

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

June 20, 2023

Re: More than 100 Organizations Urge a Centralized Process for a Chance to Come Home

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We the undersigned organizations respectfully request that you facilitate the returns of unjustly deported people with pending requests to return to the U.S. and establish a [centralized process](#) to provide a meaningful chance to come home for people forced to leave behind their families and communities by unjust deportations.

You have [referred](#) to family unity as a foundational principle underpinning the work of the Department of Homeland Security. Ensuring a meaningful process for deported individuals to apply to return to their loved ones would mark a long-lasting reflection of that commitment. It would also further this administration's efforts to [promote racial equity](#) throughout government programs and policies. And for deported individuals and their loved ones it would mean everything – the chance for families and communities to be made whole after years or decades of painful separation.

Our organizations work with and on behalf of many deported individuals. Among others, some have been separated from their loved ones for years and cannot return despite strong legal arguments to reopen their immigration cases and pursue lawful status. Some remain in exile despite having received a pardon or vacatur of the criminal conviction that formed the basis for their deportation. And we work with community members who are haunted by the memory of the day their loved one was picked up in a frightening raid or home arrest under prior administrations.

Although current immigration laws have procedures that allow individuals to seek return after deportation, these mechanisms are cumbersome and often difficult or impossible to access for unrepresented individuals who are limited in resources. Further, in our experience immigration adjudicators rarely agree to exercise prosecutorial discretion to support a request to return home, even when the humanitarian circumstances present are extreme.

More than a century ago, the Supreme Court [described](#) the harsh and permanent nature of the penalty of deportation, which “may result ... in loss of both property and life, or of all that makes life worth living.” Deportations [destabilize](#) families, often resulting in food and housing

instability. The deportation of a parent has long-lasting, [traumatic mental and physical health](#) effects on children. The costs of deportation are borne disproportionately by Black and Brown immigrants, and institutional racial biases in the criminal legal system are [amplified](#) when deportation is imposed as a second punishment.

We therefore urge you to facilitate returns for unjustly deported people with pending requests. And, going forward, we recommend the establishment of a streamlined, centralized system to consider requests for return from people who have been wrongfully or unjustly deported. Bringing home unjustly deported people including parents, community leaders, veterans, workers, and others would advance this administration's stated goals of family unity and racial equity while making all of our communities stronger.

With questions, please contact Nayna Gupta at the National Immigrant Justice Center at ngupta@heartlandalliance.org.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Acacia Center for Justice

African Human Rights Coalition

African Immigration Initiative of the Courageous Resistance

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Black Alliance for Just Immigration

Cameroon Advocacy Network

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Center for the Study of Social Policy

Center for Victims of Torture

Church World Service

Coalition on Human Needs

Deported Asylum Seekers Assistance Project

Detention Watch Network

Drug Policy Alliance

Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project
Esperanza United (formerly Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network)
Fight for the Future
Freedom for Immigrants
Grassroots Leadership
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Watch
Immigration Equality
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH)
Justice Action Center
Justice in Motion
Kino Border Initiative
Mijente
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Litigation Alliance
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
National Partnership for New Americans
Oasis Legal Services
Quixote Center
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Tahirih Justice Center
Tsuru For Solidarity
UndocuBlack Network
UnidosUS

Washington Office on Latin America
Witness at the Border
Women's Refugee Commission
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

Regional, state and local organizations

ACLU of Northern California
ACLU of Southern California
Americans for Immigrant Justice
Black and Brown United in Action
Border Network for Human Rights
Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition
Catholic Coalition for Migrant Justice
Chacon Center for Immigrant Justice at Maryland Carey Law
Cincinnati-Hamilton Co. Public Library
Cleveland Jobs with Justice
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC)
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible
Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services Inc
El Concilio Family Services
Families for Freedom
First Friends of New Jersey & New York
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Florida Immigrant Coalition
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Defense Project
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigrant Legal Defense

Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Jesuits West CORE AZ
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice of Western MA
La Resistencia
Lamar Unidos
Legal Aid Justice Center
Make the Road NJ
Mariposa Legal, program of COMMON Foundation
Midwest Immigration Bond Fund
Minnesota Freedom Fund
Muslim Justice League
NorCal Resist
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
Oasis Legal Services
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
Organized Communities Against Deportations
Public Law Center
Rhizome Center for Migrants
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Sidewalk School
Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice
Texas Advocates for Justice
Uncage and Reunite Families Coalition
Unified US Deported Veterans Resource Center
UnLocal
Voces Unidas (RGV)
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration