

**MOTIONS TO REOPEN OR RECONSIDER
IMMIGRATION PROCEEDINGS**

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MOTIONS TO REOPEN OR RECONSIDER IMMIGRATION PROCEEDINGS

IIRIRA transformed motions to reopen from a regulatory to a statutory form of relief. [Azarte v. Ashcroft, 394 F.3d 1278, 1283 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#). Motions to reopen and to reconsider are governed by [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)](#) and (6) (formerly codified at [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(6\)](#) and (5)), and [8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.2\(c\)](#) and 1003.23(b) (formerly codified at [8 C.F.R. §§ 3.2](#) and 3.23).

I. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOTIONS TO REOPEN AND TO RECONSIDER

A. Motion to Reopen

A motion to reopen is based on factual grounds, and seeks a fresh determination based on newly discovered facts or a change in the applicant's circumstances since the time of the hearing. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)\(B\)](#) (removal proceedings); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)](#); [Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889, 895-96 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#); [Socop-Gonzalez v. INS, 272 F.3d 1176, 1180 \(9th Cir. 2001\) \(en banc\)](#); see also [Azarte v. Ashcroft, 394 F.3d 1278, 1283 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (providing history of motions to reopen). Whereas “a motion to *reconsider* seeks to correct alleged errors of fact or law,” a “motion to *reopen* . . . is purely fact-based, seeking to present newly discovered facts or changed circumstances since a petitioner's hearing.” [Doissaint v. Mukasey, Nos. 06-73218, 06-75390, — F.3d —, 2008 WL 3822942, *2 \(9th Cir. Aug. 18, 2008\)](#) (mandate pending). Accordingly, “when the BIA commits legal error in a petitioner's direct appeal, the BIA cannot cure that error in a denial of the petitioner's motion to reopen.” [Id. at *3](#) (BIA, which erroneously deemed CAT claim abandoned on direct appeal, could not cure error on motion to reopen, because “the legal basis for the IJ's denial of Petitioner's CAT claim - the IJ's adverse credibility finding - was not before the BIA on Petitioner's motion to reopen”).

A petitioner's assertion of new legal arguments does not constitute new “facts” warranting reopening. [Membreno v. Gonzales, 425 F.3d 1227, 1229-30 \(9th Cir. 2005\) \(en banc\)](#).

A petitioner may also move to reopen for the purpose of submitting a new application for relief, provided such motion is accompanied by the appropriate application for relief and all supporting documentation, and the evidence sought to be offered is material and was not available and could not have been discovered or presented at the former hearing. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(1\)](#). However, a motion to reopen for the purpose of affording the petitioner an opportunity to apply for any form of discretionary relief shall not be granted “if it appears that the [petitioner’s] right to apply for such relief was fully explained to him or her and an opportunity to apply therefore was afforded at the former hearing, unless the relief is sought on the basis of circumstances that have arisen subsequent to the hearing.” *Id.* Furthermore, “[a]liens who seek to remand or reopen proceedings to pursue relief bear a ‘heavy burden’ of proving that, if proceedings were reopened, the new evidence would likely change the result in the case.” [Shin v. Mukasey, 519 F.3d 901, 907 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending).

Motions to reopen are also the appropriate avenue to raise ineffective assistance of counsel claims. See [Iturribarria, 321 F.3d at 897](#).

B. Motion to Reconsider

A motion to reconsider is based on legal grounds, and seeks a new determination based on alleged errors of fact or law. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(6\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(b\)\(1\)](#); see also [Ma v. Ashcroft, 361 F.3d 553, 558 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#). The motion to reconsider must be accompanied by a statement of reasons and supported by pertinent authority. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(6\)\(C\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(b\)\(1\)](#); see also [Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889, 895-96 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#).

The BIA’s grant of a motion to reconsider does not divest the court of jurisdiction. See [Plasencia-Ayala v. Mukasey, 516 F.3d 738, 745-46 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (explaining that although the grant of a motion to reopen vacates the final order of deportation, a motion to reconsider is fundamentally different than a motion to reopen, and does not divest the court of appeals of jurisdiction).

C. Motion to Remand

A motion to reopen or reconsider filed while an immigration judge’s deportation or removal decision is before the BIA on direct appeal will be treated

as a motion to remand the proceedings to the immigration judge. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(b\)\(1\)](#) and (c)(4); [Movsisian v. Ashcroft](#), 395 F.3d 1095, 1097 (9th Cir. 2005); [Rodriguez v. INS](#), 841 F.2d 865, 867 (9th Cir. 1987). “The formal requirements of the motion to reopen and those of the motion to remand are for all practical purposes the same.” [Rodriguez](#), 841 F.2d at 867; cf. [Guzman v. INS](#), 318 F.3d 911, 913 (9th Cir. 2003) (per curiam) (motion to remand filed while appeal of IJ’s denial of previous motion to reopen was pending was properly treated as a second motion to reopen).

See also [Movsisian](#), 395 F.3d at 1097-98 (holding that the BIA must articulate its reasons for denying a motion to remand); [Narayan v. Ashcroft](#), 384 F.3d 1065, 1068 (9th Cir. 2004) (holding that the BIA must address and rule on substantive remand motions).

D. Improperly Styled Motions

Where a petitioner improperly titles a motion to reopen or to reconsider, the BIA should construe the motion based on its underlying purpose. See [Mohammed v. Gonzales](#), 400 F.3d 785, 792-93 (9th Cir. 2005) (noting that the BIA properly construed “motion to reconsider” based on ineffective assistance of counsel as a motion to reopen, and that petitioner’s subsequent “motion to reopen” should have been construed as a motion to reconsider the BIA’s previous decision).

II. JURISDICTION

The denial of a motion to reopen is a final administrative decision generally subject to judicial review in the court of appeals. See [Singh v. Ashcroft](#), 367 F.3d 1182, 1185 (9th Cir. 2004) (permanent rules); [Sarmadi v. INS](#), 121 F.3d 1319, 1322 (9th Cir. 1997) (concluding “that other recent changes to the INA did not alter our traditional understanding that the denial of a motion to reconsider or to reopen generally does fall within our jurisdiction over final orders of deportation”); see also [8 U.S.C. § 1252\(b\)\(6\)](#) (“When a petitioner seeks review of an order under this section, any review sought of a motion to reopen or reconsider the order shall be consolidated with the review of the order”).

Jurisdiction over motions to reopen may be limited where the underlying request for relief is discretionary.

Section 1252(a)(2)(B)(i) permits the exercise of jurisdiction in cases in which the BIA rules that a motion to reopen fails to satisfy procedural standards such as the evidentiary requirements specified in [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(1\)](#), but bars jurisdiction where the question presented is essentially the same discretionary issue originally decided.

...

[Thus, i]f . . . the BIA determines that a motion to reopen proceedings in which there has already been an unreviewable discretionary determination concerning a statutory prerequisite to relief does not make out a prima facie case for that relief, § 1252(a)(2)(B)(i) precludes our visiting the merits, just as it would if the BIA had affirmed the IJ on direct appeal.

[Fernandez v. Gonzales, 439 F.3d 592, 600-01 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#).

However, “[w]here the relief sought is formally the same as was previously denied but the evidence submitted with a motion to reopen is directed at a different basis for providing the same relief, the circumstances can take the matter out of the realm of § 1252(a)(2)(B)(i).” [Id. at 601](#). For example, the court would have jurisdiction to review the denial of a motion to reopen seeking consideration of non-cumulative evidence showing hardship for cancellation eligibility, such as a newly-discovered life-threatening medical condition afflicting a qualifying relative. [Id. at 601-02](#).

The court also has jurisdiction to review motions to reopen seeking consideration of new requests for discretionary forms of relief. *See* [de Martinez v. Ashcroft, 374 F.3d 759, 761 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (holding that court retained jurisdiction to review denial of motion to reopen to apply for adjustment of status); *see also* [Medina-Morales v. Ashcroft, 371 F.3d 520, 527 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (holding that § 1252(a)(2)(B)(i) did not preclude review of the denial of a motion to reopen to re-apply for adjustment of status where the agency had not previously made a discretionary decision on the adjustment application); [Zazueta-Carrillo v. Ashcroft, 322 F.3d 1166, 1169-70 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (holding that § 1252(a)(2)(B)(i) did not bar review of the denial of a motion to reopen to apply for adjustment of status);

[Arrozal v. INS, 159 F.3d 429, 431-32 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#) (holding that § 309(c)(4)(E) of the transitional rules did not bar review of the denial of petitioner’s motion to reopen to apply for suspension of deportation).

Likewise, the court has jurisdiction to review the denial of motions to reopen in which an independent claim of ineffective assistance of counsel is at issue. [Fernandez, 439 F.3d at 602](#). This is true even where the ineffectiveness and prejudice evaluations require an indirect weighing of discretionary factors. *See id.*; *see also Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS, 282 F.3d 1218, 1223 (9th Cir. 2002)* (holding that court retained jurisdiction to review denial of motion to reopen arguing ineffective assistance of counsel in a suspension of deportation case).

The court lacks jurisdiction to review the BIA’s decision not to invoke its sua sponte authority to reopen proceedings under [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(a\)](#). *See Toufighi v. Mukasey, No. 04-74010, — F.3d —, 2008 WL 3822954, *4 n.8 (9th Cir. Aug. 18, 2008)* (mandate pending); [Ekimian v. INS, 303 F.3d 1153, 1159-60 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#).

Cross-Reference: Jurisdiction over Immigration Petitions, Jurisdiction over Motions to Reopen.

A. Finality of the Underlying Order

The filing of a motion to reopen does not disturb the finality of the underlying deportation or removal order. *See Pablo v. INS, 72 F.3d 110, 113 (9th Cir. 1995)*. However, if the BIA grants a motion to reopen, “there is no longer a final decision to review,” and the petition should be dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. [Lopez-Ruiz v. Ashcroft, 298 F.3d 886, 887 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (order); *see also Cordes v. Mukasey, 517 F.3d 1094, 1095 (9th Cir. 2008)* (order) (vacating prior opinion where unbeknownst to the court “the BIA sua sponte reopened the underlying proceeding, vacated its order of removal, and remanded the matter to the [IJ]” thereby stripping the court of jurisdiction); [Timbreza v. Gonzales, 410 F.3d 1082, 1083 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (order) (advising parties to notify the court when the BIA grants a motion to reopen while a petition for review is pending); *cf. Plasencia-Ayala v. Mukasey, 516 F.3d 738, 745-46 (9th Cir. 2008)* (explaining that although the grant of a motion to reopen vacates the final order of deportation, a motion to reconsider is fundamentally different than a motion to reopen, and does not divest the court of appeals of jurisdiction).

This court may review the denial of a motion to reopen even if a motion to reconsider is pending before the BIA. See [Singh v. INS, 213 F.3d 1050, 1052 n.2 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#).

B. Filing Motion to Reopen or Reconsider Not a Jurisdictional Prerequisite to Filing a Petition for Review

The filing of a motion to reopen or reconsider with the BIA is not a jurisdictional prerequisite to filing a petition for review with the court of appeals. See [Castillo-Villagra v. INS, 972 F.2d 1017, 1023-24 \(9th Cir. 1992\)](#); see also [Noriega-Lopez v. Ashcroft, 335 F.3d 874, 881 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (motions to reopen and reconsider are not remedies available as of right and not required for exhaustion).

