



Statement on ICE Raids and Deportations

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) is concerned about the recent increase in enforcement actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that have resulted in the apprehension and deportation of our immigrant neighbors. The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) guidelines on immigration enforcement are alarming to immigrants and immigrant advocates alike. These directives, designed to actualize President Trump's executive orders, contain a number of troubling provisions which threaten members of our communities and challenge the values which stitch this nation of immigrants together.

The DHS memo calls for a significant increase in enforcement agents; targeting low-level infractions and misdemeanors; and implementing expedited removal procedures which threaten the due process rights of asylum seekers and other immigrants, including children. Increased raids on our community and summary deportations do not make us safer, rather, they fan the flames of fear and sow seeds of division in society.

These misguided directives serve only to drive our immigrant community members further into the shadows and endanger those fleeing violence in their home countries.

Women religious will continue to heed the gospel call to welcome the stranger and minister to immigrants (Mt. 25:35). LCWR and its members will continue to press for relief for families and an end to needless deportations. Catholic sisters will continue to advocate for compassionate, bipartisan legislation that fixes our broken immigration system and we will continue to stand in solidarity with families, regardless of immigration status, who labor daily to provide safety and security for their children.

LCWR is an association of leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The conference has nearly 1300 members, who represent more than 38,800 women religious in the United States. Founded in 1956, LCWR assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today's world.

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**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

Statement: Welcoming immigrants and refugees as neighbors

January 26, 2017

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Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. (Zechariah 7:10)

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Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. decries the executive actions on immigration enforcement taken yesterday by President Trump as well as actions on refugee resettlement expected later this week. These actions portray immigrants and refugees as criminals and threats rather than seeing them as God's beloved children.

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In our society, rejection of the immigrant—"the other"—still runs deep, whether due to fear, ignorance, racism or selfishness. By building walls and turning away refugees we ignore Christ's call to care for those in need and to love the stranger among us as we love ourselves.

Building border walls focuses on the symptoms rather than the causes of migration. As long as poverty, lack of opportunity and violent conflict push people to come to the U.S.—and, as long as opportunities, safety and family members pull people here—there will be migration. When the legal routes are either not available or severely restricted, as they are in the U.S., people will come whatever way they can. And no wall will stop them.

The increased enforcement measures called for in these executive actions—including more for-profit detention facilities, the return of the controversial Secure Communities program, and thousands more immigration enforcement officers—will lead to more racial profiling, more family separations and needless suffering.

The executive actions punishing so-called "sanctuary cities" will not make our communities more safe. On the contrary, numerous cities have sanctuary policies precisely because law enforcement officials understand that mixing local policing and immigrant enforcement makes communities less safe by causing immigrants to fear reporting crimes to police.

President Trump's proposed actions on refugees would restrict the entry of people from particular countries and essentially freeze the federal refugee resettlement program. As Anabaptist Christians, we have long held that governments must protect the religious freedom of all people, not just Christians. We strongly oppose any discrimination against refugees, including discrimination based on religion or nationality. Our nation must keep its doors open to all people who are in need and face persecution.

MCC will continue to provide much needed immigration services such as legal documentation, support for families seeking asylum, and "know-your-rights" education. We will persist in our advocacy for fair and compassionate immigration policies consistent with our values and with God's teachings.

We encourage you to consider new ways you can welcome immigrants and refugees as neighbors in your community, and to make your voice heard on these important issues by contacting the White House and your members of Congress. Thank you for joining us in response to Christ's welcoming call.

J Ron Byler

Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee U.S.



National Council of Jewish Women

New Homeland Security Measures Put 11 Million Undocumented Immigrants at Risk

February 21, 2017 Washington, DC – The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) today denounced memos issued by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implementing two recent executive orders. NCJW CEO Nancy K. Kaufman released the following statement:

“National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is dismayed by the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) memos implementing President Trump’s recent executive orders, “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States” and “Border Security and Immigration Enhancement Improvements.” These memos represent a sea change in how the nation’s immigration enforcement agencies, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), treat undocumented immigrants, putting more than 11 million individuals at-risk for imprisonment and deportation.

“Most strikingly, CPB and ICE agents are now instructed to arrest and initiate deportation proceedings for every undocumented immigrant they encounter, as opposed to previous policy, which prioritized undocumented immigrants convicted of serious crimes. Further, CBP agents will be able to deport individuals to Mexico, whether or not they are from Mexico, and the memos mandate that undocumented individuals be detained in newly built prisons along the border, instead of being released on parole until their cases are heard. Yet another harmful policy shift allows ICE officials to prosecute the parents of undocumented, unaccompanied minors in some circumstances.

