

URGENT ACTION

DROP CHARGES AGAINST FAMILY SEEKING SAFETY

On February 27, 2025, a Judge in Texas signed a criminal complaint against the parents of a Venezuelan family of 5, charging them with “Illegal Entry” from when they entered the US in 2022 to seek asylum. The parents were detained twice despite having active and valid Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and pending asylum applications. The parents (Cesar and Norelia) were released from their last arrest on March 28. They are back home, but still face criminal charges in Texas, even though criminalizing asylum seekers for their manner of entry violates international law. Call on the Trump administration to drop the charges.

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 **Second UA 28.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Margaret Leachman
Acting U.S. Attorney, Western District of Texas
601 NW Loop 410, Suite 600
San Antonio, Texas 78216, USA
Email: usatx-ecfepduty@usdoj.gov

Dear Ms. Leachman,

I urge you to drop the charges under the provision 1325 for Illegal Entry against **Cesar and Norelia (A#s 246149580 & 246149581)** so they can continue to be with their three young children during the adjudication of their asylum claim in the United States after fleeing Venezuela.

On March 28, a federal judge ordered their immediate release. They are now reunited with their children but are still facing criminal charges in Texas.

The criminal charges against Cesar and Norelia, over 2 years after they entered the United States to start their asylum process, are a blatant and outrageous subversion of the law being used to target people seeking safety and separate families that have already built lives in the United States.

I urge you to drop the charges against Cesar and Norelia, and to end the practice of criminalizing migration.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On February 27, 2025, U.S. Attorneys in the Western District of Texas charged **Cesar** and **Norelia** with “illegally” entering the United States, a criminal charge that resulted in their detention and separation from their family. They are a Venezuelan family with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and pending asylum applications, and these charges were filed more than two years after their arrival at the southern U.S. border to exercise their human right to seek asylum.

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 based on their immigration status. On March 31, a federal judge stopped plans by the Trump administration to end TPS for Venezuelans a week before it was set to expire.

Cesar and Norelia were first arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on March 10, 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. Norelia and Cesar had been complying with their ICE check-ins until they were arrested again on March 21 and released on March 28.

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.

All individuals have the universal human right to seek and enjoy asylum. All individuals also 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 for this reason. Amnesty International has previously [determined](#) that immigration policies of separating families can amount to torture and other ill-treatment, particularly in children.

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

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: June 1, 2025

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

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-stop-separation-of-family-seeking-safety-usa-28-25/>