

The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) is escalating demands for the U.S. government to create a central process to allow unjustly deported people a meaningful chance to come home. In partnership with 10 people fighting to return to the United States and alongside advocates around the world, NIJC is renewing the call to repair the harms of the U.S. immigration system and reunite families and communities.

VANESSA VAQUIZ MENDOZA

Entrepreneur, survivor of medical abuse in ICE detention, mother. Vanessa suffered unnecessary and nonconsensual gynecological medical procedures while in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and had no choice but to accept deportation to El Salvador in 2020, after 20 years living in the United States. Prior to her detention & deportation, she lived in North Carolina with her three children, including a son who lives with a physical disability and is wheelchair-bound.



TINA HAMDY

Teacher, mother, survivor. Tina had DACA status and lived in the U.S. for 20 years before ICE deported her based on a single conviction resulting from domestic abuse she suffered. She lived in Ohio and is separated from her two young children who live partly in the custody of her ex-partner.



CARLOS SAUCEDA

Advocate, mentor, husband. Carlos lived in the U.S. for over 27 years and served a long criminal sentence he received as a child. His profound rehabilitation resulted in release on parole from the California parole board. But in 2019, ICE deported Carlos to Honduras where he faced potential death for renouncing his former gang membership. He now lives in another country, unable to return to obtain urgently needed medical care for his U.S. citizen wife, despite having won his immigration case on appeal.



GOURA NDIAYE

Devoted father and entrepreneur, living with a disability. Goura lived in the United States for 20 years, including nine years after he lost his asylum case during which he periodically checked in with ICE as required. He had no contact with the criminal legal system. In 2018, without warning, ICE deported Goura to Mauritania, separating him from his four children in Ohio. After his deportation, he was forced to flee to Senegal to escape potential anti-Black persecution and the threat of being enslaved in Mauritania.



LEONEL PINILLA

Husband, father, breadwinner. ICE deported Leonel to Panama in 2012 primarily for marijuana possession, which is now legal under New York State law. He lived for over 30 years in the United States with a full life in New York City. Deportation separated him from his partner, daughter, and son.





IBRAHIMA KEITA

Husband, father, breadwinner. Ibrahim lived in the United States for 20 years and sought asylum after fleeing dictatorship in Mali. After unjustly losing his asylum case due to inadequate legal representation, ICE allowed him to remain in Ohio under supervision with periodic check-ins. He had no contact with the criminal legal system. In 2019, after 10 years of supervision, ICE abruptly deported Ibrahim to Mali. Ibrahim left behind in Ohio his wife and two young sons, including one who suffers from sickle cell disease.

ASSIA SERRANO

Leader, mother, survivor. Assia is a domestic violence survivor who served 17 years of a criminal sentence in New York for actions taken under the coercive influence of an abusive ex-partner. A judge granted her release after passage of historic sentencing reform for domestic violence survivors, but nevertheless ICE deported her to Panama in 2021. Deportation separated her from her son and daughter, who live in New York — where Assia had lived since she was 15 years old.



SAMUEL ANTHONY

Youth mentor, brother, son. Samuel lived in the United States for 40 years. ICE deported Samuel to Sierra Leone in 2019, despite Samuel's significant rehabilitation from his drug addiction and the harsh sentence he served for drug convictions he received as a young Black man in Washington, D.C., at the height of the U.S. government's "War on Drugs." Deportation separated Samuel from his sister, brother, and mother who passed away in 2021.



PAUL PIERRILUS

Brother, son, New Yorker. ICE deported Paul to Haiti in 2022 after 35 years in the United States, even though Paul was not a Haitian citizen and had never visited the country. A federal judge ordered Paul's deportation after a prolonged legal fight. He lived in Spring Valley, New York, where he worked as a financial advisor. Paul misses his parents, sister, brother, and church community.




JUAN CARLOS ROMERO ESCOBAR

Oldest brother, devoted son, proudly LGBTQ. ICE deported Juan Carlos in 2015 after an immigration judge failed to inform him of a law that protected him from being deported to a country where his life would be at risk as a gay man. He lived in California and Arizona for 30 years. Deportation separated Juan Carlos from his mother and younger siblings.



For inquiries about the Chance to Come Home campaign or to connect with advocates working to bring home the people featured in this document, contact Nayna Gupta, NIJC associate director of policy at ngupta@heartlandalliance.org.

Read NIJC's 2021 white paper proposing a Chance to Come Home at immigrantjustice.org/ChancetoComeHome/whitepaper.

 *Follow #ChancetoComeHome on Twitter for campaign updates!*