“These changes are devastating for undocumented individuals and families. They make it nearly impossible for people who are undocumented to seek medical care, education, security, or basic services without fear of arrest and deportation — eroding their basic human dignity and threatening their lives. We are all of equal worth, regardless of our immigration status . NCJW denounces these egregious measures, and urges the Administration to remember that this nation was founded on the values of tolerance and openness. We must ensure that our communities remain welcoming toward immigrants and all those seeking better lives in the United States.”

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. More information on Facebook and on Twitter at @NCJW.

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Disciples Home Missions and Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Response to Executive Orders against Refugees & Immigrants:
Refugee Bans and Accelerated Immigration Enforcement/ICE Raids
2/21/2017



As a faith movement born on the American frontier and founded on the principles that all are welcome at the Table of Christ, Disciples remain committed to fulfilling our biblical call to show hospitality to the stranger and treat “the foreigner who resides with you...as the native born among you” (Leviticus 19:34). We remember the characteristics of independence, initiative, and determination that have historically contributed to our American spirit, and we see such values reflected in the courage of immigrant and refugee individuals and families who are our neighbors and fellow church members.

In this time of strident rhetoric against immigrants and refugees, and in the face of multiple Executive Orders impacting immigrant and refugee communities by the Trump administration, we express compassion both for those within and outside of our faith family who are experiencing heightened fears of disruption and separation from their families, communities, and jobs because of recent pronouncements.

As anxieties of immigrants and refugees have increased, we re-pledge to stand in solidarity with sojourners among us, to seek to strengthen our partnerships for justice with the marginalized, and to continue to call upon our congregations to deepen their welcome for refugee and immigrant communities. We celebrate many ways our congregations are actively seeking to live out their solidarity through intentional acts of welcome, sanctuary, and the offering of protections.

We likewise call upon the White House and Congress to rescind the refugee and immigration Executive Orders, and instead to pursue compassionate immigration reforms that model our commitment to unity and recognition that all are created by and valuable in the eyes of God.

We urge the White House and Congress to remain committed to a robust program of refugee resettlement that will welcome at minimum the 75,000 refugees currently funded by the U.S. Congress to enter this fiscal year. We call upon the White House and Congress to recognize the demonstrated safety of the U.S. refugee vetting processes, and to resist a pause in the U.S. resettlement program which harms the ability for thousands of the world’s most vulnerable persons to obtain needed protections. We urge the White House and Congress to not deny entrance to refugees based upon national or religious exclusions.

We decry the recent escalation of raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which have detained immigrants outside churches and other sensitive locations, and which have indiscriminately arrested parents of citizen children, lay leaders, and even an individual with current Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. We believe that raids upon immigrants do not make our communities safer. Rather, we believe community safety is strongest when all community members—regardless of immigration status—feel safe to approach law enforcement without fear that they could be detained or deported because of such actions. We urge the White House and Congress to halt such practices that result in detentions and deportations of individuals who have not posed a risk to our society.

Further, we believe peace comes not by the multiplication of barriers and force, but by the furtherance of relationships, and a focus upon building bridges and partnerships rather than walls. We therefore urge resistance to force multiplication at the border. We call for discretion in immigration enforcement, and seek civil and human rights for border communities, including community engagement and accountability systems.

Our hearts are deeply saddened as well for the more than three quarters of a million youth and young adults who now face additional uncertainties under the new administration as DACA recipients. Within our Disciples congregations are talented DACA college students, church leaders, and community contributors who arrived as “sojourners in our midst,” have spent the majority of their lives in the U.S., have served God and neighbor in America for years, and have displayed cherished values of hard work, commitment to family, and the pursuit of education. We urge the White House and Congress to offer immigration reforms that reassure these so-called “dreamers” of a stable future, keep them united with their families, and enable them to fully utilize their God-granted gifts without fears of deportation.

Contact Refugee & Immigration Ministries at: ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org, or 202-957-7826.

FCNL Calls on Congress to Speak Out Against Immigration Raids & New Enforcement Policies

By Hannah Graf Evans, February 24, 2017

On February 21, the Department of Homeland Security released memorandums instructing the agency to implement the two executive orders that scale up immigration and border enforcement, endangering U.S. communities.

