

Fall 2016 U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

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Trump and Racism: Racist, Sexist, Homophobia, Islamophobia, Chnia Bashing Won Again! And Our Lessons

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NISN Statement

Lee Siu Hin

National Coordinator – National Immigrant Solidarity Network

There's no doubt, hate and racism won the election, with president-elect Trump calling to deport millions of immigrants, banning Muslims and building the border wall, U.S. will become fascist state.

But that's nothing new—President Bush and Obama had been doing the same: Bush has been attacking Muslims and foreign students, created DHS; Obama has been detained and deported hundreds of thousands of migrants with more detention centers. Trump just continuing their legacy with one big step more--Both Democratic and Republican racist polices share the equal blame.

What we should do next? We need to learned form the election 2016 lessons, don't count on fake progressive of Democratic, continue protest, support verity immigrant movements to build multi-ethnic solidarity movement against racist Trump!

11/9: Mexican officials in Juárez prepare for Trump

Lorena Figueroa - El Paso Times

JUÁREZ — Donald Trump's surprise U.S. presidential election victory will not impact the binational relationship that Juárez has with El Paso and rest of the United States, Mexican officials said.

However, they said, they are prepared to act should Trump move to carry out his campaign promises, including the mass deportation of millions of undocumented Mexicans living in the United States.

Juárez Mayor Armando Cabada said there still is a lot of uncertainty about how Trump's campaign promises are going to affect the border region and the rest of Mexico — including whether he even plans to go ahead with any of them.

“One thing is to be a candidate (for the U.S. presidency) and another one to be the president,” he said.

Cabada said he does not think the economic, social and cultural relationship that Juárez has with El Paso — or that between Mexico and the United States — will be affected, at least in the short term.

“He (Trump) will eventually need to understand the reality of his country and the relationship that it has had with Mexico,” he added.

During his campaign, Trump pledged to build a border wall to stem undocumented immigration, emphasizing that Mexico would pay for the barrier.

The 70-year-old real estate mogul, who has described Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals, also vowed to deport all undocumented immigrants in the United States.

That includes the 5.8 million undocumented Mexicans who make up 52 percent of all undocumented immigrants in the U.S., according to the latest Pew Research Center estimates.

Chihuahua Undersecretary of the North Zone Ramon Galindo said the border would be affected by mass deportations.

Galindo said that Chihuahua Gov. Javier Corral will be on alert if that situation happens in order to lessen as much as possible the impact on the border, adding that Corral will look for ways to help deportees.

“We are in the most critical, the most delicate zone of the relationship (that Mexico has) with the United States because of our border situation. I think that there will be a response to that new reality, a plan that includes the federal government,” he said.

Cabada added that if mass deportations do occur, he will also ask the Mexican federal government for support because “there is no way that the local government has the capacity to handle them.”

The National Immigration Institute delegate in Chihuahua, Wilfrido Campbell, said the federal government already has a plan designed for that.

He said that about five months ago, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto established the Todos Somos Mexicanos, or We Are All Mexicans, program to be replicated in each of the 31 Mexican states and Mexico City. In Chihuahua, it began to be implemented in September, he added.

The program is designed to support and help all Mexicans deported from the United States. He said, for example, that Mexico's Labor Department will contribute to finding adult deportees a job while the Education Department will enroll children in public schools.

“We do not know how big this situation will be, or if it is going to happen, but we are prepared,” Campbell said.

On the U.S. side of the border, Fernando Garcia, director of the El Paso-based Border Network for Human Rights, presented a pledge in which the organization rejects racism and stands against mass deportation and militarization of the border.

“We will oppose efforts by the state of Texas to target immigrant and border communities, whether by legislation or executive action,” Garcia said at a news conference in El Paso.

He said the organization will continue to educate members of the community on their civil, constitutional and human rights, and will promote inclusion and diversity among children.

El Paso immigration attorney Carlos Spector, who also participated in the news conference, said the reality is that Trump won the election and the first ones who will suffer the consequences of his victory are young, undocumented immigrants. Spector said Trump will revoke the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy as soon as he takes office.