C. No Tolling of the Time Period to File Petition for Review

The time period for filing a petition for review with the court of appeals is not tolled by the filing of a motion to reopen. See [Stone v. INS, 514 U.S. 386, 405-06 \(1995\)](#); [Martinez-Serrano v. INS, 94 F.3d 1256, 1258 \(9th Cir. 1996\)](#).

D. No Automatic Stay of Deportation or Removal

The filing of a motion to reopen or reconsider does not automatically result in a stay of deportation or removal. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(f\)](#); [Baria v. Reno, 180 F.3d 1111, 1113 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#).

1. Exception for In Absentia Removal or Deportation

The filing of a motion to reopen an in absentia order of deportation or removal stays deportation. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.23\(b\)\(4\)\(ii\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(f\)](#).

E. Consolidation

Judicial review of a motion to reopen or reconsider must be consolidated with the review of the final order of removal. See [8 U.S.C. § 1252\(b\)\(6\)](#).

F. Departure from the United States

Departure from the United States generally ends the right to make a motion to reopen or reconsider. See [8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.2\(d\)](#) (BIA) and [1003.23\(b\)\(1\)](#) (IJ); see also [Dada v. Mukasey, 128 S. Ct. 2307, 2310 \(2008\)](#) (explaining that “departure has the effect of withdrawing [a] motion to reopen”); cf. [Singh v. Gonzales, 412 F.3d 1117, 1120-22 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (holding that § 1003.2(d) applies only to persons who depart the U.S. after removal proceedings have already commenced against them). However, a motion to reopen may be made on the basis that the departure was not legally executed. See [Wiedersperg v. INS, 896 F.2d 1179, 1181-82 \(9th Cir. 1990\)](#) (holding that petitioner was entitled to reopen his deportation proceedings where his state conviction, which was the sole ground of deportation, was vacated); [Estrada-Rosales v. INS, 645 F.2d 819, 820-21 \(9th Cir. 1981\)](#); [Mendez v. INS, 563 F.2d 956, 958 \(9th Cir. 1977\)](#). The court’s holdings in *Wiedersperg* and *Estrada-Rosales* are not limited to cases in which a vacated state court conviction was the sole ground of deportability; rather, reopening is permitted where the conviction was a “key part” of the deportation or removal proceeding. [Cardoso-Tlaseca v. Gonzales, 460 F.3d 1102, 1107 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (holding that BIA was not precluded from ruling on alien’s motion to reopen).

Additionally, an alien who departs the United States after the completion of immigration proceedings and then re-enters the United States may file a motion to reopen with an immigration judge, [Lin v. Gonzales, 473 F.3d 979, 982 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (concluding that [8 C.F.R. § 1003.23\(b\)\(1\)](#) did not preclude jurisdiction in such circumstances), or with the BIA, [Reynoso-Cisneros v. Gonzales, 491 F.3d 1001, 1002 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (*per curiam*) (concluding that [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(d\)](#) did not preclude jurisdiction in such circumstances).

Cross-reference: Jurisdiction over Immigration Petitions in the Ninth Circuit, Departure from the United States, Review of Motions to Reopen.

III. STANDARD OF REVIEW

A. Generally

The court reviews denials of motions to reopen, remand or reconsider for abuse of discretion. See [Cano-Merida v. INS](#), 311 F.3d 960, 964 (9th Cir. 2002); see also [Perez v. Mukasey](#), 516 F.3d 770, 773 (9th Cir. 2008) (motion to reopen); [Morales Apolinar v. Mukasey](#), 514 F.3d 893, 895 (9th Cir. 2008) (motion to reconsider); de [Jesus Melendez v. Gonzales](#), 503 F.3d 1019, 1023 (9th Cir. 2007) (motion to remand); [Castillo-Perez v. Gonzales](#), 212 F.3d 518, 523 (9th Cir. 2000) (motion to remand). The abuse of discretion standard applies regardless of the underlying relief requested. See [INS v. Doherty](#), 502 U.S. 314, 323 (1992). “[M]otions to reopen are disfavored in deportation proceedings.” [INS v. Abudu](#), 485 U.S. 94, 107, 110 (1988) (noting, among other things, “the tenor of the Attorney General’s regulations, which plainly disfavor motions to reopen”). However, this court will reverse the denial of a motion to reopen if it is “arbitrary, irrational, or contrary to law.” [Singh v. INS](#), 295 F.3d 1037, 1039 (9th Cir. 2002) (internal quotation marks omitted); see also [Perez](#), 516 F.3d at 773.

The BIA’s determination of purely legal questions is reviewed de novo. See [Alali-Amin v. Mukasey](#), 523 F.3d 1039, 1041 (9th Cir. 2008) (mandate pending); [Morales Apolinar](#), 514 F.3d at 895; [Singh v. INS](#), 213 F.3d 1050, 1052 (9th Cir. 2000); see also [Sotelo v. Gonzales](#), 430 F.3d 968, 970 (9th Cir. 2005). Factual findings are reviewed for substantial evidence. See [Sharma v. INS](#), 89 F.3d 545, 547 (9th Cir. 1996).

Cross-reference: Jurisdiction over Immigration Petitions, Standards of Review; Ninth Circuit Standards of Review Outline.

B. Full Consideration of All Factors

The BIA must show proper consideration of all factors, both favorable and unfavorable. See [Franco-Rosendo v. Gonzales](#), 454 F.3d 965, 967-68 (9th Cir. 2006) (holding that the BIA abused its discretion in denying motion to reopen based solely on failure to post voluntary departure bond without consideration of favorable factors); [Bhasin v. Gonzales](#), 423 F.3d 977, 986-87 (9th Cir. 2005) (holding that the BIA abused its discretion by improperly discrediting petitioner’s

affidavit as “self-serving” and failing to properly consider the factors relevant to eligibility for relief); [Mohammed v. Gonzales, 400 F.3d 785, 792 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (holding that BIA abused its discretion by denying motion to reopen in an incomplete and nonsensical opinion, and in failing to consider all attached evidence); [Singh v. Gonzales, 416 F.3d 1006, 1015 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (remanding in light of BIA’s unexplained failure to address petitioner’s ineffective assistance of counsel claim); [Movsisian v. Ashcroft, 395 F.3d 1095, 1097-99 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (remanding where BIA failed to articulate its reasons for denying motion to reopen); [Virk v. INS, 295 F.3d 1055, 1060 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (remanding where BIA did not consider any of the factors weighing in petitioner’s favor); [Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS, 282 F.3d 1218, 1227 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (remanding motion to reopen where BIA did not engage in substantive analysis or articulate any reasons for its decision); [Arrozal v. INS, 159 F.3d 429, 433 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#); [Watkins v. INS, 63 F.3d 844, 848 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#).

1. Later-Acquired Equities

It is unclear whether equities acquired after a final order of deportation or removal must be given less weight than those acquired before the applicant was found to be deportable. Compare [Caruncho v. INS, 68 F.3d 356, 362 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#) (“The government rightly points out that equities flowing from [petitioner’s] marriage should be given little weight because it took place . . . three months after the BIA’s summary dismissal/final deportation order.”), with [Vasquez v. INS, 767 F.2d 598, 602 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#) (affirming denial of motion to reopen because petitioner’s intra-proceedings marriage did not outweigh his violations of immigration law), with [Israel v. INS, 785 F.2d 738, 741 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (concluding that the BIA’s denial of a motion to reopen to adjust status based on a “last-minute marriage” was arbitrary). See also [Malhi v. INS, 336 F.3d 989, 994 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (discussing regulatory presumption of fraud for intra-proceedings marriages and requirements of bona fide marriage exemption).

C. Explanation of Reasons

“We have long held that the BIA abuses its discretion when it fails to provide a reasoned explanation for its actions.” [Movsisian v. Ashcroft, 395 F.3d 1095, 1098 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (granting petition where BIA summarily denied motion to reopen and remand without explanation). “[W]here the BIA entertains a motion

to reopen in the first instance, and then fails to provide specific and cogent reasons for its decision, we are left without a reasoned decision to review.” *Id.* (rejecting government’s contention that BIA’s summary denial of a motion to reopen and remand was consistent with its streamlining procedures).

See also [Franco-Rosendo v. Gonzales](#), 454 F.3d 965, 967-68 (9th Cir. 2006); [Mohammed v. Gonzales](#), 400 F.3d 785, 792 (9th Cir. 2005) (“[T]he BIA must issue a decision that fully explains the reasons for denying a motion to reopen.”); [Narayan v. Ashcroft](#), 384 F.3d 1065, 1068 (9th Cir. 2004) (holding that “the BIA must address and rule upon remand motions, giving specific, cogent reasons for a grant or denial”); [Arrozal v. INS](#), 159 F.3d 429, 433 (9th Cir. 1998) (“[T]he BIA must indicate how it weighed [the favorable and unfavorable] factors and indicate with specificity that it heard and considered petitioner’s claims.”).

D. Irrelevant Factors

The BIA may not rely on irrelevant factors. *See, e.g.,* [Virk v. INS](#), 295 F.3d 1055, 1060-61 (9th Cir. 2002) (holding that BIA improperly considered the impact of an unrelated section of the INA and petitioner’s wife’s pre-naturalization misconduct); [Ng v. INS](#), 804 F.2d 534, 539 (9th Cir. 1986) (holding that BIA improperly relied on misconduct of petitioner’s father).

E. Credibility Determinations

The BIA should not make credibility determinations on motions to reopen. *See* [Ghadessi v. INS](#), 797 F.2d 804, 806 (9th Cir. 1986) (“As motions to reopen are decided without a factual hearing, the Board is unable to make credibility determinations at this stage of the proceedings.”). Facts presented in supporting affidavits must be accepted as true unless inherently unbelievable. *See* [Bhasin v. Gonzales](#), 423 F.3d 977, 987 (9th Cir. 2005) (stating that the “self-serving nature of a declaration in support of a motion to reopen is not an appropriate basis for discrediting its content”); [Celis-Castellano v. Ashcroft](#), 298 F.3d 888, 892 (9th Cir. 2002); [Limsico v. INS](#), 951 F.2d 210, 213 (9th Cir. 1991); *see also* [Ordonez v. INS](#), 345 F.3d 777, 786 (9th Cir. 2003) (“The BIA violates an alien’s due process rights when it makes a sua sponte adverse credibility determination without giving the alien an opportunity to explain alleged inconsistencies.”); [Monjaraz-Munoz v. INS](#), 327 F.3d 892, 897 (9th Cir. 2003) (holding that where BIA cites no evidence to

support a finding that petitioner’s version of the facts is incredible, and none is apparent from the court’s review of the record, petitioner’s allegations will be credited), *amended by* [339 F.3d 1012 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (order).