Over the last few weeks, the first immigration raids under the new Trump administration began. FCNL's lead lobbyist on immigration, Hannah Graf Evans, made the following statement in response to these renewed, devastating enforcement actions:

"These raids are not in line with who we are as a nation, and who we should strive to be as neighbors. Rather than offering genuine opportunities for immigrants to pursue lawful status and citizenship, the executive orders and enforcement actions following them are promoting further devastation and division in communities. Amidst these raids, immigrants and their loved ones are facing an unknown future and their fear is palpable. As neighbors, as people of faith, and as constituents we should all be demanding that our unjust immigration laws are reformed to align with our values. Quakers know that there is that of God in every person, we need laws that reflect that core teaching and legislators that will speak out in the face of injustice."

Almost 700 people have been arrested in the enforcement actions in 12 different states. Among those affected by the raids are an Arizona mother of a teenage U.S. citizen daughter, who has lived in the U.S. since she was 14-years-old; a 23-year-old young man in Washington who should have been protected from deportation; and homeless men who were targeted by federal immigration authorities while leaving a church shelter in Virginia. These are just a few of the hundreds of people forcibly separated from their communities over the last few weeks. A mother of four had to choose to go into protection at a Colorado church, because with the stroke of a pen, President Trump determined her and millions others a priority for deportation.

Following the January 25 executive orders, the memorandums categorize a wider array of immigrants as priorities for immediate deportation, while also encouraging the detention and deportation of *any* undocumented immigrant encountered by immigration enforcement agents. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protections (CBP) are also instructed to begin hiring 15,000 additional enforcement agents to carry out these deportations, and increase 287(g) agreements that deputize local law enforcement officers to carry out federal immigration enforcement.

Congress has not effectively reformed our immigration laws in decades. The time is past due for our elected officials to ensure every individual has a viable chance to remain with their loved ones, and a meaningful opportunity for legal recourse. FCNL urges members of Congress to speak out against these raids, and demand that administrative and congressional proposals are in line with the world we seek.



For Immediate Release
February 24, 2017
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Press Release: National Catholic Religious Orders and Advocacy Organizations Deliver Letter to DHS Secretary Kelly

Driven by their faith, groups have "deep concern" about recent immigration memos

Washington, D.C. - Today representatives from twelve national Catholic religious orders and advocacy organizations signed a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary John Kelly. The letter made it clear that Catholic faith leaders are deeply troubled by the recent changes in immigration policy. These policies have resulted in patterns of arrests, detentions, and deportations of undocumented immigrants across the nation by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Officials and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

As stated in the letter:

"We [Catholic leaders] view President Trump's recent executive orders on immigrants and refugees, as well as the actions of ICE and CBP agents, as sowing seeds of conflict between our nation and our churches, synagogues and mosques, threatening our religious freedom, and criminalizing and penalizing acts of charity toward immigrants and their families, recent arrivals as well as those who have been here for decades."

The full letter can be found here:

https://franciscanaction.org/sites/default/files/Catholic%20Letter%20to%20Secretary%20Kelly%20DHS_0.pdf

In using our Catholic voice in the public sphere, we are demonstrating how our faith calls us to speak out and stand up for the most vulnerable among us. We implore Secretary Kelly to turn to the values of his Catholic faith tradition and heed the voices calling on him to protect the immigrant community by ending the discrimination, hatred, violence, and abuse against our undocumented sisters and brothers. We will continue to use our voice and speak out against injustice.

Quotes from Catholic Leaders:

CMSM President Fr. Brian Terry, SA: "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' The very words of Jesus' parable ring in my ears. I cannot imagine the pain filled eyes of the six vulnerable men who joyfully escaped the death of a cold night because of the care of a loving Church, only to be imprisoned as they exited... by the cold steel of handcuffs, a freezing cold steel of terror and despair which would go right into your soul."

Sister Marie Lucey, OSF Associate Director, Franciscan Action Network: The anti-immigrant, anti-refugee rhetoric of the Trump administration are enacted in recent Executive Orders which are cloaked in language of assuring public safety. We Franciscans deplore the true intent and false messaging of these orders. The recent DHS enforcement memos, under your guidance, Secretary Kelly, have the immigrant community living in fear. Driving millions of immigrants back into the shadows, making them afraid of reporting real crimes, lessens, not strengthens, public safety. More important, extreme enforcement measures are a violation of human dignity and the Gospel commands of love and compassion. As fellow Catholic Christians, and as Franciscans who see everyone as brother and sister, we urge you, Secretary Kelly, not to yield to the worst instincts of the Administration which contradict both faith and American values.

