

Fall 2015 U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Fall 2015 Issue, Volume 52

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In This Issue:

The U.S. will release 6,000 inmates next month—and then deport 2,000 of them (Pg 1) | European governments treat refugees as a hostile invasion force (Pg 2) | "Dump the Trump" rally sounds off against Trump and his supporters (Pg 3) | DMV Issues Over Half a Million Driver's Licenses Under AB 60 (Pg 4) | Wage theft and local opposition threaten day laborers (Pg 5) | Anarchists Have Taken Over a Building in Athens to House Refugees (Pg 6) | Florida Father Denied Chance to Reunite with Family, Turned Away at Border (Pg 8) | Revised CBP Standards Promise Reform but Fall Short of Accountability (Pg 9) | Clinton Lobbyist Also Works for Private Prison Company GEO Group (Pg9) Updates, Please Support NISN! Subscribe the Newsletter! (Pg 10)

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10/7: The U.S. will release 6,000 inmates next month—and then deport 2,000 of them

Casey Tolan - Fusion

More than 6,000 inmates convicted of drug charges will be released from federal prison at the end of the month in what experts say will be among the largest inmate releases in U.S. history.

But about a third of those inmates aren't going free: 2,000 of the releasees are immigrants who will be immediately moved into deportation proceedings.

The release is thanks to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, a judicial agency which voted last April to reduce sentences for drug crimes by an average of 11 months. The commission decided in November 2014 that they would enact the changes retroactively, allowing inmates to petition courts for sentence reductions. The first wave of 6,000 inmates who have been approved will now be released between Oct. 30 and Nov. 2, although many of them are already in halfway houses or home confinement.

In past years, the commission made similar moves to reduce sentences for crack cocaine, but this release covers all drug charges. Over the next few years, it will mean that more than 40,000 inmates will be eligible for early release.

"We were motivated in part by the overcrowding in the federal prisons," Rachel Barkow, a commission member and NYU law professor, told the Marshall Project. Congressional oversight reports say that federal prisons are 30% over capacity.

The retroactive resentencing will take effect as criminal justice reform reaches a critical point in U.S. politics. It's separate from President Obama's move to grant clemency to some nonviolent drug offenders, which resulted in 46 commutations this summer. And it's also different from the recent bills proposed in Congress to reduce sentences and mandatory minimums for nonviolent crimes.

In fact, the commission's resentencing decision will probably have a bigger impact than those higher profile actions. "Nothing to date comes close to what this shift is likely to produce over the next decade or so, starting this year," Marc Mauer, the executive director of the Sentencing Project, an advocacy group, told the AP.

A quarter of the inmates who qualify under the sentencing commission's reforms are not U.S. citizens. The 2,000 inmates who will be deported—both undocumented immigrants and legal residents who can be deported for their crimes—will be moved from federal prison to immigration detention centers.

Donna Coltharp, an assistant federal public defender in the western district of Texas, told me that many of her clients eligible for the reductions were caught bringing drugs from Mexico into the U.S. "A lot of them are people who carried something across the border... for what seems to us as a small amount of money," she said. They ended up getting sentences ranging from five to ten years in prison.

"Even the folks who are going home to another country, I think, are happy that they're being released," she said. Immigrants in federal prison are not eligible for some drug programs that U.S. citizen inmates are, which can make their time in prison more difficult.

Some have worried that the people being released are not just nonviolent drug offenders caught in outdated sentencing guidelines, but hardened and dangerous criminals. The AP reported that some of those being released carried automatic weapons and had past robbery or assault convictions. Judges can block an early release if they think an inmate could be a public danger.

Other criminal justice reform advocates wonder why the release is making headlines now. This has been in the works for more than a year, and some say the media attention could be timed by some prosecutors to turn public opinion against criminal justice reform efforts. "It's fodder for the Bill O'Reillys and Heather Mac Donalds," a lawmaker working on the Senate reform bill told the Marshall Project.

Taken into context, it's hardly alarming: Every year, federal prisons release 55,000 inmates who've served their sentences, and state prisons release another 600,000.

