

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

In the
United States Court of Appeals
For the Eleventh Circuit

No. 25-12847
Non-Argument Calendar

HENRY ALEJANDRO SALAZAR DELGADO,
ANNA SOFIA CALDERON ROMERO,
VERCIA SOFIA SALAZAR CALDERON,

Petitioners,

versus

U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL,

Respondent.

Petition for Review of a Decision of the
Board of Immigration Appeals
Agency No. A206-809-488

Before JILL PRYOR, BRANCH, and LUCK, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:

Henry Alejandro Salazar Delgado applied for asylum, withholding of removal, and protection under the Convention Against Torture. He sought relief not only for himself, but for his wife, Anna Sofia Calderon Romero, and his young daughter, V.S.S.C. After a hearing, an immigration judge denied the application, finding that neither Salazar Delgado nor his wife testified credibly. He appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals, which agreed with the immigration judge and dismissed his appeal. Now, he asks us to review the board's decision. Substantial evidence supports the adverse credibility determination, the board gave his claims reasoned consideration, and his remaining arguments about the Convention Against Torture were never made to the board. Accordingly, we deny his petition in part and dismiss it in part.

I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Salazar Delgado, Calderon Romero, and V.S.S.C. are Venezuelan citizens who came to the United States as tourists. After overstaying their visas, Salazar Delgado applied for asylum, withholding of removal, and protection under the Convention Against Torture. He listed his wife and daughter as derivative beneficiaries.

The Written Statement

In a written statement attached to his application, Salazar Delgado explained why he and his family needed asylum. Since 2009, Salazar Delgado had supported the Venezuelan First Justice party, which opposed the regime of Hugo Chavez. In July 2012, he

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began helping First Justice campaign for its candidate. He made lists of registered voters, drove voters to their voting centers, and acted as an election observer. His political activities, he wrote, prompted reprisals from the regime's supporters, the Chavistas. Between July and August 2012, Chavistas repeatedly telephoned Salazar Delgado's cell to threaten him and call him a traitor. In August 2012, the president of Salazar Delgado's accounting firm—his boss—demanded that he resign, threatening to denounce him as a traitor to the regime. Then, the boss ordered Salazar Delgado to put his signature on audit reports that exaggerated the financial strength of firms the boss supported politically. Salazar Delgado eventually resigned.

According to Salazar Delgado, the Chavistas continued to call and threaten him through October and November 2012, during the presidential elections. He changed his number. When Chavez died in March 2013 and Venezuela held new elections, Salazar Delgado resumed campaigning with First Justice—but the Chavistas resumed their phone threats. Salazar Delgado stated that he grew so afraid of answering his cell that his wife began answering for him. Ultimately, Chavez's vice president Nicolas Maduro won the election. The day after Maduro's victory was announced, on April 15, Salazar Delgado joined a public demonstration against the results. The Bolivarian National Guard threatened the demonstrators to make them leave. The Chavistas, he said, came to the protest on motorcycles to "kill and repress" the demonstrators.

In the following weeks, the Chavistas harassed Salazar Delgado with more calls and texts to punish him for protesting. Salazar Delgado's wife saw some of the texts. The Chavistas threatened him with death, he stated, and even threatened to kill his newborn daughter. And in July 2013, Salazar Delgado's car was vandalized and graffitied with death threats. The vandals, he explained, forced their way into his car through his passenger-side door and "ransacked" the inside. That incident was the last straw—Salazar Delgado took his family and left for the United States that September.

At the end of his statement, Salazar Delgado averred that the Chavistas were killing members of First Justice and that he was afraid he'd be killed too unless he received asylum.

The Asylum Interview

An asylum officer interviewed Salazar Delgado in August 2014. Salazar Delgado told the officer that he'd begun his political activities in 2009. As before, he stated that he'd fled Venezuela because he'd been threatened for helping First Justice. He repeated that his boss had ordered him to sign false audit reports and added that his boss had threatened him one time, in July 2012. On that occasion, the boss told Salazar Delgado that if he didn't sign the reports, he'd "pay with [his] life." The asylum officer asked whether there'd been other threats. Salazar Delgado described anonymous callers who began telephoning his cell in September 2012, two or three times a week, calling him a traitor and telling him that "the pay to a traitor is death." And he again described

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how his car had been vandalized, adding that the graffiti on the car said “death to the traitor” and that the trunk had been damaged.