"We are deeply concerned about the DHS enforcement memo issued earlier this week. Increased enforcement and indiscriminate deportations threaten border communities, force our immigrant community members deeper into the shadows, and endanger those fleeing violence and seeking asylum in this country," said **Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.** "Women religious will continue to heed the gospel call to welcome refugees and minister to immigrants, whatever their status. LCWR will continue to press for relief for families and an end to needless deportations and we will persist in our advocacy for compassionate, bipartisan legislation that fixes our broken immigration system."

Reverend Tim Mulroy, SSC U.S. Regional Director, Missionary Society of St. Columban: "As an international organization of priests and lay Christians, we, the Missionary Society of St. Columban, have a long history of caring for migrants and refugees. For the past 20 years, we have worked on both sides of the U.S. - Mexico border and in California with immigrant families, irrespective of their legal status. We are deeply troubled by the recent enforcement actions of immigration authorities, which have torn apart families and created suffering and terror in immigrant communities. As messengers of the Gospel, we are called not to reject immigrants and refugees, but to welcome them as we would welcome Christ. We are called to respond to prejudice with understanding, to suffering with compassion, and to fear with love."

"This memo is antithetical to our call as Catholics, a faith we share with Secretary Kelly, to love our neighbor. Frankly, Secretary Kelly's guidance criminalizes our undocumented sisters and brothers and will make our communities less safe and secure. I urge Secretary Kelly to resist the hateful rhetoric and policies of President Trump and guide his department in way that promotes the dignity of ALL people, including immigrants. Such an approach will be good for our nation and our people. It is the faithful-and patriotic-thing to do." -- **Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice**

"Your words and actions, Mr. President, are causing fear among a population already vulnerable and living on the margin. With all qualifications removed, all undocumented immigrants are subject to expedited removal. With all prosecutorial discretion removed, all undocumented immigrants are subject to fast-track deportation. Please reconsider your words and actions and respect those who have chosen the United States above all other countries to love and honor," --**Larry Couch, Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.**

Sister Patricia McDermott, RSM, President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas: "Our Sisters of Mercy directly working with immigrants share how they are in a panic. Immigrants are afraid to leave their homes, to take public transportation or go to school. One sister is trying to find volunteers to drive immigrants to appointments, but the volunteers are now afraid of being arrested for helping them. Youth are worried that their parents will be picked up. If a woman is a victim of domestic violence, she is afraid to call the sheriff. The situation is inhuman and cruel. One of our ministries is even preparing to go into lockdown if ICE

approaches."

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Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus, and the example of Saints Francis and Clare, the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) is a collective Franciscan voice seeking to transform United States public policy related to peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights. For more information: <https://franciscanaction.org/>

Press Release: Franciscans Outraged by DHS Announcement of New Deportation Rules



For Immediate Release

February 21, 2017

Contact: Janine Walsh

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Press Release: Franciscans Outraged by DHS Announcement of New Deportation Rules

We Stand in Solidarity with Undocumented Immigrants Who Now Face an Even Bigger Threat

Washington, D.C. - The Franciscan Action Network opposes the harsh new policies on immigration that have come out of President Trump's Executive Orders. These policies support deplorable, morally repugnant, aggressive treatment of immigrants and, considering ICE actions already underway, we cannot trust that any part of their implementation will be carried out fairly or rationally.

The announcement calls for expedited removals, targeting for low-level infractions and misdemeanors, and substantially increased numbers of immigration officials and customs agents, all of which perpetuate fear in the immigrant community. By hastening and increasing deportations, these new guidance documents will tear families apart. There are no priorities under these new rules, which are radical departures from protocol under the Bush and Obama administrations. Even more concerning is the fact that the legality of these measures is questionable, as they eliminate due process. Recent ICE activity has violated the sensitive locations memo, which includes houses of worship, schools, hospitals, and adjacent locations.

Further, the Trump Administration has stated that DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients will not be affected, but elimination of priorities in these DHS Memos leaves this in doubt. Through its actions, the administration has made it clear that they are intent on mass deportation.