9/5: European governments treat refugees as a hostile invasion force

Peter Schwarz - WSWS

Europe is currently experiencing its biggest refugee crisis since World War II. The horrific images transmitted daily across the world recall the cruel events of that time: Exhausted and desperate refugees trapped behind barbed wire, mistreated and herded into camps, dying at sea or suffocating in trucks. In the Czech Republic, refugees have been given numbers on their arms to identify them—like the prisoners in the concentration camps run by the Nazis.

European governments treat the stream of refugees as a hostile invasion force. This was most clearly articulated by the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban. "If we give them [the refugees] the impression that they are welcome, that would be a moral defeat," he said in Brussels. "We must make it clear to them: Do not come."

The remarks by Orban, an ultra-right-wing politician, have caused much phony indignation. But his "morality," which recalls that of the Nazis and finds its highest expression in the relentless persecution of refugees, is shared by all other European governments and the European Union as a whole. They are merely somewhat more careful in their choice of words.

The measures that Hungary is currently enforcing with utmost ruthlessness—the construction of a border fence, the use of tear gas and the army against refugees, their internment in camps in deplorable hygienic conditions—have long been practiced elsewhere.

Between 2007 and 2011, the EU provided its member states 2.2 billion euros for refugees, but only a fraction of this amount has gone towards their accommodation and integration. Around half of the money, one billion euros, has flowed into border protection: the construction of fences, surveillance and controls.

Three years ago Greece and Bulgaria, supported by the EU, constructed a high-tech fence, guarded by an army of police officers, to seal their borders with Turkey. The fence has forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to undertake the perilous route through the Mediterranean, with thousands subsequently dying at sea. The Spanish enclave of Ceuta is protected by a six-meter-high fence, in which refugees are repeatedly trapped and die like fish in a net.

The confinement of refugees under inhuman conditions is also not an invention of Orban. In Greece, similar disastrous conditions prevail, largely unreported by the media, since the country slid ever deeper into misery due to the austerity measures of the troika. Even the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung had to admit, "that with its construction of a fence and its plan to handle asylum procedures in border areas, Hungary is only putting into practice what the Germans, Austrians and French praise as a solution and which is also demanded of Greece and Italy."

On Friday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President François Hollande submitted a joint letter to the EU institutions, which exposes the inhumane policies of the imperialist powers. They are pressing for the establishment of registration centers in Italy, Greece and other EU member states, along with a common definition of "safe countries of origin" and a binding system of distribution of refugees to all member countries.

The registration centers, also known as "hot spots," are huge concentration camps, close to the border, where refugees are detained until they can be deported. The definition of "safe countries of origin" means that millions of refugees will lose their claim to legal asylum procedures.

And the German government only pushed for a distribution of refugees to all EU countries after the virtual collapse of the Dublin regulation, which compels refugees to remain in the first EU country they enter. As long as the refugees were concentrated in Italy, Greece and other countries, Berlin had strictly rejected any change in policy.

The responsibility of European governments for the refugee crisis is not confined to their present policies. They are also responsible for the devastation that has forced millions to flee their homelands. The colonial wars carried out in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and other countries by the European powers in alliance with the United States have wiped out the economic and social infrastructure of entire societies and transformed them literally into a pile of rubble.

Imperialist violence is complemented by the social devastation resulting from the policy of austerity in Europe. Does anyone remember the promises of freedom, democracy and future prosperity, when the Iron Curtain fell and capitalism was introduced in Eastern Europe? Twenty-five years later, new walls are being built and the social situation is more desperate than ever. Hundreds of thousands have fled from Eastern Europe and the Balkans because they have no future. Now the designation as "safe countries of origin" is robbing them of any means of flight from their misery.

The brutality with which the ruling class in Europe deals with refugees is the sharpest expression of its hostility to the entire working class. It stands in stark contrast to the wave of sympathy and solidarity shown to refugees by broad sections of the population.

As already shown in Greece, where one ruthless austerity program follows the next, capitalist society has nothing to offer to the broad mass of the population other than growing poverty, repression and war. The European working class must unite and take the fate of society into its own hands. This requires the fight for a socialist program and the construction of a new, revolutionary party. The defense of refugees is an integral part of such a struggle

9/15: "Dump the Trump" rally sounds off against Trump and his supporters

Obed Manuel - Latina Lista

Protestors from around Dallas and different Texas cities marched through the streets of downtown Dallas waving U.S. flags and chanting "Dump the Trump!" Monday afternoon.