The asylum officer’s last question was whether Salazar Delgado had discussed all the harm he’d suffered. Salazar Delgado answered yes.

The Hearing

The Department of Homeland Security initiated removal proceedings against Salazar Delgado and his family that same August. At a hearing before an immigration judge in January 2020, Salazar Delgado and Calderon Romero testified in support of the application. The department focused on the subject matter of the written statement and the asylum interview.

The Boss’s Threats. On direct examination, Salazar Delgado testified that, between July and August 2012, his boss demanded that he sign the doctored audit reports and threatened to denounce him to the regime if he refused. On cross-examination, the department asked how many times the boss had threatened him. Salazar Delgado answered, “four times, three times.” Asked whether the boss had ever threatened to kill him, he answered no. The department then asked Salazar Delgado to explain why he’d told the asylum officer that his boss had threatened him not three or four times, but just once. He answered that he’d been “nervous.”

The department also asked Calderon Romero whether the boss had ever threatened Salazar Delgado with physical harm. She answered no.

The Threatening Calls and Texts. Salazar Delgado testified that in July or August 2012, the Chavistas began calling his cell and accusing him of being a traitor. He and his wife changed their numbers in October 2012. In March 2013, he testified, the harassing calls resumed on the new number. Salazar Delgado testified that the callers “insulted” him and repeated that he was a traitor. But he added that he also started receiving text messages saying that he “was going to die”—“that’s when [he] was death threatened,” he explained. The department asked why no copies of those text messages had been submitted. Salazar Delgado answered that he’d left behind the phone that received them in Venezuela with family members. Asked whether those family members still had the phone, he said he had “never asked” them. Asked why he had never mentioned the text messages at his asylum interview, he again blamed his “nerves.”

Calderon Romero, for her part, testified that the calls to the new number began in January 2013, and on further questioning clarified that they began before their daughter was born in late January 2013. Asked whether any of the callers had threatened her husband with physical harm, she answered no. She testified that the threatening text messages began in April 2013. She didn’t recall ever receiving a call or text threatening their newborn daughter.

The department turned to the threat against the couple’s daughter. Calderon Romero testified that when she and Salazar Delgado had obtained a passport for their newborn daughter, the passport officers had made veiled threats against the child. Asked

whether that was the only threat made toward her newborn, Calderon Romero answered, “From what I remember, yes.”

The April 2013 Demonstration. Salazar Delgado testified that he attended a protest at the National Electoral Council building on April 15, 2013. The Bolivarian National Guard tear-gassed the demonstrators to make them leave. Chavistas with guns also appeared and began shooting “towards the protest.” Asked whether he was injured, he answered, “I was not.”

On cross-examination, the department asked Salazar Delgado to confirm whether the Chavistas had in fact shot directly at the demonstrators. He clarified that while there was shooting at the demonstration, the shots “weren’t like towards anyone”—the shooters were firing into the air.

The Vandalized Car. Salazar Delgado testified that his car was damaged on July 24, 2013. The car seats were taken, he said, and graffiti across the passenger side read that he and his family had to die. He further testified that the lock on the passenger-side door had been forced. Calderon Romero said the same. Seeing that damage, Salazar Delgado testified, he and Calderon Romero decided to leave Venezuela.

To support his account, Salazar Delgado submitted three photographs of the damage to his car. He explained he’d taken them for his car insurer. The first photograph showed a headrest missing from one of the car seats. The second and third showed some scratches and dents on the trunk lock. The trunk was otherwise undamaged.

On cross-examination, the department asked Salazar Delgado why none of the photographs captured any of the graffitied death threats or the damage to the passenger-side door he'd mentioned in his written statement. Again, he answered that he'd been "nervous" when he took the photos and that he "[didn't] know what could have happened there."

The Immigration Judge's Decision

The immigration judge ultimately denied Salazar Delgado's application, finding that neither Salazar Delgado nor Calderon Romero was credible. Their testimony, the judge explained, conflicted with Salazar Delgado's written statement, with his statements to the asylum officer, and with itself.

For example, Salazar Delgado had told the asylum officer that his boss had threatened him once, only to testify at the hearing that his boss had threatened him three or four times. Moreover, he'd told the asylum officer that his boss had threatened to make him "pay with [his] life" if he didn't sign the doctored audit reports. But he and Calderon Romero both testified at the hearing that the boss had never threatened Salazar Delgado with physical harm. Salazar Delgado had also testified that vandals had graffitied death threats on the passenger side of his car and damaged the passenger-side lock. Yet when he'd documented the damage for his insurer, he hadn't taken a picture of the claimed damage to the passenger-side lock—a picture that, presumably, would have captured the

graffiti. Neither Salazar Delgado nor Calderon Romero had explained why they would document less than all the damage to the car.