"These extreme new DHS Memos run counter not only to faith principles, but to humanitarian concerns and to America's proclaimed commitment to 'liberty and justice for all,'" states Sr. Marie Lucey, FAN Associate Director. "They legitimize what is already taking place in raids and arrests across the country, striking fear in the hearts of millions of immigrants. As Christians, as Franciscans, as US Americans, we stand and act in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters."

Over 800 congregations of different faiths have joined the Sanctuary movement, sparking widespread conversation across the country, in order to pledge their support to push back against these orders and protect the immigrant communities that are such a vital part of our society. As members of the faith community, we must show our immigrant sisters and brothers that we stand with them as allies in protecting their rights and well-being.



Conference of Major Superiors of Men

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February 21, 2017
Media Release

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ICE Must Respect Places of Worship and Ministry

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials apprehended six men exiting a hypothermia shelter on February 8 at Rising Hope Mission Church in Alexandria, Virginia -- violating ICE's own policy not to conduct enforcement actions at or near "sensitive locations" like houses of worship. We, who are called to be Catholic religious leaders, are deeply troubled by the pattern of deportations of those seeking refuge who do not pose a "significant threat to national security and public safety." We are outraged when a government agency breaks its commitment to religious respect and invades and violates holy ground. No action of a government should ever bring fear into any person who seeks worship or aid at a religious house of worship or religious sponsored place. Our constitution guarantees our freedom of worship and religion even when it embraces acts of mercy.

As Christians, we turn to the example of Jesus who often had a compassionate and merciful justice humanity could not imagine. The very soul of our country is based on being free from religious oppression. Are we so blind as to not see how many frightening moments in our world's history began by the erosion of a universal belief in dignity for all and oppression of religion? We choose to remind all people of our long standing Catholic social teaching on the poor and Pope Francis renewed call to all humankind to encounter the other, build bridges with relationships, and resist injustice.

CMSM President Fr. Brian Terry, SA says, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' The very words of Jesus' parable ring in my ears. I cannot imagine the pain filled eyes of the six vulnerable men who joyfully escaped the death of a cold night because of the care of a loving Church, only to be imprisoned as they exited... by the cold steel of handcuffs, a freezing cold steel of terror and despair which would go right into your soul."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement is implementing President Trump's recent executive orders to increase immigration enforcement by targeting all undocumented immigrants, including a Methodist lay leader in Kansas, a mother in Arizona, and now, men coming out of a church ministry that provides shelter in extremely cold conditions. People are increasingly afraid to go to school, hospitals, and places of worship. We promote the value of law and order, but we also recognize the greater values of merciful justice and compassion.

We invite others to join us in denouncing these deportation efforts that harm the "least of our brothers and sisters." We especially denounce the irreverence, disrespect and violation of sensitive locations, such as houses of worship and ministry which belong to God and the erosion of our Constitutional right to be free from religious oppression by our government.

We commit to speaking out and finding creative ways to do all that we can to prevent these acts. We applaud all the individuals and the more than 800 congregations that have pledged support for the Sanctuary Movement. We especially call on all Catholics involved in the system of deportation and violation of sensitive locations to look deeply and prayerfully into their consciences and reflect on your moral responsibility in these circumstances.

We encourage all people to use this action alert to call ICE, Congress, and the White House and tell them to stop the raids and respect places of worship and ministry.

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) supports and offers resources for U.S. leaders of Catholic men's religious institutes. CMSM promotes dialogue and collaboration on issues of religious life as well as peace and justice issues with major group

AJC DEEPLY CONCERNED BY NEW DHS IMMIGRATION GUIDELINES

February 24, 2017 - New York - AJC expressed deep concern over the new and sweeping immigration enforcement policies announced this week by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

As reports from Mexico City of the ongoing meetings of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly with Mexican officials make clear, these policies not only raise questions about the most effective and humane means to address an American domestic concern, but also create regrettable tensions in U.S. relations with our southern neighbor and close ally.

The memoranda issued by DHS indicate that immigration enforcement procedures will henceforth operate on the basis of a greatly expanded definition of “criminal aliens,” enlarge the role of local law enforcement authorities as immigration law enforcers, strip away immigrants' privacy rights, build new detention facilities, hire 15,000 additional immigration enforcement officials, implement steps to discourage asylum seekers, and speed up deportations-including through an expanded regime of “expedited removal” that denies basic due process of law. In doing so, DHS is overturning enforcement practices established by former Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, practices that recognized the need to balance border security and immigration enforcement with humanitarian concerns.

