured in the country of removal, the alien is entitled to protection under the Convention Against Torture. Protection under the Convention Against Torture will be

granted either in the form of withholding of removal or in the form of deferral of removal. An alien entitled to such protection shall be granted withholding of removal unless the alien is subject to mandatory denial of withholding of removal under paragraphs (d)(2) or (d)(3) of this section. If an alien entitled to such protection is subject to mandatory denial of withholding of removal under paragraphs (d)(2) or (d)(3) of this section, the alien's removal shall be deferred under § 208.17(a).

(d) *Approval or denial of application.*
(1) *General.* Subject to paragraphs (d)(2) and (d)(3) of this section, an application for withholding of deportation or removal to a country of proposed removal shall be granted if the applicant's eligibility for withholding is established pursuant to paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section.

(2) *Mandatory denials.* Except as provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section, an application for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of the Act or under the Convention Against Torture shall be denied if the applicant falls within section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act or, for applications for withholding of deportation adjudicated in proceedings commenced prior to April 1, 1997, within section 243(h)(2) of the Act as it appeared prior to that date. For purposes of section 241(b)(3)(B)(ii) of the Act, or section 243(h)(2)(B) of the Act as it appeared prior to April 1, 1997, an alien who has been convicted of a particularly serious crime shall be considered to constitute a danger to the community. If the evidence indicates the applicability of one or more of the grounds for denial of withholding enumerated in the Act, the applicant shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that such grounds do not apply.

(3) *Exception to the prohibition on withholding of deportation in certain cases.* Section 243(h)(3) of the Act, as added by section 413 of Pub. L. 104-132 (110 Stat. 1214), shall apply only to applications adjudicated in proceedings commenced before April 1, 1997, and in which final action had not been taken before April 24, 1996. The discretion permitted by that section to override section 243(h)(2) of the Act shall be exercised only in the case of an applicant convicted of an aggravated felony (or felonies) where he or she was sentenced to an aggregate term of imprisonment of less than 5 years and the immigration judge determines on an individual basis that the crime (or crimes) of which the applicant was convicted does not constitute a particularly serious crime. Nevertheless,

it shall be presumed that an alien convicted of an aggravated felony has been convicted of a particularly serious crime. Except in the cases specified in this paragraph, the grounds for denial of withholding of deportation in section 243(h)(2) of the Act as it appeared prior to April 1, 1997, shall be deemed to comply with the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Jan. 31, 1967, T.I.A.S. No. 6577.

(e) *Reconsideration of discretionary denial of asylum.* In the event that an applicant is denied asylum solely in the exercise of discretion, and the applicant is subsequently granted withholding of deportation or removal under this section, thereby effectively precluding admission of the applicant's spouse or minor children following to join him or her, the denial of asylum shall be reconsidered. Factors to be considered will include the reasons for the denial and reasonable alternatives available to the applicant such as reunification with his or her spouse or minor children in a third country.

(f) *Removal to third country.* Nothing in this section or § 208.17 shall prevent the Service from removing an alien to a third country other than the country to which removal has been withheld or deferred.

15. Section 208.17 is revised to read as follows:

§ 208.17 Deferral of removal under the Convention Against Torture.

(a) *Grant of deferral of removal.* An alien who: has been ordered removed; has been found under § 208.16(c)(3) to be entitled to protection under the Convention Against Torture; and is subject to the provisions for mandatory denial of withholding of removal under § 208.16(d)(2) or (d)(3), shall be granted deferral of removal to the country where he or she is more likely than not to be tortured.

(b) *Notice to Alien.* (1) After an immigration judge orders an alien described in paragraph (a) of this section removed, the immigration judge shall inform the alien that his or her removal to the country where he or she is more likely than not to be tortured shall be deferred until such time as the deferral is terminated under this section. The immigration judge shall inform the alien that deferral of removal:

(i) Does not confer upon the alien any lawful or permanent immigration status in the United States;

(ii) Will not necessarily result in the alien being released from the custody of the Service if the alien is subject to such custody;

(iii) Is effective only until terminated; and

(iv) Is subject to review and termination if the immigration judge determines that it is not likely that the alien would be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred, or if the alien requests that deferral be terminated.

(2) The immigration judge shall also inform the alien that removal has been deferred only to the country in which it has been determined that the alien is likely to be tortured, and that the alien may be removed at any time to another country where he or she is not likely to be tortured.

(c) *Detention of an alien granted deferral of removal under this section.* Nothing in this section shall alter the authority of the Service to detain an alien whose removal has been deferred under this section and who is otherwise subject to detention. In the case of such an alien, decisions about the alien's release shall be made according to part 241 of this chapter.

