

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GROUPS RESPOND TO COURT RULING ALLOWING REFUGEE BAN LAWSUIT TO PROCEED**

**Seattle, WA** – On Friday, District Court Judge James Robart issued a decision allowing plaintiffs to seek certain discovery in [Jewish Family Service v. Trump](#), which challenges the Trump administration's [refugee ban](#) issued on October 24, 2017. This decision will allow the plaintiffs to find out whether the suspensions in the refugee resettlement process are continuing in another form.

While Judge Robart had largely [blocked the government's ban](#) on processing refugees from certain Muslim-majority countries back in December, refugee admissions from those countries have ground to a near halt. 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 young son, have not gotten any closer to finding relief despite years of waiting. Meanwhile, the United States has accepted the [lowest number of refugees](#) in any year since the establishment of the Refugee Act 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.

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

**Rabbi Will Berkovitz, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Family Service of Seattle:** “The United States is on track to resettle the smallest number of refugees since Congress unanimously passed the Refugee Act of 1980. We are hopeful that with this ruling, a very lucky few will have the chance to be reunited with their families in the U.S. Jewish tradition says, to save one life is to save the world. This ruling offers a glimmer of possibility that lives will be saved and human beings of all faiths, from any country of origin, will once again be able look to America as a welcoming beacon.”

**Mindy Berkowitz, Executive Director, Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley:** “The refugee families in our care are so desperate to be reunited with their loved ones. They hope beyond hope that by permitting our case to proceed to discovery that their brothers, wives and parents can join them in a life of freedom in the U.S.”

**Mark Hetfield, President and CEO, HIAS:** “HIAS welcomes the court’s ruling. Family unity is a human right guaranteed by international and U.S. law. Yet whether we are talking about asylum seekers at the border or refugees resettled to the U.S., the Trump Administration has actually dedicated taxpayer resources to tearing or keeping families apart. We at HIAS are grateful that the court has once again stepped in to prevent the Administration from getting away with its cruel and lawless anti-family policies.”

**Mariko Hirose, Litigation Director, IRAP:** “By allowing our case to proceed to discovery, the Court recognized the plight of thousands of refugees who have been devastatingly impacted by this refugee ban. This ruling further proves the need for heightened transparency from an administration that has proactively stalled the refugee resettlement program and continues to vilify refugees, particularly Muslim refugees, who are seeking safe haven in the United States.”

**Melissa Keaney, Staff Attorney, NILC:** “This ruling should serve as a reminder that the fight for fairness and equality for refugees is alive and well. We are committed to getting the transparency and accountability that our clients — and those like them — deserve.”

The order can be viewed [here](#).

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