

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Pouria Tabarakifard v. Ricardo Velasquez, et al.

Tabarakifard · No. 25-18087 (KMW) · Decided December 10, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey grants Pouria Tabarakifard’s motion to seal a habeas petition and its accompanying exhibits. The court finds that the filings contain pervasive asylum-related, personal, medical, employment, and family information subject to confidentiality protections, and that sealing is necessary because redaction would be insufficient and disclosure could cause serious harm.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Karen M. Williams
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	December 10, 2025
DOCKET	25-18087 (KMW)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner moved to seal a habeas petition and all accompanying exhibits because they contained sensitive asylum-related, personal, medical, employment, family, and agency information.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2, Local Civil Rule 5.3(c), and the Third Circuit's public-access standard requiring a clearly defined and serious injury or a countervailing statutory interest.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished, nonprecedential memorandum order
PARTIES	Pouria Tabarakifard v. Ricardo Velasquez, et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- asylum
- immigration

PRACTICE AREAS

- Civil procedure
- Immigration
- Habeas corpus

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the habeas petition and accompanying exhibits should be filed and maintained under seal because they contain confidential asylum-related and personal information.
2. Whether sealing was necessary and narrowly tailored where redaction was not feasible because sensitive information was widespread throughout the filings.

HOLDINGS

1. The petition and all accompanying exhibits must be sealed because they contain asylum-related information and personal identifiers subject to mandatory confidentiality protections, and disclosure could place Petitioner and his family at serious risk.
2. Redaction was not feasible, and sealing the petition and exhibits was necessary and narrowly tailored.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Redaction is not feasible because the sensitive information is widespread throughout the filings.”

“The Third Circuit’s public-access decisions recognize that the presumption of access yields where countervailing interests are grounded in statute or where disclosure would cause a clearly defined and serious injury.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The petition and its exhibits contained the factual basis for Petitioner's asylum claim, personal identifying information, medical and employment history, family details, and internal United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and Executive Office for Immigration Review communications. The court found that disclosure could expose Petitioner and his family to serious harm or retaliation abroad and that the sensitive information was pervasive throughout the filings.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus and moved to seal the petition and exhibits. The District of New Jersey granted the motion, ordered the materials sealed, and directed the Clerk to maintain the sealed materials and serve the order electronically.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In re Cendant Corp., 260 F.3d 662 (3d Cir. 2019)

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