(d) *Termination of deferral of removal.*

(1) At any time while deferral of removal is in effect, the INS District Counsel for the District with jurisdiction over an alien whose removal has been deferred under paragraph (a) of this section may file a motion with the Immigration Court having administrative control pursuant to § 3.11 of this chapter to schedule a hearing to consider whether deferral of removal should be terminated. The Service motion shall be granted if it is accompanied by evidence that is relevant to the possibility that the alien would be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred and that was not presented at the previous hearing. The Service motion shall not be subject to the requirements for reopening in §§ 3.2 and 3.23 of this chapter.

(2) The Immigration Court shall provide notice to the alien and the Service of the time, place, and date of the termination hearing. Such notice shall inform the alien that the alien may supplement the information in his or her initial application for withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture and shall provide that the alien must submit any such supplemental information within 10 calendar days of service of such notice (or 13 calendar days if service of such notice was by mail). At the expiration of this 10 or 13 day period, the Immigration Court shall forward a copy of the original application, and any supplemental information the alien or the Service has submitted, to the

Department of State, together with notice to the Department of State of the time, place and date of the termination hearing. At its option, the Department of State may provide comments on the case, according to the provisions of § 208.11 of this part.

(3) The immigration judge shall conduct a hearing and make a *de novo* determination, based on the record of proceeding and initial application in addition to any new evidence submitted by the Service or the alien, as to whether the alien is more likely than not to be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred. This determination shall be made under the standards for eligibility set out in § 208.16(c). The burden is on the alien to establish that it is more likely than not that he or she would be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred.

(4) If the immigration judge determines that the alien is more likely than not to be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred, the order of deferral shall remain in place. If the immigration judge determines that the alien has not established that he or she is more likely than not to be tortured in the country to which removal has been deferred, the deferral of removal shall be terminated and the alien may be removed to that country. Appeal of the immigration judge's decision shall lie to the Board.

(e) *Termination at the request of the alien.*

(1) At any time while deferral of removal is in effect, the alien may make a written request to the Immigration Court having administrative control pursuant to § 3.11 of this chapter to terminate the deferral order. If satisfied on the basis of the written submission that the alien's request is knowing and voluntary, the immigration judge shall terminate the order of deferral and the alien may be removed.

(2) If necessary the immigration judge may calendar a hearing for the sole purpose of determining whether the alien's request is knowing and voluntary. If the immigration judge determines that the alien's request is knowing and voluntary, the order of deferral shall be terminated. If the immigration judge determines that the alien's request is not knowing and voluntary, the alien's request shall not serve as the basis for terminating the order of deferral.

(f) *Termination pursuant to § 208.18(c).* At any time while deferral of removal is in effect, the Attorney General may determine whether deferral should be terminated based on diplomatic assurances forwarded by the

Secretary of State pursuant to the procedures in § 208.18(c).

§§ 208.18 through 208.22 [Redesignated as §§ 208.19 through 208.23]

16. Sections 208.18 through 208.22 are redesignated as §§ 208.19 through 208.23 respectively.

17. Section 208.18 is added to read as follows:

§ 208.18 Implementation of the Convention Against Torture.

(a) *Definitions.* The definitions in this subsection incorporate the definition of torture contained in Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture, subject to the reservations, understandings, declarations, and provisos contained in the United States Senate resolution of ratification of the Convention.

(1) Torture is defined as any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or her or a third person information or a confession, punishing him or her for an act he or she or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or her or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

(2) Torture is an extreme form of cruel and inhuman treatment and does not include lesser forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment that do not amount to torture.

(3) Torture does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions. Lawful sanctions include judicially imposed sanctions and other enforcement actions authorized by law, including the death penalty, but do not include sanctions that defeat the object and purpose of the Convention Against Torture to prohibit torture.

(4) In order to constitute torture, mental pain or suffering must be prolonged mental harm caused by or resulting from:

(i) The intentional infliction or threatened infliction of severe physical pain or suffering;

(ii) The administration or application, or threatened administration or application, of mind altering substances or other procedures calculated to disrupt profoundly the senses or the personality;

(iii) The threat of imminent death; or

(iv) The threat that another person will imminently be subjected to death,

severe physical pain or suffering, or the administration or application of mind altering substances or other procedures calculated to disrupt profoundly the sense or personality.

(5) In order to constitute torture, an act must be specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering. An act that results in unanticipated or unintended severity of pain and suffering is not torture.

(6) In order to constitute torture an act must be directed against a person in the offender's custody or physical control.

(7) Acquiescence of a public official requires that the public official, prior to the activity constituting torture, have awareness of such activity and thereafter breach his or her legal responsibility to intervene to prevent such activity.

