

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

MAY 5 2021

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK  
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

LILIAN M. PINEDA MONTEALEGRE,

No. 15-70613

Petitioner,

Agency No. A200-964-902

v.

MEMORANDUM\*

MERRICK B. GARLAND, Attorney  
General,

Respondent.

On Petition for Review of an Order of the  
Board of Immigration Appeals

Submitted April 30, 2021\*\*

Before: GRABER, FRIEDLAND, and BENNETT, Circuit Judges.

Lilian M. Pineda Montealegre, a native and citizen of Guatemala, petitions for review of the Board of Immigration Appeals' ("BIA") order dismissing her appeal from an immigration judge's decision denying her application for asylum, withholding of removal, and protection under the Convention Against Torture.

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\* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

\*\* The panel unanimously concludes this case is suitable for decision without oral argument. *See* Fed. R. App. P. 34(a)(2).

We have jurisdiction under 8 U.S.C. § 1252. We review de novo the legal question of whether a particular social group is cognizable, except to the extent that deference is owed to the BIA’s interpretation of the governing statutes and regulations. *Conde Quevedo v. Barr*, 947 F.3d 1238, 1241–42 (9th Cir. 2020). We review for substantial evidence the agency’s factual findings. *Id.* at 1241. We deny the petition for review.

1. Pineda Montealegre does not challenge the agency’s determinations that her application for asylum is time-barred or that she failed to establish eligibility for relief under the Convention Against Torture.

2. The BIA did not err in concluding that Pineda Montealegre failed to establish membership in a cognizable particular social group. *See Reyes v. Lynch*, 842 F.3d 1125, 1131 (9th Cir. 2016) (in order to demonstrate membership in a particular social group, “[t]he applicant must ‘establish that the group is (1) composed of members who share a common immutable characteristic, (2) defined with particularity, and (3) socially distinct within the society in question’”) (quoting *Matter of M-E-V-G-*, 26 I. & N. Dec. 227, 237 (BIA 2014)).

In addition, substantial evidence supports the BIA’s conclusion that Pineda Montealegre failed to establish that she would be persecuted on account of any protected ground. *See Zetino v. Holder*, 622 F.3d 1007, 1016 (9th Cir. 2010) (“An [applicant’s] desire to be free from harassment by criminals motivated by theft or

random violence by gang members bears no nexus to a protected ground.”). Thus, her claim for withholding of removal fails.

The temporary stay of removal remains in place until issuance of the mandate.

**PETITION FOR REVIEW DENIED.**