

U.S. Supreme Court blocks Trump's deportations of Venezuelans under antique law



Washington, April 19 (RHC)-- The U.S. Supreme Court has blocked the deportation of Venezuelan immigrants held in northern Texas under an antique wartime law dating back to the 18th century.

The top court blocked early on Saturday the Donald Trump administration's deportations of alleged Venezuelan gang members held under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 in the Bluebonnet Detention Center "until further order of this court."

“The government is directed not to remove any member of the putative class of detainees from the United States until further order of this court,” the brief order said. The court also ordered the U.S. administration to respond to the emergency appeal once a federal appeals court in Louisiana takes action in the case.

Having filed an emergency appeal at the high court on Friday, attorneys for the Venezuelans stated that they were at immediate risk of being removed from the United States and had not been provided sufficient notice to challenge their deportation.

The Supreme Court said two conservative justices, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, had disagreed with the blocking order.

The high court acted in an emergency appeal from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) contending that immigration authorities appeared to be moving to restart removals under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.

The Supreme Court had said earlier in April that deportations could proceed only if those about to be removed had a chance to argue their case in court and were given “a reasonable time” to contest their pending removals.

“We are deeply relieved that the Court has temporarily blocked the removals. These individuals were in imminent danger of spending the rest of their lives in a brutal Salvadoran prison without ever having had any due process,” ACLU lawyer Lee Gelernt said.

The ACLU warned on Friday that immigration authorities were accusing other Venezuelan men held in the Bluebonnet Detention Center of being members of the Tren de Aragua gang, which would make them subject to Trump’s use of the act.

The antique act has only been invoked three previous times in U.S. history, most recently during World War II to hold Japanese-American civilians in internment camps.

The U.S. administration contended it gave them power to swiftly remove immigrants they identified as members of the gang, regardless of their immigration status. In March, the Trump administration deported 238 alleged Venezuelan gang members and 23 members of a Salvadoran gang to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador.

The deportations took place despite a U.S. federal judge granting a temporary suspension of the expulsions.

Among those deported was Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a resident of the U.S. State of Maryland, who had secured a protection order preventing the process from going ahead. The Trump administration later acknowledged that it had wrongly deported Garcia, but has refused to abide by a separate Supreme Court order to return him to the United States.

[SOURCE: teleSUR and NEWS AGENCIES]



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