

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WAW Condemns AG Sessions' Decision on Domestic Violence Asylum Seekers

Unilateral action in the Matter of A-B seen as a subversion of principles of human rights and refugee law

New York, NY, June 18, 2018—[Women for Afghan Women](#) (WAW) condemns, in the strongest possible terms, Attorney General Jeff Sessions' [decision](#) to prevent survivors of domestic violence from obtaining asylum in the United States (U.S.).

His unilateral action in the [Matter of A-B](#) undermines [a landmark 2014 decision](#) by the Board of Immigration Appeals and decades of [incremental legal decisions](#), as well as vital principles of international human rights and refugee law. The arbitrary targeting of these survivors—who should be considered a special class of people under the law, and thus entitled to protection—effectively undermines the recognition of women's rights as human rights. Furthermore, this mandate to deny aid to women fleeing from gender-based persecution serves to roll back U.S. law and policy to a time when law enforcement and government intervention in domestic violence incidents were non-existent, as such matters were considered private matters to be settled in the home, regardless of the risk to the woman.

Most importantly, this directive not only prevents a woman from obtaining refuge from an abusive spouse or family member, but will lead to her return to a country where her abuser awaits and her government remains indifferent to her torture, her rape, and potentially, her death.

This is the latest in a [series of unconscionable policy decisions](#) by the current administration that are endangering lives and tearing families apart. In 2018, the U.S. government should be expanding protections for survivors of domestic violence, not returning them to nearly guaranteed abuse, if not outright execution.

Attorney General Sessions should immediately reverse this ruling, and immigration judges should henceforth bring clarity and humanity into U.S. asylum law by expanding the definition of allowable asylees to include survivors of domestic violence as a "[particular social group](#)."

WAW is committed to protecting empowering survivors of violence in the U.S. and around the world. Now, WAW and our community of immigration advocates need your help to fight this injustice. Take action today:

- 1) [Donate](#) to WAW to help bolster our legal efforts to protect survivors of gender-based violence and recent immigrants;
- 2) Sign online petitions from our colleagues at the [Tahirih Justice Center](#) and the [ACLU](#) demanding that the Attorney General reverse his decision; and
- 3) [Call](#) your Senators and Representatives and tell them to protect survivors of domestic violence and urge Attorney General Sessions to rescind his decision in the *Matter of A-B*.

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WOMEN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN (WAW) is a grassroots civil society organization dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights of disenfranchised Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan and New York. In particular, WAW works to help Afghan women and girls exercise their rights to pursue their individual potential, to self-determination, and to representation in all areas of life—political, social, cultural, and economic. WAW relentlessly advocates for women's rights and challenges the norms that underpin gender-based violence wherever opportunities arise to influence attitudes and bring about change.

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