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR A MOTION TO REOPEN

A. Supporting Documentation

A motion to reopen must be supported by affidavits, the new evidentiary material sought to be introduced, and, if necessary, a completed application for relief. *See* [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)\(B\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(1\)](#); *see also* [INS v. Wang, 450 U.S. 139, 143 \(1981\) \(per curiam\)](#) (upholding BIA’s denial of motion to reopen to apply for suspension of deportation because “the allegations of hardship were in the main conclusory and unsupported by affidavit”); [Patel v. INS, 741 F.2d 1134, 1137 \(9th Cir. 1984\)](#) (“[I]n the context of a motion to reopen, the BIA is not required to consider allegations unsupported by affidavits or other evidentiary material.”). “Although the statute and regulation refer to ‘affidavits,’ we have treated affidavits and declarations interchangeably for purposes of motions to reopen.” [Malty v. Ashcroft, 381 F.3d 942, 947 n.2 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

1. Exception

The petitioner’s failure to submit supporting documentation does not bar reopening where the government either joins in the motion to reopen, or does not affirmatively oppose it. *See* [Konstantinova v. INS, 195 F.3d 528, 530-31 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (where government did not oppose petitioner’s motion to remand, BIA abused its discretion by denying the motion on basis that petitioner failed to include completed application for relief); *see also* [Guzman v. INS, 318 F.3d 911, 914 n.3 \(9th Cir. 2003\) \(per curiam\)](#).

The supporting documentation need not be submitted concurrently with the motion so long as it is submitted within the 90-day time limitation on motions to reopen. [Yeghiazaryan v. Gonzales, 439 F.3d 994, 998-99 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (holding that BIA abused its discretion and violated due process in dismissing motion before expiration of the limitation period based on petitioner’s failure to file supporting brief).

B. Previously Unavailable Evidence

The moving party must show that the previously unavailable material evidence could not have been discovered or presented at the former hearing. See [*INS v. Doherty*, 502 U.S. 314, 324 \(1992\)](#) (holding that the Attorney General did not abuse his discretion by denying motion to reopen to apply for asylum and withholding based on lack of new material evidence); [*Goel v. Gonzales*, 490 F.3d 735, 738 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (holding that results of a polygraph examination administered to the alien after the former hearing before the IJ concerning events that took place prior to the hearing cannot serve as a basis for reopening); [*Bhasin v. Gonzales*, 423 F.3d 977, 987 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (explaining that the statute and [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(1\)](#) require that the evidence must not have been available to be presented at the former hearing before the IJ); [*Guzman v. INS*, 318 F.3d 911, 913 \(9th Cir. 2003\) \(per curiam\)](#) (affirming denial of motion to reopen because “new” information was available and capable of discovery prior to deportation hearing); [*Bolshakov v. INS*, 133 F.3d 1279, 1282 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#) (finding no evidence of new circumstances to support asylum application); [*Ramon-Sepulveda v. INS*, 743 F.2d 1307, 1310 \(9th Cir. 1984\)](#) (holding that BIA erred in affirming the IJ’s decision granting the government’s motion to reopen based on a foreign birth certificate that could have been discovered and presented at prior hearing).

C. Explanation for Failure to Apply for Discretionary Relief

If the motion to reopen is made for the purpose of obtaining discretionary relief, the moving party must establish that he or she was denied the opportunity to apply for such relief, or that such relief was not available at the time of the original hearing. See [*INS v. Doherty*, 502 U.S. 314, 324, 327 \(1992\)](#) (holding that the Attorney General did not abuse his discretion by denying motion to reopen because the applicant failed to satisfactorily explain his previous withdrawal of his asylum and withholding application); [*INS v. Abudu*, 485 U.S. 94, 111 \(1988\)](#) (affirming BIA’s denial of motion to reopen to apply for asylum where applicant failed to explain why the asylum application was not submitted earlier); [*Lainez-Ortiz v. INS*, 96 F.3d 393, 396 \(9th Cir. 1996\)](#).

D. Prima Facie Eligibility for Relief

The applicant must also show prima facie eligibility for the underlying substantive relief requested. See [INS v. Wang, 450 U.S. 139, 145 \(1981\) \(per curiam\)](#); see also [Mendez-Gutierrez v. Ashcroft, 340 F.3d 865, 868-69 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (concluding that request to reinstate asylum application is analogous to motion to reopen); [Dielmann v. INS, 34 F.3d 851, 853 \(9th Cir. 1994\)](#); [Limsico v. INS, 951 F.2d 210, 213 \(9th Cir. 1991\)](#); [Aviles-Torres v. INS, 790 F.2d 1433, 1435-36 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#).

A prima facie case is established “‘where the evidence reveals a reasonable likelihood the statutory requirements for relief have been satisfied.’” [Mendez-Gutierrez v. Gonzales, 444 F.3d 1168, 1171 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (quoting [Ordonez v. INS, 345 F.3d 777, 785 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#)); see also [Hernandez-Ortiz v. INS, 777 F.2d 509, 513 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#), *superseded by statute on other grounds as stated by* [Parussimova v. Mukasey, 533 F.3d 1128, 1133 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending). Cf. [Shin v. Mukasey, 519 F.3d 901, 907 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending) (“Aliens who seek to remand or reopen proceedings to pursue relief bear a ‘heavy burden’ of proving that, if proceedings were reopened, the new evidence would likely change the result in the case.”).

E. Discretionary Denial

Where ultimate relief is discretionary, such as asylum, the BIA may leap over the threshold concerns, and determine that the moving party would not be entitled to the discretionary grant of relief. See, e.g., [INS v. Abudu, 485 U.S. 94, 105-06 \(1988\)](#); [INS v. Rios-Pineda, 471 U.S. 444, 449 \(1985\)](#); [Sequeira-Solano v. INS, 104 F.3d 278, 279 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#); [Vasquez v. INS, 767 F.2d 598, 600 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#); see also [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(a\)](#) (“The Board has discretion to deny a motion to reopen even if the party moving has made out a prima facie case for relief.”)

However, “the BIA must consider and weigh the favorable and unfavorable factors in determining whether to deny a motion to reopen proceedings on discretionary grounds.” [Virk v. INS, 295 F.3d 1055, 1060 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (remanding where BIA did not consider any of the factors weighing in petitioner’s favor); see also [Franco-Rosendo v. Gonzales, 454 F.3d 965, 968 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#); [Arrozal v. INS, 159 F.3d 429, 433-34 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#).

F. Failure to Depart Voluntarily

This court has held that for permanent rules cases, the filing of a timely motion to reopen or reconsider automatically tolls the voluntary departure period, regardless of whether the motion is accompanied by a motion to stay the voluntary departure period. [Barroso v. Gonzales, 429 F.3d 1195, 1204-05, 1207 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#); *see also* [Azarte v. Ashcroft, 394 F.3d 1278, 1289 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (rejecting the court's prior analysis in [Shaar v. INS, 141 F.3d 953 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#), and holding that petitioner's voluntary departure period is tolled while the BIA considers a timely-filed motion to reopen accompanied by a motion to stay removal); *cf.* [Medina-Morales v. Ashcroft, 371 F.3d 520, 529-531 & n.9 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (holding, in permanent rules case, that where a petitioner bargains for voluntary departure in lieu of full adjudication under [8 U.S.C. § 1229c\(a\)\(1\)](#), the BIA may weigh petitioner's voluntary departure agreement against the grant of a motion to reopen).

However, the Supreme Court recently determined that there is no statutory authority to automatically toll the voluntary departure period while a petitioner's motion to reopen is pending. *See* [Dada v. Mukasey, 128 S. Ct. 2307 \(2008\)](#) (holding that to safeguard the right to pursue a motion to reopen, voluntary departure recipients should be permitted an opportunity to withdraw a motion for voluntary departure, provided the request is made prior to the departure period expiring). This court has not yet addressed the effect of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dada* on Ninth Circuit case law.

If the petitioner files a motion to reopen after the expiration of the voluntary departure period, the BIA may deny the motion to reopen based on petitioner's failure to depart. *See* [de Martinez v. Ashcroft, 374 F.3d 759, 763-64 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (denying petition for review in permanent rules case where petitioner moved to reopen to apply for adjustment of status 30 days after the expiration of her voluntary departure period); [Zazueta-Carrillo v. Ashcroft, 322 F.3d 1166, 1174 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#). The disparate treatment of aliens permitted to depart voluntarily and those not eligible for voluntary departure with respect to the amount of time in which they may file a motion to reopen does not violate equal protection. [Granados-Oseguera v. Gonzales, 464 F.3d 993, 994 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (applying *de Martinez*).

Under the transitional rules, the BIA may deny a motion to reopen to apply for relief where the petitioners failed to depart during the voluntary departure period. See [Shaar v. INS, 141 F.3d 953, 959 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#); cf. [Ordonez v. INS, 345 F.3d 777, 783-84 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (holding in transitional rules case that BIA erred in denying motion to reopen to apply for suspension of deportation where IJ failed to give adequate oral warning under the former statute of the consequences of failing to depart voluntarily).

The BIA may not deny reopening as a matter of discretion based solely on the failure to post a voluntary departure bond or to depart voluntarily without also considering the favorable factors in support of reopening. See [Franco-Rosendo v. Gonzales, 454 F.3d 965, 968 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (remanding for consideration of positive factors in favor of reopening where BIA denied reopening based solely on petitioner's failure to post a voluntary departure bond and/or depart voluntarily).

Cross-reference: Cancellation of Removal, Ten-Year Bars to Cancellation, Failure to Depart.

G. Appeal of Deportation Order

“The BIA cannot deny a motion to reopen merely because an alien appeals a deportation order.” [Medina-Morales v. Ashcroft, 371 F.3d 520, 531 n.10 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (citing [Watkins v. INS, 63 F.3d 844, 851 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#)).

H. Fugitive Disentitlement Doctrine

Individuals who disregard the order of deportation against them by refusing to report on their appointed date of departure may have their motion to reopen denied as a matter of discretion. See [Antonio-Martinez v. INS, 317 F.3d 1089, 1091 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (applying the fugitive disentitlement doctrine where petitioner had lost contact with his attorney and the agency and all efforts to contact him failed for over two years); cf. [Bhasin v. Gonzales, 423 F.3d 977, 988-89 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (declining to uphold BIA's reliance on fugitive disentitlement doctrine in denying petitioner's motion to reopen because petitioner failed to receive critical agency documents).

V. TIME AND NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS

A. Generally

1. Time Limitations

Generally, a motion to reopen must be filed within ninety days after a final administrative order of removal is rendered. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)\(C\)\(i\)](#) (removal proceedings); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(2\)](#) (pre-IIRIRA proceedings); see also [Azarte v. Ashcroft, 394 F.3d 1278, 1283 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (discussing first imposition of time limitation on motions to reopen in 1990).

A motion to reconsider must be filed within thirty days after the date of entry of the final administrative decision. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(6\)\(B\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(b\)\(2\)](#).

The limitation period begins to run when the agency sends its decision to the correct address. See [Martinez-Serrano v. INS, 94 F.3d 1256, 1258-59 \(9th Cir. 1996\)](#); see also [Singh v. Gonzales, 494 F.3d 1170, 1172 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (explaining that although the limitation period begins to run when the decision is sent to the correct address, the presumption of mailing may be rebutted by affidavits of nonreceipt, but declining to decide whether the presumption was rebutted and remanding for the BIA to consider the issue in the first instance).