The wave of red, white and blue noisily moved for a mile from the steps of the of the Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe to the American Airlines Center where Donald Trump would speak to his north Texas supporters.

Around 1,000 protestors took to the streets to express anger at the anti-immigrant sentiment Trump, the leading Republican presidential nominee, has been trumpeting around the country for the past few weeks.

Whole families attended the march. Children younger than five walked around waving flags and holding signs in support of immigrants. Several in the crowd carried Trump piñatas.

Stephanie Saras and her husband Jose Carillo attended the march with their four-month-old son Jonathan.

Saras said they decided to attend because her husband is an immigrant and they felt offended by the comments made by Trump and his supporters about Mexican immigrants.

"They always want to blame us for everything, but that's not the truth. We're here working hard to give our kids a better future," Saras said.

Local leaders riled up the crowd when it reached its destination in a parking lot adjacent to the American Airlines Center.

"The road to the White House goes through the barrios and the neighborhoods of Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York and those are our neighborhoods!" said former Texas house representative and attorney Domingo Garcia as the crowd cheered. "The people who pick our crops, who clean the toilets in the hotels, who build these skyscrapers – those people are going to pick the next president of the United States, and it's not going to be Donald Trump!"

As Trump supporters began arriving for the candidate's appearance, they mostly steered clear of the largely Latino anti-Trump crowd but for a few shouting matches that broke out.

North Texas LULAC director Christopher Enriquez said that he was glad to see so many in attendance given that the 5:30 p.m. time slot was not the most convenient.

Enriquez also said that one of the lessons the Latino community should take from Trump's rhetoric is that there are actual elected officials who think the way Trump does about Latinos.

"We have to be careful with them. We have to really see and educate ourselves in who they are and what they vote for," Enriquez said. "They don't always help our community even when it looks like they do."

Inside the center, Trump spoke to a crowd of about 15,000 people, according to the Dallas Morning News, but the candidate's camp expected around 20,000.

As expected, Trump spoke about the need to "end" illegal immigration and the need to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico and how he would force Mexico to pay for the wall's construction.

These points drew the largest applause from the crowd.

As the rally slowly came to an end, Saras said that seeing the crowd made her feel optimistic about the election cycle.

"It's good to see everyone here supporting each other. I just hope they all vote because we don't need someone like [Trump]," Saras said.

9/25: DMV Issues Over Half a Million Driver's Licenses Under AB 60

Luis Alejo - The 30th District in the California State Assembly

(SACRAMENTO) — Today, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced that they had reached a historic milestone: over 500,000 driver's licenses have been issued to undocumented Californians under Assembly Bill 60. Assembly Bill 60 was a historic piece of legislation authored by Assemblymember Luis Alejo (D-Salinas) in 2013 that restored the ability of undocumented California residents to apply for a driver's license. Following the announcement from the DMV, Alejo issued the following statement:

"Today, the DMV announced that over 500,000 undocumented California residents have successfully obtained a driver's license under AB 60. I am proud to have authored this historic measure for not only the millions of hard working undocumented Californians that call California home, but also the 38 million California residents that can now rest assured that everyone on California's roads is properly licensed, tested and insured. I want to commend the Governor, his staff, and the Department of Motor Vehicles for their tireless work to make today a reality. The hardworking recipients of AB 60 licenses make tremendous contributions to our society and economy and now, the state has returned the favor by allowing them to drive safely to work, take their children to school, and further their contributions to California without fear. Additionally, after nine months of implementation, concerns voiced by the critics have not turned out to be true. Instead, AB 60 has been a win-win for all Californians.

Today, undocumented California residents are renting vehicles, buying cars, insurance policies, and other miscellaneous

items needed to ensure their vehicles run properly and safely. This multiplier effect powers our economy with demand for new services and that translates into job preservation for many California workers. At the same time, AB 60 continues to make our roads safer by ensuring all drivers have undergone the training to operate their vehicles safely. Increased roadway safety is a huge benefit for all drivers. The DMV has also had a record number of Californians that are signing up to be organ donors as they obtain their new licenses.

