

U.S. federal judge blocks Trump plan to deny bail to asylum seekers



Seattle, July 4 (RHC)-- A U.S. federal judge in Washington state has blocked a Trump administration plan to lock up asylum seekers while they wait for the outcome of their cases.

The policy, which was set to take effect this month, would have denied asylum seekers bond hearings. The ACLU -- the American Civil Liberties Union -- which brought the suit alongside other rights groups, welcomed the decision, saying: "Try as it may, the government can't circumvent the Constitution in an effort to deter and punish asylum-seekers applying for protection. This ruling will provide much-needed relief for people being detained in cruel and inhumane conditions while going through the asylum process."

In related news, there are reports that the Department of Homeland Security has sent out fines to a number of immigrants for "failing to depart the U.S. as previously agreed." The fines in some cases are as high as half a million dollars.

Lizbeth Mateo, an attorney for one of the recipients of a DHS fine, told NPR the administration is issuing the fines to increase pressure on immigrant communities and may be laying the groundwork for further

criminal penalties. She said, "I laughed, because there has to be someone in some basement in D.C. thinking, 'Oh, what else can I do to mess with immigrants? What else can I do to hurt them?'"

Earlier this week, Trump said that previously announced immigration raids will begin after the upcoming July 4 weekend if Congress fails to pass new restrictions on asylum seekers.

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