national network for immigrant and refugee rights

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March 9, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Secretary Janet Napolitano
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear President Obama and Secretary Napolitano:

We write on behalf of the organizations signing this letter, to respectfully request that all enforcement activities and operations engaged in by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and impacting non-citizens be completely and immediately suspended for the rest of the year in order to encourage a more inclusive count of this country's population during Census 2010. We are concerned that a climate of fear and distrust within immigrant communities due to immigration raids and other enforcement actions will deter immigrant households from returning the Census surveys and from cooperating in further Census outreach efforts.

Immigrant-based communities are among several known to be significantly undercounted by the Census; in New York City, heavily-immigrant areas have had less than a 40 percent census response rate, compared to the citywide average response of 65 percent. Numerous officials have themselves expressed grave concerns about the challenges faced in convincing immigrants to participate due to persistent enforcement activity by the same government now seeking their information. Immigrants have raised doubts about the confidentiality of the Census. While officials have repeatedly stated that the information obtained will not be shared with other departments, immigrants well recall similar assurances about the Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service; today, the data obtained from these agencies has provided the fuel for many of this Administration's enforcement operations.

Because of these challenges and the severe, long-term consequences of an undercount, we urge you to follow precedent and suspend enforcement activities.

For the 2000 Census, former Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner Doris Meissner recalls that "we definitely went further than what I'm hearing from this administration thus far". The decision then was to make clear that "while her agency would continue to do serious criminal enforcement, other routine operations and enforcement activities would be suspended. During the 1990 Census, Rep. Silvestre Reyes, then working for the Border Patrol, recalls "when the orders came down to suspend some enforcement efforts." In preparation for this year's Census, the Census Bureau leadership, in 2007, had urged that immigration enforcement raids be suspended. Under

this Administration, the Census Bureau has reversed its position and stated last October that they have declined to ask the DHS to suspend raids during the 2010 Census.

We would like to make clear that our current request is not limited to raids and sweeps, whether in the interior or border communities. As you know, enforcement activities have reached an unprecedented breadth and depth, resulting in higher numbers of detentions and deportations than even the past Administration, and utilizing strategies that are less visible than raids but well known and feared in immigrant communities throughout the country. Therefore, our request includes suspension of:

- E-verify employment verification program and audits;
- 287g agreements;
- Detentions of individuals, including long-time lawful permanent residents, on civil immigration charges;
- ICE programs -- such as Secure Communities and the Criminal Alien Program;
- Operation Streamline;
- Absconder arrest programs;
- Operation Return to Sender;
- Operation Community Shield;
- National Fugitive Operations Program;
- Issuance of Social Security no-match letters;
- Operation Cross Check;
- Operation Predator;
- Workplace, home and business raids.

Given the immediacy of the Census 2010 process, we reiterate our request for an immediate suspension of these operations to encourage maximum participation of immigrant community members, widely acknowledged among the Census' "hard-to-count" population targets.

We look forward to your response and public statements on this matter.

Sincerely,

Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice	Woodside	NY
Adrian Dominican Sisters	Adrian	MI
Advancement Project	Washington	DC
AFIRE (Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant rights and Empowerment)	Chicago	IL
African Advocacy Network (AAN), a project of Dolores Street Community Services (DSCS)	San Francisco	CA
Alianza del Pueblo	Knoxville	TN
American Dream Community Agency/Centro de Legalizacion	Houston	TX
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)	Washington	DC
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)	Philadelphia	PA
American Muslim Voice	Newark	CA
Amigos Internacional	Wilmington	NC
Amigos Multicultural Services Center	Eugene	OR

APEN (Asian Pacific Environmental Network)	Oakland	CA
API Movement	Boston	MA
Arab Cultural & Community Center	San Francisco	CA
Arab Resource and Organizing Center	San Francisco	CA
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund	New York	NY
Asian Law Alliance	San Jose	CA
Asian Law Caucus	San Francisco	CA
Asian Pacific American Legal Center	Los Angeles	CA
Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council	Los Angeles	CA
Asian Resources, Inc.	Sacramento	CA
Association of Citizens and Friends of Liberia (ACFLi)	Sacramento	CA
Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera	Austin	TX
Bayside Community Center	San Diego	CA
Bill of Rights Defense Committee	New York	NY
Black Alliance for Just Immigration	Oakland	CA
Black Workers for Justice	Rocky Mount	NC
Border Agricultural Workers Project	El Paso	TX
Border Angels	San Diego	CA
Brazilian Women's Group	Allston	MA
CAAAELII: Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois	Chicago	IL
CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities	New York	NY
California Immigrant Policy Center	Oakland	CA
Canal Alliance	San Rafael	CA
Casa Esperanza	Plainfield	NJ
Casa Freehold	Freehold	NJ
CASA Latina	Seattle	WA
CATA - The Farmworkers' Support Committee	Glassboro	NJ
Center for Critical Environmental and Global Literacy	Berkeley	CA
Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO)	Oakland	CA
Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice	Lexington	KY
Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueno	Fresno	CA
Centro Latino Wilmington	Wilmington	NC
Centro Legal de La Raza	Oakland	CA
Chhaya CDC, Jackson Heights	Queens	NY
Chiapas Support Committee	Oakland	CA
Chinese for Affirmative Action	San Francisco	CA
Chinese Progressive Association	San Francisco	CA
Coalición de Derechos Humanos	Tucson	AZ
Coalicion de Lideres Latinos (CLILA)	Dalton	GA
Coalicion pro Justice en las Maquiladoras	San Antonio	TX
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)	Los Angeles	CA
Cobb Immigrant Alliance	Austell	GA