“There is a hysteria, there is a fear, a depression in our community. But what is the answer? We organize,” Spector said.

Trump’s campaign promises have gone beyond sparking fear in undocumented immigrants who had hoped instead for a path to citizenship.

He has also vowed to tear up the North American Free Trade Agreement as a way stop U.S. jobs from going to Mexico. Juárez’s economy depends mostly on the manufacturing industry, comprised of assembly plants, or maquiladoras.

Carlos Castruita, Mexico’s deputy delegate of economy in Juárez, said the country has not received any restrictions or new additional taxes because of possible changes within NAFTA “but we will be very attentive of them.”

He said that Mexico will wait until Trump takes office in January to avoid false expectations.

And if something changes in the agreement, it will take time to take effect.

“All the trade partners, which includes Mexico and Canada, have to sit down and agree that any changes made do not affect anyone,” Castruita said.

“What we need to do right now is take care of our economy, which has been stable,” he added.

In fact, he said, Mexico keeps adding incentives to create jobs through the maquilas.

He said that this year alone there have been 27 permits given to manufacturing plants through the IMMEX program to establish operations in Juárez. Most of those plants are American, despite the political environment, he said.

The IMMEX program was created by the Mexican government to attract and promote foreign investment through tax and customs duty reductions.

Currently, there are 385 maquilas in Juárez and about 80 percent of them are from the United States, Castruita said.

For his part, Peña Nieto said Wednesday on Twitter that Mexico and the United States will remain friends and allies, but stopped short of congratulating Trump on his victory.

Instead, Peña Nieto congratulated the United States for its electoral process and reiterated to Trump his willingness to work together.

“The people of the United States have elected their next president,” Peña Nieto said. “I congratulate the United States for its electoral process, and I reiterate to Donald Trump our willingness to work together to strengthen our bilateral relationship.”

Peña Nieto added, “Mexico and the United States are friends, partners and allies who should continue collaborating for the competitiveness and the development of North America.”

In his last tweet Wednesday morning, Peña Nieto said, “I’m confident that Mexico and the United States will continue to strengthen their bonds of cooperation and mutual respect.”

Former Mexican President Vicente Fox blasted Trump in a column published in the International Business Times and other media, calling him an “authoritarian racist.”

“Donald Trump’s character will not only be tested, but will serve as a boost for his egocentric and megalomaniac ideas that will take his ‘beloved nation’ to the ground,” Fox wrote.

Fox, who was president of Mexico from 2000-06, has been one of Trump’s biggest critics.

“Even though Trump is not the prettiest person in the room, we still have to dance with him,” Fox wrote. “Now, we ought to look out for ourselves and find a way to work with the most powerful economy in the world, which is now led by an authoritarian racist.”

On Twitter, Fox reiterated his previous comments about Trump’s proposed border wall.

11/13: Donald Trump Says He Will Deport up to 3 Million Immigrants 'That Are Criminal'

Martin Pengelly - Guardian UK

Speaking to 60 Minutes, president-elect says Mexico border wall would partially consist of fencing: 'I'm very good at this. It's called construction'

President-elect Donald Trump has said he plans to deport as many as 3 million people once he accedes to the Oval Office, and that fencing will form part of his promised wall on the border with Mexico.

In an interview with CBS's 60 Minutes, set to be broadcast Sunday, Trump said: "What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably two million, it could be even three million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate."

"But we're getting them out of our country, they're here illegally."

On the campaign trail, Trump said he would deport all undocumented migrants living in the US, estimated to be about 11 million people. He has stressed his desire to deport "criminal aliens" and said that he would deport families "in a very humane way".

His comments to CBS stopped short of such extremes but they also contrasted with the words of House speaker Paul Ryan in a Sunday interview with CNN.

"That is not what our focus is," Ryan told State of the Union. "We are focused on securing the border before we get on any immigration. We are not planning on erecting a deportation force, Donald Trump's not planning on that."