(8) Noncompliance with applicable legal procedural standards does not *per se* constitute torture.

(b) *Applicability of §§ 208.16(c) and 208.17(a).*

(1) *Aliens in proceedings on or after March 22, 1999.* An alien who is in exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings on or after March 22, 1999 may apply for withholding of removal under § 208.16(c), and, if applicable, may be considered for deferral of removal under § 208.17(a).

(2) *Aliens who were ordered removed, or whose removal orders became final, before March 22, 1999.* An alien under a final order of deportation, exclusion, or removal that became final prior to March 22, 1999 may move to reopen proceedings to seek protection under § 208.16(c). Such motions shall be governed by §§ 3.23 and 3.2 of this chapter, except that the time and numerical limitations on motions to reopen shall not apply and the alien shall not be required to demonstrate that the evidence sought to be offered was unavailable and could not have been discovered or presented at the former hearing. The motion to reopen shall not be granted unless:

(i) The motion is filed within June 21, 1999; and

(ii) The evidence sought to be offered establishes a *prima facie* case that the applicant's removal must be withheld or deferred under §§ 208.16(c) or 208.17(a).

(3) *Aliens who, on March 22, 1999, have requests pending with the Service for protection under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture.*

(i) Except as otherwise provided, after March 22, 1999, the Service will not:

(A) Consider, under its pre-regulatory administrative policy to ensure compliance with the Convention Against Torture, whether Article 3 of

that Convention prohibits the removal of an alien to a particular country, or

(B) Stay the removal of an alien based on a request filed with the Service for protection under Article 3 of that Convention.

(ii) For each alien who, on or before March 22, 1999, filed a request with the Service for protection under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture, and whose request has not been finally decided by the Service, the Service shall provide written notice that, after March 22, 1999, consideration for protection under Article 3 can be obtained only through the provisions of this rule.

(A) The notice shall inform an alien who is under an order of removal issued by EOIR that, in order to seek consideration of a claim under §§ 208.16(c) or 208.17(a), such an alien must file a motion to reopen with the immigration court or the Board of Immigration Appeals. This notice shall be accompanied by a stay of removal, effective until 30 days after service of the notice on the alien. A motion to reopen filed under this paragraph for the limited purpose of asserting a claim under §§ 208.16(c) or 208.17(a) shall not be subject to the requirements for reopening in §§ 3.2 and 3.23 of this chapter. Such a motion shall be granted if it is accompanied by a copy of the notice described in paragraph (b)(3)(ii) or by other convincing evidence that the alien had a request pending with the Service for protection under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture on March 22, 1999. The filing of such a motion shall extend the stay of removal during the pendency of the adjudication of this motion.

(B) The notice shall inform an alien who is under an administrative order of removal issued by the Service under section 238(b) of the Act or an exclusion, deportation, or removal order reinstated by the Service under section 241(a)(5) of the Act that the alien's claim to withholding of removal under § 208.16(c) or deferral of removal under § 208.17(a) will be considered under § 208.31.

(C) The notice shall inform an alien who is under an administrative order of removal issued by the Service under section 235(c) of the Act that the alien's claim to protection under the Convention Against Torture will be decided by the Service as provided in § 208.18(d) and 235.8(b)(4) and will not be considered under the provisions of this part relating to consideration or review by an immigration judge, the Board of Immigration Appeals, or an asylum officer.

(4) *Aliens whose claims to protection under the Convention Against Torture*

were finally decided by the Service prior to March 22, 1999. Sections 208.16(c) and 208.17 (a) and paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(3) of this section do not apply to cases in which, prior to March 22, 1999, the Service has made a final administrative determination about the applicability of Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture to the case of an alien who filed a request with the Service for protection under Article 3. If, prior to March 22, 1999, the Service determined that an applicant cannot be removed consistent with the Convention Against Torture, the alien shall be considered to have been granted withholding of removal under § 208.16(c), unless the alien is subject to mandatory denial of withholding of removal under § 208.16(d)(2) or (d)(3), in which case the alien will be considered to have been granted deferral of removal under 208.17(a). If, prior to March 22, 1999, the Service determined that an alien can be removed consistent with the Convention Against Torture, the alien will be considered to have been finally denied withholding of removal under § 208.16(c) and deferral of removal under § 208.17(a).

(c) *Diplomatic assurances against torture obtained by the Secretary of State.*

(1) The Secretary of State may forward to the Attorney General assurances that the Secretary has obtained from the government of a specific country that an alien would not be tortured there if the alien were removed to that country.

