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Undocumented Migrants Protest against Raids and Deportations

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“Obama said that they would concentrate on criminals and not on families but that’s not true,” said activist Reina Wences, with the Organized Communities Against Deportations, at a protest held outside the ICE offices in downtown Chicago.

Wences said that “ICE continues to be out in the streets” carrying out raids of homes and workplaces.

Presented at the event were the cases of two families threatened with deportation despite the fact that they are not considered priorities for ICE.

Martha Avila said that her husband Manuel Roman has lived in the United States for 16 years and could benefit from the immigration measures put into place by the president, but the Department of Homeland Security has been holding him for more than a year in a prison in Dutch County, Wisconsin.

“I want Manuel to get a chance to remain in the country,” said Avila, who – because of her husband’s absence – is having problems supporting their two young daughters.

Mony Ruiz Velazco, the attorney assigned to Roman’s case, said that her client has a minor crime in his past, and this presents a problem in his case, but she thinks that he is eligible for the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program, which is logjammed in the courts, and she has asked ICE to exercise its discretion in the matter in his favor.

Meanwhile, Honduran Maria Oneida said that she arrived in Wisconsin a year ago with her two small children fleeing the violence and economic instability in her homeland.

“I’m asking please for them to let me stay here, because I struggled a lot to come and we want to have a better future here,” the undocumented migrant said.

In her case, the lawyers said that although her family is considered to be “recent immigrants” and thus subject to deportation, they have requested that ICE exercise its discretion to terminate the deportation process.

“The families of Maria and Manuel are suffering the cruelty of the system first-hand its their inhumane detention centers and deportations, but they are fighting for their loved ones,” said Wences.

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