Speaking to CBS in his first broadcast interview since he defeated Hillary Clinton in the electoral college and lost to her in the popular vote, Trump referred to undocumented migrants without criminal records as "terrific people". He did not describe in detail what his policy would be toward them.

"After the border is secure and after everything gets normalized," he said, "we're going to make a determination on the people that they're talking about who are terrific people, they're terrific people but we are gonna make a determination at that."

"But before we make that determination," he added, "it's very important, we are going to secure our border."

The day he began his presidential campaign, Trump warned about Mexican migrants who were "rapists" and "criminals", and spent weeks saying migrants were "pouring in" across the border, although research does not support links between immigration and crime, net migration has remained level for years, and more Mexican migrants are leaving the US than entering it.

The US already has a large infrastructure for arresting, detaining and deporting migrants. Over eight years, Barack Obama has deported more than 2.5 million people, more than any other president, and more than doubled the number of border patrol agents. He has also increased border surveillance, and contracted the country's largest prison company to help detain migrants.

Obama pursued immigration reform but failed to press a bipartisan bill through Republican opposition in Congress in 2013 and 2014. He subsequently ordered sweeping executive actions to shield eligible migrants, mostly young people and all without criminal records, from deportation. Trump has pledged to rescind those orders.

Trump also discussed his way to secure that border, the proposed wall, which on the campaign trail he said would be a genuine wall made of "hardened concrete", "rebar" and "steel".

Long stretches of the nearly 2,000-mile southern border already have fencing, under a years-long project that has proven difficult and expensive to enact.

Asked if some stretches of his wall would consist of fencing, as suggested by congressional Republicans, he said: "For certain areas I would, but certain areas, a wall is more appropriate."

“I’m very good at this,” the businessman added. “It’s called construction.”

10/28: Dozens of Haitian men held at Otero County Detention Center

Julio Chavez - KIVA

Otero County, New Mexico - More than 100 undocumented Haitian men are being held at the Otero County Prison Facility, according to volunteers who worked with the immigrants.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement confirmed they are holding the men in partnership with the prison.

The 136 men crossed through California before being detained and sent to different facilities while they await deportation, the volunteers said.

El Paso residents have helped the immigrants overcome a large language barrier; the guards at the prison don't speak French. A few immigrants speak broken Spanish.

Volunteers are looking for extra help. "I don't want people's money. If people want to help in the situation, let's say you're a lawyer, an immigration lawyer, this is the time to serve your country, please help," said Fainot Pierre, one of the Haitian-Americans United volunteers.

Pierre said there are other ways you can help, "Offer counseling, any kind of help to help these people during this difficult time, please reach out and those people need your help; and they need your help right now."

Haitians have been fleeing the country since the 2011 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew earlier this month. The U.S. was allowing Haitians to stay in the country after the earthquake but the provision ended in September.

It appears husbands and wives have been separated, including one couple in their third trimester.

"One particular example, that wife, she's due pretty soon. She has no clue where her husband is being held. I had to share that information with her, I told her 'Don't panic, your husband is alive and well. He's in Otero County Jail.' And she explained to me she hasn't spoke to her husband since they got into California in early September, September 7," Pierre said.

We're told while some husbands and wives have been separated, immigration authorities typically don't separate mothers and their children.

If you would like to help the immigrants you can contact Pierre at fpierre@miners.utep.edu

It helps if you speak French but is not required.

11/16: Trump Team Has Plan to Build Wall, Maybe Reinstate Muslim Registry

Margaret Hartmann – NY Magazine

There are a lot of policies that President Trump could enact on day one, but it did not seem like building his beautiful southern border wall was one of them. The U.S. already spent billions to merely fence off about a third of the border, and attempting to construct a concrete wall could cost as much as \$25 billion. Even with Republicans in control, that's not something that's going to move through Congress swiftly.

But according to one member of Trump's transition team – who's rumored to be a top contender for attorney general – his immigration advisers have already worked out how to start on the wall without any help from Congress.

