

URGENT ACTION

STOP SEPARATION OF FAMILY SEEKING SAFETY

On March 21, US immigration authorities detained the parents of a Venezuelan family of 5, separating them from their three children under the age of twelve. Despite the family having Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and pending asylum applications, they were charged with “illegal” entry to the United States, more than two years after their arrival at the southern US border. Everyone has the right to seek asylum, regardless of their manner of entry into the US, and detaining anyone with valid TPS is illegal. We call the Trump administration to immediately release the parents to reunite with their young children and cease the cruel practice of family separation.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 28.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Todd Lyons,
Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20536, USA
Email: Todd.M.Lyons@ice.dhs.gov

Dear Mr. Lyons,

I urge you to immediately release **Cesar and Norelia (A#s 246149580 & 246149581)** back to their three young children. On March 21, 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Washington, DC, USA, unlawfully detained and separated a Venezuelan family with active and valid Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and pending asylum applications and charged them with “illegal” entry to the United States, more than two years after their arrival at the southern US border.

This is a blatant and outrageous subversion of the law being used to target immigrants and separate families that have already built lives in the United States. Everyone has the right to seek asylum. People should be given prompt access to fair and efficient asylum procedures, and under international refugee law, cannot be penalized due to irregular entry into the country where they are seeking protection. Once granted TPS, an individual cannot be detained on the basis of their immigration status in the US.

Young children watched their parents being taken away in handcuffs and thrust into a system that inflicts violence and prolongs their suffering. Separating asylum-seeking families causes long lasting trauma, particularly in children, can amount to torture, and is a flagrant breach of their human rights.

I urge you to immediately change course and release Cesar and Norelia back to their young children, and end the practice of family separation, family detention, and mass detention and deportations.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In recent weeks, President Trump has unleashed a series of actions that dehumanize, criminalize, and cause real suffering to people who have fled human rights crises to seek safety. Across the country, the Trump administration continues to implement increasingly cruel and shocking tactics to strike fear in communities, separate and detain families, and target activists.

On March 21, 2025, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Washington, DC, USA, detained and separated a Venezuelan family with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and pending asylum applications, and charged them with “illegal” entry to the United States.

Cesar and Norelia, their three children under the age of 12, and other extended family members fled Venezuela where they were persecuted because of their support for the opposition party in the country. They entered the US in 2022 through Texas. The entire family has pending asylum applications, along with valid and active TPS for Venezuela. TPS allows individuals from certain countries experiencing dangerous conditions to legally reside and work in the United States. Once granted TPS, an individual cannot be detained on the basis of their immigration status in the US.

Cesar and Norelia had previously been arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on March 11, 2025. On March 12, a federal judge ordered that they be released from custody, pending a court hearing that was scheduled in Texas. On March 13, Cesar and Norelia were taken from the jail to the federal court in DC where they were released and immediately detained by ICE. ICE released them later that same day. Since then, Norelia and Cesar had been complying with their ICE check-ins until they were arrested again on March 21. Cesar is currently detained at the Farmville Detention Center and Norelia at the Caroline Detention Center.

The Trump administration has recently begun using 8 U.S.C. 1325, the provision of immigration law that was the basis for the Trump administration’s family separation policy in its first term, to target individuals and families that have been in the United States for years, rather than recent arrivals at the US-Mexico border. Cesar and Norelia’s case is precedent-setting as it could affect thousands of other individuals who entered the United States irregularly but were granted legal protections.

All individuals have the right not to be returned to places where their life or freedom may be endangered, regardless of their migration status. This principle, known as non-refoulement, is a protection under customary international, human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law, and requires states to refrain from returning, removing, or transferring anyone to their countries of origin or any other location where they would be at risk of serious human rights abuses. The 1951 Refugee Convention recognizes that the seeking of asylum can require refugees to breach immigration rules and indicates that people seeking safety should not be subject to specific requirements or suffer penalties or discrimination for this reason.

Moreover, family separation causes long lasting trauma, particularly in children and is a flagrant breach of their human rights.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: June 24, 2025

NAME AND PRONOUN: Cesar (he/him), Norelia (she/her)