

# ICE abducts student in New York City as anti-immigrant campaign intensifies

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Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents continue their outrageous and illegal behavior at 26 Federal Plaza in Manhattan as they arrest immigrants after judicial hearings on their status in the United States. Despite frequent protests by immigrant groups, high-school students, Democratic Party politicians and thousands of immigrant supporters, masked federal agents kidnap dozens of immigrant workers and youth every week.

Late last month, ICE thugs arrested and detained Joselyn Chipantiza-Sisalema, a 20-year-old student and asylum seeker from Ecuador, as she left a routine immigration hearing. Though a federal judge had set a new court date and left open the possibility that Chipantiza-Sisalema could stay in the United States, ICE agents seized her as soon as she left the courtroom.

Chipantiza-Sisalema was soon thrown into a cell on the 10th floor of 26 Federal Plaza with 50 other women. Because the cell has no beds, Chipantiza-Sisalema has been sleeping on the floor. She has no access to a shower and has been wearing the same clothes for more than a week. Since she was detained, she has been allowed to speak to her parents only three times. Each call lasted no longer than one minute.

Chipantiza-Sisalema and her family fled Ecuador to escape gang violence. At the time of her arrest, she was enrolled in a program to prepare for a General Educational Development test. Passing the test would grant her the equivalent of a high school diploma. She has been missing classes since she was detained.

Marco Chipantiza, the student's father, spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* while he, his wife and his son were protesting outside of 26 Federal Plaza. The family was joined by immigration advocates, attorneys and other supporters who called for an end to ICE brutality.

Chipantiza had not seen his daughter in 15 days. "The little I have communicated with her, she told me that she is in terrible condition," he said. "It does hurt me a lot, as a father, and I feel helpless not being able to do anything for her."

Chipantiza has been in the United States for about three years, and his daughter for one year. "Many of us are here to give better security to our children and our family," he said. "After my daughter arrived, I think there were changes in the laws. From there, our situation began to change."

The arrest of his daughter has been traumatic for Chipantiza. "It is a very hard blow, because I felt very safe in this country," Chipantiza continued. "It gave us security, and the whole family already settled in this community. But from one moment to another, I found myself in this situation ... despite the traumas I had in my country." Chipantiza described gang-related shootings that have occurred in Ecuador. He fears that his daughter will be persecuted and killed if she is deported.

"Every day is one of great uncertainty. Our family cannot remain calm. We are desperate, not knowing what to do, because the four of us are the only family in this country, and that is very hard."

Chipantiza-Sisalema is at least the third New York high school student to be seized by ICE in the past two months. On June 6, agents arrested an 11th grader at Grover Cleveland High School in Queens while he was attending an immigration hearing with his family. The student's name was not released.

In late May, ICE arrested Dylan Josue Lopez Contreras, a 20-year-old student at Ellis Prep Academy in the Bronx. Lopez Contreras immigrated to the US from Venezuela during the administration of President Joe Biden using the Customs and Border Protection app. He entered the country legally and was in the process of seeking asylum. ICE thugs arrested him when he arrived for a mandatory immigration hearing.

In recent months, attorneys for the Department of Homeland Security have systematically moved to dismiss asylum seekers' cases. Far from being acts of clemency, these motions have been a tactic in the anti-immigrant campaign. When the attorneys' motions to dismiss have been granted, ICE agents have seized the immigrants for expedited removal. The agents have notoriously stood

outside, or even inside, the courtrooms and pounced on the immigrants immediately.

More recently, ICE agents have begun seizing immigrants like Chipantiza-Sisalema regardless of whether they have open cases or pending court dates. These abductions are not only an escalation in the attack on democratic rights but also brazen violations of the separation of the executive and judicial branches of the US government. They represent another stage in President Donald Trump's effort to establish a presidential dictatorship.

According to a report in *Hell Gate*, federal jails in New York City and around the United States have now been opened to receive abducted immigrants. The Federal Bureau of Prisons said in a statement that this would help "fulfill the administration's policy objectives." In New York, the federal Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn now houses over 100 immigrants seized by ICE.

Paige Austin, an attorney with the immigrant rights group Make the Road, told *Hell Gate*, "Stephen Miller and others at the top levels of government have said they want 3,000 people a day detained, and so ICE is grabbing everybody that they can, and it is causing an immense logistical problem that they haven't planned for."

Journalists also reported seeing, in addition to ICE goons, agents from the Treasury Department, Customs and Border Patrol and Homeland Security Investigations making arrests at 26 Federal Plaza. Many of the agents are in plain clothes and wear masks to conceal their identity.

The Trump administration is unabashed about making New York City a focus of its attacks. After the massive No Kings demonstrations in June, Trump proclaimed that the federal government would conduct the "single largest Mass Deportation Program in History," specifying that efforts must "detain and deport Illegal Aliens in America's largest Cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York."

After Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), won the Democratic primary in New York's Democratic mayoral primary, Trump falsely asserted that he might be "here illegally." Calling Mamdani a "pure communist," the president threatened to arrest him, strip him of his citizenship and deport him.

This extraordinary outburst underscores the fact that the anti-immigrant campaign is in fact an attack on the democratic rights of the entire working class. This is necessary to implement the untrammled rule of the richest Americans. In the form of Trump's budget bill, Congress has just enacted one of the largest transfers of wealth to the corporate and financial oligarchy in US history. The oligarchy, represented by Trump, understands that it cannot enact its agenda of class war by democratic means.

The victory of Mamdani in the mayoral primary reflects

the rise of left-wing sentiment among young people and workers in New York and in the US as a whole. Hostility is spreading not only to the fascists in the Republican Party but to the Democratic Party's political establishment, which has ruled New York City and state as well as large cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles for decades.

During the primary election last month, the Democratic establishment lined up behind former New York state governor Andrew Cuomo and redbaited and smeared Mamdani as an antisemite. But the tactic backfired spectacularly. Voters who face low wages, burdensome debt and an exorbitant cost of living in one of the world's most expensive cities voted for Mamdani based on his promises of city-run grocery stores, subsidized transit, rent freezes and free childcare. They also responded to Mamdani's denunciation of Israel's genocide of the Palestinians and to his refusal to cooperate with ICE.

The No Kings protests on June 14 were a further sign of this growing left-wing opposition. Millions of people in every state participated in these protests, including large numbers in New York. The protesters loudly proclaimed their opposition to Trump's efforts to establish a dictatorship, and many decried his violation of immigrants' rights to asylum and due process.

Protests, however, have not stopped ICE at 26 Federal Plaza, and neither would a Democratic Mayor Mamdani. An entirely different political perspective is needed to fight the attacks on immigrants and to stop dictatorship in its tracks: the mobilization of the working class on a socialist program that will expropriate the wealth of the oligarchy.

Students and workers who are outraged at the kidnapping of Joselyn Chipantiza-Sisalema and thousands like her around the US should begin to build rank-and-file committees that will fight for the political independence of the working class and a general strike to bring down the Trump regime.



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