



Factsheet: **U.S. Immigration Policy**

Militarized Immigration Enforcement

U.S. immigration policy is increasingly employing **racial profiling and criminalizing immigrants**.¹ The most visible aspect of this enforcement-only approach can be seen in the **militarization of the border, raids, deportations and collaboration programs between police and immigration authorities**.

- During the eight years of the Bush Administration, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) doubled the number of Border Patrol agents and the Obama Administration has pursued plans that include tripling the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents policing the interior.²
- **U.S. immigration laws and policies systematically violate the human rights of immigrants and refugees.** Working in conjunction with local and state governments and law enforcement agencies, employers and private citizen groups, the U.S. government has advanced hundreds of measures that deny immigrants due process, living wages, housing, labor protections, and proper health and safety.³

How do police collaborate with immigration authorities?

Agreements like 287(g) and Secure Communities essentially turn local and state law enforcement into immigration enforcement agents. Since 2006, over 70,000 people have been deported under 287(g) agreements nationwide.

- The latest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) program, the Secure Communities initiative, is designed to identify immigrants in U.S. jails who are deportable under immigration law. The DHS launched the program in October 2008 in 48 counties across seven states and plans to expand it to all U.S. jails and prisons by the end of 2012.⁴
- Congress allocated \$350 million for the Secure Communities program in fiscal years 2008 and 2009. In May 2009, after less than four months in office, President Obama asked Congress for a 30% increase in federal funds for fiscal year 2010.⁵

The High Cost to Immigrant Communities

Anti-immigrant policies and ordinances across the country fuel a climate that promotes hate violence against immigrants and propels police and government abuses.⁶



- According to hate crime statistics published annually by the FBI, anti-Latino hate crimes rose by almost 35% between 2003 and 2006.⁷
- **ICE detentions and deportations separate families, traumatize communities and trample due process rights.**⁸
- Immigrants are now more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Under 287(g) and Secure Communities programs, immigrants fearing detection do not report crimes, robberies, domestic abuse or fires to public authorities. Collaboration between police and immigration authorities destabilize communities, making everyone less secure.⁹

Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border

Securing the border has become the cornerstone of trade, immigration and national security policy.¹⁰ **The U.S. has committed billions of tax payer dollars to the construction of a border wall and new technologies that have not successfully deterred migration, but instead funnel people to cross the border through the most dangerous terrains increasing the risk of death.**



- Since 1998, more than 5,000 men, women and children have died while attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border.¹¹ In the quest for national security, migrant casualties are viewed as an unfortunate but necessary consequence of the global war on terrorism.¹²
- The Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection budget has expanded from \$6 billion to \$10.1 billion from 2004 to 2008. The U.S. Border Patrol has increased from 18,000 to 20,000 agents.¹³
- In August 2010, President Obama signed into law a bill allocating \$600 million to deploy two aerial surveillance drones and 1,500 new Border Patrol agents and law enforcement officials along the U.S. Mexico border.¹⁴
- **Border security policies constitute a systematic violation of human rights occurring in U.S. soil today.**¹⁵

Take Action

This October, Witness for Peace will deliver a petition with over 5000 signatures to the Obama Administration demanding an end to raids, deportations, detentions and collaboration between police and immigration officials. Join us as the *Migrating Toward Justice* campaign takes swift action to change these oppressive policies and promotes immigration and uphold human and civil rights.

Go to **www.WitnessForPeace.org/MigratingTowardJustice** for more information and to find out about ways to get involved.

Sources:

- 1,2,4 "Guilty by Immigration Status," by the Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network, an Initiative by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR), September 2009
- 3 "Over-Raided, Under-Siege: US Immigration Laws and Enforcement destroy the rights of immigrants," by the Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network, an Initiative by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR), January 2008
- 4 The Associated Press, "Colo to get access to federal data on immigrants," by Ivan Moreno. July 18, 2009
- 5 Los Angeles Times, "3 California county jails will check immigration status as inmates enter jail," by Anna Gorman; May 14, 2009.
- 6, 8, 9 Guilty by Immigration Status," by the Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network, an Initiative by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR), September 2009
- 7 Brentin Mock, "Immigration Backlash," Southern Poverty Law Center, 2007
- 10, 12, 13, 15 Maria Jimenez, "Humanitarian Crisis: Migrant Deaths at the U.S.-Mexico Border," October 1, 2009
- 11 Stuart Anderson, "Death at the Border," National Foundation for American, May 2010
- 14 Democracy Now, August 19, 2010