



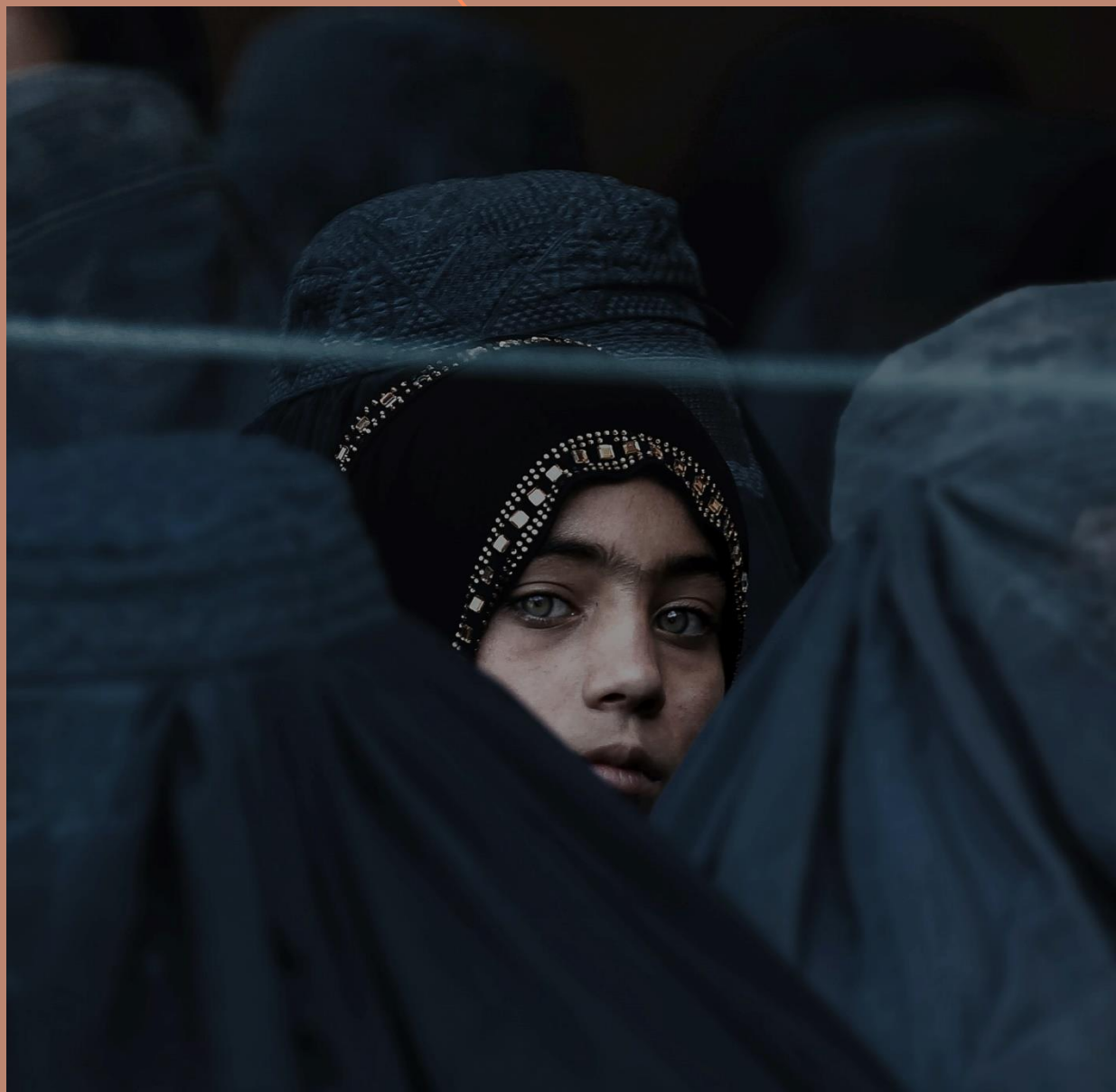
# PROJECT AFGHAN LEGAL ASSISTANCE (PALA)

INTERPRETER TRAINING

JANUARY 12, 2023 4PM EST-5PM EST

BILL RICE, LEGAL FELLOW

 Human Rights First



# OVERVIEW OF PROJECT AFGHAN LEGAL ASSISTANCE (PALA)

We are facing an unprecedented crisis caused by the chaotic and rushed withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Afghanistan.

Project Afghan Legal Assistance is a coordinated coalition effort, led by Human Rights First, to ensure that recent Afghan arrivals in the United States are welcomed to the U.S. with dignity and have access to pro bono legal representation.



# OVERVIEW

- Role of Interpreter
- Role of Attorney
- Interacting with Clients
- Working with Trauma Survivors



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- During the interview with the client, the interpreter should:
  - (1) Introduce themselves and explain their role as interpreter
  - (2) Take notes
  - (3) Ask the client, attorney, and all parties present to speak in short sentences and pause, in order to allow for the most accurate translations.