Colectivo Flatlander	Houston	TX
Coloradans for Immigrant Rights, a project of the AFSC	Denver	CO
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach	Silver Spring	MD
Comite Cesar Chavez		
Comite de Inmigrantes en Accion	Providence	RI
Community Coalition	Los Angeles	CA
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project	New York	NY
Community Voices Heard	New York	NY
Companeros	Durango	CO
Coney Island Avenue Project	Brooklyn	NY
D7 Round Table, Inc., of Greater Roxbury	Boston	MA
DAMAYAN Migrant Workers Association	New York	NY
Direct Action for Rights and Equality	Providence	RI
Davis Religious Community for Sanctuary	Davis	CA
Day Worker Center of Mountain View	Mountain View	CA
Denver Fair Food Committee	Denver	CO
Domestic Workers United	New York	NY
Dominican Development Center	Roslindale	MA
Dominican Sisters of Houston	Houston	TX
Dominican Sisters~Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	MI
DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving)	Jackson Heights	NY
East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy	Oakland	CA
East Bay Community Law Center	Berkeley	CA
East Bay Interfaith Coalition	Oakland	CA
East Valley Chapter, G.I. Forum	San Jose	CA
Educacion para la paz, Asociacion Civil	Comitan, Chiapas, Mexico	
El Centro AMISTAD	Boulder	CO
El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos	Albuquerque	NM
El Centro de La Raza	Seattle	WA
Employment Law Center	San Francisco	CA
Encantada Gallery	San Francisco	CA
English for Action	Providence	RI
Escondido Human Rights Committee	Escondido	CA
Esperanza Peace and Justice Center	San Antonio	TX
Farmworker Justice	Washington	DC
Farmworker Legal Services of NY	Rochester	NY
Federacion de Mexicanos Unidos en Utah	Murray	UT
FIERCE (Fabulous, Independent, Radicals for Community Empowerment)	New York	NY
Filipino Advocates for Justice	Oakland	CA
Filipino Community Support of Silicon Valley (FOCUS-SV)	San Jose	CA
Florida Coastal School of Law, Immigrant Rights Clinic	Jacksonville	FL
Franco Law Group, APLC	Los Angeles	CA

Freedom Ambassadors	Del Rio	TX
Freedom Bound Center	Sacramento	CA
Frente Indigena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB)	Fresno	CA
Fresno Center for New Americans	Fresno	CA
Fundacion Mexico	Tucson	AZ
Garment Worker Center	Los Angeles	CA
Gente Latina de Ambiente (GELAAM)	Burlingame	CA
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights	Atlanta	GA
Georgia Rural Urban Summit	Decatur	GA
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance	San Pedro	CA
Ground Zero Players	San Diego	CA
Guerrero Azteca Peace Project	Escondido	CA
Hermandan Mexicana Latinoamericana	Santa Ana	CA
Hernan Taylor & Lee	Norcross	GA
Highlander Research and Education Center	New Market	TN
Homies Unidos	Los Angeles	CA
Houston Interfaith Worker Justice	Houston	TX
Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN)	Boise	ID
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)	San Francisco	CA
Inmigrantes Latinos en Accion	Austin	TX
Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights	San Francisco	CA
International Institute of Rhode Island	Providence	RI
Intervarsity Coalition for Equality (ICE) District 13	Bolingbrook	IL
Jewish Community Action	St. Paul	MN
Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	Lexington	KY
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (KRCC)	Chicago	IL
Korean Community Center of the East Bay	Oakland	CA
Korean Resource Center (KRC)	Los Angeles	CA
La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurreccion	Mount Vernon	WA
La Semilla Centro de Superacion Latina	New Orleans	LA
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)	San Juan	TX
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Center	Lagos, Nigeria	
Latin@ Roundtable of the San Gabriel and Inland Valleys	San Bernadino	CA
Latino Coalition of Randolph County	Asheboro	NC
Latino Ethnic Awareness Student Club at College of DuPage	Glen Ellyn	IL
Latino Network	Portland	OR
Latino Outreach, Solidaridad	Franklin	NC
LatinoJustice PRLDEF	New York	NY
Law Students Against Violence (LSAV)	Jacksonville	FL
Lexington Hispanic Association	Lexington	KY
March 25 Coalition	Los Angeles	CA
Marcha Migrante V	San Diego	CA
Marin Interfaith Task Force	Larkspur	CA

