

August U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

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**July 28-30 Washington DC National Grassroots
Immigrant Strategy Conference
A Success and Milestone for the Immigrant Rights
Movement!**

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Yesterday We Marched, Today We Organized, Tomorrow We'll Achieve Our Dreams and Goals!

**Lee Siu Hin
National Coordinator, National Immigrant Solidarity Network**

The 3-day (July 28-30, 2006) Washington DC National Grassroots Immigrant Strategy Conference at American University has been without doubt a success and a milestone for the immigrant rights movement. Organized by National Immigrant Solidarity Network, one of the leading coalitions involved in the March 25 Los Angeles "Gran Marcha" and the May 1st "A Day Without Immigrants" General Strike/Boycott, there were approximately 180 people from over 80 organizations across the country in attendance.

The conference represented diverse groups, including Latin@s, APIs, African Americans, African immigrants, European immigrants, LGBTQ, women, youth/students, interfaith, peace/global justice activists, white allies, labor, immigrant day laborers and community organizers from two dozen states. Community/grassroots immigrant activists from across the country met face-to-face for the first time to discuss how to collectively build a new national, broad-based, immigrant rights/civil rights movement.

During the strategy section on Sunday (7/30), we re-affirmed our "Ten Points of Unity" for the immigrant movement, and adopted the national immigrant strategy/action plans for the next 3-6 months with more than a dozen working groups [includes: Student/Youth, Labor, Direct Action, Day Laborers, Border, Events, Multi-Ethnic, Community Work, Legislation, LGBT, Women, Deportation, Education & Outreach and Interfaith], and point persons to coordinate each working group. We also began the discussion of creating a concept of the immigrant solidarity movement: grassroots, volunteer-based, direct action-oriented with strong emphases of community outreach and popular education.

Some of the highlights included:

- Multi-ethnic, multi-issue and multi-constituent based immigrant movement, inviting groups that traditionally have been marginalized from the struggle, such as LGBTQ, women and student/youth, African immigrants, African American, to be part of the coalition.
- Linking our struggles to the anti-war and global justice movements, and mutually supporting each other's cause.
- Institutionalizing the May 1st boycott "A Day Without Immigrants" and beginning planning for May 1st 2007.
- Supporting nationwide immigrant marches/actions during the Labor Day Weekend, and the September 7th Camp Democracy's Immigrant Rights Day in Washington DC, called by antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan.
- Direct actions as an important part of the immigrant movement.
- Grassroots organizing strategy and education programs.
- 'La gran marcha fronteriza flor y canto' - Conduct a Border Walk during Spring Break 2007, from San Diego, CA to Brownsville, TX.
- Working towards the creation of model legislation that resonates with the movement's principles and values.
- Legislative campaigns, such as immigrant voter registration, and supporting bills such as the *Legal Immigration and Family Equity Act* and the *Uniting American Families Act (UFAA)*.
- National support hotline for immigrants who need legal referral, detention support, or help with other urgent needs.
- Developing a vocabulary to replace "amnesty" and "legalization."

There's no doubt that this conference has been the beginning of an historical turning point for the immigrant solidarity movement. With other immigrant conferences in Chicago, IL organized by the March 10th Movement and in Oakland, CA organized by NNIRR, we show that we have the will and strength to continue our momentum, and that we have the passion and energy to fight for our justice and dignity in the years to come.

Please visit our conference main page for the full report: <http://www.immigrantsolidarity.org/2006Conference/>

Please subscribe to our ISN Immigrants Daily-Info E-mail List!

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Immigration News Briefs from Across the Country

Immigration News Briefs is a weekly English-language summary of US immigration news, e-mail: nicajg@panix.com.

1. PALESTINIAN FREED AT LAST

Shortly after 9:30pm on July 31, after more than two years of detention, Muslim community leader Abdel Jabbar Hamdan walked out of the Terminal Island federal detention center in San Pedro, California, and returned to his Buena Park home with his wife and six US-born children.

