CONTACT: Rachel Pak
media@tahirih.org; 571-550-9162

TAHIRIH FILES LAWSUIT TO DEMAND INFORMATION ON USCIS'S LAST-IN, FIRST-OUT SYSTEM

Yesterday, the Tahirih Justice Center filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit in federal court to compel the government to release records about United States Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) troubling transition to a "last-in, first-out" system to schedule interviews for affirmative asylum cases. From 2014 to 2018, USCIS prioritized interviews for people whose asylum applications have been pending the longest. However, beginning in 2018, USCIS inverted that system, leaving survivors of gender-based violence and other applicants who have already waited years for relief stuck in an indefinite limbo.

"The 'last-in, first-out' system inhumanely leaves survivors out in the cold, who have already waited years for an asylum interview," said Richard Caldarone, Tahirih Litigation Counsel. "Individuals who originally filed their asylum cases five or more years ago and were waiting for an interview are now at the back of the line again. There seems to be no end in sight for survivors and the backlog of asylum cases only continues to grow. The public deserves to know the details of USCIS's troubling practice."

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, challenges the failure of USCIS to disclose critical information—in response to FOIA requests submitted in July 2019 and April 2021—about the agency's transition to the "last-in, first-out" system.

Richard Caldarone is available for comment on this topic. Please contact Rachel Pak at media@tahirih.org to arrange an interview.

About the Tahirih Justice Center
The Tahirih Justice Center is a national, nonprofit organization that serves immigrant survivors fleeing gender-based violence. By centering the voices of survivors in communities, courts, and Congress, Tahirih's mission is to create a world in which all people share equal rights and are treated equitably.