

ICE conducts armed raid on student pastor's home in Chicago, abducts three

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16 May 2019

An estimated 20 armed Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducted a militarized raid on a family home in Chicago last Wednesday, kidnapping a student pastor, her husband and cousin.

Betty Rendón had been preaching at Emaus Lutheran Church in Racine, Wisconsin, for approximately three months while studying for her doctorate degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago when she was snatched by federal agents last week. Rendón had been in the process of applying for asylum for multiple years while in the United States. Her most recent appeal was rejected, but she was still attempting to work her way through the byzantine appeal process.

Originally from Colombia, Rendón had fled following an attack on the school where she had previously worked that left several teachers injured. Upon reaching the United States, Rendón's initial appeal for asylum was rejected because federal agents could not locate a police report to verify her claims, despite the attack being well known to people in the village, according to Rendón.

ICE has not released a statement yet detailing why the raid was conducted nor any information as to where Rendón and the rest of her family were being held. It was later discovered by friends and family that Rendón is being held at the Kenosha Detention Facility in Wisconsin some 60 miles north of Chicago.

In an interview with the *Racine Journal Times*, Stephanie Mitchell, a professor at Carthage College and a parishioner at Emaus, recalled the events leading up to Rendón's abduction. Mitchell visited Rendón in the detention facility this past Saturday.

According to Mitchell, ICE officials conducted a traffic stop on the pastor's daughter, whose name as yet to be released, while she was driving her five-year-old daughter to school from their home in Chicago. Despite Pastor Rendón's daughter being currently eligible for DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, she was

nevertheless arrested and placed in handcuffs; armed ICE officials then drove her and her daughter, who was born in the US, back to their house.

Mitchell was struck by the size of the militarized force used to kidnap a pastor and her family. "This was a carefully planned raid that involved a lot of heavy-duty police force, multiple police vehicles, maybe 20 police officers, all of them armed as though they were invading a space where there was some kind of dangerous criminal," Mitchell continued; "instead it was [a Lutheran] pastor and her family going about their ordinary daily business."

Upon arriving at the house, ICE agents engaged Betty's husband Carlos as he was leaving home to go to work. Multiple armed agents descended upon the home with guns drawn and began shouting in English at Carlos. The agents violently shoved Carlos and illegally forced him to open the door to his home. Once the armed thugs forced their way inside, they moved room to room until they located Betty Rendón, still in her pajamas, and arrested her. Agents also kidnapped her adult cousin, Felipe, who was staying as a house guest.

Following her arrest, ICE agents allowed Rendón to make arrangements for her granddaughter to be picked up by her other grandparents as they detained all of the adults in the family. Eventually Rendón's daughter was released, as she is legally protected by DACA and should not have been targeted by ICE in the first place. While Rendón was making arrangements for her daughter, she was able to send one text message to her church informing them that she wouldn't be able to preach last Sunday, which was Mother's Day.

According to a Facebook post written on the church's page, after the agents had arrested all of the adults a celebratory mood overtook them. Apparently the agents hadn't expected to "arrest so many people in a single raid." In their jubilation, the agents forgot, or neglected, to secure the Rendóns' home after abducting them,

leaving the doors unlocked and open. A neighbor of the Rendóns called the police to file a report upon noticing the home was subsequently ransacked with all items of value reported stolen.

A prayer vigil was organized for Wednesday evening outside the Kenosha Detention Facility to demand the release of Rendón, her husband and cousin. It was attended by members of her church and other community members disgusted by the heavy-handed tactics employed by the American Gestapo.

More than 100 workers, youth, immigrants and community members attended the vigil in support of Betty and her family's liberation. Signs displayed featured slogans such as "STOP ICE," "No Wall," "Who Would Jesus Deport?" and finally "Abolish ICE."

While the Rendóns are currently imprisoned in the unfriendly confines of the Kenosha detention center, hundreds, if not thousands of those seeking asylum in the US are forced to remain outside in the elements with nothing more than a reflective Mylar blanket. Recent photos sent this past weekend to CNN from inside the McAllen, Texas, border station, one of nine stations located in the Rio Grande Valley, show the horrific conditions asylum seekers are made to endure.

The photos depict a scene of chaos and misery: Hundreds of families, including women with young children, are forced to huddle under makeshift tents and sleep on rocks. Forced to live in these conditions, it is hardly surprising that sickness and disease runs rampant throughout the facilities.

The exposé of these criminal conditions will be used to further Trump's, the Democrats' and the *New York Times*'s "humanitarian" demand for an additional \$4.5 billion in funding to quell the manufactured "crisis" at the southern border that has been created by the Trump administration's illegal refusal to process asylum claims.



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