Additionally, the immigration judge explained, Salazar Delgado and Calderon Romero had been inconsistent about whether their newborn had been directly threatened. Salazar Delgado's written statement said that the Chavistas directly threatened to kill his newborn. But Calderon Romero testified that the only threat made against the child was the veiled one made by the passport officers. The immigration judge found it implausible that Calderon Romero wouldn't have remembered the direct threat. And although Salazar Delgado initially testified that the Bolivarian National Guard tear-gassed the demonstrators and that armed Chavistas fired toward them—including him—he admitted on cross-examination that the Chavistas had shot only into the air.

Based on these inconsistencies, and “considering the totality of the circumstances and all relevant factors,” the immigration judge found that Salazar Delgado and his wife weren't credible and that the evidence wasn't sufficient to carry Salazar Delgado's burden of proof. She therefore denied the application.

The Board Appeal

Salazar Delgado appealed to the board. In his brief, he argued only that the immigration judge was wrong to determine that he wasn't credible and tried to explain away some of the inconsistency findings.

The board affirmed, crediting the immigration judge’s finding that there’d been conflicting evidence about the threats made against Salazar Delgado by his boss and over the phone—including the threats against his newborn daughter—and about the April 2013 protest and the vandalism of his car. “In the absence of credible testimony and sufficient corroboration,” the board explained, Salazar Delgado had not met his burden for asylum or withholding of removal. As to Salazar Delgado’s claim for relief under the Convention Against Torture, the board ruled that because that claim “[was] based on the same testimony the [i]mmigration [j]udge found not credible,” it failed too. Separately, the board concluded that Salazar Delgado “ha[d] not established, independent of his own non-credible testimony, . . . that he w[ould] be tortured,” so relief under the Convention failed on that independent ground too. It therefore dismissed the appeal.

Salazar Delgado petitions for review of the board’s decision.

II. STANDARD OF REVIEW

We review the board’s decision as to the issues on which it rendered its own opinion and reasoning. *Hasan-Nayem v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 55 F.4th 831, 842 (11th Cir. 2022). Where the board relies on the immigration judge’s decision without expressly adopting it, we review the immigration judge’s decision to the extent the board found it supported by the record. *Id.*

We review the board’s legal conclusions de novo and its findings of fact, including its credibility determinations, for substantial evidence. *Id.* Under the “highly deferential” substantial-

evidence test, we view the record evidence in the light most favorable to the board's decision and draw every reasonable inference in favor of it. *Adefemi v. Ashcroft*, 386 F.3d 1022, 1026–27 (11th Cir. 2004) (en banc). We'll sustain its findings so long as they rest on “reasonable, substantial, and probative evidence on the record considered as a whole.” *Id.* That the record may support findings other than the board's doesn't justify reversal. *Id.* We reverse “only when the record compels a reversal,” *id.*—that is, when “any reasonable adjudicator would be compelled to conclude” that the board's findings are wrong, 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(4)(B). And we “may not substitute [our] judgment” for the board's “with respect to credibility findings.” *Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 842 (quoting *D-Muhammed v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 388 F.3d 814, 818 (11th Cir. 2004)).

Whether the board gave reasoned consideration to a petitioner's claims is a separate question, and we review it de novo. *Ali v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 931 F.3d 1327, 1333 (11th Cir. 2019).

III. DISCUSSION

Salazar Delgado raises three challenges to the board's decision. First, he argues that the adverse credibility determination wasn't supported by substantial evidence because the immigration judge and the board did no more than identify minor, peripheral inconsistencies. Second, he contends that the board failed to give reasoned consideration to his corroborating evidence. Third, he asserts that he was entitled to protection under the Convention Against Torture on grounds independent of his credibility.

As we'll explain, none of these arguments entitles him to relief. The decisions of the immigration judge and the board were supported by substantial evidence, the board did give reasoned consideration to the record evidence, and Salazar Delgado's arguments about his entitlement to relief under the Convention were never presented to the board.