“[T]he pendency of a petition for review of an order of removal does not toll the statutory time limit for the filing of a motion to reopen with the BIA.” [Dela Cruz v. Mukasey, 532 F.3d 946, 949 \(9th Cir. 2008\) \(per curiam\)](#) (mandate pending) (relying on [Stone v. INS, 514 U.S. 386, 405-06 \(1995\)](#) for proposition that “a removal order is final when issued” regardless of subsequent motion to reconsider) (internal quotation marks omitted).

Where an alien is ordered deported, but is granted deferral under the CAT, the order constitutes an order of deportation, and the ninety-day time period for filing a motion to reopen begins to run when the order becomes final. See [Alali-Amin v. Mukasey, 523 F.3d 1039, 1041-42 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending).

With respect to deadlines specified in regulations, “the general rules concerning adequacy of notice through publication in the Federal Register apply in the immigration context.” [Williams v. Mukasey, 531 F.3d 1040, 1042 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending) (publication of CAT regulations in Federal Register provided adequate notice of June 21, 1999 deadline to file motion to reopen based on CAT claim of applicant subject to pre-March 22, 1999 removal order).

2. Numerical Limitations

A party may make one motion to reopen and one motion to reconsider. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)\(A\)](#) and (c)(6)(A); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(2). The single-motion limitation on motions to reopen does not apply to motions to reopen and rescind in absentia orders of deportation. See [Fajardo v. INS, 300 F.3d 1018, 1020 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (noting for in absentia cases that the limitation applies only to removal cases under IIRIRA’s permanent rules).

B. Exceptions to the Ninety-Day/One-Motion Rule

1. In Absentia Orders

a. Exceptional Circumstances

If an applicant who is ordered deported or removed in absentia can show that she failed to appear for the hearing due to “exceptional circumstances,” the applicant has 180 days to file a motion to reopen to rescind the in absentia order. See [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(b\)\(5\)\(C\)\(i\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.23\(b\)\(4\)\(ii\)](#) and (b)(4)(iii)(A)(1); see also [Lo v. Ashcroft, 341 F.3d 934, 936 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#).

The term “exceptional circumstances” refers to exceptional circumstances (such as battery or extreme cruelty to the alien or any child or parent of the alien, serious illness of the alien, or serious illness or death of the spouse, child, or parent of the alien, but not including less compelling circumstances) beyond the control of the alien.

[8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(e\)\(1\)](#); see also [Reyes v. Ashcroft, 358 F.3d 592, 596 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#). “This court must look to the particularized facts presented in each case in

determining whether the petitioner has established exceptional circumstances.” [Singh v. INS, 295 F.3d 1037, 1040 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (internal quotation marks omitted); *see also* [8 U.S.C. § 1252b\(f\)\(2\) \(pre-IIRIRA provision, repealed 1996\)](#).

Note that “a petitioner who arrives late for his immigration hearing, but while the IJ is still in the courtroom, has not failed to appear for that hearing . . . and is not required to demonstrate exceptional circumstances in order to reopen proceedings.” [Perez v. Mukasey, 516 F.3d 770, 774 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#).

Cross Reference: Equitable Tolling.

(i) Evidentiary Requirements

The BIA may not impose new proof requirements without notice. *See* [Singh v. INS, 213 F.3d 1050, 1053-54 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (holding that BIA violated due process where it newly required an applicant to produce an affidavit from his employer or doctor, and to contact the immigration court); *cf.* [Celis-Castellano v. Ashcroft, 298 F.3d 888, 891 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (holding that petitioner had notice of BIA’s evidentiary requirements).

(ii) Cases Finding Exceptional Circumstances

[Chete Juarez v. Ashcroft, 376 F.3d 944, 948 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (holding that petitioner established exceptional circumstances because she appeared at all scheduled hearings but the last, of which she had no actual notice; she had prevailed on appeal before the BIA; and she had no reason to delay or evade the hearing); [Reyes v. Ashcroft, 358 F.3d 592, 596-97 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (stating that ineffective assistance of counsel qualifies as an exceptional circumstance, but denying relief because petitioner failed to comply with the procedural prerequisites of *Matter of Lozada*); [Lo v. Ashcroft, 341 F.3d 934, 939 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (holding that counsel’s secretary’s statement that hearing was on wrong day constituted ineffective assistance, which was an exceptional circumstance); [Monjaraz-Munoz v. INS, 327 F.3d 892, 894-95, 898 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (counsel’s wife’s advice to leave and reenter the United States the day before the hearing, in order to prove that petitioner’s visa was valid, constituted ineffective assistance of counsel and exceptional circumstances), *amended by* [339 F.3d 1012 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (order); [Fajardo v. INS, 300 F.3d 1018, 1022 n.8 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (suggesting to BIA on

remand that “it [would be] difficult to imagine” how the paralegal’s failure to inform the petitioner “of her need to appear at her deportation hearing would not constitute an exceptional circumstance”); [Singh v. INS, 295 F.3d 1037, 1039-40 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (holding that petitioner established exceptional circumstances where he arrived late to his hearing based on a misunderstanding, and had “no possible reason to try to delay the hearing” because he was eligible for adjustment of status); [Romani v. INS, 146 F.3d 737, 739 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#) (holding that where applicants were in the courthouse but did not enter the courtroom due to incorrect advice by lawyer’s assistant, they did not fail to appear for their hearing, and reopening was warranted).

(iii) Cases Finding No Exceptional Circumstances

[Valencia-Fragoso v. INS, 321 F.3d 1204, 1205-06 \(9th Cir. 2003\) \(per curiam\)](#) (holding that applicant who was 4 ½ hours late due to a misunderstanding of the time of the hearing, and made no showing that she arrived while the IJ was still hearing cases, did not establish exceptional circumstances, especially where only possible relief was discretionary grant of voluntary departure); [Celis-Castellano v. Ashcroft, 298 F.3d 888, 891-92 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (severe asthma attack not exceptional); [Singh-Bhathal v. INS, 170 F.3d 943, 946-47 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (holding that erroneous advice of immigration consultant not to appear at hearing did not constitute exceptional circumstances); [Farhoud v. INS, 122 F.3d 794, 796 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#) (holding that petitioner’s failure personally to receive the notice of hearing, which was mailed to his last known address, where receipt was acknowledged, was not an exceptional circumstance); [Sharma v. INS, 89 F.3d 545, 547 \(9th Cir. 1996\)](#) (traffic congestion and parking difficulties not exceptional); *see also* [Hernandez-Vivas v. INS, 23 F.3d 1557, 1559-60 \(9th Cir. 1994\)](#) (holding under the previous standard of reasonable cause that the mere filing of a motion for a change of venue did not excuse the failure to appear).

(iv) Arriving Late While IJ On Bench

See [Perez v. Mukasey, 516 F.3d 770, 774 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (holding that a petitioner does not need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances where he arrives late for his immigration hearing, but while the IJ is still in the courtroom); [Jerezano v. INS, 169 F.3d 613, 615 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (concluding that applicant did not fail to appear where he was 20 minutes late and the IJ was still on the bench, and that an in absentia order was too “harsh and unrealistic”).

b. Improper Notice of Hearing

A motion to reopen to rescind an in absentia order of removal may be filed at any time if the applicant demonstrates improper notice of the hearing. *See* [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(b\)\(5\)\(C\)\(ii\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.23\(b\)\(4\)\(ii\)](#) and (b)(4)(iii)(A)(2). “Neither the statute nor the BIA’s interpretation of the statute – or any court of appeals opinion – limits this ‘any time’ language by prescribing a cut-off period after an alien learns of the deportation order.” [Andia v. Ashcroft, 359 F.3d 1181, 1184 \(9th Cir. 2004\) \(per curiam\)](#) (interpreting pre-IIRIRA notice provision in 8 U.S.C. § 1252b(c)(3)(B) (repealed 1996)).

Due process requires notice of an immigration hearing that is reasonably calculated to reach the interested parties. *See* [Khan v. Ashcroft, 374 F.3d 825, 828 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#); [Flores-Chavez v. Ashcroft, 362 F.3d 1150, 1155-56 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#); [Farhoud v. INS, 122 F.3d 794, 796 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#). If petitioners do not receive actual or constructive notice of deportation proceedings, “it would be a violation of their rights under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution to deport them in absentia.” [Andia, 359 F.3d at 1185](#).

A petitioner “does not have to actually receive notice of a deportation hearing in order for the requirements of due process to be satisfied.” [Farhoud, 122 F.3d at 796](#) (holding with respect to former 8 U.S.C. § 1252b(c)(1) that notice was sufficient where mailed to applicant’s last address, where receipt was acknowledged); *see also* [Dobrota v. INS, 311 F.3d 1206, 1211 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#). “Actual notice is, however, sufficient to meet due process requirements.” [Khan, 374 F.3d at 828](#) (holding that a second notice in English was sufficient to advise petitioner of the pendency of the action when petitioner had appeared in response to an earlier notice in English). *Cf.* [Sembring v. Gonzales, 499 F.3d 981, 988-89 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (alien demonstrated nonreceipt of hearing notice for purpose of rescinding in absentia order).

Cross-reference: Due Process in Immigrations Proceedings; Notice of Hearing.

c. Proper Notice Requirements

(i) Presumption of Proper Notice

The INS will benefit from a presumption of effective delivery if the notice of hearing was properly addressed, had sufficient postage, and was properly deposited in the mails. See [Busquets-Ivars v. Ashcroft, 333 F.3d 1008, 1010 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#). However, “[a] notice which fails to include a proper zip code is not properly addressed.” *Id.* “Notice mailed to an address different from the one [the applicant] provided could not have conceivably been reasonably calculated to reach him.” [Singh v. INS, 362 F.3d 1164, 1169 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

The applicant is responsible for informing the immigration agency of his current address. See [8 U.S.C. § 1305\(a\)](#); [Farhoud v. INS, 122 F.3d 794, 796 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#); cf. [Singh v. Gonzales, 412 F.3d 1117, 1121-22 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (explaining that § 1305(a) applies only so long as the applicant is within the United States and where he or she receives written notice of the address notification requirement); [Lahmidi v. INS, 149 F.3d 1011, 1017 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#) (holding, under the pre-1996 statutory provision, that applicant who was not informed of the change-of-address requirement established reasonable cause for failure to appear at the hearing); [Urbina-Osejo v. INS, 124 F.3d 1314, 1317 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#) (remanded for further findings).

Where an applicant seeks to reopen proceedings on the basis of nondelivery or improper delivery of the notice, the IJ and BIA must consider the evidence submitted by the applicant. See [Arrieta v. INS, 117 F.3d 429, 432 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#) (*per curiam*).

(ii) Pre-IIRIRA Proceedings

Before passage of IIRIRA, service of Orders to Show Cause and written notice of deportation hearings was governed by INA § 242B, [8 U.S.C. §§ 1252b\(a\)\(1\)](#) and (a)(2) (repealed 1996).

(A) OSCs

Service of the Order to Show Cause was required to be given in person to the respondent or, if personal service was not practicable, by certified mail to the respondent or his counsel of record, with the requirement that the certified mail receipt be signed by the respondent or a responsible person at the respondent's address. [Matter of Grijalva, 21 I. & N. Dec. 27, 32 \(BIA 1995\) \(en banc\)](#). The pre-IIRIRA notice provision required that the Order to Show Cause be written in English and Spanish. *See* [Flores-Chavez v. Ashcroft, 362 F.3d 1150, 1155 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#); [8 U.S.C. § 1252b\(a\) \(repealed 1996\)](#).