In closing, I strongly encourage those who are eligible, but have yet to apply, to take the brave step and come out of the shadows so they too can obtain a license. They can do their part by applying and studying for the written test and signing up for driving lessons so they too can obtain a license to further their contributions to our great state."

9/18: Wage theft and local opposition threaten day laborers

Courts rule anti-day laborer local ordinances covering hundreds of thousands of workers are unconstitutional

Haya El Nasser - AlJazeera.com

LAGUNA BEACH, California — Every day starting at 6 a.m. about two dozen men, mostly Latinos, arrive at a roadside site off of winding Laguna Canyon Road and wait for cars and trucks to pull up and offer them day jobs.

Sometimes the pay is good, even higher than the federal minimum wage. But all too often, these men work all day and never get all the money they were promised.

It happened just the day before to Miguel Lopez, 56, a Mexican immigrant who has been in the U.S. 18 years. A man hired him and two others to do some planting in a gated community in posh Laguna Niguel. They were promised \$120 each for 8 hours work. Once they got there, the man pressured them to work faster and faster and when they finished in a little over seven hours, he paid them only \$95.

"He pushed, pushed, pushed all day and then he said \$95," said Lopez, who was appalled that the man told them to go to the bathroom outside rather than let them in to the house.

There are hundreds of thousands of day laborers across the nation, a number that is impossible to pin down because most are part of an informal network that is extremely difficult to track. Some hang out on street corners, others in the parking lots of Home Depots and Lowe's home improvement stores. Others report to an assigned area, usually sponsored by the city or community organizations.

It is estimated that more than 100,000 day laborers are either looking for work or employed in an informal work arrangement on any given day, according to a 2006 study by researchers at several universities.

Once confined to ports of entry along the East and West coasts, day labor is now a nationwide phenomenon that has spread to small and rural towns across America from the Midwest to the South.

The research showed that about 40 percent of day laborers have been in the country more than six years. Three-fourths are undocumented.

Another study by Abel Valenzuela, Jr., chair of the César E. Chávez Department for Chicana/o Studies at the University of California Los Angeles, put the numbers of day laborers in southern California alone at an estimated 15,000 to 20,000.

It is estimated that the slumbering economy and tight job market has pushed the numbers of day laborers even higher.

"After 2008, when the housing market collapsed, some contractors were coming to day labor centers themselves looking for work," said Pablo Alvarado, executive director of the National Day Labor Organizing Network.

The organization works to protect the constitutional rights of residents to find work, even on street corners. It won challenges to local ordinances barring the practice in 15 municipalities. The biggest victory was in 2011 in Redondo Beach, California, where day laborers were getting arrested. A U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the city's ordinance unconstitutional. The following year, the U.S. Supreme Court denied to hear the city's appeal of the decision.

"There are fewer localities trying to pass these ordinances now," Alvarado said. "For us, it's important because they deserve the constitutional right to stand on the sidewalk and look for work."

There was another victory earlier this month in Oyster Bay on the north shore of New York's Long Island. A federal court judge ruled after a five-year court fight that a law enacted to bar day laborers from soliciting work on town sidewalks and streets is unconstitutional.

Now, there are more women joining the ranks of day laborers or "jornaleros" as house cleaners and child care workers.

"The safety issues for the workers is really not being talked about," said Haeyoung Yoon, director of strategic partnerships at the National Employment Law Project. "Women often experience sexual harassment."

And because day laborers are usually paid cash, they're often target of robberies, said Salvador Sarmiento, legislative director of the national day laborer group.

Those assaults often go unreported because "immigrants are uncomfortable reaching out to police," he said.

But the greatest threat to day laborers is exactly what Lopez experienced: wage theft.

"It's a huge, huge problem in the day labor industry," Yoon said. "People are hired for one, two days and, in the end they are either underpaid or not paid. There are huge minimum wage violations."

Organizing day labor centers

Advocates are pushing for organized day laborer centers, either at an assigned location, such as the one here in Laguna Beach, or through a formal jobs center.

"When they're organized, they're an asset to communities," Alvarado said. "It's good for everybody."