Substantial Evidence

Salazar Delgado attacks the immigration judge's adverse credibility determination on the theory that it's unsupported by substantial evidence and that the agency demanded too much of him. The Attorney General or the Secretary of Homeland Security may grant asylum to an applicant who proves that he is a "refugee." 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1); *see, e.g., Forgue v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 401 F.3d 1282, 1287 (11th Cir. 2005) (explaining that the asylum applicant bears the burden of proof). The applicant must establish "with specific and credible evidence" that he experienced "past persecution" based on, for instance, "political opinion," or that he has a "well-founded fear of future persecution." *Chen v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 463 F.3d 1228, 1231 (11th Cir. 2006).

If credible, the applicant's testimony alone may satisfy his burden of proof. *Kueviakoe v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 567 F.3d 1301, 1304 (11th Cir. 2009). But credibility is for the immigration judge to determine based on the "totality of the circumstances." 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(iii). Those circumstances include the applicant's (or witness's) "demeanor," the "inherent plausibility" of his statements, the "consistency between [his] written and oral statements"

and “other evidence of record,” the “internal consistency” of his statements, and any “inaccuracies or falsehoods” in his statements. *Id.* Importantly, an immigration judge may determine that an applicant or witness isn’t credible even if any “inconsistencies, omissions, or discrepancies are ‘trivial’ or ‘irrelevant to the dispositive issues.’” *Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 842 (quoting *Chen*, 463 F.3d at 1232–33).

An immigration judge’s credibility determination must be supported by “specific, cogent reasons.” *Chen*, 463 F.3d at 1232. The judge must consider “*all* evidence introduced by the applicant,” *Forgue*, 401 F.3d at 1287, and may not “cherry pick[]” facts or “excessively focus[] on insignificant testimonial inconsistencies,” *Serra v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 60 F.4th 653, 659 (11th Cir. 2023). That said, the immigration judge need not “address specifically each claim . . . or each piece of evidence the [applicant] presented.” *Carrizo v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 652 F.3d 1326, 1332 (11th Cir. 2011). In the same vein, an immigration judge is free to credit “all, none, or some” of the applicant’s or witness’s testimony. *Garland v. Ming Dai*, 593 U.S. 357, 366 (2021). And an immigration judge needn’t accept explanations for inconsistencies and omissions just because they’re “tenable.” *Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 842 (quoting *Chen*, 463 F.3d at 1233). “[A] denial of asylum relief can be supported solely by an adverse credibility determination, especially if the alien fails to produce corroborating evidence.” *Xia v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 608 F.3d 1233, 1239 (11th Cir. 2010) (citation modified).

The immigration judge gave specific, cogent reasons for finding that Salazar Delgado's account was neither credible nor adequately supported by evidence. As affirmed by the board, that determination was supported by substantial evidence. The main inconsistencies the board relied on fall into four groups.

First, Salazar Delgado's description of his boss's threats shifted as his case progressed. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(iii) (stating that credibility determinations partly depend on "consistency between the applicant's . . . written and oral statements" and "other evidence of record"). In his written statement, Salazar Delgado said that his boss threatened to denounce him. He never mentioned any threat of physical harm. At the interview, however, Salazar Delgado stated that his boss had threatened to make him "pay with [his] life" if he didn't sign the doctored audit reports. Then, when he testified, he remembered three or four threats from his boss, but none of them was a death threat. Indeed, Calderon Romero testified without reservation that the boss had never threatened Salazar Delgado with physical harm. That left the immigration judge to choose between three different accounts of the same threats—threats bearing directly on the "dispositive issue[]" of whether Salazar Delgado's fear of persecution was well-founded. *Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 842 (quoting *Chen*, 463 F.3d at 1233).

Second, Salazar Delgado's account of the damage to and graffiti on his car was inadequately supported and implausible. Salazar Delgado and his wife agreed that the vandals broke into his car through the passenger-side door. But at the asylum interview, he

told the officer that the damage was to the trunk. And his explanation for his photographs compounded the inconsistency. Even though he took the photographs to document the damage for his car insurer, he documented neither the forced-open passenger-side door nor the graffiti on that side of his car—both of which were damage he had ample reason to document. Nor could he explain why he hadn’t photographed at least the door, offering only that he “[didn’t] know what could have happened there.” The immigration judge wasn’t required to accept that non-answer. *See id.* at 846 (affirming where the immigration judge partially based her adverse credibility determination on the applicant’s “nonresponsive” demeanor).