A presumption of effective service for OSCs sent via certified mail to the alien's address of record does not exist, rather the government must demonstrate by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence that petitioner or a responsible person at his address signed the certified mail return receipt for his OSC. [Chaidez v. Gonzales, 486 F.3d 1079, 1087 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (concluding that the government did not meet its burden of demonstrating signature on certified mail receipt was that of a "responsible person" where signer signed for both OSC and hearing notice, but petitioner submitted affidavit stating he did not know signer, that he did not believe she lived at his address at the relevant time and that she did not have authorization to receive service for him).

(B) Hearing Notices

Unlike service of the Order to Show Cause, written notice of the time and place of the deportation hearing sent by certified mail to the respondent at the last address provided to the agency can be sufficient to establish proper service by "clear, unequivocal, and convincing" evidence, regardless of whether there is proof of actual service or receipt of the notice by respondent. *See* [8 U.S.C. § 1252b\(c\)\(1\) \(repealed\)](#) (stating that written notice shall be considered sufficient if provided at the most recent address provided by respondent); [Arrieta v. INS, 117 F.3d 429, 431 \(9th Cir. 1997\) \(per curiam\)](#); *see also* [Matter of Grijalva, 21 I. & N. Dec. 27, 33-34 \(BIA 1995\) \(en banc\)](#).

Adopting the BIA's standard in *Matter of Grijalva*, this court has held that written notice of a deportation hearing sent by certified mail through the United States Postal Service with proof of attempted delivery creates a "strong

presumption of effective service.” [Arrieta, 117 F.3d at 431](#); [Busquets-Ivars v. Ashcroft, 333 F.3d 1008, 1009 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#); *see also* [Matter of Grijalva, 21 I. & N. Dec. at 37](#). However, this presumption of service may be overcome if the applicant presents “substantial and probative evidence,” such as documentary evidence from the Postal Service, or personal or third-party affidavits, that her mailing address has remained unchanged, that neither she nor a responsible party working or residing at the address refused service, and that there was nondelivery or improper delivery by the Postal Service. [Arrieta, 117 F.3d at 431](#). This court has not addressed whether the presumption of delivery is rebutted where the INS lacks the certified return receipt. *See* [Busquets-Ivars, 333 F.3d at 1009](#) (expressing “no opinion whether the record, lacking the return receipt, deprives the INS of the presumption that notice was effective”). *Contrast* [Singh v. Gonzales, 412 F.3d 1117, 1119 n.1 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (noting that the government did not submit into evidence the certified mail return receipt).

(iii) Removal Proceedings

Proper notice procedures for removal proceedings are set forth in [8 U.S.C. § 1229\(a\)\(1\)](#) and (2). The statute provides that “written notice (in this section referred to as a ‘notice to appear’) shall be given in person to the alien (or, if personal service is not practicable, through service by mail to the alien or to the alien’s counsel of record, if any).” *Id.* at § 1229(a)(1); *see also* [Khan v. Ashcroft, 374 F.3d 825, 828 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#). “In addition, the notice must include seven specified elements, including, *inter alia*, the nature of the proceedings, the conduct that is alleged to be in violation of the law, and the date and time of the proceedings.” [Khan, 374 F.3d at 828](#). Neither the statute nor the regulations require notices to be provided in any language other than English. *See id.* (distinguishing translation requirement for expedited removal proceedings); *see also* [Flores-Chavez v. Ashcroft, 362 F.3d 1150, 1155 n.4 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (discussing Congressional intent to vest discretion for translation in the agency).

“[D]elivery by regular mail does not raise the same ‘strong presumption’ as certified mail, and less should be required to rebut such a presumption.” [Salta v. INS, 314 F.3d 1076, 1079 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (holding, under the new statutory provision in [8 U.S.C. § 1229\(a\)\(1\)](#), which does not require service by certified mail, that the BIA erred by applying the strong presumption of delivery accorded to certified mail under the former statutory provision). An applicant’s sworn

affidavit that neither she nor a responsible party residing at her address received the notice “should ordinarily be sufficient to rebut the presumption of delivery and entitle [the applicant] to an evidentiary hearing.” *Id.* (noting that the applicant initiated the proceedings to obtain a benefit, appeared at an earlier hearing, and had no motive to avoid the hearing). See also [Sembiring v. Gonzales, 499 F.3d 981, 987-89 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (applying *Salta* and concluding alien overcame weaker presumption of delivery of hearing notice for purpose of rescinding in absentia order).

(iv) Notice to Counsel Sufficient

Notice to counsel is sufficient to establish notice to the applicant. See [Garcia v. INS, 222 F.3d 1208, 1209 \(9th Cir. 2000\) \(per curiam\)](#) (rejecting claim of inadequate notice where the government personally served written notice of the hearing on petitioner’s counsel; noting that petitioner did not raise an ineffective assistance of counsel claim). Where the government fails to send notice to counsel of record, notice is insufficient. See [Dobrota v. INS, 311 F.3d 1206 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#).

(v) Notice to Juvenile Insufficient

If a juvenile under 18 years old is released from INS custody to a responsible adult, proper written notice must be served on the juvenile and on the adult who took custody of him. See [Flores-Chavez v. Ashcroft, 362 F.3d 1150, 1163 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

(vi) Notice to Applicant No Longer Residing in the United States

A notice to appear mailed to an applicant’s former address after he has already departed the United States may not be sufficient to establish proper notice. See [Singh v. Gonzales, 412 F.3d 1117, 1121-22 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (holding that BIA abused its discretion in denying a motion to reopen where applicant submitted evidence demonstrating that the agency mailed notice to his former address after he had departed the United States).

2. Asylum and Withholding Claims

A motion to reopen to apply or reapply for asylum or withholding of removal based on changed country conditions that could not have been discovered or presented at the prior hearing, may be filed at any time. *See* [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)\(C\)\(ii\)](#); [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(3\)\(ii\)](#); *see also* [Malty v. Ashcroft, 381 F.3d 942, 945-46 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (holding that BIA abused its discretion in denying as untimely and numerically barred a motion to reopen based on changed circumstances in Egypt); [Azanor v. Ashcroft, 364 F.3d 1013, 1021-22 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

A petitioner's evidence regarding changed circumstances will almost always relate to his initial claim; nothing in the statute or regulations requires otherwise. The critical question is not whether the allegations bear some connection to a prior application, but rather whether circumstances have changed sufficiently that a petitioner who previously did not have a legitimate claim for asylum now has a well-founded fear of future persecution.

[Malty, 381 F.3d at 945.](#)

The exception for changed country conditions does not apply to changes in United States asylum law. *See* [Azanor, 364 F.3d at 1022](#) (rejecting claim that recognition of female genital mutilation as a ground for asylum constituted changed country conditions within the meaning of former 8 C.F.R. § 3.2(c)(3)(ii)). In addition, changes in an alien's *personal* circumstances do not provide a basis to file a successive or untimely asylum application. *See* [Chen v. Mukasey, 524 F.3d 1028, 1031-34 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (deferring to BIA's interpretation that, despite [8 U.S.C. § 1158\(a\)\(2\)\(D\)](#)'s exception for time and number limits in cases of "changed circumstances," a successive and untimely application must satisfy requirements for motion to reopen and [8 U.S.C. § 1229a\(c\)\(7\)\(C\)](#)'s more restrictive changed country conditions exception).

3. Jointly-Filed Motions

An exception to the number and time restrictions exists if the motion to reopen is agreed upon by all parties and jointly filed. *See* [8 C.F.R.](#)

[§ 1003.2\(c\)\(3\)\(iii\)](#); [Bolshakov v. INS](#), 133 F.3d 1279, 1281-82 (9th Cir. 1998) (rejecting government’s contention that the “exception in section 3.2(c)(3)(iii) is an administrative remedy that must be exhausted before an alien can petition the Court of Appeals”). However, the deadline for filing a motion to reopen is not tolled while a petitioner waits for a response from the District Counsel regarding whether the government will join the motion. See [Valeriano v. Gonzales](#), 474 F.3d 669, 673-675 (9th Cir. 2007).

4. Government Motions Based on Fraud

The government may, at any time, bring a motion based on fraud in the original proceeding or a crime that would support termination of asylum. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(3\)\(iv\)](#).

5. Movant in Custody

A motion to reopen to rescind an in absentia order of removal may be filed at any time if the applicant demonstrates that he failed to appear at the hearing because he was in state or federal custody. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(c\)\(3\)](#) (referring to [8 C.F.R. § 1003.23\(b\)\(4\)\(ii\)](#) and (b)(4)(iii)(A)(2)).

6. Sua Sponte Reopening by the BIA

The BIA may at any time reopen proceedings sua sponte. See [8 C.F.R. § 1003.2\(a\)](#). However, this court lacks jurisdiction to review a claim that the BIA should have exercised its sua sponte power to reopen deportation proceedings. See [Toufighi v. Mukasey](#), No. 04-74010, — F.3d —, 2008 WL 3822954, *4 n.8 (9th Cir. Aug. 18, 2008) (mandate pending); [Ekimian v. INS](#), 303 F.3d 1153, 1159 (9th Cir. 2002); [Abassi v. INS](#), 305 F.3d 1028, 1032 (9th Cir. 2002).

Cross Reference: Equitable Tolling, Ineffective Assistance of Counsel.

VI. EQUITABLE TOLLING

The ninety-day/one-motion limitations are not jurisdictional, and are amenable to equitable tolling. See [Socop-Gonzalez v. INS](#), 272 F.3d 1176, 1188 (9th Cir. 2001) (*en banc*). Equitable tolling is available “when a petitioner is

prevented from filing because of deception, fraud, or error, as long as the petitioner acts with due diligence in discovering the deception, fraud, or error.” [Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889, 897 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#). Likewise, the 180-day limit on filing a motion to reopen and rescind an in absentia removal order may also be tolled. *See* [Fajardo v. INS, 300 F.3d 1018, 1022 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (180-day limit for filing motion to reopen proceedings conducted in absentia based on exceptional circumstances tolled due to deceptive actions of notaries).

A. Circumstances Beyond the Applicant’s Control

In [Socop-Gonzalez v. INS, 272 F.3d 1176 \(9th Cir. 2001\) \(en banc\)](#), the court held that equitable tolling is available “in situations where, despite all due diligence, [the party invoking equitable tolling] is unable to obtain vital information bearing on the existence of the claim.” *Id.* at 1193 (internal quotation marks omitted) (applying equitable tolling where INS officer repeatedly provided erroneous information to the applicant). “The inability to obtain vital information bearing on the existence of a claim need not be caused by the wrongful conduct of a third party. Rather, the party invoking tolling need only show that his or her ignorance of the limitations period was caused by circumstances beyond the party’s control.” *Id.*

See also [Mendez-Alcaraz v. Gonzales, 464 F.3d 842, 845 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (holding that the IJ’s erroneous statement that petitioner’s conviction qualified as an aggravated felony and petitioner’s unawareness of subsequent caselaw to the contrary did not warrant equitable tolling). *Compare* [United States v. Camacho-Lopez, 450 F.3d 928, 930 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (reasoning in a collateral attack on an underlying removal order that IJ’s erroneous, but qualified, advice about whether conviction constituted an aggravated felony invalidated prior deportation order).