(2) If the Secretary of State forwards assurances described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section to the Attorney General for consideration by the Attorney General or her delegates under this paragraph, the Attorney General shall determine, in consultation with the Secretary of State, whether the assurances are sufficiently reliable to allow the alien's removal to that country consistent with Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture. The Attorney General's authority under this paragraph may be exercised by the Deputy Attorney General or by the Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service, but may not be further delegated.

(3) Once assurances are provided under paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the alien's claim for protection under the Convention Against Torture shall not be considered further by an immigration judge, the Board of Immigration Appeals, or an asylum officer.

(d) *Cases involving aliens ordered removed under section 235(c) of the Act.* With respect to an alien terrorist or other alien subject to administrative

removal under section 235(c) of the Act who requests protection under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture, the Service will assess the applicability of Article 3 through the removal process to ensure that a removal order will not be executed under circumstances that would violate the obligations of the United States under Article 3. In such cases, the provisions of Part 208 relating to consideration or review by an immigration judge, the Board of Immigration Appeals, or an asylum officer shall not apply.

(e) *Judicial review of claims for protection from removal under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture.*

(1) Pursuant to the provisions of section 2242(d) of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, there shall be no judicial appeal or review of any action, decision, or claim raised under the Convention or that section, except as part of the review of a final order of removal pursuant to section 242 of the Act; provided however, that any appeal or petition regarding an action, decision, or claim under the Convention or under section 2242 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 shall not be deemed to include or authorize the consideration of any administrative order or decision, or portion thereof, the appeal or review of which is restricted or prohibited by the Act.

(2) Except as otherwise expressly provided, nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to create a private right of action or to authorize the consideration or issuance of administrative or judicial relief.

18. Newly redesignated 208.19 is revised to read as follows:

§ 208.19 Determining if an asylum application is frivolous.

For applications filed on or after April 1, 1997, an applicant is subject to the provisions of section 208(d)(6) of the Act only if a final order by an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals specifically finds that the alien knowingly filed a frivolous asylum application. For purposes of this section, an asylum application is frivolous if any of its material elements is deliberately fabricated. Such finding shall only be made if the immigration judge or the Board is satisfied that the applicant, during the course of the proceedings, has had sufficient opportunity to account for any discrepancies or implausible aspects of the claim. For purposes of this section, a finding that an alien filed a frivolous asylum application shall not preclude the alien from seeking withholding of removal.

19. Newly redesignated § 208.21 is revised to read as follows:

§ 208.21 Effect on exclusion, deportation, and removal proceedings.

(a) An alien who has been granted asylum may not be deported or removed unless his or her asylum status is terminated pursuant to § 208.23 of this part. An alien in exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings who is granted withholding of removal or deportation or deferral of removal may not be deported or removed to the country to which his or her deportation or removal is ordered withheld or deferred unless the withholding order is terminated pursuant to § 208.23 or deferral is terminated pursuant to § 208.17(d) or (e).

(b) When an alien's asylum status or withholding of removal or deportation is terminated under this part, the Service shall initiate removal proceedings under section 235 or 240 of the Act, as appropriate, if the alien is not already in exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings or subject to a final order of removal. Removal proceedings may also be in conjunction with a termination hearing scheduled under § 208.23(e).

20. Section 208.30 is amended by:

A. Revising paragraphs (b), (d) and (e); and by

B. Revising paragraphs (f)(1), and (f)(2), and (f)(3), to read as follows:

§ 208.30 Credible fear determinations involving stowaways and applicants for admission found inadmissible pursuant to section 212(a)(6)(C) or 212(a)(7) of the Act.

* * * * *

(b) *Interview and procedure.* The asylum officer, as defined in section 235(b)(1)(E) of the Act, will conduct the interview in a nonadversarial manner, separate and apart from the general public. At the time of the interview, the asylum officer shall verify that the alien has received Form M-444, Information about Credible Fear Interview in Expedited Removal Cases. The officer shall also determine that the alien has an understanding of the credible fear determination process. The alien may be required to register his or her identity electronically or through any other means designated by the Attorney General. The alien may consult with a person or persons of the alien's choosing prior to the interview or any review thereof, and may present other evidence, if available. Such consultation shall be at no expense to the Government and shall not unreasonably delay the process. Any person or persons with whom the alien chooses to consult may be present at the interview

and may be permitted, in the discretion of the asylum officer, to present a statement at the end of the interview. The asylum officer, in his or her discretion, may place reasonable limits on the number of such persons who may be present at the interview and on the length of statement or statements made. If the alien is unable to proceed effectively in English, and if the asylum officer is unable to proceed competently in a language chosen by the alien, the asylum officer shall arrange for the assistance of an interpreter in conducting the interview. The interpreter may not be a representative or employee of the applicant's country of nationality or, if the applicant is stateless, the applicant's country of last habitual residence. The asylum officer shall create a summary of the material facts as stated by the applicant. At the conclusion of the interview, the officer shall review the summary with the alien and provide the alien with an opportunity to correct errors therein. The asylum officer shall create a written record of his or her determination, including a summary of the material facts as stated by the applicant, any additional facts relied on by the officer, and the officer's determination of whether, in light of such facts, the alien has established a credible fear of persecution or torture. The decision shall not become final until reviewed by a supervisory asylum officer.