Third, Salazar Delgado’s description of the threats he received by phone was inconsistent with what he told the asylum officer—and so was his wife’s. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(1)(B)(iii). At the interview, Salazar Delgado described anonymous callers who told him that “the pay to a traitor is death.” But at the hearing, both petitioners testified that no caller had ever threatened Salazar Delgado with physical harm.

The text messages fared similarly. Salazar Delgado testified that for six months he received messages telling him he “was going to die.” He never mentioned them to the asylum officer—not when asked whether he’d had problems with anyone else and not when asked at the close of the interview whether they’d discussed all the harm he’d suffered. Salazar Delgado didn’t need to catalog every threatening message. But “his failure to mention any of

them supports the [immigration judge's] adverse credibility finding.” *Carrizo*, 652 F.3d at 1332.

And then there was Salazar Delgado's claim in his written statement that the Chavistas threatened to kill his newborn daughter. Yet Calderon Romero testified that the only threat against the child she could remember was the passport officers' veiled one. An immigration judge may make an adverse credibility determination when the applicant's testimony is contradicted by witness testimony. See *Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 845–46 (affirming where there were inconsistencies between the applicant's testimony and a witness affidavit).

Fourth, and finally, Salazar Delgado contradicted himself when he described the April 2013 demonstration. At first, he said the armed Chavistas fired toward the demonstrators. On cross-examination, he stated instead that the Chavistas fired up into the air. Internal inconsistencies can support an adverse credibility determination. *Chen*, 463 F.3d at 1232–33.

Salazar Delgado might have rescued his inconsistent testimony with corroborating evidence. Where an applicant produces evidence of persecution beyond his testimony, an immigration judge may not “rely solely on an adverse credibility determination” to deny the application. *Forgue*, 401 F.3d at 1287. Although she needn't credit that evidence or “assign it decisive weight,” she must consider it. *Mohammed v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 547 F.3d 1340, 1347 (11th Cir. 2008). But Salazar Delgado failed to corroborate the parts of

his story the immigration judge and the board found most significant. He produced no copy of any threatening text message, and never “even request[ed] access to the phone,” even though he’d left it with family in Venezuela. Nor did he produce a photograph of the graffiti or the damaged passenger-side door, even though he photographed contemporaneous damage to the same car.

Against all this, Salazar Delgado argues mainly that these inconsistencies were minor. At the hearing, he attributed most of his inconsistencies to nervousness. On appeal, he doubles down, arguing (without citation) that “trauma research establishes that persecution victims often struggle with precise recall of threatening events.” He posits that there may have been “translation and cultural issues.” The point, he urges, is that his “core persecution account remained consistent.” He was a member of First Justice, he was systematically threatened by his boss and others, and “[v]andals destroyed his vehicle with death threat graffiti.” In rejecting this core account and his supporting documents, Salazar Delgado contends, the board demanded more corroboration than he was required to present.

We aren’t persuaded. It’s true, as we’ve already explained, that we don’t permit the board or immigration judges to cherry-pick evidence or linger on unimportant discrepancies. *Serra*, 60 F.4th at 659–61 (collecting cases). But even “trivial” discrepancies can justify an adverse credibility determination, *Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 842; *Chen*, 463 F.3d at 1233—and the discrepancies on which the board relied here weren’t trivial. The difference in the

accounts presented to the immigration judge is the difference between a family in danger of physical harm and a family that isn't. Whether Salazar Delgado is telling the truth about the danger he faces goes to the heart of his asylum claim.

Besides, even if we thought that Salazar Delgado's explanations—nerves and miscommunications—were “tenable,” *see Hasan-Nayem*, 55 F.4th at 842, our review is for substantial evidence. “[T]he mere fact that the record may support a contrary conclusion” doesn't compel reversal of the board's findings. *Lopez v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 914 F.3d 1292, 1297 (11th Cir. 2019). And as for the evidence Salazar Delgado did present, neither the board nor the immigration judge was “under [any] obligation to credit it or assign it decisive weight.” *Mohammed*, 547 F.3d at 1347.

The credibility determination thus reaches all three forms of relief. The board denied each of them because it found that Salazar Delgado hadn't carried his burden of proof with credible testimony and sufficient corroboration. Because that finding rested on substantial evidence, the across-the-board denial stands. *See, e.g., Forgue*, 401 F.3d at 1288 n.4 (holding that, where an applicant “fail[s] to establish a claim of asylum on the merits, he necessarily fails to establish eligibility for withholding of removal or protection under [the Convention Against Torture]”); *see also Lyashchynska v. U.S. Att'y Gen.*, 676 F.3d 962, 968–69, 971 (11th Cir. 2012) (affirming the denial of an application for asylum, withholding of removal, and protection under the Convention based on the immigration judge's adverse credibility determination).