B. Fraudulent or Erroneous Attorney Conduct

This court recognizes equitable tolling in cases involving ineffective assistance by an attorney or representative, coupled with fraudulent, or erroneous conduct. *See, e.g.,* [Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889, 897-98 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#). “Where the ineffective performance was that of an actual attorney and the attorney engaged in fraudulent activity causing an essential action in her client’s case to be undertaken ineffectively, out of time, or not at all, equitable tolling is available.”

Id. at 898; *see also* [Ray v. Gonzales](#), 439 F.3d 582, 588 n.5 (9th Cir. 2006); [Singh v. Ashcroft](#), 367 F.3d 1182, 1185-86 (9th Cir. 2004); [Fajardo v. INS](#), 300 F.3d 1018, 1022 (9th Cir. 2002); [Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS](#), 282 F.3d 1218, 1224 (9th Cir. 2002); [Varela v. INS](#), 204 F.3d 1237, 1240 (9th Cir. 2000); [Lopez v. INS](#), 184 F.3d 1097, 1100 (9th Cir. 1999); *cf.* [Hamoui v. Ashcroft](#), 389 F.3d 821, 826 (9th Cir. 2004) (stating that “[i]neffective assistance of counsel amounting to a due process violation permits untimely reopening”).

Ineffective assistance of counsel, where a nonattorney engaged in fraudulent activity causes an essential action in his or her client’s case to be undertaken ineffectively, may equitably toll the statute of limitations. *See* [Fajardo](#), 300 F.3d at 1020; *see also* [Albillo-De Leon v. Gonzales](#), 410 F.3d 1090, 1099 (9th Cir. 2005) (holding that fraudulent conduct by a non-attorney warranted equitable tolling of the deadline to file a motion to reopen under NACARA); [Rodriguez-Lariz](#), 282 F.3d at 1224; [Socop-Gonzalez v. INS](#), 272 F.3d 1179, 1187-88, 1193-96 (9th Cir. 2001) (en banc).

C. Due Diligence

The filing deadline may be tolled until the petitioner, exercising due diligence, discovers the fraud, deception, or error. In cases involving ineffective assistance, this court has found that the limitation period may be tolled until the petitioner meets with new counsel to discuss his file, thereby becoming aware of the harm resulting from the misconduct of his prior representatives. *See* [Iturribarria v. INS](#), 321 F.3d 889, 899 (9th Cir. 2003); *see also* [Albillo-De Leon v. Gonzales](#), 410 F.3d 1090, 1099-1100 (9th Cir. 2005) (holding that petitioner acted with due diligence in making a FOIA request for court case file after discovering former counsel’s deception); [Fajardo v. INS](#), 300 F.3d 1018, 1021 (9th Cir. 2002).

The time limitation is not tolled while petitioner awaits a response from the District Counsel regarding whether the government would join a motion to reopen because “attempting to obtain nonvital information or acquiescence is not ‘diligence’ within the meaning of our equitable tolling jurisprudence.” [Valeriano v. Gonzales](#), 474 F.3d 669, 673 (9th Cir. 2007).

VII. INEFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL

A. Presented Through a Motion to Reopen

“Where the facts surrounding allegedly ineffective representation by counsel were unavailable to the petitioner at an earlier stage of the administrative process, motions before the BIA based on claims of ineffective assistance of counsel are properly deemed motions to reopen.” [*Iturribarria v. INS*, 321 F.3d 889, 891 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (holding that “the BIA misapplied its own regulations when it classified [petitioner’s] motion alleging ineffective assistance of counsel as a motion to reconsider rather than a motion to reopen”); *see also* [*Mohammed v. Gonzales*, 400 F.3d 785, 792 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#); [*Siong v. INS*, 376 F.3d 1030, 1036 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#); [*Singh v. Ashcroft*, 367 F.3d 1182, 1185 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

B. Exhaustion and Proper Forum

Where ineffective assistance of counsel (“IAC”) occurred “prior to and during the removal proceeding,” petitioner must first raise IAC claims in a motion to reopen before the BIA, and not in district court. *See* [*Puga v. Chertoff*, 488 F.3d 812, 815-16 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#); *see also* [*Liu v. Waters*, 55 F.3d 421, 426 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#) (requiring petitioner to exhaust IAC claim through a motion to reopen before the BIA). Where IAC claim arises out of attorney misconduct after the BIA decision on appeal (e.g. attorney failed to file petition for review), petitioner can bring the IAC claim in district court habeas proceedings without filing a motion to reopen. *See* [*Singh v. Gonzales et. al*, 499 F.3d 969, 972 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (district court retains jurisdiction post-REAL ID Act to review claims of post-BIA IAC because not reviewing final order of removal); *see also* [*Dearinger ex rel. Volkova v. Reno*, 232 F.3d 1042, 1046 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (affirming the district court’s grant of writ of habeas corpus based on IAC where counsel filed an untimely petition for review with this court). Petitioner may also bring these claims in a motion to reopen before the BIA. *See* [*Singh*, 499 F.3d at 979](#) (“That Singh may have an alternative avenue for relief does not change our statutory analysis.”)

However, the court has jurisdiction to consider an ineffective assistance of counsel claim raised for the first time in a petition for review “[i]n the limited situation where an alien is represented by the same allegedly incompetent counsel throughout agency proceedings including through the filing of his motion to

reopen proceedings before the BIA and therefore cannot administratively exhaust a claim for ineffective assistance of counsel.” [Granados-Oseguera v. Gonzales, 464 F.3d 993, 994 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#). However, petitioner must still demonstrate prejudice and show that he has “plausible grounds for relief.” See [Serrano v. Gonzales, 469 F.3d 1317, 1319 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#).

C. Standard of Review

The court reviews findings of fact regarding counsel’s performance for substantial evidence. [Lin v. Ashcroft, 377 F.3d 1014, 1023 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#). The court reviews for abuse of discretion the BIA’s denial of a motion to reopen, and reviews de novo claims of due process violations in removal proceedings, including claims of ineffective assistance of counsel. [Mohammed v. Gonzales, 400 F.3d 785, 791-92 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#).

Cross-reference: Standards of Review.

D. Requirements for Due Process Violation

1. Constitutional Basis

Although individuals in immigration proceedings do not enjoy the Sixth Amendment’s guarantee of an attorney’s assistance at government expense, they do have the right to obtain counsel of their own choice. [Ray v. Gonzales, 439 F.3d 582, 586-87 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#). “[T]he extent to which aliens are entitled to effective assistance of counsel during [immigration] proceedings is governed by the Fifth Amendment due process right to a fair hearing.” [Lara-Torres v. Ashcroft, 383 F.3d 968, 972 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (emphasis omitted), *amended by* [404 F.3d 1105 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (order); *see also* [Blanco v. Mukasey, 518 F.3d 714, 722 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#). The Sixth Amendment “reasonableness” standard for ineffective assistance of counsel in criminal proceedings “does not attach to civil immigration matters.” [Lara-Torres, 383 F.3d at 974](#).

“Ineffective assistance of counsel in a deportation proceeding is a denial of due process under the Fifth Amendment if the proceeding was so fundamentally unfair that the alien was prevented from reasonably presenting his case.” [Ortiz v. INS, 179 F.3d 1148, 1153 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (internal quotation marks omitted); *see*

also [Maravilla Maravilla v. Ashcroft](#), 381 F.3d 855, 857-58 (9th Cir. 2004) (per curiam).

Where, notwithstanding notice of the right to retain counsel and the availability of free legal services, “an individual chooses not to retain an attorney, and instead knowingly relies on assistance from individuals not authorized to practice law, such a voluntary choice will not support a due process claim based on ineffective assistance of counsel.” [Hernandez v. Mukasey](#), 524 F.3d 1014, 1020 (9th Cir. 2008) (concluding that where petitioners waived their right to counsel, and knowingly relied on a non-attorney immigration consultant for advice, there was no denial of due process because “reliance on a non-attorney [is] not sanctioned by law”).

2. Counsel’s Competence

To prevail on an ineffective assistance of counsel claim, the petitioner must make two showings. First, the petitioner must demonstrate that counsel failed to perform with sufficient competence. See [Mohammed v. Gonzales](#), 400 F.3d 785, 793 (9th Cir. 2005). “We do not require that [petitioner’s] representation be brilliant, but it cannot serve to make [the] immigration hearing so fundamentally unfair that [petitioner] was prevented from reasonably presenting his case.” [Lin v. Ashcroft](#), 377 F.3d 1014, 1027 (9th Cir. 2004) (internal quotation marks omitted) (holding that counsel’s failure to investigate and present the factual and legal basis of Lin’s asylum claim, attend the hearing in person, advocate on his behalf at the hearing, and file brief on appeal, constituted ineffective assistance of counsel). Impinging on a petitioner’s “authority to decide whether, and on what terms, to concede his case” by failing to insure counsel’s withdrawal will not prejudice the petitioner can “effectively deprive[] [the petitioner] of the ability to present his case” See [Nehad v. Mukasey](#), No. 07-70606, — F.3d —, 2008 WL 2925201, *8 (9th Cir. July 31, 2008) (mandate pending) (concluding that counsel’s performance was deficient where counsel pressured client to accept voluntary departure under threat of counsel’s withdrawal two hours before hearing).

Cross-reference: Cases Finding Ineffective Assistance, below.

3. Prejudice

Second, petitioner must generally show that she was prejudiced by her counsel's performance. See [Mohammed v. Gonzales](#), 400 F.3d 785, 793 (9th Cir. 2005); see also [Blanco v. Mukasey](#), 518 F.3d 714, 722 (9th Cir. 2008). A showing of prejudice can be made if counsel's performance "was so inadequate that it may have affected the outcome of the proceedings." [Iturribarria v. INS](#), 321 F.3d 889, 899-90 (9th Cir. 2003) (internal quotation marks omitted); see also [Morales Apolinar v. Mukasey](#), 514 F.3d 893, 897 (9th Cir. 2008); [Mohammed](#), 400 F.3d at 793-94; [Maravilla Maravilla v. Ashcroft](#), 381 F.3d 855, 857-58 (9th Cir. 2004) (per curiam); cf. [Lara-Torres v. Ashcroft](#), 383 F.3d 968, 972 (9th Cir. 2004) (stating that alien must show "substantial prejudice, which is essentially a demonstration that the alleged violation affected the outcome of the proceedings") (internal quotation marks omitted), amended by [404 F.3d 1105 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (order).

The court will "consider the underlying merits of the case to come to a tentative conclusion as to whether [petitioner's] claim, if properly presented, would be viable." [Lin v. Ashcroft](#), 377 F.3d 1014, 1027 (9th Cir. 2004). To show prejudice, the alien "only needs to show that he has *plausible* grounds for relief." [Id.](#) (internal quotation marks omitted); see also [Morales Apolinar](#), 514 F.3d at 898.

