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Sessions to Impose Quotas on Immigration Court Judges

Washington, D.C.—Human Rights First today condemned a decision by Attorney General Jeff Sessions to impose caseload quotas on immigration judges, a move that threatens due process and fairness in the asylum and immigration systems.

“Asylum cases can be a matter of life and death for thousands of individuals who have fled violence and persecution, not simply numbers for judges to clear. For other immigrants, their families’ futures are on the line. In imposing arbitrary case completion quotas, Attorney General Sessions is undermining justice by pushing judges to quickly hear cases instead of giving them the attention that these life-changing cases require,” said Human Rights First’s Eleanor Acer. “These performance quotas conveniently ignore the fact that asylum seekers and immigrants sometimes need time to secure legal counsel, and raise grave concerns that the Department of Justice is trying to push people through complex asylum and immigration hearings without legal representation.”

Human Rights First has documented the Trump Administration’s campaign against due process and asylum, and its impact on the growing immigration court backlog. A recent report, “Tilted Justice,” details actions taken by the administration that exacerbated backlogs in some of the busiest immigration courts and threaten access to asylum and due process. Human Rights First notes that as a result of the long waits, many asylum seekers and other immigrants face hardships ranging from physical danger to financial difficulties. In many cases the children of refugees are left stranded in difficult and dangerous situations while they await resolution of their parent’s asylum application.

“While there are many steps that must be taken to address the immigration court backlog, the Justice Department should focus on those that ensure timely and fair hearings, and abandon those that undermine justice,” added Acer.

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<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/sessions-impose-quotas-immigration-court-judges>