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**COURT ORDERS FEDERAL IMMIGRATION JAIL IN BUFFALO TO OFFER
PAROLE BOND HEARINGS FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS**

New York, NY – A federal court on Friday night ordered the Buffalo Federal Detention Facility in Batavia, New York to stop detaining asylum-seekers without a fair opportunity for release on parole or bond while awaiting asylum hearings. The New York Civil Liberties Union and the International Refugee Assistance Project at the Urban Justice Center originally filed suit in July over the practice at the state’s largest immigration detention facility.

"We are thrilled that the court recognized that the asylum-seekers detained at Batavia deserve a fair chance at freedom," **said Mariko Hirose, litigation director at IRAP.** "These are people who have had to flee horrific conditions at home and this ruling allows them a chance at reuniting with family and friends here while their immigration cases continue."

"People who came to the U.S. border seeking only refuge will no longer suffer indefinite confinement in New York's largest immigration detention facility," **said Christopher Dunn, associate legal director of the New York Civil Liberties Union.** "Asylum-seekers deserve, and will now get, the chance to be with loved ones while awaiting their asylum hearings. This win is a strong rebuke to the Trump administration’s campaign against immigrants."

The district court ordered the government "immediately" to redo the parole process for asylum-seekers held at Batavia. Under the order, asylum-seekers will be notified of the availability of parole in a language they understand, be given a parole interview with an immigration officer, be provided an explanation for their parole decision and be informed they can seek reconsideration if parole is initially denied. Asylum-seekers who have already had their parole denied will have the opportunity for their parole requests to be readjudicated. The injunction also ordered bond hearings for those detained at Batavia for six months or more.

Judge Elizabeth A. Wolford granted Friday’s preliminary injunction in recognition of the severe physical and psychological harms of prolonged detention. In particular, incarceration prevents many asylum-seekers from adequately preparing for their asylum hearings – proceedings that

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could determine whether they must return to their countries of origin, where they may face threats to their lives.

"We applaud Judge Wolford's recognition that ICE must comply with its own policies and procedures," **said NYCLU Staff Attorney and lead counsel Aadhithi Padmanabhan.** "What makes ICE's conduct at Batavia such a travesty is that the agency was not following its own internal guidelines, all while government lawyers in D.C. recently told the Supreme Court that these procedures are followed to a T."

"I fled persecution in Somalia and came to America because people all around the world think of this country as a beacon of hope," **said named petitioner, Hanad Abdi.** "But during the ten months I was imprisoned at Batavia, not knowing why I was jailed or how I could get out, I felt hopeless. Because of the judge's decision, others will not have to suffer like I did. The government will have to follow the law just like everyone else."

"I fled Cuba where I was a political prisoner and came to America seeking freedom," **said named petitioner Johan Barrios Ramos.** "I was shocked when I got here and asked for asylum but was instead put in jail. I am so happy that the court said there are limits on ICE's authority to detain people like me."

"My health got worse and worse in ICE custody while I waited for my hearing," **said class member Saikou Touray of Gambia.** "I felt increasingly desperate because no one ever explained to me why I was denied parole or what I could do to get out of detention. Now I can be with my family and get the medical treatment I needed all along."

In addition to Dunn, Hirose and Padmanabhan, counsel on the case include NYCLU staff attorneys Robert Hodgson and Paige Austin, NYCLU legal fellow Scout Katovich, paralegal Andrea Barrientos and Data & Policy Analyst Michelle Shames; IRAP staff on the case include Staff Attorney Deepa Alagesan, paralegal Casey Smith, and volunteer Sofia Calatrava.

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