"[W]here an alien is prevented from filing an appeal in an immigration proceeding due to counsel's error, the error deprives the alien of the appellate proceeding entirely." [Dearinger ex rel. Volkova v. Reno](#), 232 F.3d 1042, 1045 (9th Cir. 2000). "In cases involving such error, the proceedings are subject to a 'presumption of prejudice,' and [the court] will find that a petitioner has been denied due process if he can demonstrate 'plausible grounds for relief' on his underlying claim." [Ray v. Gonzales](#), 439 F.3d 582, 587 (9th Cir. 2006) (applying a presumption of prejudice where petitioner's counsel failed to file an appeal and concluding that the government failed to rebut that presumption where petitioner's asylum application provided plausible grounds for relief) (citation omitted); see also [Siong v. INS](#), 376 F.3d 1030, 1037 (9th Cir. 2004). However, the presumption of prejudice is rebutted where a petitioner cannot demonstrate that his claims are viable. [Rojas-Garcia v. Ashcroft](#), 339 F.3d 814, 826-27 (9th Cir. 2003) (presumption rebutted where petitioner had no plausible claim to adjustment of status or voluntary departure).

a. Exception for In Absentia Orders

Where a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel is the basis for moving to reopen and rescind an in absentia removal order, a showing of prejudice is not required. See [Lo v. Ashcroft, 341 F.3d 934, 939 n.6 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#); see also [Monjaraz-Munoz v. INS, 327 F.3d 892 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (granting petition without discussing prejudice), amended by [339 F.3d 1012 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (order).

E. The *Lozada* Requirements

A motion to reopen based on ineffective assistance of counsel must generally meet the three procedural requirements set forth by the BIA in [Matter of Lozada, 19 I. & N. Dec. 637 \(BIA 1988\)](#). The petitioner must:

1) submit an affidavit explaining his agreement with former counsel regarding his legal representation, 2) present evidence that prior counsel has been informed of the allegations against her and given an opportunity to respond, 3) either show that a complaint against prior counsel was filed with the proper disciplinary authorities or explain why no such complaint was filed.

[Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889, 900 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#); see also [Hernandez v. Mukasey, 524 F.3d 1014, 1018 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#); [Morales Apolinar v. Mukasey, 514 F.3d 893, 895-96 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#); [Monjaraz-Munoz v. INS, 327 F.3d 892, 896 n.1 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#), amended by [339 F.3d 1012 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (order); [Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS, 282 F.3d 1218, 1226-27 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#). The court “presume[s], as a general rule, that the Board does not abuse its discretion when it obligates petitioners to satisfy *Lozada*’s literal requirements.” [Reyes v. Ashcroft, 358 F.3d 592, 597 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

1. Exceptions

This court has explained that the *Lozada* requirements are not sacrosanct, and the court has not hesitated to address an ineffective assistance of counsel claim even when petitioner fails to comply strictly with *Lozada*. See [Ray v. Gonzales, 439 F.3d 582, 588 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (identifying cases holding that the failure to comply with *Lozada* was not dispositive); see also [Morales Apolinar v. Mukasey,](#)

[514 F.3d 893, 896 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (explaining that “[t]he *Lozada* factors are not rigidly applied, especially where their purpose is fully served by other means”). For example, the failure to comply with the *Lozada* requirements is not fatal where the alleged ineffective assistance is plain on the face of the administrative record. See [Castillo-Perez v. INS, 212 F.3d 518, 525-26 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#). “In addition, [the court has] concluded that ‘arbitrary application’ of the *Lozada* command is not warranted if petitioner shows ‘diligent efforts’ to comply were unsuccessful due to factors beyond petitioner’s control.” [Reyes v. Ashcroft, 358 F.3d 592, 597 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#).

See also [Morales Apolar, 514 F.3d at 896](#) (excusing failure to report attorney’s misconduct to a disciplinary authority or to confront his attorney direction where such action would have been futile); [Granados-Oseguera v. Gonzales, 464 F.3d 993, 998 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (excusing failure to comply with *Lozada* because ineffective assistance and prejudice were clear in the record); [Lo v. Ashcroft, 341 F.3d 934, 937-38 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (noting court’s flexibility in applying the *Lozada* requirements, and holding that failure to comply with third *Lozada* factor did not defeat ineffective assistance of counsel claim given no suggestion of collusion between petitioners and counsel); [Rojas-Garcia v. Ashcroft, 339 F.3d 814, 825-26 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (failure to file bar complaint not fatal where former counsel submitted letter of self-report to bar); [Melkonian v. Ashcroft, 320 F.3d 1061, 1072 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#); [Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS, 282 F.3d 1218, 1227 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (substantial compliance sufficient); [Ontiveros-Lopez v. INS, 213 F.3d 1121, 1124-25 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (holding that the BIA may not impose the *Lozada* requirements arbitrarily); [Escobar-Grijalva v. INS, 206 F.3d 1331, 1335 \(9th Cir. 2000\), amended by 213 F.3d 1221 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (order); [Varela v. INS, 204 F.3d 1237, 1240 n.6 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#).

F. Cases Discussing Ineffective Assistance of Counsel

1. Cases Finding Ineffective Assistance

[Nehad v. Mukasey, No. 07-70606, — F.3d —, 2008 WL 2925201, *3-*10 \(9th Cir. July 31, 2008\)](#) (mandate pending) (pressuring alien to accept voluntary departure under threat of counsel’s withdrawal two hours before hearing); [Morales Apolar v. Mukasey, 514 F.3d 893, 899 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (failure to introduce available documentary evidence, failure to elicit testimony, and failure to establish

petitioner's mother as a qualifying relative for the purpose of the hardship analysis); [Granados-Oseguera v. Gonzales, 464 F.3d 993, 998 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (failure to file a timely petition for review, failure to seek a stay of voluntary departure after family member fell ill, and failure to file motion to reopen within voluntary departure period); [Ray v. Gonzales, 439 F.3d 582, 588 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (failure to file a brief with the BIA on appeal, failure to file a petition for review, and failure to meet procedural requirements of two motions to reopen); [Mohammed v. Gonzales, 400 F.3d 785 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (counsel's performance was ineffective and caused prejudice where she failed to present evidence of petitioner's past female genital mutilation); [Hamoui v. Ashcroft, 389 F.3d 821, 826 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (failure to file motion to reopen to pursue claim under the Convention Against Torture constituted constitutionally deficient performance); [Lin v. Ashcroft, 377 F.3d 1014 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (counsel's failure to: investigate and present the factual and legal basis of Lin's asylum claim; attend the hearing in person; advocate on his behalf at the hearing; and file brief on appeal, constituted ineffective assistance of counsel); [Siong v. INS, 376 F.3d 1030, 1037 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) ("Failing to file a timely notice of appeal is obvious ineffective assistance of counsel."); [Singh v. Ashcroft, 367 F.3d 1182 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (counsel's failure to file brief to BIA established ineffective assistance and caused prejudice where BIA dismissed based on failure to file brief); [Rojas-Garcia v. Ashcroft, 339 F.3d 814 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (failure to file brief on appeal to BIA constituted ineffective assistance, but presumption of prejudice rebutted because petitioner had no plausible grounds for relief); [Monjaraz-Munoz v. INS, 327 F.3d 892 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (advisements to return to Mexico in order to prove validity of visa, where petitioner missed his hearing due to border detention upon attempted return, constituted ineffective assistance and exceptional circumstances warranting reopening), *amended by* [339 F.3d 1012 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (order); [Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (counsel was ineffective, but petitioner could not show prejudice); [Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS, 282 F.3d 1218 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (non-attorney provided ineffective assistance by failing to file a timely application for relief while assuring petitioners he was diligently handling their case); [Dearinger ex rel. Volkova v. Reno, 232 F.3d 1042 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (counsel's untimely petition for review presented valid basis for ineffective assistance claim); [Castillo-Perez v. INS, 212 F.3d 518, 526 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (finding a "clear and obvious case of ineffective assistance of counsel" where counsel "failed, without any reason, to timely file [an] application" for relief even though petitioner was prima facie eligible); [Escobar-Grijalva v. INS, 206 F.3d 1331, 1335 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (IJ denied applicant her right to counsel when he

allowed an attorney whom she had never met and who had no understanding of her case to represent her), *amended by* [213 F.3d 1221 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#); [Lopez v. INS, 184 F.3d 1097 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (fraudulent legal representation by notary posing as an attorney established a meritorious ineffective assistance claim).

2. Cases Rejecting Ineffective Assistance of Counsel Claims

[Blanco v. Mukasey, 518 F.3d 714, 722 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (counsel's actions did not deny petitioner his right to full and fair hearing where record showed that counsel diligently examined witnesses, argued points of law before IJ and informed petitioner of his right to appeal, and even if performance was ineffective, petitioner failed to demonstrate prejudice); [Padilla-Padilla v. Gonzales, 463 F.3d 972, 975-76 \(9th Cir. 2006\)](#) (counsel's erroneous advice regarding the retroactivity of the stop-time rule did not result in the deprivation of due process); [Lara-Torres v. Ashcroft, 383 F.3d 968, 973 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (counsel's "unfortunate immigration-law advice" was not ineffective assistance because it did not "pertain to the actual substance of the hearing" or "call the hearing's fairness into question"), *amended by* [404 F.3d 1105 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (order); [Azanor v. Ashcroft, 364 F.3d 1013, 1023 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (rejecting claim because petitioner failed to comply with *Lozada* and counsel's actions did not cause prejudice because petitioner failed to inform counsel of critical facts); [Reyes v. Ashcroft, 358 F.3d 592, 597-98 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (rejecting claim because petitioner failed to comply substantially with *Lozada*); [Melkonian v. Ashcroft, 320 F.3d 1061 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (rejecting claim based on single statement of counsel during proceedings); [Lata v. INS, 204 F.3d 1241 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (petitioner failed to show prejudice); [Ortiz v. INS, 179 F.3d 1148 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (petitioner failed to show prejudice); [Behbahani v. INS, 796 F.2d 249 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (finding no ineffective assistance by accredited representative); [Ramirez-Durazo v. INS, 794 F.2d 491, 500-01 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (no ineffective assistance or prejudice); [Magallanes-Damian v. INS, 783 F.2d 931 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (attorney's decision to forego contesting deportability was a tactical decision that did not rise to the level of ineffective assistance).

VIII. CASES ADDRESSING MOTIONS TO REOPEN FOR SPECIFIC RELIEF

A. Motions to Reopen to Apply for Suspension of Deportation

[INS v. Rios-Pineda, 471 U.S. 444 \(1985\)](#) (Attorney General did not abuse discretion in denying motion to reopen); [INS v. Wang, 450 U.S. 139 \(1981\) \(per curiam\)](#) (BIA did not abuse discretion in denying motion to reopen).

