

The Honorable Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice

Via Electronic Mail

RE: *Matter of A-B*, 27 I&N Dec. 316 (A.G. 2018)

June 27, 2018

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

The 465 undersigned faith-based, immigration, civil rights, human rights, worker rights, and anti-violence service and advocacy organizations write to express our profound concern for the lives and safety of immigrant survivors of domestic violence following your wrongful decision in *Matter of A-B*. **We ask that you immediately revoke this legally and factually erroneous decision.**

As you know, women like the respondent in *Matter of A-B* endure horrific violence including sexual assault and other torture in their home countries. Women and girls are frequently unable to escape harm, and are killed by their abusers as a result. Those who undertake and survive the perilous journey to the United States to seek asylum under our laws do so because their home country has not upheld its obligation to protect them. For decades, the U.S. has proudly provided safe haven to vulnerable refugees for this reason as outlined in the United Nations (UN) Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Your decision in *Matter of A-B* is fundamentally flawed both in its legal analysis and as a matter of policy. Consistent with longstanding domestic case law, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policies, and current regulations governing asylum as well as international jurisprudence and UN guidance, DHS itself has taken the position consistently since 2004 that women like Ms. A.B. should qualify for asylum. Specifically, the agency agrees that domestic violence may rise to the level of persecution, a cognizable social group centered around gender may be constructed in cases involving domestic violence, and the “state actor” requirement for asylum may be satisfied when a persecutor is an intimate partner. Your efforts to undermine the growing consensus that women fleeing domestic violence may establish asylum eligibility by encouraging adjudicators to pre-judge claims without consideration of the individual facts will potentially result in further tragedy and unspeakable horror for traumatized women, children, and LGBTQ immigrants.

Under U.S. and international law, our country is obligated to provide refuge to individuals who suffer persecution and are unable to avail themselves of protection in their home countries. Your decision in *Matter of A-B* undermines this nation’s adherence to its legal obligations, especially when combined with your “zero tolerance” policy that is resulting in the prosecution of individuals seeking asylum, family detention, and the cruel and inhumane separation of parents (mostly mothers) from their children.

By treating immigrants like criminals, dehumanizing them and their families, and stripping them of the right to live in safety, you are sending a clear message to immigrant survivors of violence: you aren't safe here, either. This reflects a shameful attempt to drag the United States back to an era in which women's rights weren't recognized as human rights, and when women fleeing horrific gender-based persecution were wrongfully denied protection.

Matter of A-B- distorts the will of Congress and seeks to undermine the very meaning and purpose of international protection for refugees. We are privileged to have the power to prevent needless suffering by those fleeing gender-based violence. As a nation, we should be proud to uphold our commitments to those seeking our protection.

In light of the above, we ask that you immediately revoke your erroneous decision in *Matter of A-B-*.

Signed,

180 Turning Lives Around
A New Hope Center
ACADV
Adhikaar
ADORE LA
Advocate Safehouse Project
Advocates for Youth
ADWAS
ADZ Law, LLP
African Americans Ministers In Action
Aitken Family Protection Clinic
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Alexandra House
Alexandria NOW
All Saints Episcopal Church / Iglesia Episcopal de Todos los Santos
Alliance for Community Transformations
Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance - AMOR
Alternative House
Alvarez & Gutierrez, LLP
American GI Forum of the US
American Immigration Council
American Immigration Lawyers Association
American Immigration Lawyers Association - Oregon Chapter
American Medical Student Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Americans for Immigrant Justice
Anna Maries Alliance
Anti-Defamation League
API Chaya
Apoyo Legal Migrante Asdo (ALMA)

Arab American Institute (AAI)
Arcia and Associates
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault
ASAP (Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project)
AshaKiran
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach
Asian Women's Shelter
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bailey Immigration
Bailey Immigration
Bailey Immigration, PC
Barten Law PC
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture
Bend Immigration Group
Bethany Immigration Services
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
Black Women's Roundtable
Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center
Boston University School of Law Immigrants' Rights and Human Trafficking Program
Bread for the City
Break the Cycle
Bridges
Brighter Tomorrows, Inc.
Bronx Legal services
CA Central Valley National Lawyers Guild Chapter
California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
California National Organization for Women
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
California Women Lawyers
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc.
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans
Catholic Charities-Immigration Legal Services
CAWS North Dakota
Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency
CDWBA Legal Project, Inc.
Cedarmere Foundation
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness
Center for Safety and Change
Center for Social Justice, Seton Hall University School of Law

