



ACLU sues Trump administration for shutting down southern border asylum access

Politics Feb 3, 2025 4:47 PM EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) — Immigration advocacy groups on Monday sued the Trump administration over its ban on asylum access at the southern border, saying the sweeping restrictions illegally put people who are fleeing war and persecution in harm's way.

The decision outlined in one of President Donald Trump's immigration-related executive orders is "as unlawful as it is unprecedented," the groups — led by the American Civil Liberties Union — said in the complaint, filed in a Washington federal court.

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"The government is doing just what Congress by statute decreed that the United States must not do. It is returning asylum seekers — not just single adults, but families too — to countries where they face persecution or torture, without allowing them to invoke the protections Congress has provided," lawyers wrote.

The ACLU filed the complaint on behalf of Arizona-based Florence Project, El Paso-based Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center and Texas-based RAICES.

In an executive order, Trump declared that the situation at the southern border constitutes an invasion of America and that he was "suspending the physical entry" of migrants until he decides it's over.

The executive order also suspended the ability of migrants to ask for asylum.

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It was the latest blow to asylum access that began under the Biden administration, which severely curtailed the ability of people who entered the country between the official border crossings to qualify for asylum. But they also had a system by which 1,450 people a day could schedule an appointment at an official crossing with Mexico to seek protection in America.

Trump ended that program on his first day in office.

Advocates say the right to request asylum is enshrined in the country's immigration law and that denying migrants that right puts people fleeing war or persecution in grave danger.

Critics have said relatively few people coming to America seeking asylum actually end up qualifying and that it takes years for overloaded immigration courts to come to a determination on such requests.

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