



**For Immediate Release  
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**FOUR-YEAR-OLD REFUGEE REUNITES WITH HER MOTHER IN MINNEAPOLIS:**

**Minneapolis community successfully stands up against un-American ban, bringing justice to one family out of countless victims of Trump policy.**

A four-year-old Somali girl waited years before receiving approval to join her mother and two older sisters in Minnesota, only to be stopped at an airport in Africa last week. Her story is one illustration of how President Trump's unprecedented and possibly unconstitutional executive order on immigration is affecting thousands of Minnesotans.

**The family has asked for privacy, but will be available to speak to the press on Friday, February 3 at 1:30 pm at The Center for Changing Lives, 2400 Park Ave. S., Minneapolis. Media interested in attending should contact Jackie Nelson with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota at (651) 969-2286 or cell (651) 324-5350.**

Separated from her mother months after birth, Mushkaad underwent years of refugee processing in Africa before she finally received approval to travel to the United States and reunite with her mother, Samira Dahir, a Somali refugee who came to Minneapolis in 2013. But at the eleventh hour, President Trump's executive order stopped Mushkaad at the very last step of the process, as she arrived at the airport in Kampala, Uganda last week.

**"This four-year-old child poses no threat to anyone in the United States," said John Keller, Executive Director of the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. Refugee vetting requires security checks against over a dozen different databases, and in Mushkaad's case, the process also included DNA testing. "She is one of thousands of refugees and immigrants who have gone through extensive vetting only to have their lives upended by this unconstitutional executive order."**

Wearing a new dress, hair braided and hands decorated in henna, Mushkaad was left sobbing in the airport last week as her mother, half a world away, explained over the phone that Mushkaad could not board the plane to join her family. An empty room and welcome gifts at the family's apartment in Minneapolis remained untouched.

After hearing the family's story, the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota joined forces with some of the most experienced immigration experts and litigators in the state, marshalling legal resources to reunite Mushkaad with her mother and sisters. Their efforts paid off Thursday afternoon when Mushkaad, who was finally cleared for travel, arrived at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

**“We’re deeply relieved that Mushkaad is able to reunite with her family, but her story illustrates the deep flaws and fundamental unlawfulness of President Trump’s executive order,” said Keller. “It should not have taken dozens of experts and thousands of hours of emergency, high-level advocacy to reunite this innocent child with her family.”**

The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota teamed up with the University of Minnesota Law School’s Center for New Americans, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, University of St. Thomas School of Law, pro bono lawyers at Dorsey & Whitney LLP, the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota, Advocates for Human Rights, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota offices on two continents, and Minnesota Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken to find a pathway to humanitarian consideration. Al Franken’s office has been working to bring Mushkaad to Minnesota since June. Finally, after countless dead-ends, nothing short of intervention by the highest-level immigration officials in the Trump administration were able to reunite Mushkaad and her mother.

**“If this is what it took to get clearance for a 4-year-old refugee girl, we are horrified to consider what awaits thousands of other children and families,” said Keller.** President Trump’s executive order temporarily bans all arrivals from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including four-year-olds and those admitted after years of vetting. These provisions disregard U.S. immigration law, and potentially the guarantees of the Constitution.

In less than a week, President Trump’s executive order has already been enjoined or held to be likely unlawful by all of the several courts to consider it on an emergency basis. The U.S. Attorney General refused to defend the order before her employment was terminated, and now a rapidly growing number of state Attorney Generals have joined together in a lawsuit. They hope to block the order’s unlawful injury of U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and many others with lawful refugee status and visas, who are admissible under current U.S. law.

The manner of the executive order’s creation and implementation are a departure from past Presidents’ and officials’ use of discretion in immigration law. “The hasty, secretive way the executive order was drafted—without consultation of key officials—and with its chaotic and arbitrary implementation, reflect an intent to create confusion and fear rather than establish rules,” said Keller. “The story of Mushkaad’s family proves the absence of any fair, legitimate legal process or security interest.”

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The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM) is a nonprofit agency that provides immigration legal assistance to low-income immigrants and refugees in Minnesota. ILCM also works to educate Minnesota communities and professionals about immigration matters, and advocates for state and federal policies which respect the universal human rights of immigrants.