But there is often opposition from the community.

"A lot of folks are using the services these day laborers are providing, whether it's renovating a house or cleaning a house," said Fernando Romero, executive director of the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center in Pomona, California. "But they don't want it around. We have to change the mindset ... I'm sure in every city there is a corner somewhere."

The National Day Labor Organizing Network is trying to establish hiring centers in North Carolina. New York City for the first time is supporting worker centers in all five of its boroughs, even providing funding in the 2016 fiscal year.

Having organized day labor centers "is night and day when you're talking about the vulnerability of a worker," Romero said. Without some type of a network, "You get picked up and get in to a car and you have no idea where they're taking you."

The number of day laborers has grown as families find it difficult to meet skyrocketing housing prices.

"It's hard to pay rent even with two incomes," Romero.

That's why more women are seeking day jobs. The Pomona jobs center created the Women Workers' program earlier this summer to find day jobs for women. About a dozen women are placed in jobs — many of them to clean homes or office buildings. Because they're placed by the center, they are less likely to be taken advantage of than those who are hired off the street.

Protecting and educating

Nationally, the push is on to create an organized network to protect day workers but also to educate them so that they can find more permanent jobs.

In Laguna Beach, the Crosscultural Council sends an official to the day laborer site at 6 a.m. to provide some safeguards and monitoring system.

On a recent Thursday, council worker Marlene Avila was keeping a log of every worker who was hired that day, jobs that are doled out via a morning lottery. She writes down the license plate numbers of people who hire them — from individuals to contracting companies — and tries to match the right workers for the jobs.

The Migrant Education Program in Orange and San Diego Counties sends migrant outreach workers to day labor sites to try to get those who might not have finished high school to do so — a long-term goal to improve immigrants' employment outlook.

Carmela Vásquez, one of the outreach workers who visited the Laguna Beach hiring area last week, said she is working with

50 out-of-school youths aged 16 to 22. Many arrive in the U.S. and go right to work in agriculture or construction.

But it's a local 17-year-old high school senior who has received national recognition for her volunteer work with day laborers. Shira Alcouloumre has been volunteering since the age of 11, even using her bat mitzvah money to help pay for a \$2,500 water fountain at the hiring site here. She teaches English as a second language to the workers.

Alcouloumre founded Laguna Friends in Need, which raised more than \$20,000 to pay for an awning at the site, meals, clothing and holiday presents for workers and their families. Her work has earned her a \$36,000 prize as one of 15 recipients of the 2015 Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards that recognizes teenagers for their commitment to social good and volunteer service. "Tikkun olam" is a Hebrew phrase that means repairing the world.

"I noticed one guy needed eye surgery and we took him to urgent care," said Alcouloumre, who is greeted with broad smiles by the day laborers.

When she saw that many were not eating the bread she brought them because of toothaches, she reached out to local dentists and distributed 100 toothbrushes and toothpaste tubes. A dental hygienist came to talk to them about dental care.

But now, Alcouloumre is getting a taste of local opposition. The Canyon Alliance of Neighborhoods Defense Organizations (CANDO) is not keen on her proposal to establish a larger structure to expand English classes.

"Our position isn't that there shouldn't be day laborers nor were we saying they should be out of Laguna," said Penelope Milne, president of the association. "Our mission is protecting the rural character of the canyon. ... That side of the canyon was always to remain undeveloped in perpetuity."

CANDO objects to more development, which in turn brings more traffic, and is seeking a compromise to move the center about half a mile away.

"The environmentalists have always been opposed to development on the side the labor area exists," said Steve Dicterow, Laguna Beach's mayor pro tem.

The city was sued in 2006 by Judicial Watch, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank that has filed similar suits elsewhere. The citizen border patrol group, the Minuteman Project, joined protests of the hiring area. The city won.

Dicterow supports a facility to teach English to the day laborers.

"To me, the greatest divide that keeps people from communicating is the different language," he said, adding that the hiring area "wouldn't exist if there wasn't a demand for labor."

The issue will be taken up by city staff and eventually go to the city council.

"We are certainly torn about it," said Milne, a dog trainer and 29-year resident of Laguna Beach. "Having day laborers who are working hard to work, driving and getting there at dawn to get work — that is not the mission that we oppose."

