

**QUESTION:** I got my permanent residence based on my status as an asylee. My grandma is gravely ill. She has little time left to live. If I travel home now, will I have any problems re-entering the United States or when I apply to become a U.S. citizen?

**ANSWER:** An immigration officer may give you a hard time when you return from abroad, but my bet is that eventually you'll be readmitted. And, you'll get your U.S. citizenship. That's true unless you made false statements on your asylum application or you claimed persecution so severe that you couldn't even set foot in your country and conditions haven't changed there. Nevertheless, traveling home may cause you some difficulties. Government officers have increased their questioning of asylees and former asylees who travel home about whether their original claim for asylum was genuine.

To me, that's unfair. Just because an asylee or former asylee travels home doesn't mean that he or she can live there permanently without facing persecution. Referring to asylees traveling home, the CBP's own manual states that "[S]imply traveling to his or her home country does not necessarily mean that the alien has re-availed him or herself of the protection of that country." In your case, traveling to see your grandmother before she dies may make it worthwhile for you to travel — understanding that when you return, you might have to fight for your immigration rights. You may want to consult an immigration-law expert before leaving.

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