Reasoned Consideration

Salazar Delgado next argues that the board failed to give his claims reasoned consideration because it never grappled with the documentary evidence he submitted. The board must give “reasoned consideration” to an applicant’s claims. *Ali*, 931 F.3d at 1333 (citation modified). That standard isn’t demanding. Again, the board needn’t “address specifically each claim . . . or each piece of evidence the [applicant] presented.” *Carrizo*, 652 F.3d at 1332. We ask only whether it considered the issues raised and announced its decision “in terms sufficient to enable a reviewing court to perceive that [it] ha[s] heard and thought and not merely reacted.” *Id.* A decision that “lists the basic facts of the case, references the relevant regulatory and statutory provisions on which the order is based, and accepts several grounds on which the [agency] properly denied” relief will do. *Bing Quan Lin v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 881 F.3d 860, 874 (11th Cir. 2018), *abrogated in part on other grounds by Santos-Zacaria v. Garland*, 598 U.S. 411, 419–23 & n.2 (2023).¹

The board flunks “reasoned consideration” when it “misstates the contents of the record” or offers justifications that “do not respond to any arguments in the record.” *Jeune v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 810 F.3d 792, 803 (11th Cir. 2016), *abrogated in part on other*

¹ *Santos-Zacaria v. Garland* held that the obligation to exhaust administrative remedies in 8 U.S.C. § 1252(d)(1) is a claims-processing rule, not a jurisdictional limitation, and is therefore subject to waiver and forfeiture. 598 U.S. 411, 419–23 & n.2 (2023). That holding abrogated our prior precedent to the contrary.

grounds by *Santos-Zacaria*, 598 U.S. 411. So too when it passes over “highly relevant” evidence. *Ali*, 931 F.3d at 1334. But that evidentiary category is narrow. “Highly relevant evidence is necessarily a subset of evidence. If it were otherwise, a reviewing court could abuse the reasoned-consideration requirement by characterizing any evidence not discussed by the [b]oard as highly relevant.” *Farah v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 12 F.4th 1312, 1329 (11th Cir. 2021), *abrogated in part on other grounds by Santos-Zacaria*, 598 U.S. 411. Evidence is “highly relevant” only when passing it over leaves the decision with “illogical conclusions—ones that cast doubt on whether the [b]oard considered that evidence in the first place.” *Id.* And even then, the board “must at least acknowledge that evidence, either implicitly or explicitly”; it needn’t “write an exegesis” on it. *Id.*

Here, the board gave “reasoned consideration” to Salazar Delgado’s claims. It recited the procedural history and the relief sought, stated the standard it was applying, and cited the governing regulations. *See Bing Quan Lin*, 881 F.3d at 874. It identified the grounds for its decision, cited the credibility statute and the board precedent construing it, and worked through specific conflicts in the record. In working through those conflicts, it cited the hearing transcript, the asylum interview, the written statement, and the photographs it relied on. It explained why the immigration judge could draw the inferences she drew and why Salazar Delgado’s explanations didn’t resolve the conflicts. And it addressed each form of relief in turn.

Salazar Delgado claims the board ignored four categories of evidence: the photographs of his car, two affidavits attesting to the threats, his party-membership documents, and reports about “the Venezuelan government’s systematic persecution of opposition political activists.” But the board and the immigration judge did consider the photographs, as we discussed. The board didn’t name the affidavits in its order, but it implicitly rejected them when it found that Salazar Delgado hadn’t carried his burden with credible testimony and sufficient corroboration. *See Farah*, 12 F.4th at 1329. Salazar Delgado is really arguing that the board and the immigration judge gave the affidavits insufficient weight. But reasoned-consideration review “does not amount to a review for whether sufficient evidence supports the decision of the [b]oard.” *Perez-Guerrero v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 717 F.3d 1224, 1232 (11th Cir. 2013).