Cruz Moreno, 60, has been in the U.S. since 1978 and is a citizen and father of 10. He's a welder but "I can do anything," he said. And he has had to just about anything because finding a permanent job has not been easy.

That's why he comes to the hiring area. He manages to get two or three days of work a week that pays \$15 to \$20 an hour. He said the improvements to the day laborer site spearheaded by Alcouloumre and other local groups "helped us a lot."

Now, there are porta johns, a food truck, water fountain and picnic tables in the shade.

"Before, it was in the wild," Moreno said.

Alavarado said that local fights against day laborers is a microcosm of the national debate over the fate of an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants.

"The national debate is over whether to accept and include the undocumented who live and work in the United States," he said. "The debate in neighborhoods is to accept or reject 50 or 100 men."

9/28: Anarchists Have Taken Over a Building in Athens to House Refugees

Melpomeni Maragkidou - Vice

A huge banner reading "Refugees Welcome Home" is draped across the front of a derelict building in Exarchia, Athens--a district that's generally regarded as the spiritual home to the city's anarchist movement. On Tuesday morning, members of the Anti-authoritarian Movement Athens (AK) occupied a former university dining hall, with the aim of transforming it into a temporary residence for refugees. They want to fix up the space and make it fit to accommodate refugee and migrant families arriving in Athens.

Crossing a rubble-strewn courtyard, I entered the building to find members of AK making plans for an open meeting later that day. They offered to show me around and explained that before any refugees can be housed, they'll need to work together to clean, disinfect and make the place habitable. The truth is that it'll take a hell of a lot of time and effort because at the moment it's just a building site. The three floors are vast and empty. The ground level consists of a sort of living room, plus what's left of the old kitchen and bathrooms. The first and second floor will accommodate the families, while there are also plans to turn the basement into a storage area. Once complete, it's estimated that the building will accommodate up to 200 people.

"As the refugee crisis worsens, we took the initiative to seize the old student club on Arachovis Street and turn it into housing for refugees and migrants. There have been some positive developments in regards to the situation on behalf of the state, but we need the citizens to show real solidarity," AK note on their website.

One of the activists helping out at the site told me: "We came in the morning and took over the building. We don't want this to be a charity initiative or a soup kitchen. We want the space to be run by the migrants and refugees themselves. We can help meet their basic needs but they will need to cook and clean on their own, as if they were at home." This project isn't the only of its kind in Greece and AK members aim to connect with similar movements across Greece and the rest of Europe.

Are they worried the neighbours might object to their plans? "We're not concerned about the neighbourhood's reaction. Sure, there might be a few who don't agree, but the alternative makeup of Exarcheia makes it a good fit to accommodate people of different cultures. We're talking about refugees fleeing war zones--people who have endured terrible conditions. Even the coldest heart must be touched by that," another activist assured me.

Shortly after 7PM, several collectives and organisations joined members of the public and filled the building's ground floor completely. In an open meeting of about 200 people, the next few days were planned out. Firstly, the group would need to find the funds to cover the costs of renovation. They also discussed other similar projects across the country and the involvement of the migrant communities themselves. Work on the building was due to begin the next day.

The plan is for the space to function as a stop-gap in the journey of refugees and immigrants. The venue will be run by the refugees, who will host their own meetings and manage the space. The activists will only act as assistance. Once the building has been prepared, the work of actually getting the refugees in will begin. If people are as willing to help as they claimed at the meeting, the building could be ready in as few as three days.

Even though politicians don't seem to have an answer to this crisis--no matter how many EU summits they hold--the often maligned anarchists and other political radicals are offering at least a temporary reprieve for refugees. They've given up their own time and effort to help make the journey of refugees through Athens as human as possible.

The day after I visited, many returned to the squat with tools and equipment and the hard work began. If all goes to plan, refugees and immigrants will have their own real home in Athens in just a few short days.

