

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

SEP 11 2020

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

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

FRANCISCO ANTUNEZ-CONTRERAS,

No. 15-73945

Petitioner,

Agency No. A200-246-150

v.

MEMORANDUM*

WILLIAM P. BARR, Attorney General,

Respondent.

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

Submitted September 8, 2020**

Before: TASHIMA, SILVERMAN, and OWENS, Circuit Judges.

Francisco Antunez-Contreras, 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 withholding of removal and relief under the Convention Against Torture ("CAT"). We have jurisdiction under 8 U.S.C. § 1252. We review de novo questions of law, *Cerezo v.*

* 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).

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. *Zehatye v. Gonzales*, 453 F.3d 1182, 1184-85 (9th Cir. 2006). We deny the petition for review.

The BIA did not err in finding that Antunez-Contreras’ returnee-based social group was not cognizable. *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))); *see also Barbosa v. Barr*, 926 F.3d 1053, 1060 (9th Cir. 2019) (finding that individuals returning to Mexico from the United States who are believed to be wealthy does not constitute a particular social group). Further, substantial evidence supports the agency’s determination that Antunez-Contreras failed to establish he would be persecuted on account of a protected ground, including membership in a family-based social group. *See Ayala v. Holder*, 640 F.3d 1095, 1097 (9th Cir. 2011) (even if membership in a particular social group is established, an applicant must still show that “persecution was or will be *on account of* his membership in such group”); *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, Antunez-Contreras’ withholding of removal claim fails.

Substantial evidence also supports the agency’s denial of CAT relief because Antunez-Contreras failed to show it is more likely than not he will be tortured by or with the consent or acquiescence of the government if returned to Mexico. *See Aden v. Holder*, 589 F.3d 1040, 1047 (9th Cir. 2009).

As stated in the court’s April 5, 2016 order, the temporary stay of removal remains in place until issuance of the mandate.

PETITION FOR REVIEW DENIED.