

March 17, 2020

Dear City Council Members,

While the nation is taking severe actions to contain the spread of COVID-19, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has continued their ruthless and aggressive tactics of surveilling and arresting non-citizens. These ICE policing actions have taken place in areas with confirmed coronavirus cases, including in New Rochelle, the day before Governor Andrew M. Cuomo declared a containment area in part of the city, and also an arrest yesterday outside a courthouse in Suffolk County on the same day they announced the closure of their schools. ICE has continued these arrests without regard for the health risk for people currently being held in ICE detention. Furthermore, ICE has not been responsive to multiple requests from lawyers to release medically vulnerable people.

In the past two weeks as the first COVID-19 cases were reported in the New York City and surrounding area, ICE agents have continued their ruthless and aggressive tactics of surveillance and arresting non-citizens. In the past 10 days, the Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) received 13 verified reports of ICE arrests or sightings, including reports of ICE presence in all New York City boroughs (except for the Bronx), in Westchester (New Rochelle), and in Suffolk County (Central Islip).

Below are some of the stories of ICE raids activity collected by the IDP.

Trends include:

- The presence of Border Patrol agents spotted in Crown Heights
- ICE agents with guns on their holster spotted in a family shelter in Midtown Manhattan
- ICE agents spotted at and making arrests in criminal courts in Manhattan, Queens, and Suffolk County
- Teams of 8-10 ICE agents pretending to be police to make arrests

### **ICE Agents Arrest an Individual in New Rochelle One Day before the Containment Zone Announced**

- On March 9, as COVID-19 cases were multiplying in New Rochelle, 10 plain-clothes ICE agents came to a man's home around 6 am. This individual and his wife live on the top floor of a two family home with their two young children. The ICE agents first went to the downstairs apartment and then came upstairs. The agents were wearing vests that said POLICE and told the wife that they were the police and needed to "ID everyone in the house." When the man came into sight of the doorway of the apartment to see who was there, the ICE agents told him they had a warrant for his arrest but did not show it or identify themselves. The ICE agents arrested him in front of his two young children and wife. They also took a copy of his wife's ID before leaving.

### **Border Patrol Agents Spotted in Brooklyn**

- On March 11, at least 3 ICE agents and 2 CBP agents were spotted in Crown Heights at around 7:40am. One of the ICE agents was wearing a vest that said POLICE and the other two were in plain-clothes. The two CBP agents were wearing clothing that said BORDER PATROL on it. The agents went first to one building and then a few minutes later to a

second building two doors down, which they entered as someone was leaving the building. Around 7:55 the agents came outside alone and all five agents got into five separate unmarked cars that were double-parked on the street and drove away.

### **ICE Continues Enforcement Actions at and around Courthouses**

- On March 16, an ICE agent entered the Suffolk County District Court in Central Islip and observed an individual appear on his court case. As the man left the courthouse, he was followed by the agent and arrested after he left the building.
- On March 9, an individual was arrested entering New York County Criminal Court by ICE agents. Prior to arresting him, the ICE agents entered the courthouse and informed court agents that they intended to arrest this individual.
- On March 9, ICE agents were spotted in Queens County Criminal Court and informed court officers that they had an administrative arrest warrant but did not show it. ICE agents were also spotted in Queens County Criminal Court the following day, March 10.

### **ICE Police Ruses Continue**

- On Sunday March 8, four plain-clothes ICE agents with jackets that said POLICE came to a man's home in Staten Island. They knocked on the door and the individual's girlfriend opened it, thinking the agents were NYPD agents. The agents arrested the individual and took him to ICE detention.
- On March 9, ICE agents arrested a man on the street in Manhattan. ICE agents had previously come to his home pretending to be police looking for someone else. The individual did not know he was arrested by ICE until after the arrest.

### **ICE Agents Spotted in a New York City Family Shelter**

- On March 10 at around 6pm, 5 plain-clothes ICE agents were spotted in a New York City family shelter. Although they were dressed in plain-clothes, they had visible guns and a badge that said ICE, which was only visible up close. to a NYC family shelter that is on a few floors of a hotel. The agents were walking with a building guard.

For your convenience, we are sharing a list of all the resources that IDP has created around ICE raids. They can all be downloaded from [immdefense.org/raids](http://immdefense.org/raids). Please feel free to use and distribute to your constituents and community members:

- [Defend Against ICE Raids and Community Arrests Toolkit](#), updated in July 2019 (in English and Spanish)
- [Know Your Rights Flyers](#) (2 pages, available in 16 languages)
- [Know Your Rights Booklet](#) (11 pages, available in English and Spanish)
- [Home Raids Poster](#) (11x17", available in 7 languages)
- [KYR infographics](#) (8 infographics, English and Spanish)
- [Train the Trainer KYR video and slides](#) (video in English, slides in English and Spanish)
- [IDP/Newsweek KYR videos](#) (English)
- [2018 ICE Raids Trends Report](#) (English)

- [IDP/WITNESS Eyes on ICE](#) webinar (English slides on what to do if you witness ICE arrests)
- IDP/Make the Road New York resource on identifying your type of case if detained by ICE ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))

Since 2013, Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) has been tracking ICE enforcement in the New York area to monitor and analyze trends of ICE arrests and detention as well as share that information with community members, advocates, and elected officials. In the seven years of collecting ICE raids reports, IDP has [verified over 1400 raids](#).<sup>1</sup> IDP receives reports of ICE raids through collaborations with community-based and legal services organizations throughout New York State, as well as through calls and reports received on our hotline. In addition, New York State uniquely houses both Regional Immigrant Assistance Centers (RIAC) in all counties across the state, as well as the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) in immigration courts. Both initiatives have provided a mechanism for IDP to collect firsthand accounts of raids from the individuals arrested by ICE (via their attorneys), whose experiences during ICE raids may otherwise not have been shared or reported. IDP confirms details of raids reports by speaking with witnesses of raids or those with direct knowledge, the individuals arrested by ICE themselves, or their attorneys.

If you hear reports of ICE raids or arrests from constituents or community members, please feel free to share them with IDP. **We do not need confidential information about the individuals arrested.** Instead, focus on gathering information about the tactics used by ICE during the encounter. To report an ICE raid, please contact Genia Blaser, Senior Staff Attorney, at [genia@immdefense.org](mailto:genia@immdefense.org).

If constituents or community members would like to seek immigration legal services or speak to an immigration attorney, please direct them to ActionNYC, which offers free, safe immigration legal help in a network of trusted community organizations and schools. They can make an appointment to receive services by calling 1-800-354-0365 between 9AM and 6PM, Monday – Friday.

Thank you,



Mizue Aizeki  
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<sup>1</sup> See IDP's ICEwatch raid tactics map including ICE raids in the NYC area over the past five years at [raidsmap.immdefense.org](http://raidsmap.immdefense.org).