While the board didn’t discuss the party-membership documents or the country-conditions reports, those documents bore on questions the board never reached—whether the harm Salazar Delgado described amounted to persecution, whether it was inflicted on account of a protected ground, and whether conditions in Venezuela support a well-founded fear of future harm. The board never reached them because it resolved the case on credibility and corroboration. Salazar Delgado answers that the country-conditions reports corroborate his claim that members of First Justice are persecuted in Venezuela. But reports of what generally happens to opposition members say nothing about whether his boss threatened his life or his reputation, whether the text messages arrived, or whether anyone expressly threatened to kill his

newborn daughter. Those were the conflicts the board resolved. The country-conditions reports did not bear on those issues.²

We’re satisfied, then, that the board heard and thought about this case. It didn’t merely react.

Exhaustion

Finally, Salazar Delgado argues that the board should have granted him protection under the Convention Against Torture for reasons unrelated to whether he testified credibly. We may review a final order of removal only if the applicant “has exhausted all administrative remedies available to [him] as of right.” 8 U.S.C. § 1252(d)(1). Section 1252(d)(1) is a claims-processing rule; we enforce it where, as here, the government asserts it. *Kemokai v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 83 F.4th 886, 891 (11th Cir. 2023); *Santos-Zacaria*, 598 U.S. at 419–23 & n.2.

We can’t review an unexhausted claim “even if the BIA addressed the underlying issue sua sponte.” *Amaya-Artunduaga v. U.S.*

² Pointing to *Chenery II*, Salazar Delgado urges us not to supply the board with a rationale for not discussing the country-conditions reports since it didn’t provide one itself. *SEC v. Chenery Corp.*, 332 U.S. 194, 196 (1947) (holding that reviewing courts “must judge the propriety of [agency] action solely by the grounds invoked by the agency”); *see also Calcutt v. Fed. Deposit Ins. Corp.*, 598 U.S. 623, 624 (2023) (same). But explaining why particular undiscussed evidence is immaterial to the agency’s reasoning isn’t the same as offering new reasoning. Holding otherwise would require us to reverse any time the board failed to analyze every single piece of evidence adduced by an applicant. *Cf. Farah*, 12 F.4th at 1329. But that’s not what we ask of the board. *Carrizo*, 652 F.3d at 1332.

Att’y Gen., 463 F.3d 1247, 1251 (11th Cir. 2006), *abrogated in part on other grounds by Santos-Zacaria*, 598 U.S. 411. To enable our review, the applicant must have argued his claim to the board. *See Kemokai*, 83 F.4th at 891. He needn’t have used the “precise legal terminology” for his claim, but he must have argued the “core issue now on appeal.” *Laguna Rivera v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 130 F.4th 915, 925 (11th Cir. 2025) (quoting *Indrawati v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 779 F.3d 1284, 1297 (11th Cir. 2015), *abrogated in part on other grounds by Santos-Zacaria*, 598 U.S. 411). “Unadorned, conclusory statements” to the board won’t suffice. *Indrawati*, 779 F.3d at 1297.

In his brief to the board, Salazar Delgado challenged the immigration judge’s credibility determination as the basis for the denial of his application and the three forms of relief he sought in it. He exhausted that claim; we reviewed it and explained why it failed. For purposes of his claim under the Convention Against Torture, he now contends: (1) that his country-conditions evidence establishes the systematic torture of political dissidents; (2) that the board misapplied the government-acquiescence standard; and (3) that it demanded more corroboration than the Convention regulations allow, *see* 8 C.F.R. § 1208.16(c)(2). The problem is that he never made any of these arguments to the board with respect to the Convention. His brief to the board cited no regulation or standard governing relief under the Convention, never mentioned acquiescence, and never discussed torture. In fact, the only time it named the Convention at all was when it identified the relief the immigration judge had denied. And it closed by asking

the board to reverse the denial of “asylum and withholding of removal”—nothing about the Convention. A lone mention in an introductory sentence is an “unadorned, conclusory statement.” *Indrawati*, 779 F.3d at 1297. It can’t trigger our review. *See Laguna Rivera*, 130 F.4th at 925.

Salazar Delgado replies that the board reached the claim anyway, so he needn’t have raised it. *Amaya-Artunduaga* forecloses that answer. 463 F.3d at 1251. We therefore don’t reach his non-credibility arguments about the Convention.

IV. CONCLUSION

The immigration judge committed no reviewable error in denying Salazar Delgado’s application, and the board committed none in affirming. Salazar Delgado and his derivative beneficiaries are therefore entitled to no relief.

PETITION DENIED IN PART AND DISMISSED IN PART.