Massachusetts Jobs with Justice	Jamaica Plain	MA
Maternal and Child Health Access	Los Angeles	CA
Meadowland Center	Newton	KS
Methodist Federation of Social Action, Cal-Pac Chapter	So. California & Hawaii	
Migrantes Unidos Sin Fronteras	Rio Grande Valley	TX
Migration Policy & Resource Center, Occidental College	Los Angeles	CA
Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA)	Jackson	MS
Movimiento de Inmigrantes Guatemaltecos en Estados Unidos (MIGUA) SF Bay Area, CA; Chicago, IL; Atlanta, GA; Brooklyn, NY; Morristown, NJ; Greenville, NC	San Francisco	CA
Moving Forward Gulf Coast, Inc.	Slidell	LA
Ms. Foundation for Women	Brooklyn	NY
Mujeres Unidas y Activas	San Francisco	CA
Multicultural Efforts to End Sexual Assault (MESA)	West Lafayette	IN
Muslim Consultative Network	New York	NY
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC)	Chicago	IL
National Domestic Worker Alliance	National	
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)	Los Angeles	CA
National Lawyers Guild, San Diego Chapter	San Diego	CA
New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)	Jackson Heights	NY
North Carolina Public Service Workers Union - UE Local 150	Raleigh	NC
Northern California Communist Party	Oakland	CA
Nuestro Centro	Asheville	NC
Oakland Institute	Oakland	CA
Olneyville Neighborhood Association (ONA)	Providence	RI
Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA)	Garden Grove	CA
Out4Immigration	San Francisco	CA
Pacific Institute	Oakland	CA
Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement	Washington	DC
People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER)	San Francisco	CA
Pilipino Workers Center of Southern California	Los Angeles	CA
PODER	San Francisco	CA
Portland Jobs with Justice	Portland	OR
Priority Africa Network (PAN)	Oakland	CA
Promoters of Justice and Peace, Dominicans of North America	Chicago	IL
Proyecto Juan Diego	Brownsville	TX
Religious of the Assumption	Worcester	MA
Rights for All People	Denver	CO
Rural Training and Research Center, Federation of Southern Cooperatives	Epes	AL
Sahara of South Florida	Miami	FL

Sakhi for South Asian Women	New York	NY
Santana & Beiting, P.S.C.	Lexington	KY
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network	San Jose	CA
Servicio Ecumenico de Apoyo y Orientaciona Migrantes-CAREF	Buenos Aires	Arg.
Shakti Peer Group	New York	NY
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas	Washington	DC
Somos America	Scottsdale	AZ
Somos Un Pueblo Unido	Santa Fe	NM
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)	Washington	DC
South Asian Network	Artesia	CA
South Texas Immigration Council Inc.	Brownsville	TX
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)	Washington	DC
Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network	Durham	NC
Southern Coalition for Social Justice	Durham	NC
Southwest Organizing Project	Albuquerque	NM
Southwest Workers Union	San Antonio	TX
St. Pius V Parish	Chicago	IL
Student Action with Farmworkers	Durham	NC
Texans for Peace	Austin	TX
The Praxis Project	Washington	DC
Trabajo Cultural Caminante	San Francisco	CA
Unidad Popular Benito Juarez	Bakersfield	CA
Union Civica Primero de Mayo	Sacramento	CA
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)	Pittsburgh	PA
United Latino Voice	Contra Costa Co	CA
United Methodist Women, Immigrant/Civil Rights Initiative	New York	NY
VAMOS Unidos	New York	NY
Vermont Migrant Farmworker Solidarity Project	Burlington	VT
Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California (VABANC)	SF Bay Area	CA
Voluntarios de La Comunidad	San Jose	CA
Warehouse Workers United	Inland Empire	CA
Wilco Justice Alliance	Bartlett	TX
William C. Velasquez Institute	San Antonio	TX
Wisconsin Annual Conference United Methodist Church	Sun Prairie	WI
World Organization for Human Rights, USA	Washington	DC
Zapatista Solidarity Coalition	Sacramento	CA