To be sure, the memoranda leave in place the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program instituted by President Obama, a welcome development, even as they create a new policy of deporting, and possibly prosecuting, parents who facilitate the travel of their children to the United States illegally. AJC notes it is also the case that President Obama deported some 2.8 million people during his eight years of office, and there were, as well, criticisms of Obama-era practices, not only as to numbers but also as to practices such as immigrant family detention. Nevertheless, the policies announced by DHS represent a change in kind and, if implemented, in substantial scope as compared to the enforcement measures implemented under President Obama, which, whatever their flaws, were focused on those who were either convicted of multiple offenses or had repeatedly entered the country illegally.

It remains no less the case today than it has been for many years that there is an urgent moral and practical need to bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows-as opposed to adopting policies that will only drive millions deeper into those shadows. If, as AJC said in prior years, the continuation of the status quo was an unsustainable policy, and did not comport with American values to respect and defend human dignity, that is even more the case with respect to the harsh measures announced by DHS.

The United States is a nation of laws, and should not condone the violation of law, including by individuals who did not enter our country through legal processes. At the same time, a nation of laws committed to universal human rights cannot turn its face from the human cost of splitting families and destroying lives that have been built by those undocumented immigrants who are otherwise law-abiding. AJC calls once again, as we have so many times in the past, for our leaders in Washington, ideally working in bipartisan fashion, to move instead toward the comprehensive-and humane-immigration reform that is so urgently needed.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 17, 2016

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**FAITH LEADERS AND ADVOCATES TO ICE:
RESPECT PLACES OF WORSHIP AND STOP THE RAIDS NOW**

***See and share the video and photos from the event [HERE](#), using the hashtags
#NoBanNoWallNoRaids, #SanctuaryRising and #GreaterAs1***

FAIRFAX, VA – At a press conference and prayer vigil outside of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office in Virginia earlier today, faith leaders and advocates denounced a recent ICE raid outside of a church – calling on ICE to respect places of worship and immediately stop the raids. Last week, ICE officials apprehended six men exiting a hypothermia shelter at Rising Hope Mission Church in Alexandria, violating ICE’s own policy against conducting enforcement actions at or near “[sensitive locations](#)” like houses of worship.

After the prayer vigil, advocates proceeded inside the ICE facility, where staff attempted to help arrange a meeting with the faith leaders and ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations officials. ICE refused to meet with them and asked them to leave.

Rev. Keary Kincannon, Pastor at Rising Hope Mission Church, where last week’s ICE operation took place, said, “Rising Hope is committed to ministering in love to the needs of everyone, especially those living in poverty and on the margins of society. On that cold early morning, ICE waited for those six men outside of our shelter, part of our ministry to ensure that no one was left in the cold and ensure no one dies from hypothermia. The service we provide was threatened when ICE picked out these men right across from our church as they left the shelter changing the course of their lives and stirring fear in the community.”

Nicholas Marritz, a Justice Legal Aid Center lawyer representing the men who were apprehended, said, “We are gravely concerned that the government is targeting people in positions of extreme vulnerability. Actions like this put lie to the claim that enforcement is targeted and raise serious civil rights concerns about the way in which these shameful raids are being conducted. Furthermore, we’re frustrated that ICE refused this morning to release the names of the people who were apprehended--even to the pastor whose church was so clearly targeted.”

Rev. Ben Roberts the Director of Social Justice Ministries at Foundry United Methodist Church “Foundry UMC is dedicated to exercising our faith and public witness in a way that is consistent with teachings of Christ, the United Methodist Social Principles, and our Core Values. The predatory nature of these ICE raids run contrary to those values and we will seek through our advocacy, our witness, and our actions to support the most vulnerable among us.”

Yesterday, Church World Service issued an [action alert](#) urging all people of faith and good conscience to call ICE, Congress, and the White House to tell them to stop the raids and respect places of worship. Faith leaders continue to stand united in their opposition of inhumane and unjust immigration raids and call on ICE to respect places of worship, schools and hospitals by not apprehending people in or near these sensitive locations.

Sponsoring organizations included: [Rising Hope Mission Church](#), DC-Maryland-Virginia Sanctuary Coalition, Centreville Immigration Forum, [United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society](#), [Church World Service](#), [PICO National Network](#), [Faith in Public Life](#), and [Sojourners](#).