10/6: Florida Father Denied Chance to Reunite with Family, Turned Away at Border

Rafael Gaytan, a DAPA-eligible father of 2 U.S.-born children and long term resident from Auburndale, FL, was denied humanitarian parole at the border

Tijuana, FL - Today at the San Ysidro U.S. port of entry, with a shattered heart Rafael Gaytan was turned away by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. His petition for humanitarian parole was denied. While in Florida, Mayra Gaytan (wife) and their children are devastated to hear the terrible news. Their family remains separated and their dreams of family reunification are turned into a nightmare.

Authorities at the border told Rafael the only way he could be granted humanitarian parole would be if his children were at their death bed. In the same way they stated he should have never gone to see his sister and parents. "I fear for my life back in Mexico, the organized crime is at its peak and I have no means to provide for my wife and kids from here" says Rafael.

Rafael Gaytan had to leave the country three months ago due to a family medical emergency and, unfortunately, had no other option but to travel without a permit because the Deferred Action or Parental Accountability (DAPA) program he is eligible for to have a temporary immigration status, is currently blocked at the courts. Today, Rafael attempted to turn himself in to immigration authorities at the border between San Diego and Tijuana as a last resort to reunite with his family.

The Young American Dreamers (YAD), and the rest of the supporting organizations, are with the Gaytan family now more than ever. They will not give up at the first encounter and will continue growing a petition that has over 500 signatures nationwide. This is the moment to continue fighting the immigration system keeping immigrant families apart, where if DAPA was in place Rafael would not be in this situation in the first place.

Daniel Barajas, YAD's Executive Director, returned to the Deported Veterans Support House in Tijuana with Rafael and will be working on next steps with legal support and other allies in the community. "At the end of the day, there are two citizen children who the system is failing and keeping away from their father" shared Daniel.

10/5: Revised CBP Standards Promise Reform but Fall Short of Accountability

Tom Hargis - ACLU of Texas

SOUTHERN BORDER REGION — Today, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) released revised "standards governing transport, escort, search and detention"—commonly known as TEDS. These standards create minimum requirements for U.S. Border Patrol and the Office of Field Operations, the two components of CBP, both of which may choose to supplement these standards with their own guidance.

While the new standards provide some affirmative reforms, other unconstitutional practices continue to be maintained.

"CBP's public release of revised standards is a welcome nod towards transparency and an encouraging sign that the agency has finally acknowledged border communities' concerns," said Vicki Gaubeca, director of the ACLU of New Mexico Regional Center for Border Rights. "At the same time, these standards do not guarantee fair and lawful treatment for those in CBP custody and come with no structure for oversight or accountability."

Several constructive reforms in the new TEDS standards include limiting the use of shackles as a "punitive" measure while in CBP custody, and adopting principles required by the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act.

"These standards make clear that CBP is beginning to recognize the failings of its detention operations," said Chris Rickerd, policy counsel with the ACLU's Washington Legislative Office. "We commend the agency's initial effort, including its attention to children, LGBTQ persons and individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, the standards fall short of constitutional adequacy and fail to address a federal judge's recent concern that 'widespread and deplorable' detention conditions exist because CBP policies aren't implemented. CBP needs to designate full-time detention-oversight personnel, upgrade the policies announced today, and establish a robust, independent inspection regime for all holding cells."

The TEDS standards continue to give CBP officials wide latitude to override the new requirements in deciding what is timely or operationally feasible. They maintain the status quo that virtually robs migrants of personal belongings. They also maintain or exacerbate a number of constitutionally suspect policies that have already resulted in the systemic abuse and mistreatment of countless men, women, and children in Border Patrol custody.

"Standards are worth little if they are not enforced," said Terri Burke, Executive Director of the ACLU of Texas. "These standards fail to address CBP's oversight and accountability deficits and, unlike other DHS agencies, omit independent monitoring and nongovernmental access. Without this, our nation's largest police force will continue to operate under a veil of secrecy that enables Border Patrol agents to ignore constitutional rights and American values."

7/24: Clinton Lobbyist Also Works for Private Prison Company GEO Group

Democracy Now!

....Meanwhile, in more news from the Clinton campaign, The Intercept is reporting that at least one of Clinton's top campaign lobbyists is also a registered lobbyist for the private prison giant GEO Group. The news raises questions about Clinton's recent statement that, if elected, she would work to end mass incarceration....

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About National Immigrant Solidarity Network

NISN 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>

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