

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FEB 21 2019

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

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

JOSE MARTIN ZAMORA ELIAS, AKA
Martin Zamora,

Petitioner,

v.

WILLIAM P. BARR, Attorney General,

Respondent.

No. 18-70377

Agency No. A077-368-101

MEMORANDUM*

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

Submitted February 19, 2019**

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

Jose Martin Zamora Elias, a native and citizen of Mexico, petitions for review of the Board of Immigration Appeals' ("BIA") order dismissing his appeal from an immigration judge's decision denying his application for asylum, withholding of removal, and relief under the Convention Against Torture ("CAT").

* 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 questions of law de novo, *Cerezo v. Mukasey*, 512 F.3d 1163, 1166 (9th Cir. 2008), except to the extent that deference is owed to the BIA's determination 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. *Zehatye v. Gonzales*, 453 F.3d 1182, 1184-85 (9th Cir. 2006). We deny the petition for review.

The agency did not err in finding that Zamora Elias 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 agency's determination that Zamora Elias otherwise failed to establish that any harm he experienced or fears in Mexico was or would be on account of a protected ground. *See Molina-Morales v. INS*, 237 F.3d 1048, 1052 (9th Cir. 2001) (harm based on personal retribution is not persecution on account of a protected ground). Thus, Zamora Elias's asylum and withholding of removal claims fail.

Substantial evidence also supports the agency's denial of CAT relief because Zamora Elias failed to show it is more likely than not that he would be tortured by or with the consent or acquiescence of the Mexican government. *See Zheng v. Holder*, 644 F.3d 829, 835-36 (9th Cir. 2011) (claims of possible torture remain speculative).

PETITION FOR REVIEW DENIED.