

## **BATTERED WOMAN'S ASYLUM CASE LINGERS**

### **ASHCROFT SENDS REVIEW BACK TO BOARD**

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## **Body**

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WASHINGTON -- Attorney General John **Ashcroft** will leave office without deciding the celebrated **asylum case** of a **battered woman** that he's had under **review** for two years, the Justice Department announced Friday.

Instead, **Ashcroft** has **sent** the **case** of Rodi Alvarado, a Guatemalan **woman** who suffered 10 years of beatings by her husband, **back** to the **Board** of Immigration Appeals, where the issue was pending when he intervened in 2003.

**Ashcroft** wants the Justice and Homeland Security departments to come up with rules covering **asylum** claims for domestic abuse before the Alvarado **case** is resolved, Justice Department spokesman Eric Holland said Friday.

One of Alvarado's advocates, Eleanor Acer, said **Ashcroft's** decision was "good news and bad news" because there had been some speculation last year that he would decide against her.

"But it's disappointing because it leaves her still in limbo, after the Justice Department had two years to resolve this," said Acer, who heads the **asylum** program for the legal group Human Rights First.

More than 100 members of Congress have written **Ashcroft** urging **asylum**.

The Department of Homeland Security recommended last year that Alvarado, a 37-year-old maid working in a San Francisco convent, be granted **asylum**. Officials criticized the Guatemalan government and courts for ignoring her complaints about repeated beatings.

Alvarado fled to the United States 10 years ago and was granted **asylum** by an immigration judge who found her story of persistent, brutal attacks by her husband credible.

But in 1999, the **Board** of Immigration Appeals, an administrative **review** panel, reversed that decision.

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