Hamdan's release came after a day of last-ditch legal efforts by the government to keep him detained. On July 27, and again on July 28 in response to a government challenge, US District Judge Terry J. Hatter, Jr. had ordered Hamdan released "forthwith". But Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials claimed they could continue holding Hamdan because government lawyers in Washington planned to file an emergency request to block Hatter's order. That request was filed late on July 31 with the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which quickly rejected it in a three-sentence ruling, upholding Hatter's order and confirming that Hamdan should be released "forthwith."

Earlier in the day, Hatter had ordered Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff to release Hamdan by 5pm on July 31 or appear in his Los Angeles courtroom at 11am on Aug. 1 "to show cause, if you have any, why you should not be held in contempt." American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorney Ranjana Natarajan said government lawyers assured her they plan no further appeals.

Hamdan is Palestinian; he was born in a refugee camp in the West Bank when it was under Jordanian control. He was arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on July 28, 2004; earlier he had worked as a fundraiser for the Holy Land Foundation, an Islamic charity shut down by US officials in December 2001 for allegedly raising money for Hamas, a Palestinian organization the US has designated as terrorist. Hamdan was not charged with any crimes but was ordered deported for overstaying a student visa and was held by ICE without bond as an alleged national security threat.

In its July 31 brief, the government claimed that Hamdan's

release could have "adverse foreign policy ramifications" because it could create "the perception that the US cannot keep alien fundraisers detained pending removal." Hamdan's lawyers had anticipated the government's move and filed a response before seeing its brief, noting that Holy Land Foundation officials charged with terrorism related crimes were released on their own recognizance to await trial, and were not deemed dangers to national security.

In a statement, ICE said Hamdan would have to comply with an electronic monitoring program requiring him to be at home from 10 pm to 6 am daily and stay within a 50-mile radius of his home. DHS and the Department of Justice "will continue the vigorous effort to remove" Hamdan from the US, the statement said. [Los Angeles Times 8/1/06; Orange County Register 8/1/06] On Aug. 1, Hamdan declined to answer whether he was wearing an electronic monitor and steered clear of making controversial statements on his attorney's advice. [LAT 8/2/06]

2. SADDLE COMPANY RAIDED IN OKLAHOMA

On Aug. 2, ICE agents arrested 51 immigrants working at Billy Cook's Harness and Saddle in Sulphur, Oklahoma. The arrests were made at the company's main address at 320 Muskogee Street while agents executed two federal search warrants for business records at businesses associated with the company. Agents from the Social Security Administration (SSA) assisted with the operation. The 30 men and 21 women arrested are Mexican citizens ranging in age from 18 to 60. [ICE News Release 8/2/06]

3. CONSTRUCTION RAID IN ARKANSAS

On July 18, ICE agents raided a construction site in Springdale, Arkansas, and arrested 27 workers--25 of them from Mexico, two from Guatemala--on administrative immigration violations. According to Washington County Sheriff Tim Helder, 24 men and one woman were being detained in the Washington County Jail. [ICE News Release 7/21/06; Northwest Arkansas Times 7/20/06]

ICE also arrested a manager and a crew leader of the

construction firm, Arevalo Framing Associates, on criminal charges. Manager Alejandro Arevalo was charged with harboring illegal aliens and re-entry after deportation. Crew leader Rodrigo Arevalo was charged with re-entry after deportation. Searches conducted during the investigation resulted in the seizure of four vehicles, \$1,943 in US currency and an assault-type shotgun. Additional federal charges are expected. [ICE News Release 7/21/06]

4. CHICAGO'S IFCO ARRESTEES WIN STAY

On July 31, immigration judge Carlos Cuevas in Chicago granted a one-year stay of deportation to 11 undocumented immigrants who were arrested in a mass nationwide raid last April of the IFCO Systems pallet

company. The 11 were among 26 workers arrested Apr. 19 at an IFCO facility in Chicago. Cuevas had previously given the 11 workers a two-month stay when they appeared at a June 1 hearing.

