

For Immediate Release

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**Immigrant Rights Groups, Law School and Legal Organization
FOIA for Info on Thomson Reuters, RELX Group
Contracts with ICE**

*Lawyers Concerned Their Research on Legal Databases Like LexisNexis
and Westlaw May Be Shared With Immigration Officials at ICE and
DHS*

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New York/Chicago/Phoenix – Today, Mijente, the Immigrant Defense Project (IDP), CUNY Law School’s Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic (HRGJ) and the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) request](#) to demand information on contracts between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and commercial information technology and data service providers RELX Group and Thomson Reuters. The request follows documentation and reporting on the role of the “data broker firms” in providing information that is used by U.S. government agencies in immigration enforcement operations.

“As we have seen in our years of tracking ICE raids, ICE relies heavily on secrecy and manipulation to enact its harmful deportation agenda,” said **Mizue Aizeki, Deputy Director of the Immigrant Defense Project**. “As millions and millions of tax dollars continue to enrich tech corporations' growing role in ICE operations, we must uncover the details of these hidden deals.”

Requesters IDP and Mijente, with the National Immigration Project, have previously shone a light on DHS’s plans for immigration policing through a scheme of tech and database policing, the mass scale and scope of the tech-based systems, the contracts that support it, and the connections between Washington, D.C., and Silicon Valley, in their report [Who’s Behind ICE?: The Tech and Data Companies Fueling Deportations](#).

“These contracts are usually completely out of public view, inaccessible to immigrant rights groups or legislators who could act as watchdogs over these tech companies,” said **Jacinta Gonzalez, Mijente Senior Campaign Organizer**. “We know how this technology works, we

know the impact it has on us, but we often don't know the exact relationship between ICE and these companies. These FOIAs reveal that.”

Through the [#NoTechForICE](#) campaign, Mijente and students across the country have been mobilizing to expose the role of tech companies in immigration enforcement operations, including the Trump administration's family-separation policy, and to stop recruitment by tech companies at colleges, while urging the companies to cut their ties with ICE. The information sought through the FOIA will further that campaign.

As members of the legal community, the HRGJ Clinic, CCR and IDP have a particular interest in understanding how lawyers' and law students' use of paid legal subscription services provided by RELX Group and Thomson Reuters, including *LexisNexis* and *Westlaw*, might supply or contribute data – including client information and attorney work product – that is conveyed to DHS and ICE by the companies as part of the data services they are contracted to provide the agency.

“Law schools, law professors and lawyers-in-training all have a substantial interest in knowing what information the legal research companies they rely upon share with law enforcement agencies including ICE,” said **Cindy Soohoo co-director of CUNY Law School's Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic**. “How private is our search history? We need to know and this FOIA is a further step in getting answers from Thomson Reuters and RELX.”

CUNY Law School HRGJ Clinic students Jeri Milan and Stephani Antona played a significant role in the preparation of the FOIA request. Their research found an increasing number of non-competitive contracts awarded to Thomson Reuters and RELX by DHS and ICE.

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Mijente Support Committee is a national organization that coordinates and organizes with its members in several states to address issues relating to immigration enforcement and Latinx political participation.

The Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) is a New York-based nonprofit that works to secure fairness and justice for immigrants in the racially-biased U.S. criminal and immigration systems. IDP fights to end the current era of unprecedented mass criminalization, detention and deportation through a multi-pronged strategy including advocacy, litigation, legal support, community partnerships, and strategic communications. Visit www.immigrantdefenseproject.org and follow [@ImmDefense](#).

The **HRGJ Clinic** is a division of Main Street Legal Services, Inc. at CUNY School of Law. The HRGJ Clinic advocates before international and regional human rights bodies and national and local courts and legal institutions on issues involving gender discrimination and sexual violence, reproductive justice, economic and social rights, children's rights and anti-militarism. Visit <https://www.law.cuny.edu/academics/clinics/hrgj/>.

The **Center for Constitutional Rights** works with communities under threat to fight for justice and liberation through litigation, advocacy, and strategic communications. Since 1966, the Center for Constitutional Rights has taken on oppressive systems of power, including structural racism, gender oppression, economic inequity, and governmental overreach. Learn more at ccrjustice.org.