

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 31, 2017

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## **GOVERNMENT SETTLES IN FIRST LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST TRUMP'S MUSLIM BAN**

**NEW YORK, NY** – The Trump administration today settled with the plaintiffs in the first legal challenge to the president's original executive order, which sought to bar travelers from certain majority Muslim countries from entering the United States and to dramatically curtail the admission of refugees. The settlement ensures that all travelers who were barred from the country on the basis of the ban and have not since returned to the United States are informed of their right to reapply for a visa and provided with a list of free legal services organizations that can help them do so.

The settlement came in the case of *Darweesh v. Trump*, which was filed as a nationwide class-action in federal district court in New York City on the morning of January 28, 2017, only hours after the first Muslim ban went into effect. The ban had plunged airports across the country into chaos as the Trump administration haphazardly implemented its discriminatory policy, leading to the separation of families and exclusion of refugees fleeing persecution. By the evening of January 28, the court had issued a nationwide injunction prohibiting the Trump administration from removing anyone from the country on the basis of the Muslim ban. As a result, the administration's effort to bar Muslims and refugees from the country was halted barely 24 hours after it went into effect.

Having succeeded in halting detentions under the Muslim ban, the lawsuit then sought to address the harm done to those already excluded in the chaotic first days of the Muslim ban. In the settlement announced today, the government agreed to contact all individuals who had been barred from entry as a result of the ban and have not since reapplied for a visa or entered the United States and to inform them of their right to reapply for a visa. The government will also provide a list of pro bono immigration legal aid providers available to assist with the visa application. The written notice will be provided in English, Arabic and Farsi. The settlement also requires the Justice Department to coordinate the processing of new applications for any affected individuals identified by the plaintiffs' attorneys who are seeking to return to the U.S. in the next three months.

The plaintiffs included two Iraqi men, Hameed Khalid Darweesh and Haider Sameer Abdulkhaleq Alshawi, who had been unjustly detained at JFK airport due to the Muslim ban. They are

represented by the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), the Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic (WIRAC) at Yale Law School, and Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP.

When he was informed of the settlement, lead plaintiff **Hameed Darweesh said**: "It means a lot to me to be in America. The United States is a great country because of its people. I'm glad that the lawsuit is over. Me and my family are safe; my kids go to school; we can now live a normal life. I suffered back home, but I have my rights now. I'm a human."

To view the settlement, [click here](#).

Representatives from each group gave the following statements:

**Becca Heller, Director, International Refugee Assistance Project at the Urban Justice Center:**  
"On January 27, Hameed Darweesh and thousands of others attempted to legally enter the United States. They were detained, handcuffed and, in many cases, deported. This settlement forces the government to individually reach out to everyone illegally kept out of the country, and begin to remedy that wrong. But it is only a first step - we continue to fight against the illegal, discriminatory, and un-American provisions of the second Muslim ban."

**Lee Gelernt, Deputy Director, Immigrants' Rights Project, American Civil Liberties Union:**  
"Although the government dragged its feet for far too long, it has finally agreed to do the right thing and provide those excluded under the first Muslim ban with proper notice of their right to come to the United States. While this closes one chapter in our challenge to Trump's efforts to institute his unconstitutional ban, we continue our legal fight against Muslim ban 2.0 at the Supreme Court in October."

**Esther Sung, staff attorney, National Immigration Law Center:**

"This settlement is a victory for the individuals who were unlawfully detained and deported as a result of the president's Muslim ban, but our fight continues. The Muslim ban doesn't just violate the Constitution, it flies in the face of dearly held values to live free from fear of persecution based on where we're from or how we pray. This case may have ended, but we remain more committed to the fight now than ever before."

**Yusuf Saei, Student, Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic (WIRAC), Yale Law School:**

"This fight began when thousands of Americans showed up at airports across the country to support refugees and protest religious discrimination. This settlement closes a chapter on the Trump administration's catastrophic Muslim ban. It delivers a measure of fairness to people who were illegally and discriminatorily barred from entering the country, but the fight against prejudice and hatred is not over."

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