

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON

Bezunesh Tesfaye Ayehu v. Kristi Noem, Secretary of Homeland
Security; Joseph B. Edlow; Danielle Lehman; and Pam Bondi

Ayehu · No. 2:25-cv-02276-JNW · Decided January 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The parties jointly move to stay a federal case for 90 days while USCIS proceeds with asylum-interview scheduling and potential administrative resolution. The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington grants the stay and orders the parties to submit a status update within 90 days of the order.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jamal N. Whitehead
DECIDED	January 16, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-02276-JNW
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties jointly stipulated and moved to stay the plaintiff's Administrative Procedure Act and Mandamus Act action seeking to compel adjudication of her asylum application.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied its broad discretion to stay proceedings and its inherent authority to control the disposition of cases on its docket.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Bezunesh Tesfaye Ayehu v. Kristi Noem, Secretary of Homeland Security, Joseph B. Edlow, Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Danielle Lehman, Director of San Francisco Asylum Office of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Pam Bondi, Attorney General

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- mandamus immigration
- administrative procedure act
- asylum
- immigration

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

immigration

administrative law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should grant the parties' stipulated request to stay the proceedings for 90 days.

HOLDINGS

1. The court granted the parties' stipulated motion and stayed the case for 90 days.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Courts have “broad discretion” to stay proceedings.” (at 2)

“[T]he power to stay proceedings is incidental to the power inherent in every court to control the disposition of the causes on its docket with economy of time and effort for itself, for counsel, and for litigants.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bezunesh Tesfaye Ayehu brought an action under the Administrative Procedure Act and Mandamus Act seeking to compel USCIS to adjudicate her asylum application. USCIS sent interview notices concerning the application for December 30, 2025, and January 27, 2026. The parties agreed that a 90-day stay would allow them to pursue a potential administrative resolution and conserve judicial resources.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed an action against federal immigration officials seeking, among other relief, an order compelling U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to adjudicate her asylum application. After USCIS issued interview notices in connection with the case, the parties jointly requested a 90-day stay to pursue a potential administrative resolution. The court granted the stipulated motion and ordered the parties to submit a status update within 90 days.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Clinton v. Jones, 520 U.S. 681, 706 (1997)
- Landis v. N. Am. Co., 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936)

OPINION

1 The Honorable Jamal N. Whitehead 2 3 4 5 6 7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR
THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON 8 AT SEATTLE 9 BEZUNESH TESFAYE
AYEHU, CASE NO. 2:25-cv-02276-JNW 10 Plaintiff, STIPULATED MOTION TO STAY 11

CASE AND ORDER v. 12 NOTED FOR CONSIDERATION: KRISTI NOEM, Secretary of Homeland JANUARY 15, 2026 13 Security; JOSEPH B. EDLOW, Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration 14 Services; DANIELLE LEHMAN, Director of San Francisco Asylum Office of the United 15 States Citizenship and Immigration Services; and, PAM BONDI, Attorney General 16 Defendants.

17 18 Plaintiff and Defendants, by and through their counsel of record, pursuant to Federal Rule 19 of Civil Procedure 6 and Local Rules 7(d)(1), 10(g) and 16, hereby jointly stipulate and move to 20 stay these proceedings for 90 days. Plaintiff brought this litigation pursuant to the Administrative 21 Procedure Act and Mandamus Act seeking, inter alia, to compel U.S. Citizenship and Immigration 22 Services (“USCIS”) to adjudicate her asylum application.

USCIS recently sent out interview 23 notices in connection with this case for December 30, 2025 and January 27, 2026. The parties have 24 agreed to stipulate to a 90-day stay. 1 Courts have “broad discretion” to stay proceedings. Clinton v. Jones, 520 U.S. 681, 706 2 (1997). “[T]he power to stay proceedings is incidental to the power inherent in every court to 3 control the disposition of the causes on its docket with economy of time and effort for itself, for 4 counsel, and for litigants.” Landis v. N. Am.

Co., 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936); see also Fed. R. Civ. 5 P. 1. 6 Accordingly, the parties stipulate and request that the proceedings in this case be stayed 7 for 90 days, at which time the parties will file a joint status report with the Court. At that time, the 8 parties may request a further continuance of the stay of proceedings, dismissal of the litigation if 9 appropriate, or placement of the case back on the Court’s active docket.

A stay of proceedings in 10 this case will benefit the parties and conserve the Court’s resources while the parties pursue a 11 potential administrative resolution. 12 Dated this 15th day of January, 2026. 13 LAW OFFICE OF DANIEL J. SMITH, PLLC CHARLES NEIL FLOYD United States Attorney 14 s/ Aaron L. Vasey s/ Katie D. Fairchild 15 AARON L. VASEY, WSBA No. 58613 KATIE D. FAIRCHILD, WSBA No. 47712 145 N.W.

85th Street, Suite 103 Assistant United States Attorney 16 Seattle, WA 98117 United States Attorney’s Office Phone: 206-438-8720 700 Stewart Street, Suite 5220 17 Email: aaron@danielsmithlawoffice.com Seattle, Washington 98101-1271 Phone: (206) 553-7970 18 Attorney for Plaintiff Fax: 206-553-4067 Email: katie.fairchild@usdoj.gov 19 Attorneys for Defendant 20 I certify that this memorandum contains 251 21 words, in compliance with the Local Civil Rules.

22 23 24 1 ORDER 2 The case is stayed for 90 days. The parties shall submit a status update on or before 90 days 3 ||from the date of this Order. It is so ORDERED. 4 Dated this 16th day of January, 2026. 5 6 Ae te AL N. WHITEHEAD 7 United States District Judge 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 STIPULATED MOTION TO STAY CASE AND ORDER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY [2:25-cv-02276-JINW] - 3 700 Stewart Street.

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