The workers had strong backing from the community; about 120 supporters greeted them as they emerged from immigration court. Alderman Daniel Solis, who joined the workers in the immigration courtroom, and members of Congress had lobbied the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on their behalf. Attorneys also presented a petition with hundreds of signatures supporting the workers. One of the "IFCO 26," Flor Crisostomo, led a hunger strike from May 10 to June 1 to demand a moratorium on deportations. [Chicago Tribune 8/1/06]

Upcoming Nationwide Immigrant Events (Compiled by Detention Watch Network)

- **National Coalition on Immigrant Rights Conference in Chicago, August 11-13**
- **Detention Watch Network Maryland Detention Meeting: August 28, 1-5pm, University of Baltimore.**
- **Camp Democracy: 9/5-21, DC Mall; Activities on 9/7 will focus on Immigrant Rights**
- **Nationwide Immigrant Rallies: West Coast-9/2-4, Chicago-9/5, Washington DC-9/7**
- **European Social Forum with Detention and Deportation focus, 10/7**
- **Southwest Border Social Forum October 13-15, 2006 Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico (Across from El Paso, TX)**
- **CLINIC legal trainings. Learn more at www.clinic.org**

Detention Standards & Complaints: How to Get Heard

By Tara Magner

In the Fall of 2005, ICE suggested a process for reporting on specific failures of ICE and its contractors to comply with the Detention Standards. When a facility fails to comply with one or more standards, advocates for detained immigrants should first take action to resolve the problem at the local level. ICE has provided a list of contacts for each ICE district office that is available from Tara Magner with the National Immigrant Justice Center (see contact information below). If the local authorities are non-responsive or fail to take appropriate action, advocates should report the problem to ICE headquarters. To ensure that this reporting mechanism is effective, all attempts to solve a problem locally should be documented. Keeping a record will demonstrate to ICE that advocates are working to address concerns in a professional and constructive manner at every level of authority. Documentation of our collective efforts will also allow the Enforcement Working Group to track trends across regions and periods of time. Accordingly, the Working Group asks that when advocates raise a concern at the national level through the process described below, they also share a copy of this correspondence with the Working Group, which will serve as a repository of concerns that are conveyed to ICE headquarters.

Please follow the steps below as a guide to reporting concerns to ICE headquarters.

First: Try to resolve any detention standards violations with local ICE offices. Document those attempts even if such documentation is quite simple (e.g., copies of e-mail correspondence; notation of a phone call, message left, and whether the call was returned).

Second: If the problem cannot be resolved locally, then the advocate should contact ICE headquarters. Such grievances should be submitted in writing or by e-mail and contain detailed information about the issue at hand and all prior attempts to solve the problem with local authorities. Please direct these complaints to Mr. Timothy Perry, Acting Chief of the Detention

Acquisition and Support Branch, ICE Office of Detention and Removal, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 801 "I" Street, Suite 980, Washington, D.C. 20536. Tel: (202) 305-8597; Fax: (202) 616-8702; E-mail: timothy.perry@dhs.gov

For complaints concerning medical and mental health care, advocates should copy Captain Philip Jarres, Branch Chief of Field Operations for the United States Public Health Service, 1220 L Street NW, Suite 500, Washington D.C. 20005. Tel: (202) 732-0100; E-mail: philip.jarres@dhs.gov

Third: The Working Group will keep a record of all issues brought to ICE headquarters. Please send a "bcc" of your e-mail correspondence, or a hard copy of any other correspondence, to Tara Magner, Director of Policy, National Immigrant Justice Center, 208 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 1818, Chicago, IL 60604. Tel: 202.660.1363; Fax: 312.660.1505; E-mail: tmagner@heartlandalliance.org

This centralized record of complaints sent to ICE headquarters will help the Working Group monitor ICE's response to such concerns and will help to shape the agenda of future meetings with high-level ICE officials. Ideally, these steps will serve to improve nationwide compliance with the Detention Standards. At minimum, they will contribute to our efforts to conduct effective oversight. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

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About National Immigrant Solidarity Network

ISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community. Please visit our website: <http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

Contact Information:

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(213) 403-0131 (Los Angeles)
(212) 330-8172 (New York)
(202) 595-8990 (Washington D.C.)

Please donate to ISN! (All donations are tax deductible!)
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