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January 24, 2020

Dear City Council Members:

We are writing to inform you of a recent increase in ICE activity in the New York City region. In the last two weeks, the Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) has received an uptick in reports of ICE arrests or attempted arrests in the New York City region. Of the 21 separate reports we received, there are some alarming trends that we wanted to share with City Council Members:

- Reports of ICE using mobile fingerprint devices
- Reports of ICE making “collateral arrests” (including multiple people arrested at once)
- ICE agents dressed in jackets or vests that only say “POLICE”
- ICE’s ongoing use of ruses to trick people that they are “police” or NYPD
- An ongoing presence of ICE agents around Kings County Criminal Court

Below are examples of each of these trends. Although the examples do not reflect this, we have received reports of ICE agents in all 5 New York City boroughs.

Increase in “collateral arrests”

There is an alarming increase of reports of non-targeted immigrants, what ICE calls “collateral arrests,” meaning arrests of people not pre-identified by ICE.

- On January 18, 2020, ICE agents raided a home in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and when they could not find the individual they had pre-identified for arrest, they arrested three other individuals (believed to be brothers) who were in the home.
- On January 15, 2020, ICE agents came to a home in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. They did not identify who they were and they were dressed in blue jackets that said POLICE on them. The agents claimed they were doing a “criminal investigation.” When one of the

individuals showed an IDNYC, ICE asked to see the passports of everyone who lived in the home. They arrested one individual in the home who they admitted they had come looking for and then additionally arrested his brother-in-law after seeing his passport. They told a third adult in the home who was the primary caregiver of a young child to report in person to ICE that day to receive a Notice to Appear and begin deportation proceedings against her.

- On January 16, 2020, ICE agents arrested six people in an apartment near the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The agents were looking for an individual who was not there and instead arrested everyone present in the apartment.

Increased reports of ICE using mobile fingerprint devices

There is also an alarming increase of reports of ICE agents using mobile fingerprint devices to fingerprint individuals they find at home to either arrest them on the spot or take down their information (including photographs of their IDs).

- On January 16, 2020, ICE agents came to a home in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. A family member allowed ICE to enter the home (it is unclear what the encounter at the door looked like) and ICE agents immediately arrested someone in the home who they had pre-identified for arrest. The ICE agents then asked everyone else in the home for their IDs, took photographs of the IDs and took fingerprints with a portable fingerprint device. No one else was arrested in the home but some of those people whose fingerprints were taken could be at risk of ICE arrest and were very scared, especially now that ICE has their fingerprints and ID information.
- On January 15, 2020, ICE agents came to a building in Mott Haven, Bronx, wearing plain-clothes and vests that said POLICE on them. ICE knocked on the apartment door, stated they were the police, and showed the individual at the door a photo of someone they said they were looking for. The individual at the door had never seen the person in the photo and allowed the ICE agents to enter the home and search the apartment. The agents asked for the ID of everyone in the home and then went to the apartment across the hall. They returned to the first apartment 10 minutes later and specifically asked for one of the roommates who had shown his ID. They took out a mobile fingerprint machine, fingerprinted him, and then arrested him.

ICE continuing to use “ruses” pretending to be NYPD officers

As has long been a disturbing trend nationally and specifically in NYC, ICE agents use [deceptive methods called “ruses”](#) when they make arrests.¹ They frequently go to homes or stop

¹ Learn more about ruses here: <https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/wp-content/uploads/ICEwatch-Trends-Report.pdf>

immigrants on the street pretending to be local NYPD officers, refusing to identify themselves. Some of the disturbing arrest reports we received in the last two weeks include:

- On January 22, 2020, ICE agents came to a home in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn early in the morning and told the residents of the home that they were the police. When asked what precinct they were from, the ICE agents did not answer and left to sit in their unmarked car parked on the street in front of the home where they remained for the entire day. The agents returned the next day (January 23, 2020) and falsely told one of the residents of the home that they had missed a criminal court case (which was not true). The resident refused to open the door for the agents and the ICE agents loitered outside until someone else in the home left for work. They followed this individual for two blocks harassing and threatening him. The individual was scared and felt like he had no choice but to take the agents to the home and let them inside. Once inside the ICE agents arrested one of the residents.

Continued presence of ICE agents around New York City Criminal Courts

IDP has continued to receive reports of ICE agents and unmarked ICE vehicles around New York City Courthouses. There have been four reports of arrests outside of New York City courts since January 15, 2020: 3 outside of Kings County Criminal Court and 1 outside of Bronx Criminal Court.

- Additionally there is a report from January 17, 2020 of an ICE agent stopping an individual on the street and asking their name without identifying that they were ICE. The agent was dressed in plain-clothes with a visible ICE badge, which the individual saw.

For your convenience, below is a list of all the resources that IDP has created around ICE raids. They can all be downloaded from 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)

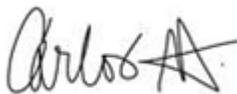
- IDP/Make the Road New York resource on identifying your type of case if detained by ICE ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))

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 1100 raids.](#)² 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.

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.

Sincerely,



Carlos Menchaca
Immigration Committee Chair
NYC Council Member | 38th District



Mizue Aizeki
Deputy Director
Immigrant Defense Project

² See IDP's ICEwatch raid tactics map including ICE raids in the NYC area over the past five years at raidsmap.immdefense.org.