* * * * *

(d) *Referral for an asylum hearing.* If an alien, other than an alien stowaway, is found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture, the asylum officer will so inform the alien and issue a Form I-862, Notice to Appear, for full consideration of the asylum and withholding of removal claim in proceedings under section 240 of the Act. Parole of the alien may only be considered in accordance with section 212(d)(5) of the Act and § 212.5 of this chapter. If an alien stowaway is found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture, the asylum officer will so inform the alien and issue a Form I-863, Notice to Referral to Immigration Judge, for full consideration of the asylum and withholding of removal claim in proceedings under § 208.2(b)(1).

(e) *Removal of aliens with no credible fear of persecution or torture.* If an alien is found not to have a credible fear of persecution or torture, the asylum officer shall provide the alien with a written notice of decision and inquire whether the alien wishes to have an immigration judge review the negative decision, using Form I-869, Record of Negative Credible Fear Finding and

Request for Review by Immigration Judge, on which the alien shall indicate whether he or she desires such review. If the alien is not a stowaway, the officer shall also order the alien removed and issue a Form I-860, Notice and Order of Expedited Removal. If the alien is a stowaway and the alien does not request a review by an immigration judge, the asylum officer shall also refer the alien to the district director for completion of removal proceedings in accordance with section 235(a)(2) of the Act.

(f) * * *

(1) If the immigration judge concurs with the determination of the asylum officer that the alien does not have a credible fear of persecution or torture, the case shall be returned to the Service for removal of the alien. The immigration judge's decision is final and may not be appealed.

(2) If the immigration judge finds that the alien, other than an alien stowaway, possesses a credible fear of persecution or torture, the immigration judge shall vacate the order of the asylum officer issued on Form I-860 and the Service may commence removal proceedings under section 240 of the Act, during which time the alien may file an application for asylum and withholding of removal in accordance with § 208.4(b)(3)(i).

(3) If the immigration judge finds that an alien stowaway possesses a credible fear of persecution or torture, the alien shall be allowed to file an application for asylum and withholding of removal before the immigration judge in accordance with § 208.4(b)(3)(iii). The immigration judge shall decide the application as provided in that section. Such decision may be appealed by either the stowaway or the Service to the Board of Immigration Appeals. If and when a denial of the application for asylum or withholding of removal becomes final, the alien shall be removed from the United States in accordance with section 235(a)(2) of the Act. If and when an approval of the application for asylum or withholding of removal becomes final, the Service shall terminate removal proceedings under section 235(a)(2) of the Act.

21. In Subpart B, § 208.31 is added to read as follows:

§ 208.31 Reasonable fear of persecution or torture determinations involving aliens ordered removed under section 238(b) of the Act and aliens whose removal is reinstated under section 241(a)(5) of the Act.

(a) *Jurisdiction.* This section shall apply to any alien ordered removed under section 238(b) of the Act or whose deportation, exclusion, or removal order

is reinstated under section 241(a)(5) of the Act who, in the course of the administrative removal or reinstatement process, expresses a fear of returning to the country of removal. The Service has exclusive jurisdiction to make reasonable fear determinations, and EOIR has exclusive jurisdiction to review such determinations.

(b) *Initiation of reasonable fear determination process.* Upon issuance of a Final Administrative Removal Order under § 238.1 of this chapter, or notice under § 241.8(b) of this chapter that an alien is subject to removal, an alien described in paragraph (a) of this section shall be referred to an asylum officer for a reasonable fear determination. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, this determination will be conducted within 10 days of the referral.

