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TAHIRIH STATEMENT ON PROPOSED APPLICATION FEES FOR AFFIRMATIVE ASYLUM SEEKERS

Last Thursday, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [published proposed regulations](#) that create additional, undue barriers for asylum seekers to access justice, including a \$50 fee for affirmative asylum applications and a \$490 fee for initial Employee Authorization Document (EAD)s. This rule would make the U.S. among the only four countries in the world to charge those seeking asylum.

“The Tahirih Justice Center is strongly opposed to the administration’s new fees. The latest rule is yet another attack on the asylum system, making it nearly impossible for those fleeing severe violence to exercise their rights under international and domestic law,” said Irena Sullivan, Tahirih Senior Immigration Policy Counsel.

Asylum seekers are fleeing persecution, and have left their families, communities, jobs, and possessions behind in order to save their lives. Requiring a fee for asylum applications and initial work permits will drive asylum seekers deeper into poverty and leave them more vulnerable to predation by abusers and traffickers. Particularly vulnerable to abuse and trafficking will be women, children, and those who have already experienced domestic and sexual violence.

Included in the proposed rule is also a reallocation of \$200 million from U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE), diverting funds from much-needed humanitarian adjudication to enforcement efforts instead. Adjudications are already severely delayed, leaving immigrants – including those who qualify for protection – undocumented and vulnerable to arrest, detention, and deportation. Reported raids, arrests of women seeking protective orders, and deportations of individuals with pending applications punish the most vulnerable among us, even while they await their court hearings or serve as witnesses in criminal actions that ultimately help keep our communities safe.

Tahirih will file comments opposing these proposed regulations and will continue to challenge policies that unnecessarily and cruelly harm survivors of violence who need protection.

Irena Sullivan is available for comment on this topic. Please contact dhajjar@mrss.com to arrange an interview.

About the Tahirih Justice Center

The Tahirih Justice Center is the largest national direct service and policy advocacy organization focused on assisting immigrant women and girls fleeing violence. Tahirih will continue to monitor policy shifts that impact women and girls fleeing violence and advocate for the United States to honor its legal obligations to protect those fleeing human rights abuses.

Tahirih Justice Center is a national non-profit that protects courageous immigrant women and girls who refuse to be victims of violence through free legal and social services, public policy advocacy, and training and education. Visit www.tahirih.org for more information.