

Stay Calm: Information about recent deportations

Recent enforcement actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have left many immigrants fearful that they will be picked up and deported. Here's information that may help:

Are you at risk of being picked up for deportation?

The Department of Homeland Security reported that ICE picked up 121 people (mostly in Texas, North Carolina and Georgia) in actions Jan. 2 and 3. Reports of "raids" at schools, supermarkets and other public locations are not true. The mothers and children who were taken into custody all came to the United States after May 1, 2014, and had deportation orders. They had been through the immigration court system and judges rejected their efforts to obtain asylum or another form of permission to stay in the United States. Most of these people have been returned to their home countries. A few were allowed by a judge to stay temporarily while they appeal their deportation orders.

If you don't fall into one of the three categories identified by the government as priorities for deportation, there is less chance that ICE will pick you up to deport you. However, DHS has said that there will be more deportations, in keeping with these priorities President Barack Obama established:

1. People who are considered a threat to national security, to border security, or who have been convicted of serious crimes, such as participation in a gang.
2. People who have been convicted of specific types of other crimes, such as drug trafficking or sexual abuse.
3. People who were issued deportation orders after Jan. 1, 2014.

How to reduce your risk of being deported:

- If you are in the process of seeking asylum or any other type of legal status, continue to go to appointments with immigration authorities and judges.
- If you move, be sure you notify ICE and the Executive Office for Immigration Review.
- Don't break the law.
- If you haven't spoken to a qualified attorney or BIA accredited representative about your legal status, seek help from one. You may learn there are options for improving your legal situation. Find a local CLINIC affiliate here: www.cliniclegal.org/affiliates/directory.

Know your rights:

- Do not open the door to immigration agents or police unless they have a legal document with your name on it. Ask them to slip it under the door before you admit them.
- Tell your children not to open the door.
- Remain silent. You do not have to answer their questions.
- Do not sign anything and ask to speak with an attorney or legal representative.
- Find more detailed explanations of your rights here:
 - English: www.aclu-md.org/uploaded_files/0000/0739/home_raids_kyr_card_-_english.pdf
 - Spanish: www.aclu-md.org/uploaded_files/0000/0738/home_raids_kyr_card_-_spanish.pdf

What you should continue to do:

- Go to school, work and church as usual. ICE policies require special permission or unusual circumstances (such as risk of terrorism) before agents will attempt to arrest someone in schools, hospitals, churches and other houses or worship and public demonstrations like marches or rallies.
- Gather relevant documents and have copies of them where family members or trusted friends can get them
- Especially if you or a member of your family fall within the priorities described above, plan what your family would do if one of you is picked up or deported.

This should include:

- Have an emergency plan so someone you trust can take care of your children in case of an arrest.
- Always have the phone number of a person you trust. Make sure your children also have the same number and memorize it or carry it at all times.

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