(c) *Interview and Procedure.* The asylum officer shall conduct the interview in a non-adversarial manner, separate and apart from the general public. At the time of the interview, the asylum officer shall determine that the alien has an understanding of the reasonable fear determination process. The alien may be represented by counsel or an accredited representative at the interview, at no expense to the Government, and may present evidence, if available, relevant to the possibility of persecution or torture. The alien's representative may present a statement at the end of the interview. The asylum officer, in his or her discretion, may place reasonable limits on the number of persons who may be present at the interview and the length of the statement. If the alien is unable to proceed effectively in English, and if the asylum officer is unable to proceed competently in a language chosen by the alien, the asylum officer shall arrange for the assistance of an interpreter in conducting the interview. The interpreter may not be a representative or employee of the applicant's country or nationality, or if the applicant is stateless, the applicant's country of last habitual residence. The asylum officer shall create a summary of the material facts as stated by the applicant. At the conclusion of the interview, the officer shall review the summary with the alien and provide the alien with an opportunity to correct errors therein. The asylum officer shall create a written record of his or her determination, including a summary of the material facts as stated by the applicant, any additional facts relied on by the officers, and the officer's determination of whether, in light of such facts, the alien has established a reasonable fear of persecution or torture. The alien shall

be determined to have a reasonable fear of persecution or torture if the alien establishes a reasonable possibility that he or she would be persecuted on account of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, or a reasonable possibility that he or she would be tortured in the country of removal. For purposes of the screening determination, the bars to eligibility for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3)(B) of the Act shall not be considered.

(d) *Authority.* Asylum officers conducting screening determinations under this section shall have the authority described in § 208.9(c).

(e) *Referral to Immigration Judge.* If an asylum officer determines that an alien described in this section has a reasonable fear of persecution or torture, the officer shall so inform the alien and issue a Form I-863, Notice of Referral to the Immigration Judge, for full consideration of the request for withholding of removal only. Such cases shall be adjudicated by the immigration judge in accordance with the provisions of § 208.16 within 10 days of the issuance of the I-863. Appeal of the immigration judge's decision shall lie to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

(f) *Removal of aliens with no reasonable fear of persecution or torture.* If the asylum officer determines that the alien has not established a reasonable fear of persecution or torture, the asylum officer shall inform the alien in writing of the decision and shall inquire whether the alien wishes to have an immigration judge review the negative decision, using Form I-898, Record of Negative Reasonable Fear Finding and Request for Review by Immigration Judge, on which the alien shall indicate whether he or she desires such review.

(g) *Review by immigration judge.* The asylum officer's negative decision regarding reasonable fear shall be subject to review by an immigration judge upon the alien's request. If the alien requests such review, the asylum officer shall serve him or her with a Form I-863. The record of determination, including copies of the Form I-863, the asylum officer's notes, the summary of the material facts, and other materials upon which the determination was based shall be provided to the immigration judge with the negative determination. Upon review of the asylum officer's negative reasonable fear determination:

(1) If the immigration judge concurs with the asylum officer's determination that the alien does not have a reasonable

fear of persecution or torture, the case shall be returned to the Service for removal of the alien. No appeal shall lie from the immigration judge's decision.

(2) If the immigration judge finds that the alien has a reasonable fear of persecution or torture, the alien may submit Form I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal.

(i) The immigration judge shall consider only the alien's application for withholding of removal under § 208.16 and shall determine whether the alien's removal to the country of removal must be withheld or deferred.

(ii) Appeal of the immigration judge's decision whether removal must be withheld or deferred lies to the Board of Immigration Appeals. If the alien or the Service appeals the immigration judge's decision, the Board shall review only the immigration judge's decision regarding the alien's eligibility for withholding or deferral of removal under § 208.16.

PART 235—INSPECTION OF PERSONS APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

22. The authority citation for part 235 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 8 U.S.C. 1101, 1103, 1182, 1183, 1201, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1252; 8 CFR part 2.

23. Section 235.1 is amended by revising paragraph (d)(4) to read as follows:

§ 235.1 Scope of examination.

(d) * * * (4) An alien stowaway is not an applicant for admission and may not be admitted to the United States. A stowaway shall be removed from the United States under section 235(a)(2) of the Act. The provisions of section 240 of the Act are not applicable to stowaways, nor is the stowaway entitled to further hearing or review of the removal, except that an alien stowaway who indicates an intention to apply for asylum, or expresses a fear of persecution, a fear of torture, or a fear of return to the country of proposed removal shall be referred to an asylum officer for a determination of credible fear of persecution or torture in accordance with section 235(b)(1)(B) of the Act and § 208.30 of this chapter. An alien stowaway who is determined to have a credible fear of persecution or torture shall have his or her asylum application adjudicated in accordance with § 208.2(b)(2) of this chapter.

24. In section 235.3, revise paragraph (b)(4) introductory text and paragraph (b)(4)(i)(D) to read as follows:

§ 235.3 Inadmissible aliens and expedited removal.

