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March 29, 2018

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REFUGEE BAN LAWSUIT TO CONTINUE**

SEATTLE, WA – Today, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals denied a motion by the government to dismiss the appeal and vacate the injunction in *JFS v. Trump*, which challenges the Trump administration's October 24 ban on refugees that suspended the admission of refugees from 11 countries and stopped the follow-to-join process for family members of refugees already in the United States. The Court rejected the administration's argument that the appeal and the injunction are moot because the challenged ban has ended, after the plaintiffs had argued that they are entitled to find out whether the suspensions were continuing in another form.

The case will now return to the district court, where in December Judge Robart largely blocked the restrictions from being implemented for refugees with *bona fide* relationships to the United States. While the judge's decision should have brought relief to many of the affected individuals, including the plaintiffs, it is still unclear, even months later, how the administration is implementing the order. The plaintiffs will therefore be seeking discovery.

The individual plaintiffs, including an Iraqi man hiding in Egypt who had worked as a translator for the U.S. military and a Somali refugee trying to be reunited with his wife and son, have not gotten closer to finding relief. Instead, the United States is slated to accept the lowest number of refugees since the modern refugee program began in 1980.

Jewish Family Service v. Trump was brought on behalf of Jewish Family Service of Seattle, Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley, and nine individual plaintiffs by attorneys at the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP); the National Immigration Law Center (NILC); Perkins Coie LLP; HIAS, the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees; and individual attorneys Lauren Aguiar, Mollie M. Kornreich, and Abigail Shaheen Davis.



In response to the ruling, the counsel and plaintiffs issued the following statements:

Rabbi Will Berkovitz, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Family Service of Seattle: “We are gratified the Ninth Circuit has remanded our case. Allowing this process to continue ensures our government remains accountable to the rule of law and to the people it represents. Right now, it is not only the American refugee admission program that is under attack but also our core American values. During this time when our Jewish community recalls our plight as refugees we feel even more resolved in our efforts to support those who are seeking a place of safety and security for their families and the principles that have made our country a beacon of hope to so many across the world.”

Mindy Berkowitz, Executive Director, Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley: “On behalf of the families in our community who have waited for years to be reunited with their relatives, we are grateful for the court's decision. Our American values call on us to protect the neediest among us. As our Jewish teachings continually remind us, we were once strangers in the land of Egypt. We must ensure that those who need our help and support the most, get it.”

Mark Hetfield, President and CEO, HIAS: “We are encouraged that the government’s motion for dismissal has been denied, but remain concerned that the tens of thousands of refugees who have been impacted by this executive order still face undue challenges to finding the safety and welcome that our country has traditionally offered to those who flee persecution. HIAS, our partners, and our supporters in the American Jewish community will continue to challenge the Trump Administration’s discriminatory policies until the refugee admissions program is resuscitated and the U.S. starts showing humanitarian leadership again.”

Mariko Hirose, Litigation Director, IRAP: “We applaud the court's decision to deny the motion for dismissal. Contrary to what the government stated, this dispute is not over. It certainly isn’t over for our plaintiffs, who have seen no end to their suffering. We demand transparency from an Administration that is actively trying to ban Muslims at every opportunity and will continue to challenge their attempts at freezing refugee resettlement.”

Esther Sung, Staff Attorney, NILC: “We commend the court for allowing this case to continue so that the Trump Administration can be held accountable for its on-going effort to ban Muslims and refugees from this country. Our plaintiffs remain in dangerous and life-threatening situations. On behalf of them and thousands of other refugees like them, we will continue to fight the Administration’s attempts to block refugee resettlement and erode our country’s humanitarian values.”

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