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PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Juan Rivera
Director of Marketing & Communications

CARECEN SF JOINS ACLU AND OTHER GROUPS IN LAWSUIT AGAINST TRUMP POLICY TO FORCIBLY RETURN ASYLUM SEEKERS TO MEXICO

San Francisco – February 14, 2019 - The American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Center for Gender & Refugee Studies filed a federal lawsuit today challenging the Trump administration’s new policy forcing asylum seekers to return to Mexico and remain there while their cases are considered.

The forced returned policy, also known as the Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP), introduced by the Trump Administration, will greatly hinder legal teams in their efforts to represent migrants seeking asylum.

“This policy will greatly impinge on the core immigration legal and social services that we currently provide our clients. We will no longer be able to provide high quality legal services to asylum seekers because they will be out of the country,” states Laura Sanchez, Director of Immigration Legal Services at CARECEN SF.

“The Trump administration is forcibly returning asylum seekers to danger in Mexico,” said Judy Rabinovitz, deputy director of the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project. “Once again, the administration is breaking the law in order to deter asylum seekers from seeking safety in the United States.”

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of 11 individual asylum seekers forcibly returned to Mexico, and organizational plaintiffs Innovation Law Lab, CARECEN SF - Central American Resource Center of Northern California, Centro Legal de la Raza, the University of San Francisco School of Law Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic, Al Otro Lado, and the Tahirih Justice Center.

“This is no longer just a war on asylum seekers, it’s a war on our system of laws,” said Melissa Crow, Southern Poverty Law Center senior supervising attorney. “This misguided policy deprives vulnerable individuals of humanitarian protections that have been on the books for decades and puts their lives in jeopardy.”

The lawsuit cites violations of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, as well as the United States’ duty under international human rights law not to return people to dangerous conditions.

“This new policy severely undermines the very purpose of our asylum system, endangering rather than safeguarding the lives of our individual plaintiffs and others fleeing persecution,” said Blaine Booke, co-legal director of the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies.

The case, *Innovation Law Lab v. Nielsen*, was filed in federal court in San Francisco.

The complaint is here: <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/innovation-law-lab-v-nielsen-complaint>

More information is here: <https://www.aclu.org/cases/innovation-law-lab-v-nielsen>

CARECENSF empowers and responds to the needs, rights and aspirations of Latino, immigrant, and under-resourced families in the San Francisco Bay Area — building leadership to pursue self-determination and justice. Rooted in its cultural strengths and inspired by the Central American justice struggles, CARECEN SF envisions our diverse immigrant community as thriving; where families prosper, build effective community institutions, and participate confidently in civic life.

Learn more about our history and work at www.carecensf.org.

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