

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](mailto: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