

# Voices Without Faces: “We’ve lived our whole lives here, and now we live in fear”—A brother and sister speak out on Trump’s war on immigrants

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*Voices Without Faces* is a new series of articles on the World Socialist Web Site to focus on and give a voice to immigrant workers who are isolated from and out of the view of other workers, and the capitalist press, by raising real life conditions as well as political issues. Readers and workers are encouraged to contribute to this series. Your anonymity will be guaranteed.

Trump’s conversion of the Department of Defense into the Department of War marks an escalation of his ongoing coup d’état in Washington. What appears to be merely bureaucratic rebranding is in fact nothing less than a declaration of war against the international working class.

Domestically, his administration has unleashed a campaign of terror: militarized raids, detention sweeps and mass deportations have devastated millions of working class families. Abroad, Washington prepares for direct confrontation with China, while US imperialism backs the ongoing genocide in Gaza and continues to fuel destruction in Ukraine.

In the US, hundreds of thousands have already been deported in just a few months. According to preliminary Census Bureau data analyzed by the Pew Research Center, More than 1.2 million immigrants disappeared from the labor force from January through the end of July.

Immigrant workers, who fully contribute to society and the economy, are being targeted, criminalized and removed at a breathtaking pace. In Los Angeles, Adam, 21, who is undocumented, and his sister Abriel, 18, a US citizen, spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* about their lives under siege, their family’s sacrifices and their fears for the future.

Adam was an infant when his mother arranged for him to be brought across the U.S.-Mexico border.

“I came here at nine months old,” he recalls. “My mom hasn’t told me much about how. She had to trust someone else to carry me, pretending I was their son. I can’t imagine how hard that was for her, handing me over to strangers, hoping I would make it safely.”

Like many children brought to the US, Adam did not know he was undocumented until he was told in elementary school. “I didn’t know until fifth grade,” he says. “Then everything changed. It got harder, especially with school, applying for college, jobs—everything.”

Adam’s attempt to secure status through DACA collided with the shifting political landscape.

“When I turned 15, I applied for DACA,” he explains. “I sent all the paperwork, but right then Trump stopped new applications. Mine’s been on hold ever since.”

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, announced in 2012, allowed certain undocumented youth—brought to the US before age 16 and under 31 as of June 15, 2012—to apply for temporary protection from deportation and work permits. But in July 2020, the Trump administration blocked new applications, restricted renewals to one-year increments, and threw thousands into limbo.

“People think DACA is protection,” Adam says, “but it’s not. You’re still always at risk.”

The cruelty of Trump’s deportation machine became personal when Adam’s uncle was detained during an ICE raid at a car wash. “They took him and moved him from place to place—downtown, then Altadena, then somewhere else,” Adam explains.

Inside detention, the conditions are brutal. “My grandma told me he gets two protein drinks and a piece of bread for the whole day,” Adam says. “He’s sick, nauseous, getting weaker.”

Thinking about his uncle, Adam draws a direct connection to what he sees happening abroad. “I can imagine what people in Gaza are going through,” he says. “It’s worse there—bombing, starvation, people with no way out. But it’s connected. Over there they bomb and starve, and here they starve you in jail. It’s the same system hurting people, just in different ways.”

When asked what he thinks about the US-backed Israeli assault, Adam doesn’t hesitate. “It’s really bad—what Israel is

doing to the Palestinian people,” he says. “People forget history. The Jewish people suffered, and now Israel’s government is doing the same thing to Palestinians. That doesn’t make it right.”

“It shows you,” he continued, “this isn’t just about immigrants. It’s about workers, poor people, people without power. The government has no problem hurting us—here or anywhere else.”

Adam recalls ICE raids targeting car washes, construction sites, and supermarkets. “They pick certain places, and they take people—people who’ve been here 10, 15 years, who have kids,” he says. “They work hard, they’re innocent.”

Some believe it’s only racial profiling, but Adam sees a bigger picture. “I have a friend who’s Italian, undocumented like me. He doesn’t get stopped because he looks ‘American,’ but technically, he’s at the same risk I am. They are taking Asians and others. This isn’t just about race. It’s about immigrants, about workers.”

For Adam, fear defines daily life. “I take the bus to work,” he says. “By my job, ICE raided a car wash and took people. They were even near our house the other day.”

Like the millions who are undocumented, his family is terrified to do basic things: “My parents don’t want to go grocery shopping. They tell us, ‘Don’t go out unless you have to.’ It feels like we’re trapped.”

Adam dreams of becoming a mechanic, earning a steady living, and staying with his family. “I’ve lived here 21 years,” he says. “I have friends, school, work, my whole life here. But politicians keep talking and doing nothing. Both parties have failed us.”

Adam rejects the narrative pushed by Trump and the media. “They make it sound like we’re criminals,” he says. “But we came here as kids. Our parents brought us for a better life. Everybody works in my family.”

If deported, Adam would be sent to a country he barely knows. “I don’t see myself living there,” he admits. “I’ve built everything here—my friends, my siblings, my life, my future. I am American!”

Abriel, Adam’s younger sister, was born in the US, but citizenship offers little comfort. “I’m scared too,” she says. “Walking to the corner store, you never know what’s going to happen. My parents are terrified. Sometimes we just stay home.”

She is deeply disturbed by the government’s abandonment of constitutional protections. “Trump’s abusing executive power, and nobody’s stopping him,” she says. “I thought this country had checks and balances, but it feels like he does whatever he wants.”

Abriel also worries about Trump’s threats to end birthright citizenship. “If they change the law, who knows what’ll happen to people like me?” she says. “I never thought I’d be scared as a US citizen.”

Abriel faces the crushing reality of possibly raising her two

youngest siblings if their parents or Adam are deported. “I think about it all the time,” she says. “What would I do? How would I take care of them? It’s terrifying.”

Her cousin is already living this nightmare. “Her dad, our uncle, got detained,” Abriel explains. “Now she’s struggling to pay bills and take care of her brothers. That could be us.”

Both Adam and Abriel stress the sacrifices their parents made. “My dad came here at 14,” Abriel says. “He brought my mom and brother at 16. Everything we have, they built. They’re not criminals—they’re hardworking parents.”

She’s outraged at the criminalization of undocumented immigrants. “People call my brother and parents ‘illegal,’” she says. “It’s disturbing. My parents have done nothing but work hard, pay taxes and support us. They’re learning like we are, trying their best.”

For Adam and Abriel, the attacks on immigrants cannot be separated from broader attacks on democratic rights. Abriel puts it bluntly: “The government’s failing. The country’s falling apart. Anything could happen now.”

Their experiences reveal the bipartisan nature of these policies. Democrats posture as defenders but have offered no protection, while Republicans openly escalate repression. “They talk about helping immigrants every election,” Adam says, “but when they’re in power, they do nothing.”

For Adam, the situation feels surreal. “I’ve been here my whole life,” he says. “I feel American in every way, but to the government, I don’t exist. We’re invisible until they come for us.”

Abriel agrees: “My parents, my brother, my neighbors—there are no criminals here. We’re families, we’re workers, we’re part of this country. But they’re tearing us apart.”

Despite the fear and uncertainty, Abriel insists that the suffering of her family and millions like it cannot continue indefinitely. “Something has to change,” she says. “We can’t keep living like this, scared every day, hiding from the government, worrying about being torn away from each other. No one deserves to live like that.”

For Abriel, the path forward begins with unity. “I’ve seen how hard my parents work, how hard people around us work. It’s not just immigrants, it’s everyone. People are struggling everywhere. That’s where change has to come from.”

She concludes: “Real change has to come from working people standing together.” Her words echo the central theme that the struggles of immigrant families like hers are inseparable from the broader fight of the working class against capitalism.



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