Center for the Pacific Asian Family
Center for Victims of Torture
Central Arizona National Lawyers Guild
Central California Family Crisis Center
Central Phoenix Inez Casiano NOW
Central Washington Justice For Our Neighbors
Central West Justice Center
Cherokee Family Violence Center
Child and Family Service
Child Justice, Inc.
Children's Charter
Church World Service
Citizens Against Domestic & Sexual Abuse
City of Renton Emergency Management
Civil Law Project
Claudia Slovinsky and Associates, PLLC
CLUE-Ventura County
Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence
Coalition for Family Harmony
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Colectiva Legal del Pueblo
Colin Immigration Law
Commission on the Status of Women
Community Against Violence (CAV)
Community Law Group, PLLC
Community Legal Center
Congoese Integration Network
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Connecticut Legal Services
Contact
Courage connection
Crisis Intervention Services
Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons
CUNY Law School
DACAmended
DAWN
Day One
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
DC-Maryland Justice for Our Neighbors
Deaf Overcoming Violence through Empowerment (DOVE)
Delaware State University
Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida
Democratic Women's Club of Palm Beach County
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Domestic Abuse Project

Domestic Abuse Women's Network (DAWN)
Domestic Violence Intervention Services
Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project
Domestic Violence Report
Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County
Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Co
Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County
Dorcas International Institute of RI
DOVE, Inc.
DOVES Domestic Violence
DOVES of Big Bear Valley, Inc.
DV/SA Program at Newton-Wellesley Hospital
DVSBF
DWC of PBC
El pueblo Immigration Legal Services
El Refugio, Inc.
Elevation Law LLC
Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center
Elizabeth K. Abdnour, Esq., PLLC
Empower Tehama
End Domestic Abuse WI
End Rape on Campus
End Violence Against Women International
Enlace Comunitario
Entre Hermanos
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.
Esperanza Shelter
Family & Community Resources
Family Crisis Services, Inc
Family Equality Council
Family Violence Appellate Project
Family Violence Law Center
Feminist Majority Foundation
FL Immigrant Coalition
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
Florida NOW
Fort Myers/Naples NOW
Frohman Law Office, LLC
Futures Without Violence
Gariguna Community Services
Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Global Justice Center
Gonzales Gonzales & Gonzales
Grammys House

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.
Guam Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence
Guzior Armbrecht Maher
Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs
HarborCOV
Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program
Haven Hills
Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus
HBI Realty Inc
HEAL, Inc.
Hebrew Union College
Her Justice (formerly inMotion)
Hernandez Immigration Law, LLC
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
HOPE'S DOOR
Hopeful Horizons
House of Ruth
Human Rights at Home Clinic, UMass Law School
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
Humboldt Domestic Violence Services
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
Iglesia Piedra Viva UMC
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Illinois National Organization for Women
Immigrant Law Group
Immigration Center for Women and Children
Immigration Counseling Service (ICS)
IMPACT Boston, an affiliate of Triangle
Impact NW
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Indiana National Organization for Women
InnerSpark Associates, LLC
International Human Rights Clinic at Loyola Law School, Los Angeles
International Human Rights Clinic at Western New England University School of Law
International Institute of Buffalo
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors
Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc.
Jacksonville Area National Organization for Women
Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
Jean king

Jeff Davis Communities Against Domestic Abuse
Jennifer Ann's Group
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse
Jewish Federation of Ventura County
Just Neighbors
Justice Center of Southeast MA
Justice in Motion
JWI - Jewish Women International
KAN-WIN
Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights
Katrina M Caldwell
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Korean Community Service Center
La Puerta Abierta UMC
Las Cruces Police Department-Victim Assistance Unit
LASSEN FAMILY SERVICES
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Latin American Coalition
Latino LinQ
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Law Firm
Law Office of Allison N. Boyle, PLLC
Law Office of Geri Lynn Green
Law Office of Sam Oliver, PC
Law Office of Sarah J. Schlicher, PA
Law Office of Shara Svendsen
Law Office Of Sophia Solovyova
Law Office of Yessenia Martinez
Law Offices of Arcia & Associates PC
LAW OFFICES OF CARMEN REYES YOSIFF
Law Offices of Jan Joseph Bejar
Law Offices of Martha Cordoba
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Legal Voice
Leschak & Associates LLC
Life Span Center for Legal Services & Advocacy
LifeWire
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
Maitri
Make the Road New York
Marandas Sinlapasai, P.C.

MAssachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)
Massachusetts Protective Mothers for Custodial Justice, Inc.
Meadowlark Immigration PC
Metro Centers for Community Advocaacy
Miami University
Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women
Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Moicano even. Llc
MomsRising
Monarch Services
Montana Chapter of the National Organization for Women
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Morongo Basin Unity Home, Inc
Ms.
Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee
My Sisters' Place
Narika
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Assoc. for Latino Community Asset Builders
National Association of Socialworkers
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)
National Justice for Our Neighbors
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina/o Psychological Association
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Partnership for Women & Families

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Women's Law Center
NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
New Hope For Women
New Hope, Inc.
New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault
New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence
New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence
New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Inc.
New Mexico Immigrant Law Center
New York City Anti-Violence Project
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Legal Assistance Group
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Next Step Domestic Violence Project
NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Ni-Ta-Nee NOW
NorCal Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence
North Dallas NOW (chapter of National Organization of Women)
Northeast Justice Center
Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
Northern New Jersey Chapter, National Organization. For Women
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
NOW SGV-Whittier
NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence
OAESV
OneAmerica
Open Immigration Legal Services
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and Preschool
Oxfam
PA Religious Coalition for Reproductive Justice
Palm Beach County National Organization for Women, Inc.
Pangea Legal Services
Park Avenue United Methodist Church
Parker, Butte & Lane, PC
Passage Immigration Law
Pennington County Crime Victims Services
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center
Philip Hornik, Attorney at Law
Phoenix Legal Action Network (PLAN)

Physicians for Human Rights
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Political Asylum Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project
Private Practice, Washington D.C.
Project Hope of Gunnison Valley
Project Safeguard
Project Sanctuary
Promundo-US
R.I. Center for Justice
REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, Inc
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Refugees Northwest
Resolve
Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Ries Law Group, P.C.
RISE
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Runway to Freedom
Safe Horizon Immigration Law Project
Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley
Safehope, Inc.
SafeHouse Denver
Safeplace
Sakhi for South Asian Women
Sanctuary for Families
Santa Clara Law - International Human Rights Clinic
Santa Fe Safe
Sauti Yetu Center for African Women and Families
SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
SCOPE50
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)
Sikh Family Center
SLV Immigrant Resource Center
SOAR
Sojourner House
Sojourners
Somali Family Safety Task Force
Someplace Safe
South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking
South Shore NOW Massachusetts
Southwestern Law School Community Lawyering Clinic
Southwestern Law School Immigration Law Clinic
Stand Strong
Standpoint

Surge Reproductive Justice
SW Idaho Chapter National Organization for Women
Tahirih Justice Center
Tahoe SAFE Alliance
Taskin Law and Mediation
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
The Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education at UMN
The Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigranrs
The Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
The Haven, Inc
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Legal Aid Society
The North Carolina Justice Center
The Safe Center LI, Inc.
The Second Step, Inc.
The Voices and Faces Project
The Women's Law Center of Maryland
TN Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violenc
Transgender Law Center
Triad NOW (National Organization for Women)
Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Tubman
Tulsa Immigrant Resource Network
U Care, Inc.
UMass Law Human Rights at Home Clinic
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
University of Miami Law, Human Rights Clinic
University of Oregon's Domestic Violence Clinic
Urban Justice Center- Domestic Violence Project
US Woman and Cuba Collaboration
Valencia Shelter Services
Vera House, Inc.
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violen
Victim Advocate
Victim Rights Law Center
Violence Free Colorado
Violence intervention Program
Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance
Walla Walla Immigrant Rights Coalition
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
Washington Hebrew Congregation
Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)

West Pinellas National Organization for Women (NOW - FL)
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Women Enabled International
Women's Bar Association of DC
Women's Law Project
Women's Refugee Commission
Women's Transitional Living Center, Inc.
Women's Rural Advocacy Programs, Inc (WRAP)
Women's Transitional Living Center
WomenShelter of Long Beach
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
World Without Genocide
Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
YWCA Central MA Domestic Violence Services
YWCA North Shore Rape Crisis Center
YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts
YWCA of San Diego County
YWCA of Yakima
YWCA Pierce County
YWCA USA
Zion Counseling