[Chete Juarez v. Ashcroft, 376 F.3d 944 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (petition granted); [Ordonez v. INS, 345 F.3d 777 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (petition granted); [Iturribarria v. INS, 321 F.3d 889 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (petition denied); [Guzman v. INS, 318 F.3d 911 \(9th Cir. 2003\) \(per curiam\)](#) (affirming denial of motion to reopen to apply for suspension because “new” information regarding date of entry was available and capable of discovery prior to deportation hearing); [Rodriguez-Lariz v. INS, 282 F.3d 1218 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (reversed and remanded); [Arrozal v. INS, 159 F.3d 429 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#) (reversed and remanded); [Shaar v. INS, 141 F.3d 953 \(9th Cir. 1998\)](#) (petition denied); [Urbina-Osejo v. INS, 124 F.3d 1314, 1317 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#) (petition remanded); [Sequeira-Solano v. INS, 104 F.3d 278 \(9th Cir. 1997\)](#) (petition denied); [Watkins v. INS, 63 F.3d 844 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#) (reversed and remanded); [Limsico v. INS, 951 F.2d 210, 213 \(9th Cir. 1991\)](#) (petition denied); [Gonzalez Batoon v. INS, 791 F.2d 681 \(9th Cir. 1986\) \(en banc\)](#) (discretionary denial of reopening was arbitrary); [Vasquez v. INS, 767 F.2d 598 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#) (suspension and adjustment; petition denied); [Saldana v. INS, 762 F.2d 824 \(9th Cir. 1985\) \(reversed and remanded\), amended by 785 F.2d 650 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (order); [Duran v. INS, 756 F.2d 1338 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#) (reversed and remanded).

Cross-reference: Cancellation of Removal, Suspension of Deportation, and Section 212(c) Relief.

B. Motions to Reopen to Apply for Asylum and Withholding

[INS v. Doherty, 502 U.S. 314 \(1992\)](#) (Attorney General did not abuse his discretion by denying the motion to reopen); [INS v. Abudu, 485 U.S. 94 \(1988\)](#) (BIA did not abuse its discretion by denying the motion to reopen).

Toufighi v. Mukasey, No. 04-74010, — F.3d —, 2008 WL 3822954 (9th Cir. Aug. 18, 2008) (mandate pending) (petition denied); *Chen v. Mukasey*, 524 F.3d 1028, 1031-34 (9th Cir. 2008) (petition denied); *Bhasin v. Gonzales*, 423 F.3d 977, 989 (9th Cir. 2005) (petition granted); *Mohammed v. Gonzales*, 400 F.3d 785 (9th Cir. 2005) (petition granted); *Malty v. Ashcroft*, 381 F.3d 942 (9th Cir. 2004) (petition granted); *Lin v. Ashcroft*, 377 F.3d 1014 (9th Cir. 2004) (petition granted); *Siong v. INS*, 376 F.3d 1030 (9th Cir. 2004) (petition granted); *Singh v. Ashcroft*, 367 F.3d 1182 (9th Cir. 2004) (petition granted); *Azanor v. Ashcroft*, 364 F.3d 1013 (9th Cir. 2004) (denying petition as to asylum and withholding, granting as to CAT relief); *Ma v. Ashcroft*, 361 F.3d 553 (9th Cir. 2004) (petition granted); *Cano-Merida v. INS*, 311 F.3d 960 (9th Cir. 2002) (granting petition for review of BIA’s denial of motion to reconsider based on due process violation); *Mejia v. Ashcroft*, 298 F.3d 873 (9th Cir. 2002) (petition granted); *Konstantinova v. INS*, 195 F.3d 528 (9th Cir. 1999) (petition denied); *Bolshakov v. INS*, 133 F.3d 1279 (9th Cir. 1998) (petition denied); *Lainez-Ortiz v. INS*, 96 F.3d 393 (9th Cir. 1996) (petition denied); *Romero-Morales v. INS*, 25 F.3d 125 (9th Cir. 1994) (petition granted); *Chavez v. INS*, 723 F.2d 1431 (9th Cir. 1984) (petition denied); *Rodriguez v. INS*, 841 F.2d 865 (9th Cir. 1987) (reversed and remanded); *Ghadessi v. INS*, 797 F.2d 804 (9th Cir. 1986) (petition granted); *Sakhavat v. INS*, 796 F.2d 1201 (9th Cir. 1986) (reversed and remanded); *Aviles-Torres v. INS*, 790 F.2d 1433 (9th Cir. 1986) (reversed and remanded); *Larimi v. INS*, 782 F.2d 1494 (9th Cir. 1986) (petition denied); *Hernandez-Ortiz v. INS*, 777 F.2d 509 (9th Cir. 1985) (reversed and remanded); *Maroufi v. INS*, 772 F.2d 597 (9th Cir. 1985) (remanding on asylum claim); *Sangabi v. INS*, 763 F.2d 374 (9th Cir. 1985) (petition denied); *Samimi v. INS*, 714 F.2d 992 (9th Cir. 1983) (remanded).

Cross-reference: Asylum, Withholding and the Convention Against Torture.

C. Motions to Reopen to Apply for Relief Under the Convention Against Torture

“Denial of a motion to reopen to present a claim under the Convention qualifies as a final order of removal” over which this court has jurisdiction. *Hamoui v. Ashcroft*, 389 F.3d 821, 826 (9th Cir. 2004) (petition granted).

See also [Williams v. Mukasey, 531 F.3d 1040, 1042-43 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending) (publication of CAT regulations in Federal Register provided adequate notice of June 21, 1999 deadline to file motion to reopen based on CAT claim of applicant subject to pre-March 22, 1999 removal order); [Huang v. Ashcroft, 390 F.3d 1118 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (motions to reopen to apply for withholding or deferral of removal under CAT are both subject to the time limitations set forth in [8 C.F.R. § 208.18\(b\)\(2\)](#)); [Azanor v. Ashcroft, 364 F.3d 1013 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (granting petition as to CAT relief and remanding for evaluation under correct legal standard); [Vukmirovic v. Ashcroft, 362 F.3d 1247, 1253 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (IJ abused his discretion in failing to address motion to reopen to apply for CAT relief); [Abassi v. INS, 305 F.3d 1028 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (petition granted in part); [Kamalthas v. INS, 251 F.3d 1279 \(9th Cir. 2001\)](#) (vacated and remanded); [Khourassany v. INS, 208 F.3d 1096 \(9th Cir. 2000\)](#) (motion to remand denied); [Cano-Merida v. INS, 311 F.3d 960 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (petition denied as to motion to reopen to apply for CAT relief).

Cross-reference: Asylum, Withholding and the Convention Against Torture.

D. Motions to Reopen to Apply for Adjustment of Status

[Alali-Amin v. Mukasey, 523 F.3d 1039, 1041-42 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending) (petition denied as untimely); [Kalilu v. Mukasey, 516 F.3d 777, 779-80 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (mandate pending) (remanding “for an exercise of the agency’s discretion that takes into consideration the factors set forth in [*Matter of Velarde-Pacheco*, 23 I. & N. Dec. 253, 256 (BIA 2002)]”); [Ochoa-Amaya v. Gonzales, 479 F.3d 989 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (petitioner did not qualify as child under Child Status Protection Act because he turned 21 before visa petition approved by INS; petition denied); [Medina-Morales v. Ashcroft, 371 F.3d 520 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (petition granted, holding that BIA erred in considering the strength of the stepparent-stepchild relationship); [de Martinez v. Ashcroft, 374 F.3d 759 \(9th Cir. 2004\)](#) (petition denied); [Manjiyani v. Ashcroft, 343 F.3d 1018 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (order) (petition remanded); [Malhi v. INS, 336 F.3d 989 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (affirming BIA’s denial of motion to remand to apply for adjustment of status based on marriage that occurred during deportation proceedings); [Zazueta-Carrillo v. INS, 322 F.3d 1166 \(9th Cir. 2003\)](#) (remanding BIA’s denial of motion to reopen to apply for adjustment of status based on petitioner’s failure to depart voluntarily);

[Castillo Ison v. INS, 308 F.3d 1036 \(9th Cir. 2002\) \(per curiam\)](#) (adjustment of status and immigrant visa; petition granted); [Abassi v. INS, 305 F.3d 1028, 1032 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (court lacks jurisdiction to review BIA's refusal sua sponte to reopen proceedings to allow applicant to apply for adjustment of status); [Konstantinova v. INS, 195 F.3d 528 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (reversing and remanding denial of motion to remand to adjust status); [Eide-Kahayon v. INS, 86 F.3d 147 \(9th Cir. 1996\) \(per curiam\)](#) (petition denied); [Caruncho v. INS, 68 F.3d 356 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#) (petition denied); [Dielmann v. INS, 34 F.3d 851 \(9th Cir. 1994\)](#) (petition denied); [Ng v. INS, 804 F.2d 534 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (reversed and remanded); [Israel v. INS, 785 F.2d 738 \(9th Cir. 1986\)](#) (petition granted); [Mattis v. INS, 774 F.2d 965 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#) (adjustment and waiver of excludability; reversed and remanded); [Vasquez v. INS, 767 F.2d 598 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#) (suspension and adjustment; petition denied); [Ahwazi v. INS, 751 F.2d 1120 \(9th Cir. 1985\)](#) (consolidated petitions denied).

E. Motions to Reopen to Apply for Other Relief

[Navarro v. Mukasey, 518 F.3d 729 \(9th Cir. 2008\)](#) (motion to reopen on the basis that they qualified for benefits under the *Barahona-Gomez v. Ashcroft*, 243 F. Supp. 2d 1029 (N.D. Cal. 2002) class action settlement; petition granted); [Avila-Sanchez v. Mukasey, 509 F.3d 1037 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (motion to reopen to obtain waiver of inadmissibility; petition denied); [Pedroza-Padilla v. Gonzales, 486 F.3d 1362 \(9th Cir. 2007\)](#) (legalization, waiver of inadmissibility (212(a)(9)(A)(ii)(II)), continuous residence; petition denied); [Albillo-De Leon v. Gonzales, 410 F.3d 1090 \(9th Cir. 2005\)](#) (NACARA section 203(c) special rule cancellation; petition granted); [Taniguchi v. Schultz, 303 F.3d 950 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (holding that petitioner failed to exhaust equitable tolling argument); [Virk v. INS, 295 F.3d 1055 \(9th Cir. 2002\)](#) (Section 241(f) waiver; petition granted); [Briseno v. INS, 192 F.3d 1320 \(9th Cir. 1999\)](#) (court lacks jurisdiction to review denial of aggravated felon's motion to reopen to apply for former § 212(c) relief); [Martinez-Serrano v. INS, 94 F.3d 1256 \(9th Cir. 1996\)](#) (motion to reopen to request a humanitarian waiver; petition denied); [Alquisalas v. INS, 61 F.3d 722 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#) (waiver of deportation; remanded); [Foroughi v. INS, 60 F.3d 570 \(9th Cir. 1995\)](#) (former § 212(c) relief; petition granted); [Butros v. INS, 990 F.2d 1142 \(9th Cir. 1993\)](#) (former § 212(c) relief; petition granted); [Torres-Hernandez v. INS, 812 F.2d 1262 \(9th Cir. 1987\)](#) (former § 212(c) relief; petition denied); [Platero-Reymundo v. INS, 807 F.2d 865 \(9th Cir. 1987\)](#) (reinstatement of voluntary departure; petition

denied); *Desting-Estime v. INS*, 804 F.2d 1439 (9th Cir. 1986) (to redesignate country of deportation; petition denied); *Williams v. INS*, 795 F.2d 738 (9th Cir. 1986) (reinstatement of voluntary departure; finding no abuse of discretion); *Mattis v. INS*, 774 F.2d 965 (9th Cir. 1985) (adjustment and waiver of excludability; reversed and remanded); *Avila-Murrieta v. INS*, 762 F.2d 733 (9th Cir. 1985) (former § 212(c) relief; petition denied).