* * * * * (b) * * * (4) *Claim of asylum or fear of persecution or torture.* If an alien subject to the expedited removal provisions indicates an intention to apply for asylum, or expresses a fear of persecution, a fear of torture, or a fear of return to his or her country, the inspecting officer shall not proceed further with removal of the alien until the alien has been referred for an interview by an asylum officer in accordance with § 208.30 of this chapter to determine if the alien has a credible fear of persecution or torture. The examining immigration officer shall record sufficient information in the sworn statement to establish and record that the alien has indicated such intention, fear, or concern, and to establish the alien's inadmissibility.

(i) * * * (D) The consequences of failure to establish a credible fear of persecution or torture.

* * * * * 25. In § 235.6, revise paragraphs (a)(1)(ii) and (iii), and paragraph (a)(2)(i) to read as follows:

§ 235.6 Referral to immigration judge.

(a) * * * (1) * * * (ii) If an asylum officer determines that an alien in expedited removal proceedings has a credible fear of persecution or torture and refers the case to the immigration judge for consideration of the application for asylum. (iii) If the immigration judge determines that an alien in expedited removal proceedings has a credible fear of persecution or torture and vacates the expedited removal order issued by the asylum officer.

* * * * * (2) * * * (i) If an asylum officer determines that an alien does not have a credible fear of persecution or torture, and the alien requests a review of that determination by an immigration judge; or

* * * * * 26. In § 235.8, add a new paragraph (b)(4), to read as follows:

§ 235.8 Inadmissibility on security and related grounds.

* * * * * (b) * * * (4) The Service shall not execute a removal order under this section under circumstances that violate section 241(b)(3) of the Act or Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture. The

provisions of part 208 of this chapter relating to consideration or review by an immigration judge, the Board of Immigration Appeals, or an asylum officer shall not apply.

PART 238—EXPEDITED REMOVAL OF AGGRAVATED FELONS

27. The authority citation for part 238 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 8 U.S.C. 1228; 8 CFR part 2.

28. In § 238.1, revise paragraphs (b)(2)(i) and (c)(1), and add new paragraph (f)(3) to read as follows:

§ 238.1 Proceeding under section 238(b) of the Act.

* * * * * (b) * * * (2) *Notice.*

(i) Removal proceedings under section 238(b) of the Act shall commence upon personal service of the Notice of Intent upon the alien, as prescribed by §§ 103.5a(a)(2) and 103.5a(c)(2) of this chapter. The Notice of Intent shall set forth the preliminary determinations and inform the alien of the Service's intent to issue a Form I-851A, Final Administrative Removal Order, without a hearing before an immigration judge. The Notice of Intent shall constitute the charging document. The Notice of Intent shall include allegations of fact and conclusions of law. It shall advise that the alien: has the privilege of being represented, at no expense to the government, by counsel of the alien's choosing, as long as counsel is authorized to practice in removal proceedings; may request withholding of removal to a particular country if he or she fears persecution or torture in that country; may inspect the evidence supporting the Notice of Intent; may rebut the charges within 10 calendar days after service of such Notice (or 13 calendar days if service of the Notice was by mail).

* * * * * (c) * * *

(1) *Time for response.* The alien will have 10 calendar days from service of the Notice of Intent or 13 calendar days if service is by mail, to file a response to the Notice of Intent. In the response, the alien may: designate his or her choice of country for removal; submit a written response rebutting the allegations supporting the charge and/or requesting the opportunity to review the Government's evidence; and/or submit a statement indicating an intention to request withholding of removal under 8 CFR 208.16 of this chapter, and/or request in writing an extension of time

for response, stating the specific reasons why such an extension is necessary.

* * * * *

(f) * * *

(3) *Withholding of removal.* If the alien has requested withholding of removal under § 208.16 of this chapter, the deciding officer shall, upon issuance of a Final Administrative Removal Order, immediately refer the alien's case to an asylum officer to conduct a reasonable fear determination in accordance with § 208.31 of this chapter.

* * * * *

PART 240—PROCEEDINGS TO DETERMINE REMOVABILITY OF ALIENS IN THE UNITED STATES

29. The authority citation for part 240 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 8 U.S.C. 1103; 1182, 1186a, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1251, 1252 note, 1252a, 1252b, 1362; sec. 202, Pub. L. 105–100 (111 Stat. 2160, 2193); 8 CFR part 2.

