

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PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished, nonprecedential memorandum order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)

OPINION

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY
POURIA TABARAKIFARD, Petitioner, Civil Action No. 25-18087 (KMW) MEMORANDUM

ORDER RICARDO VELASQUEZ, et al, Respondents. This matter comes before the Court on Petitioner's Pouria Tabarakifard's ('Petitioner') Motion to Seal the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus ("Petition") and all accompanying exhibits.

(ECE No. 2}. The Court has reviewed the Motion, the exhibits thereto, and the relevant authorities. For the reasons set forth below, the Motion is granted. Petitioner seeks leave to file the Petition and exhibits under seal because they contain highly sensitive and confidential information, including 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.

(ECF No. 2 at 2.) Disclosure of these materials could expose Petitioner and his family to serious harm or retaliation abroad. Ud.) Redaction alone would be insufficient to protect these interests because the sensitive information is pervasive throughout the filings and integral to the narrative of the Petition. (/d.) Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 authorizes courts to permit unredacted filings under seal to protect privacy, safety, or other confidential information.

Ud. at 3.) Local Civil Rule 5.3(c) similarly allows sealing when there is a showing that disclosure would result in clearly defined and serious injury. (d.) Statutory and regulatory provisions, including 8 U.S.C. § 1367 and 8 CKR. §§ 208.6, 1208.6, and 236.3, further mandate confidentiality for asylum-related information and require protective measures for former unaccompanied minors. (d. at 3—7.)

The Court has reviewed Petitioner's Motion to Seal (ECF No. 2) and finds that the Petition and its exhibits (ECF No. 1) contain asylum-related information, personal identifiers, and other sensitive details subject to mandatory confidentiality protections under 8 U.S.C. § 1367 and 8 C.F.R. §§ 208.6 and 1208.6. Disclosure of this material could place Petitioner and his family at serious risk and would contravene these federal confidentiality provisions.

Consistent with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 and Local Civil Rule 5,3(c), the Court finds that sealing is necessary and narrowly tailored. 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. See *In re Cendant Corp.*, 260 F.3d 662 (3d Cir. 2019). That standard is satisfied here.

Accordingly, the Court concludes that Petitioner has satisfied the requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2, Local Civil Rule 5.3(c), and controlling Third Circuit precedent. IT IS THEREFORE on this 10" day of December, 2025, ORDERED that Petitioner's Motion to Seal

(ECF No. 2) is GRANTED; and it is further ORDERED that the documents filed in the Petition and all accompanying exhibits (ECF No. 1) shall be SEALED; and it is further ORDERED that the Clerk of Court is directed to maintain the sealed materials in accordance with this Order; and it is further ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall serve a copy of this Order upon the parties electronically. is Karen M. Williams, United States District Judge