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- Important to know:
  - Those who are currently applicants for asylum CANNOT also serve as interpreters for other asylum hearings.
  - Those who are currently applicants for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) are permitted to serve as interpreters in asylum hearings.



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- If the interpreter needs clarification on something the client said, the interpreter should inform the attorney what they are going to ask the client and then what the client said in response.
- It is imperative that the attorney be aware of everything that is being communicated between all parties during the meeting



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- Building trust with the client is essential
- This may be difficult where there is limited time and where clients have experienced traumatic events.
- Being respectful & polite to clients, and making them feel that they're in a safe environment can help establish trust.



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- Essential to understand your role & boundaries as an interpreter
- The interpreter's role is to translate what is being said by the client and attorney
- To the best of their ability, the interpreter should communicate everything the client and attorney are saying





# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- The interpreter SHOULD:
  - When necessary to convey the most accurate interpretation, politely ask the client to stop, slow down, repeat, or simplify what they are saying
  - Convey all the information and not make judgement calls on prioritization
  - Provide any questions that the client has to the attorney for the attorney to answer
  - Interpret word-for-word to the attorney exactly what the client said



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- The interpreter SHOULD NOT:
  - Explain or summarize what the client said
  - Selectively translate based on the interpreter's personal opinions, analyses, or assumptions
  - Convey their own opinions and analyses about the client, what the client says, or the client's story
  - Communicate only what they believe is important from what the client or attorney says
  - Answer client questions asked of the attorney



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- In some instances, an explanation of what the client said may end up being necessary (e.g., client is overly repetitive, client speaks for a long time without pausing). *This will be rare.*
- When this happens, the interpreter should have the client repeat what they wanted to say in shorter sentences so that they can translate from the beginning.



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- Central role: to interpret what the client says to the attorney word-for-word without summary or analysis, and to interpret what the attorney says to the client word for word without summary or analysis. Do not engage in side conversations.
- Be sure to introduce yourself to the client and explain your role. Reassure the client that you will be interpreting what they say to the attorney exactly as they say it.
- If you need to stop to ask the attorney a question, you should translate to the client the question you asked and the answer the attorney provided.



# ROLE OF INTERPRETER

- Human Rights First invoices should be sent to [palainvoices@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:palainvoices@humanrightsfirst.org) for processing.
- \$20/hour for oral interpretation, \$30/page for written translation.
- For translated documents: Request advance permission from Human Rights First if more than 5 pages of documents requested for translation\_per invoice.



# ROLE OF THE ATTORNEY

- It is the attorney's role to conduct legal analysis for and provide legal advice to the client.
- The interpreter should NEVER conduct legal analysis for or provide legal advice to the client.
  - This includes advising the client on how to tell their story in their asylum interview, advising the client as to what information is or is not important, advising the client about the immigration process, etc.
  - Providing legal advice constitutes the unauthorized practice of law and can create legal liability.



# INTERACTING WITH CLIENTS

- Interpreters should be professional and respectful to clients at all times.
- Interpreters should not contact clients outside of the legal clinic or legal representation, nor should they speak with clients without the attorney present.



# INTERACTING WITH CLIENTS

- If a client contacts an interpreter outside of the clinic for further information or legal advice, the interpreter should refer the client to HRF.
- If you do not feel comfortable or able to continue translating at any point, please notify your HRF or the attorney immediately.





# WORKING WITH TRAUMA SURVIVORS

- Trauma can cause, among other things, incomplete or faulty memory, trouble focusing, hypervigilance, flooding, depression, suspicion, anxiety.
- Trauma survivors can often appear cold, unemotional, distrustful of others, defensive, or confused. Trauma manifests itself differently in everyone.



# WORKING WITH TRAUMA SURVIVORS

- Trauma survivors may struggle explaining time, dates, relationships, and expressing clear stories. Be patient and calm. Periods of silence can be helpful for the client in processing their emotions.



# WORKING WITH TRAUMA SURVIVORS

- Building trust is critical to working with survivors of trauma. Clients do not owe you, their attorney, or HRF anything. They will share their story once they feel safe, respected, and a sense of trust.
- Interpreters and attorneys should behave in a manner that evokes a sense of trust, nonjudgment, and support.
- The interpreter's role is non-adversarial You should not cross-examine the client.



# WORKING WITH TRAUMA SURVIVORS

- Trauma-Informed practice involves:
  - Patience
  - Transparency
  - Being aware of your and the client's body language, tone, and facial expressions
  - Always stay calm, relaxed, and reassuring, without judgement



# WORKING WITH TRAUMA SURVIVORS

- Let the client know that they can ask the attorney to repeat their questions.
- Tell the client that they can ask for breaks when needed.
- These sessions can be very emotional and triggering for trauma survivors. Breaks can help them get through the process.



# QUESTIONS?

For further information please contact the PALA Email:  
[pala@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:pala@humanrightsfirst.org)

