

UPHOLD HUMAN SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS, END MASS DEPORTATIONS AND STATE REPRESSION

GAATW stands in full solidarity with human rights advocates and organisations in the urgent call to stop the systems of securitisation, surveillance, and state-led repression that are being used across the US and beyond to criminalise migrants, immigrants and refugees, including trafficked persons.

Under the guise of national security, states are justifying mass deportations, detention and racial profiling, acts that violate fundamental rights and human dignity. In the past months, we have witnessed reports of migrants from working-class groups in the US being forcibly removed from homes, school premises and workplaces by authorities WITHOUT any due process. Many have taken the matter to social media to alert people and disseminate information about raids, checkpoints and patrols in targeted areas.¹ These repressive state practices particularly harm women and girl migrants, especially those with multiple marginalised identities, such as women of colour, Black and Indigenous women, and women with disabilities. As migration is a gendered process, women and girls face greater risks of gender-based violence (GBV) due to ongoing gender inequality and discrimination. These risks intensify during crises, such as the current mass deportations in the United States.² The gendered impacts of criminalisation are documented in GAATW's report,³ which details the rights violations in the context of deportation. Authorities frequently treat migrant women as criminals and restrain them with handcuffs during the process.

We also express our concerns over the use of national security frameworks not only to criminalise migration, but to actively silence dissent. Human rights defenders, students, solidarity groups and even elected officials are being targeted, and protests and assemblies are being repressed. We are witnessing the growth of a global authoritarian system fueled by xenophobia, repression and a lack of accountability.

¹ WIRED, *Social Media Is Now a DIY Alert System for ICE Raids*, 12 June 2025, <https://www.wired.com/story/the-rise-of-social-media-as-a-diy-alert-system-for-ice-raids/>

² R Celorio, M Ellsberg, C J Sandoval and G Nassif, *Gendered Consequences of U.S. Mass Deportations: How Shifting Migration Policies Endanger Women and Girls*, SFS Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 6 May 2025, <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2025/05/06/gendered-consequences-of-u-s-mass-deportations-how-shifting-migration-policies-endanger-women-and-girls/>

³ GAATW, *'Do you have a boyfriend?' Exploring decision makers' treatment of migrant women*, 2024, https://www.gaatw.org/images/ATJ_report_design_Dec_fixed.pdf

Between January and June 2025, under the Trump administration, arrests of immigrants with no criminal background surged by 807%.⁴ This escalation in the number of arrests has led to overcrowded and unsafe conditions across a network of detention facilities. Detainees, many of whom are women and children, are being rapidly transferred between detention sites, without notice or due process. This process is exacerbating trauma and disrupting access to legal counsel. Disturbingly, we heard stories from families and attorneys about being unable to locate detained individuals, as authorities withheld information about their whereabouts. At the same time, sponsors of unaccompanied children are being targeted for immigration enforcement, creating fear and discouraging reunification among families. This lack of transparency and rollback on protection not only violates basic rights but also cuts crucial lines of support and advocacy to deepen the isolation and fear experienced by those in detention.

Many of these detention facilities are privately run, and have long been documented as sites of abuse and inhumane treatment.⁵ Significantly, a recent report⁶ shows the Trump administration's dismantling of oversight protections for women and girls in detention, which includes dismantling the critical oversight bodies that ensure that the federal government and its contractors comply with civil rights laws. It also eliminates legal service providers' access to detention facilities. And there is withholding of vital data on detained migrants, including data on family separations.

Importantly, the limited protections available to immigrant survivors of trafficking are under serious threat, both through legislative proposals such as the Reconciliation Bill⁷ and the broader erosion of the rule of law. These threats have created a climate of uncertainty, fear and a reduction of rights protection for migrant workers who have experienced exploitation. There is no clear and enforceable guarantee that coming forward will not lead to detention or deportation. This uncertainty has left many questioning whether it is safer to remain undocumented than to seek protection through a system that is increasingly hostile and unreliable.

⁴ *Ice arrests of migrants with no criminal history surging under Trump*, The Guardian, 14 June 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/14/ice-arrests-migrants-trump-figures>

⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Detained and at Risk, Sexual Abuse and Harassment in United States Immigration Detention*, 25 August 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/25/detained-and-risk/sexual-abuse-and-harassment-united-states-immigration-detention>

⁶ Women's Refugee Commission, *Oversight is Critical for Women and Girls in Immigration Detention: Restore it NOW!*, May 2025, <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Oversight-Is-Critical-for-Women-and-Girls-in-Immigration-Detention.pdf>

⁷ Freedom Network USA, *FNUSA Opposes Harmful Reconciliation Bill that Strips Protections for Survivors and Enables Trafficking*, 12 June 2025, <https://freedomnetworkusa.org/2025/06/12/fnusa-opposes-harmful-reconciliation-bill-that-strips-protections-for-survivors-and-enables-trafficking/>

GAATW members and allies are actively protesting against the ongoing mass deportations and state repression, standing in solidarity with migrant communities targeted by unjust immigration policies.

This moment calls for our collective voice to push back and remind states of their obligations to uphold the fundamental human rights for ALL people and to exercise their duties to recognise the justice system, both locally and in accordance with international laws. We echo the calls to stop illegal detentions and mass deportations, reject carceral border regimes,⁸ and reassess 'safety' within a human rights and human security framework and a functioning justice system, rather than through excessive surveillance, criminalisation and control.

We demand:

- An end to the criminalisation of migration and carceral border regimes.
- Due process and access to legal services for all migrants, regardless of status, as affirmed in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. An end to worksite raids, which may well result in the detention and deportation of forced and exploited labour survivors.
- Safety and protection towards NGOs, especially among advocates, legal counsel and social workers who have an ethical obligation to assist their clients, but are targeted by the government should they intervene.
- Transparency, just treatment and fair case processing by authorities.
- Accountability for state violence and repression.

SIGNATORIES

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women - International Secretariat

Freedom Network USA

Advocating Opportunity (AO)

GAATW Canada

Corporación Espacios de Mujer, Colombia

Asociación Civil de Derechos Humanos Mujeres Unidas Migrantes y Refugiadas (AMUMRA),
Argentina

Brigada Callejera de Apoyo a la Mujer E.M.A.C, Mexico

CHS Alternativo, Peru.

⁸ Amnesty USA, *Stop Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill": Tell Your Two Senators 'Vote NO on Reconciliation Bill That Would Fund Cruel Border Policies and Mass Deportation'*, 11 June 2025, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/blog/stop-trumps-one-big-beautiful-bill-tell-your-two-senators-vote-no-on-reconciliation-bill-that-would-fund-cruel-border-policies-and-mass-deportation/>

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