

Human Rights First

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/human-rights-first-concerned-biden-plan-risks-new-rocket-dockets-when-it-should-end>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Work With Asylum Seekers

If you are seeking asylum, we can help

Areas of Focus

Current Initiatives

NEW YORK Human Rights First expressed concerns that new Biden administration [policies](#) announced today risk undermining due process in asylum adjudications while the administration continues to fail to end illegal Trump policies that deny refugees U.S. protection.

While measures that both reduce delays for asylum seekers and strengthen due process would be a step in the right direction, creating dedicated dockets for families seeking asylum may amount to another round of rocket dockets that short circuit due process and aggravate backlogs, said **Eleanor Acer, senior director for refugee protection**. Noticeably missing from the administration's announcement is any mention of when they will undo Trump policies that deny asylum to victims of deadly gangs and domestic violence. Without steps to undo Trump policies, substantive adjudications will continue to be rigged against asylum seekers.

The announcement is also glaringly silent on the Biden administration's continued use of the Trump administration Title 42 policy that expels asylum seekers to danger, and makes no mention of restarting asylum hearings for people who remain waiting and blocked from seeking asylum at U.S. ports of entry, **Acer added**. U.S. asylum proceedings cannot be considered fair when the Biden administration continues to blatantly violate U.S. refugee laws and treaties.

Both the Obama administration and the Trump administration adopted initiatives to push cases through the immigration courts quickly. These rocket dockets were ultimately counterproductive and raised [serious due process concerns](#), [undermining](#) access to counsel, leading to [high rates](#) of in absentia removals and mistaken decisions that need to be corrected on appeal, and [exacerbating](#) backlogs.

Instead, the Biden administration must take steps, as Human Rights First has previously [recommended](#), to enable timely and fair asylum hearings, including:

These recommendations and others were most recently outlined by Human Rights First in our April 2021 [Swift Action](#) to Improve Fairness and Enable Timely Asylum Hearings in Immigration Courts, issued with the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies and April 2021 report on the asylum office backlogs, [Protection Postponed](#).

Human Rights First has repeatedly called on the Biden administration, as it did on the Trump administration, to end the misuse of public health authority, uphold U.S. refugee law and restart asylum. The organization's April 2021 report [Failure to Protect](#), issued in collaboration with Al Otro Lado and Haitian Bridge Alliance, documents the continuing harms suffered by asylum seekers since the Biden administration began.

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Urge Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act

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