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*Seattle on behalf of impacted refugees and
Refugee-Serving Agencies*

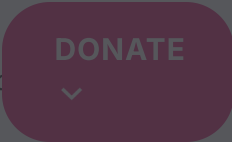
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Join Plaintiffs and Lawyers for Press Call Today at
4:30 p.m. ET/1:30 p.m. PT
RSVP to npimmigration@npstrategygroup.com for
call-in details

Seattle, WA — Today, three national and local refugee-serving agencies and nine individuals filed *Pacito v. Trump*, the first lawsuit challenging President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) suspending the U.S. refugee resettlement program (USRAP), as well as the efforts by the Trump Administration to decimate the USRAP by withholding critical, congressionally-appropriated funding for refugee processing and services. The new federal litigation, filed in the Western District of Washington, asks the court to declare the EO illegal, enjoin all implementation of the EO, and restore refugee-related funding.

The lawsuit was filed by the **International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)** on behalf of **Church World Service (CWS)**, **HIAS**, and **Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW)** — whose ability to provide critical services to refugees in the U.S. and abroad has been severely inhibited by the suspension of USRAP and funding, as well as impacted individual plaintiffs, including refugees who had their travel to the U.S. canceled on short notice, families hoping to reunite after years of separation, and a local community sponsor.

RSVP to today’s 4:30 p.m. ET/1:30 p.m. PT press call: npimmigration@npstrategygroup.com

“When the Taliban took over Afghanistan I was a student at the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul. I was a peace activist and advocated for human rights and was evacuated along with other

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plaintiff Ahmed, who was travel-ready before the EO was issued. "For the past three years, I've been

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waiting for a chance to go to the United States and reunite with my sister and her family. I have not seen her since 2021 and I have never met my youngest niece. I was so excited to join them."

"When I was given the chance to move to America, it felt like I was given a second chance at life," said **plaintiff Pacito, a Congolese refugee who fled war when he was just 13 years old.** "My family sold our belongings and bought new clothes and new shoes for our new life in the United States. But then the day before we were scheduled to travel, I received a call that our flight was cancelled. I hoped there was a mistake. That night, my wife, my baby, and I slept outside the transit center in the parking lot, along with other refugee families waiting to travel to the United States. In the morning, they told us President Trump had cancelled all refugee travel. Now I don't know what we're going to do, we have nothing."

The lawsuit argues that the refugee suspension, including its chaotic implementation by federal agencies, is unlawful and violates Congress' authority to make immigration laws, and that the State Department's stop-work orders violate basic regulatory requirements. IRAP expects to file for a nationwide injunction on both orders in the coming days.

"President Trump cannot override the will of Congress with the stroke of a pen," said **Melissa Keaney, senior supervising attorney, U.S. litigation at IRAP.** "The United States has a moral and legal obligation to protect refugees, and the longer this illegal suspension continues, the more dire the consequences will be. Refugees and the families and communities waiting to welcome them have been thrown into indefinite limbo and the resettlement agencies ready to serve them don't

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government continues to withhold critical funding.

This could decimate the USRAP, carrying

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in sequence over the next few years to come. IRAP has successfully fought Trump's previous refugee ban and we are not backing down."

The organizational plaintiffs' clients and staff have been directly impacted by both the EO and stop-work orders, which have caused mass layoffs and restrictions on their ability to provide services for refugees in the resettlement pipeline, as well as recent arrivals.

"Shutting down this proven and Congressionally-mandated program irrevocably harms tens of thousands of vulnerable refugee families we have pledged to support while blocking our faith communities from continuing to live out our calling," said **Rick Santos, president and CEO of CWS**. "Refugee resettlement is an exceptionally successful public-private partnership between the U.S. government and people of faith that revitalizes communities and upholds our nation's values of compassion and generosity. These executive actions have separated families, abandoned U.S. military allies, and harmed American communities including congregations who have worked and prepared to welcome their new neighbors home."

"The American Jewish community owes its very existence to those times when the United States opened its doors to refugees fleeing anti-Semitism and persecution," said **Mark Hetfield, HIAS president**. "The American Jewish community knows the heart of the refugees, for we were once refugees ourselves. Today, Trump has even slammed the door in the face of Christians, Jews and Baha'i fleeing Iran, as well as refugees from everywhere else. This breaks our hearts, but not our spirit. HIAS will stand for welcome, stand up for what we believe in, and fight this refugee ban in court."

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states, though the numbers rise and fall," said

David Duea, CEO of Lutheran Community

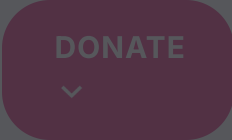
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“We’ve done this work at LCSNW since after World War II, through the Vietnam era, the Afghanistan evacuation, to the present day. We know there will be ebbs and flows. But this is the first time a president has shut down the system without notice, abandoning thousands of families who’d received invitations to start new lives, and thousands who’ve barely had a chance to start. We trust justice will prevail.”

Additional Information

- **RSVP** to npimmigration@npstrategygroup.com to access dial-in information for **today’s 4:30 p.m. ET/1:30 p.m. PT press call** with plaintiffs and their attorneys
- Read the complaint: [HERE](#)
- Read the *New York Times* exclusive: [HERE](#)



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301-844-7300

New York Office

212-967-4100

Information Helpline

800-HIAS-714
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- 13% Management
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