Kansas secretary of State Kris Kobach tells Reuters that he has been holding conference calls with about a dozen Trump immigration advisers for the past few months, and they believe the Homeland Security Department can reappropriate funds from its current budget to begin construction immediately. Congress would likely balk at this, and he acknowledged "that future fiscal years will require additional appropriations."

According to Kobach, the team has also been looking at how to implement Trump's vague plan for the "extreme vetting" of Muslims entering the country. One possibility: simply reinstate the post-9/11 registry of Muslims entering the country on visas from countries that pose a terror threat.

Under the 2002 National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, which Kobach helped design, people from "higher risk" countries were interrogated and fingerprinted upon entering the country. The "special registration" program required some noncitizen males over the age of 16 to register in person and occasionally notify the government of their whereabouts.

Following complaints that the program violated civil liberties and was discriminatory toward Muslims, the special registration program ended in 2003.

"It was clearly discriminatory because the nations listed were only Arab and Muslim nations," Abed Ayoub, the national legal and policy director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, told The Wall Street Journal. "They just put in North Korea for good measure."

The Obama administration ended the rest of the NSEER requirements in 2011, but it accomplished that by removing all the countries from the list. Technically, the regulation is still on the books.

Presumably, this is just a small peek at the proposals Kobach is preparing for President Trump. He's known for drafting extreme immigration laws, such as Arizona's "show me your papers" law, which was struck down by the Supreme Court. He's also passionate about fighting voter fraud, though there's little evidence that it exists. He pushed for a 2013 Kansas law that required people to provide documents proving their citizenship in order to register to vote, which was also overturned by the courts.

Kobach has taken credit for the idea that Mexico would pay for the wall, and he seems like a perfect fit for Trump's cabinet — even when it comes to the controversy his nomination would generate. In 2015, he spoke before the Social Contract Press, which the Southern Poverty Law Center classifies as a white nationalist group, saying:

Recent articles in its main product, The Social Contract, have propagated the myth that Latino activists want to occupy and 'reclaim' the American Southwest, argued that no Muslim immigrants should be allowed into the U.S., and claimed that multiculturalists are trying to replace "successful Euro-American culture" with "dysfunctional Third World cultures."

Kobach called the criticism "outrageous," and defended the group, saying, "According to the SPLC, if you're against illegal immigration, you're a racist."

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11/14: Muslims in Trump's America: Fearful but Defiant

Murtaza Hussain - The Intercept

Over the course of Donald Trump's electoral campaign, the now president-elect repeatedly promised to turn Muslim Americans' darkest fears into reality. Trump has suggested that under his administration, Muslims may be listed and recorded in a national database, forced to carry special identification cards, and subjected to intensified surveillance in their places of worship. Trump has also suggested that many Muslims could be banned from the United States wholesale, as part of a broader crackdown on immigration.

Trump's proposals, however vile, at one time seemed almost too outlandish to be accepted by the American electorate. But now, the inconceivable has happened. Donald Trump, the former reality-TV host and real estate mogul, has gone from dark-horse GOP primary candidate to the president-elect of the United States. With Republicans retaining control of Congress, the future President Trump has a mandate to turn many of his proposals into reality.

While many communities have good reason to fear a Trump presidency, for Muslim Americans the fears are particularly immediate. Not only is Trump openly hostile to them, roughly half of American voters have either accepted his message of hatred and xenophobia, or otherwise helped abet it. During the primaries, strong majorities in many states expressed direct support for Trump's proposal to ban Muslims from the country.

The revelation that there is such widespread, demonstrable popular support in the United States for drumming Muslims out of society has been chilling for many.

“I grew up in New England, in a community that was worldly, educated, and prosperous — but the last time I was there, I saw more Trump signs than I could believe. That wasn’t about economics. It was about tribe, race, and privilege,” says Haroon Moghul, a Muslim activist and fellow at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. “I’m afraid for my family and for Muslim Americans generally. To use a cultural reference we can all understand: We feel like we just got voted off the island. Now all we’re doing is waiting for when, and how, they’ll show us out.”

