

CONTACT: Danny Hajjar
dhajjar@mrss.com, 202-478-6182

TAHIRIH FILES LAWSUIT CHALLENGING REMAIN IN MEXICO POLICY

Today, the Tahirih Justice Center filed a lawsuit challenging the Department of Homeland Security's Migration Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as the Remain in Mexico policy. The new policy requires asylum seekers at the southern border to stay in Mexico while awaiting their immigration court hearings.

In its lawsuit, Tahirih asserts that as a result of the MPP, the organization will not be able to effectively fulfill its core organizational mission, which is to provide holistic legal and social services to those fleeing gender-based violence.

"For more than 20 years, Tahirih has honed its expertise in trauma-informed, holistic service delivery to asylum seekers who are survivors of violence," said Archi Pyati, Chief of Policy of the Tahirih Justice Center. "We know how critical it is for survivors to have access to attorneys trained in U.S. law who can interview them thoroughly, develop evidence, and prepare legal documents. Survivors also need to be in a safe living environment and have access to mental and physical health care to heal from trauma. For these reasons, we provide precisely these services in each of our five offices across the country, but we cannot do that effectively if asylum seekers are forced to wait in Mexico for their cases to be heard."

To continue to serve asylum clients, Tahirih would have to divert significant resources to attempt to serve clients while they are in Mexico, or substantially cut or curtail its current asylum practice. There is also serious concern as to whether Tahirih attorneys with licenses in U.S. states would be able to legally and ethically provide counsel to asylum seekers in Mexico.

Tahirih is joined as plaintiffs in this lawsuit by Al Otro Lado, Innovation Law Lab, the Central American Resource Center of Northern California, Centro Legal de la Raza, and the University of San Francisco School of Law Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic, and represented in the action by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies.

"The right to asylum is enshrined in international law, and U.S. domestic laws create a process that must be fair and available to all who seek protection," said Pyati. "Our mission is to uphold these obligations and support rule of law. The Remain in Mexico policy makes that harder for us as an organization and violates our obligations as a nation."

About the Tahirih Justice Center

The Tahirih Justice Center is the largest national direct service and policy advocacy organization focused on assisting immigrant women and girls fleeing violence. The organization has five offices across the country and is headquartered in the Washington DC area. Tahirih monitors policy shifts that impact women and girls fleeing violence and advocate for the United States to honor its legal obligations to protect those fleeing human rights abuses.

Tahirih Justice Center is a national non-profit that protects courageous immigrant women and girls who refuse to be victims of violence through free legal and social services, public policy advocacy, and training and education. Visit www.tahirih.org for more information.