30. In § 240.1, revise paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 240.1 Immigration Judges.

(a) *Authority.* (1) In any removal proceeding pursuant to section 240 of the Act, the immigration judge shall have the authority to:

(i) Determine removability pursuant to section 240(a)(1) of the Act; to make decisions, including orders of removal as provided by section 240(c)(1)(A) of the Act;

(ii) To determine applications under sections 208, 212(a)(2)(F), 212(a)(6)(F)(ii), 212(a)(9)(B)(v), 212(d)(11), 212(d)(12), 212(g), 212(h), 212(i), 212(k), 237(a)(1)(E)(iii), 237(a)(1)(H), 237(a)(3)(C)(ii), 240A(a) and (b), 240B, 245, and 249 of the Act and section 202 of Pub. L. 105–100;

(iii) To order withholding of removal pursuant to section 241(b)(3) of the Act and pursuant to the Convention Against Torture; and

(iv) To take any other action consistent with applicable law and regulations as may be appropriate.

(2) In determining cases referred for further inquiry, immigration judges shall have the powers and authority conferred upon them by the Act and this chapter. Subject to any specific limitation prescribed by the Act and this chapter, immigration judges shall also

exercise the discretion and authority conferred upon the Attorney General by the Act as is appropriate and necessary for the disposition of such cases. An immigration judge may certify his or her decision in any case under section 240 of the Act to the Board of Immigration Appeals when it involves an unusually complex or novel question of law or fact. Nothing contained in this part shall be construed to diminish the authority conferred on immigration judges under sections 101(b)(4) and 103 of the Act.

* * * * *

PART 241—APPREHENSION AND DETENTION OF ALIENS ORDERED REMOVED

31. The authority citation for part 241 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 8 U.S.C. 1103, 1223, 1227, 1251, 1253, 1255, and 1330; 8 CFR part 2.

32. In § 241.8, revise paragraph (d) to read as follows:

§ 241.8 Reinstatement of removal orders.

* * * * *

(d) *Exception for withholding of removal.* If an alien whose prior order of removal has been reinstated under this section expresses a fear of returning to the country designated in that order, the alien shall be immediately referred to an asylum officer for an interview to determine whether the alien has a reasonable fear of persecution or torture pursuant to § 208.31 of this chapter.

* * * * *

33. In § 241.11, revise paragraph (d)(1) to read as follows:

§ 241.11 Detention and removal of stowaways.

* * * * *

(d) *Stowaways claiming asylum—*
(1) *Referral for credible fear determination.* A stowaway who indicates an intention to apply for asylum or a fear of persecution or torture upon return to his or her native country or country of last habitual residence (if not a national of any country) shall be removed from the vessel or aircraft of arrival in accordance with § 208.5(b) of this chapter. The immigration officer shall refer the alien to an asylum officer for a determination of credible fear in accordance with section 235(b)(1)(B) of the Act and § 208.30 of this chapter. The stowaway

shall be detained in the custody of the Service pending the credible fear determination and any review thereof. Parole of such alien, in accordance with section 212(d)(5) of the Act, may be permitted only when the Attorney General determines, in the exercise of discretion, that parole is required to meet a medical emergency or is necessary for a legitimate law enforcement objective. A stowaway who has established a credible fear of persecution or torture in accordance with § 208.30 of this chapter may be detained or paroled pursuant to § 212.5 of this chapter during any consideration of the asylum application. In determining whether to detain or parole the alien, the Service shall consider the likelihood that the alien will abscond or pose a security risk.

* * * * *

PART 253—PAROLE OF ALIEN CREWMEN

34. The authority citation in part 253 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 8 U.S.C. 1103, 1182, 1282, 1283, 1285; 8 CFR part 2.

35. In § 253.1, revise paragraph (f) to read as follows:

§ 253.1 Parole.

* * * * *

(f) *Crewman, stowaway, or alien removable under section 235(c) alleging persecution or torture.* Any alien crewman, stowaway, or alien removable under section 235(c) of the Act who alleges that he or she cannot return to his or her country of nationality or last habitual residence (if not a national of any country) because of fear of persecution in that country on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or because of fear of torture is eligible to apply for asylum or withholding of removal under 8 CFR part 208. Service officers shall take particular care to ensure that the provisions of § 208.5(b) of this chapter regarding special duties toward aliens aboard certain vessels are closely followed.

* * * * *

36. Add a new part 507 to read as follows:

**PART 507—ALIEN TERRORIST
REMOVAL PROCEDURES****§ 507.1 Eligibility for Protection under the
Convention Against Torture.**

A removal order under Title V of the Act shall not be executed in circumstances that would violate Article 3 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel,

Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, subject to any reservations, understandings, declarations, and provisos contained in the United States Senate resolution of ratification of the Convention, as implemented by section 2242 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, Pub. L. 105–277. Convention-based claims by aliens subject to removal under this Title shall

be determined by the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of State.

Authority: Pub. L. 105–277, 112 Stat. 2681.

Dated: February 13, 1999.

Janet Reno,

Attorney General.

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