“Will it happen gradually, or all at once? Will it be late at night when no one is watching, or in the middle of the day, to chants of ‘USA, USA’?”

Faiza Ali, a community organizer in Brooklyn, says she was “shocked and terrified” by the results of the election. Like many others, she fears that Trump’s anti-Muslim political platform will lead to the mainstreaming of Islamophobia within American society. “An unabashed bigot who has called for the banning of Muslims and the shutting down of mosques was elected president. When he was running his campaign, there was no place for Muslims in Trump’s America. What does this mean for us now?”

Since Trump’s election, a number of hate crimes targeting visibly Muslim women have been investigated across the country. Many fear that such incidents are only a harbinger of future discrimination, now legitimized by the bigotry of the president-elect himself.

“I fear for communities of color and Muslims, especially women who wear hijab,” Ali says. “Trump ran a campaign based on fear and hate, and without a doubt, fear and hate is exactly what won on Tuesday.”

While the shock of Trump’s election is still reverberating, some Muslim American activists say that Trump’s presidency may offer a small silver lining: the opportunity to forge alliances with other communities to defend civil liberties in the United States. After 15 years of being at the forefront of surveillance and harassment by the FBI, NSA, and other federal government agencies, Muslim Americans are hopeful that the widespread shock over Trump’s election will offer an opportunity to build new alliances with other civil society groups, while turning more Americans against Islamophobia.

“Americans have to understand that when Muslims were depicted as a national security threat to legislate against, with measures like the Patriot Act and NDAA being passed as a result, everyone lost their civil liberties, not just us,” says Maytha Alhassen, a PhD researcher in American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California. “By painting us as an unrelatable community, disconnected from American values, the government made it easy for Americans to vote against their own interests.”

Back in the early post-9/11 period, the Bush administration expanded government powers, including domestic surveillance and watchlisting. The Obama administration has continued and entrenched these measures, which have been accepted by many on the basis of national security. In general, the targets of the most draconian security policies have been Muslims. An NYPD surveillance program that conducted blanket surveillance on Muslim neighborhoods in New York and New Jersey and a national program that permitted the surveillance of Muslim American civil society leaders are among the many examples.

The fact that such programs were revealed largely during a relatively popular Democratic administration blunted much popular criticism. But under a GOP president as divisive, threatening, and bellicose as Trump, there may be an opportunity for a coordinated push against such policies.

“We had a lot of work to do no matter who won the presidency. Many policies were already in place that were targeting our community, but now the landscape has fundamentally changed,” says Mohammad Khan, campaign manager at MPower Change, a Muslim grassroots advocacy organization.

Khan says that his organization is bracing for the worst after Trump’s election. He describes the atmosphere of fear among Muslim Americans today as similar to the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001.

“I think we’re going to have to operate in a manner similar to opposition parties living under authoritarian regimes. We expect organizations and leaders to be targeted for harassment and legal measures in the coming years, as well as wider crackdowns on public assembly and dissent,” Khan says. “A crackdown is coming to civil society in general, and on Muslims in particular, whether they engage in activism or not.”

The sweep of this crackdown may help Muslim Americans gain more public support on issues affecting their community. “In a crisis moment like this, other communities may realize how Islamophobia has been used as a justification to expand the coercive power of the government,” Khan says. “That can bring a sense of unity between different groups who share a fear of being targeted by this administration.”

Over the course of a long, divisive campaign, Trump has succeeded in alienating vast swaths of American society. His attacks against the press and the judiciary have strongly suggested that his administration will seek to govern in a bullying, authoritarian fashion. With the vastly expanded executive powers bequeathed to him by the Obama administration, Trump stands ready to inherit a presidential office of unprecedented historical power.

“For years we have been warning of the sheer magnitude of a government that has militarized the police, dramatically expanded secrecy, and normalized suspicionless surveillance,” says Naureen Shah, director of national security and human rights at Amnesty International. “We’re now seeing growing consciousness of how we’re all affected by these aggressive and abusive security measures.”.

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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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