

Detention of hospital worker by ICE provokes anger among nurses

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On March 27, hospital supply chain manager Aditya Harsono was arrested in the basement of the facility where he works in Marshall, Minnesota after his student visa was secretly revoked by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). According to a report by the *Guardian*, two Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents had shown up dressed in plain clothes and instructed staff to stage a fake meeting in the basement so they could apprehend him.

Harsono told the ICE agents that his F-1 student visa was valid through June 2026, and that he had a pending green-card application based on his marriage to a US citizen. His attorney, Sarah Gad, said that Harsono's F-1 visa was still active the day after his arrest and was revoked by DHS without giving him notice. They then claimed he had overstayed his visa.

Secretly revoking a visa is a sinister tactic of immigration authorities under the Trump administration's fascistic mass deportation operation. Even more sinister is the backdating of his visa to March 23, allegedly for a 2022 misdemeanor conviction for graffitiing a semi-truck trailer and an arrest for "unlawful assembly" during a demonstration against the police murder of George Floyd, which was later dropped. The misdemeanor is not a deportable offense under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and Harsono had traveled internationally and returned multiple times to Indonesia since the conviction without incident, said Gad.

Harsono's spouse, Peyton Harsono, believes that her husband was detained due to his political activism and support for Palestine. According to his attorney, he operates a small non-profit, which sells art and merchandise with proceeds going to organizations aiding Gaza. He frequently posts on social media in support of humanitarian relief for Gaza.

The Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) released a toothless statement on April 16, nearly three weeks after the incident, condemning the arrest of Harsono at Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center. The MNA covers 22,000 registered nurses in Minnesota as well as in Wisconsin, Iowa and North Dakota, but has done nothing to mobilize its membership in defense of Harsono.

This is not surprising, given the MNA's own record. In October 2023, MNA fired union staffer Tania Singh after she made social media statements supporting the right of the people of Gaza to defend themselves. The firing of Singh made clear that the MNA supports the genocide and rejects any expression of opposition. This flows from the bureaucracy's support for American capitalism, which also is expressed in their enforcement of sellout contracts.

In a Reddit post on r/nursing, nurses expressed their anger and disgust over the arrest of Harsono. In one comment, an ER nurse said, "So basically ... he was here legally, the government didn't like his political/religious views, so they made him an illegal immigrant so they could deport him. Yeah, nothing to see here everyone, this is totally normal."

In another comment, a Med/Surg nurse said, "I used to wonder how the Nazis were able to do all the things they did. I don't wonder anymore."

Nurses want to fight but their struggle against the attacks on their working conditions, living standards, healthcare and on public health are being suffocated by the MNA bureaucracy. MNA is affiliated to National Nurses United (NNU), the largest union and professional association of registered nurses in the United States. NNU has yet to put out a statement on the arrest of Harsono and has done nothing to mobilize its 225,000 members to defend immigrants, students

and democratic rights. Instead, NNU is working with Bernie Sanders and other Democrats, including Debbie Dingell and Pramila Jayapal to defuse working class anger behind Trump's Democratic Party enablers.

While posturing as a "democratic socialist," Sanders stated his support for Trump's border crackdown and has long backed trade measures against China. At a recent rally, Sanders stood by while police dragged out protesters who unfurled a Palestinian banner behind the speakers' platform.

To mobilize the power of the working class in defense of democratic rights, nurses must organize independently of Democratic Party and the union bureaucracy, whose overriding goal is to secure its place within the capitalist system and preserve the status quo.

Workers must build independent rank-and-file defense committees in every workplace, factory, school and neighborhood to defend immigrants, students and democratic rights.



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