

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FEB 6 2020

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

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

TEODORA RAFAEL-LOPEZ,

Petitioner,

v.

WILLIAM P. BARR, Attorney General,

Respondent.

No. 16-73341

Agency No. A206-782-535

MEMORANDUM*

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

Submitted February 4, 2020**

Before: FERNANDEZ, SILVERMAN, and TALLMAN, Circuit Judges.

Teodora Rafael-Lopez, a native and citizen of El Salvador, petitions pro se 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 relief under the Convention Against Torture ("CAT"). Our jurisdiction is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1252. We review de novo questions of

* 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).

law, *Cerezo v. Mukasey*, 512 F.3d 1163, 1166 (9th Cir. 2008), except to the extent that deference is owed to the BIA's interpretation of the governing statutes and regulations, *Simeonov v. Ashcroft*, 371 F.3d 532, 535 (9th Cir. 2004). We review for substantial evidence the agency's factual findings. *Garcia-Milian v. Holder*, 755 F.3d 1026, 1031 (9th Cir. 2014). We dismiss in part and deny in part the petition for review.

We lack jurisdiction to consider the proposed social groups that Rafael-Lopez raises for the first time in her opening brief. *See Barron v. Ashcroft*, 358 F.3d 674, 677-78 (9th Cir. 2004) (court lacks jurisdiction to review claims not presented to the agency). We also lack jurisdiction to consider her unexhausted contentions regarding humanitarian asylum. *See id.*

The agency did not err in finding that Rafael-Lopez failed to establish membership in a cognizable social group. *See Reyes v. Lynch*, 842 F.3d 1125, 1131 (9th Cir. 2016) (in order to demonstrate membership in a particular 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))).

Substantial evidence supports the BIA's determination that Rafael-Lopez failed to establish that the harm she experienced or fears in El Salvador was or

would be on account of a 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”); *see also Barrios v. Holder*, 581 F.3d 849, 856 (9th Cir. 2009) (finding a political opinion claim failed where petitioner did not present sufficient evidence of political or ideological opposition to the gang’s ideals or that the gang imputed a particular political belief to the petitioner). Thus, Rafael-Lopez’s asylum and withholding of removal claims fail.

In light of this disposition, we do not reach Rafael-Lopez’s remaining contentions regarding the merits of her asylum and withholding of removal claims. *See Simeonov v. Ashcroft*, 371 F.3d 532, 538 (9th Cir. 2004) (courts and agencies are not required to decide issues unnecessary to the results they reach).

Rafael-Lopez does not challenge the BIA’s determination that she waived review of her CAT claim. *See Lopez-Vasquez v. Holder*, 706 F.3d 1072, 1079-80 (9th Cir. 2013) (issues not specifically raised and argued in a party’s opening brief are waived).

The record does not support Rafael-Lopez’s contentions that the BIA failed to consider evidence or ignored arguments. *See Najmabadi v. Holder*, 597 F.3d 983, 990 (9th Cir. 2010) (agency need not write an exegesis on every contention); *Fernandez v. Gonzales*, 439 F.3d 592, 603 (9th Cir. 2006) (petitioner did not

overcome the presumption that the BIA reviewed the record).

PETITION FOR REVIEW DISMISSED in part; DENIED in part.