Insights: News Releases

# Kilpatrick Townsend Plays Key Role in Securing Release for Detained Refugee

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*Firm Joins Other Leading Organizations in Lawsuit Securing Nationwide Injunction*

Kilpatrick Townsend played a key role over the weekend securing the release of an Iraqi refugee detained at Kennedy International Airport after President Trump signed his executive order broadly restricting refugees and immigrants from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

One of the detainees, Hameed Khalid Darweesh, has been a pro bono client of the firm for the past two years -- represented by Kilpatrick Townsend New York office Senior Counsel Jonathan Polonsky, along with students from City University of New York (CUNY) Law School through the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP). Mr. Darweesh has risked his life working as an interpreter and engineer for over a decade with the United States military and government, including the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq. He arrived with his family in New York City with a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) which entails a 14-step application process, multiple interviews, recommendation letters and numerous forms and documents. Mr. Darweesh was detained upon arrival at John F. Kennedy Airport on Friday, January 27th, and released from detention on Saturday, January 28th.

Kilpatrick Townsend has joined the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Immigration Law Center, IRAP, and the Yale Law School's Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Office as counsel in the lawsuit before Judge Ann Donnelly in the Eastern District of New York that resulted in the nationwide injunction Saturday night against deporting any immigrants from the seven targeted countries who hold SIVs like Mr. Darweesh or other valid visas.

“The firm has been overwhelmed and heartened by the show of support from firm clients, organizations, and members of the legal community from around the globe,” said Jonathan Polonsky, Kilpatrick Townsend Senior Counsel. “I am relieved that Mr. Darweesh has been released and proud that Kilpatrick Townsend gave me the opportunity to be a part of this important issue. I look forward to continuing to provide my assistance.

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