For Immediate Release
January 30, 2017

National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (NIPNLG) Secures Release of 9 Detainees in Dallas, TX over weekend

Statement: The National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild/NIPNLG is buoyed by the nationwide resistance and work of its staff, board, and members over the weekend to fight President Trump’s anti-Muslim and anti-Refugee Executive Order of January 27, 2017. NIPNLG’s staff, board, and members helped gain the release of nine detained individuals in Dallas, TX on Sunday, January 29, 2017.

On Saturday afternoon, January 28, 2017, NIPNLG learned that 9 individuals from Iraq, Iran, Sudan, and Syria were being detained at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, and in need of legal representation. Legal Director Sejal Zota, Board member Javier N. Maldonado, and Vinesh Patel took the case of Shahin Hassanpour, a 70-year old Iranian woman who received her U.S. immigrant visa in September, 2016; and who upon entry to the U.S., would have been granted lawful permanent residence.

Working with a group of attorneys in Texas, NIPNLG co-filed a lawsuit on Hassanpour’s behalf on Sunday morning. Despite a federal judge in New York having issued an emergency stay temporarily halting the removal of individuals detained following President Trump’s order to ban immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries, officials at the Dallas airport were not releasing our client. Further, we learned that the group was being coerced into withdrawing their individual requests for admission. We then filed a lawsuit on behalf of all 9 detainees.

After an emotional and trying weekend for the families of the detainees, all 9 detainees were released.

NIPNLG will continue to pursue legal remedies that protect the U.S. constitution and defend the rights of all immigrants, independent of race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin.
To that end, NIPNLG recently filed a lawsuit (Wagafe v. USCIS) to challenge the U.S. government’s unlawful delay and denial of applications for citizenship and adjustment of status under a secretive, sub-regulatory policy that blacklists many noncitizens as ‘national security concerns’ without giving them notice of this designation, or an opportunity to demonstrate that the designation is incorrect.

**NIPNLG Statement on the anti-Muslim and Anti-Refugee Executive Order**

NIPNLG denounces this Executive Order in the strongest of terms. History demonstrates that such policies and laws as the Chinese Exclusion Act, the so-called Japanese internment, the Palmer Raids, Operation W**back, and others, are in retrospect viewed as irreconcilable with the tenets of democracy. NIPNLG does not require the passage of time to know that the policies in the Executive Order are wretched, will separate families, deny needed humanitarian relief, and decrease freedom for citizen and non-citizen alike.

NIPNLG further denounces the administration’s anti-humanitarian decision to shut our doors to refugees from Syria and around the world. The Order pretends to be even-handed but President Trump publicly acknowledges that Christian refugees will be allowed to come into the United States.

NIPNLG joins with activists and people of good will across the nation in denouncing and resisting the spirit and letter of the Order. To that end, we repudiate the government’s long-held tradition of designating some people as more deserving of rights than others, and urge our colleagues, allies, and the general public to defend the rights of all people.
ABOUT NIPNLG

The National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (NIPNLG) promotes justice and equality of treatment in all areas of immigration law, the criminal justice system, and social policies related to immigration. For over 45 years, the National Immigration Project has served as a progressive source of advocacy-oriented legal support on issues critical to immigrant rights. We develop cutting-edge strategies to respond to illegal immigration enforcement, in order to educate and strengthen the capacity of immigration professionals, immigrant community organizations, and all advocates of fair and just immigration law and policy.