

ICE terrorizes Haitians in Springfield, Ohio; imprisons 5-year-old boy in Texas

Jacob Crosse
23 August 2026

The Trump administration's deportations and kidnappings of Haitian immigrants are continuing across the United States. The fate of the 161 people forcibly deported to Haiti last Thursday remains largely unknown.

The US government has provided no public breakdown showing how many were formerly protected by Temporary Protected Status (TPS), how many were children, how long they had lived in the United States or whether they had pending asylum or other immigration cases.

The little that is known underscores the criminal character of the operation. The flight included women and children, former TPS holders and people admitted under humanitarian parole. Some of those deported were not born in Haiti. One man was born in the Dominican Republic, where his parents still live, but was sent to Haiti solely because he is of Haitian descent.

Some 350,000 Haitians who were previously protected by TPS are now at risk of being seized, imprisoned and sent to one of the poorest and most dangerous countries in the Western Hemisphere. Haiti's social catastrophe is the product of more than a century of US invasions, occupations, coups and economic domination aimed at suppressing the Haitian working class and maintaining the country as a cheap labor platform.

Among those seized by the immigration Gestapo are Pastor Gilbert Joubert Adrien and Victor Yonel, whose arrests were reported Friday by the *World Socialist Web Site*. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents took the two men at about 8:30 a.m. Thursday from a Sunoco gas station on South Limestone Street in Springfield, Ohio. Two women who were in the vehicle, including Yonel's wife, were released.

Springfield G92, a local faith-rooted immigrant rights organization, first made their seizure public. In an email to the WSW, Michael McClelland, a spokesperson for G92, said that as of Saturday the organization did not know where either man was being held.

"Any time Haitian immigrants are taken into custody there is a strong likelihood they will be sent to Haiti, often with no one being told, including their families," McClelland wrote. "Again, we just don't know where they are now."

At last report, Adrien did not have a lawyer and could not afford one. He was receiving advice and limited assistance from Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, but McClelland said

the organization was swamped with other cases.

The secrecy is a standard feature of ICE's criminal operations. Detainees are moved between county jails and for-profit concentration camps, frequently hundreds or thousands of miles from their families and attorneys. Relatives may receive no notice before a loved one is placed aboard a deportation flight.

Fear of retaliation also makes it difficult to document the scale of the assault. McClelland explained that Haitians were "very reluctant" to provide information that could draw ICE's attention to themselves or their loved ones in Haiti.

"Pastor Adrien's arrest is a huge shock to all of Springfield, especially those in the Haitian community who see this as one more vicious assault on their lives and dreams," he wrote. "People across Springfield are shocked that our quiet little town has become a battlefield for human rights."

McClelland contrasted ICE's methods in Springfield with the federal occupation of Minneapolis. "ICE is not using the mass-assault tactics they used in places like Minneapolis but rather are going quietly after individuals where they live," he wrote. As a result, many residents do not know what is happening to their neighbors. "For those who do, this is heartbreaking."

G92 knows of "at least 20 detainments in the last 2 weeks" and believes there may be many more, McClelland said. "ICE will not provide any figures." Local news reports indicate that more than two dozen Haitians with connections to Springfield have recently been taken to the Butler County Jail.

Springfield has a population of roughly 58,000, including more than 12,000 Haitian immigrants. They labored in factories and warehouses, operated restaurants and small businesses, raised families and attended local churches. The termination of TPS and the daily threat of abduction have driven much of this community underground.

Even Haitians with other visa or asylum applications pending "are afraid to step outside their own homes," McClelland wrote.

"School started last week here; parents are afraid to let their children go, and children [are] afraid if they go to class, parents won't be there when they get back," he said. "They can no longer hold jobs or drive. There are frequent reports of Haitians going without food because they have no money and are afraid

to go to groceries.”

G92 and other local organizations are providing transportation, legal assistance, food and rent money, “but the problem is far bigger than we are,” McClelland said. The Haitian Support Center is among the organizations collecting donations and assisting residents.

An unknown number of Haitians have fled Springfield. Those who remain are desperately waiting for asylum applications that can take months to resolve while ICE hunts them with virtually no legal restraint.

“Depression is widespread among the community, and we have reports of suicides,” McClelland wrote. He added that “people would rather die than return to Haiti.”

The attack extends far beyond Haitian immigrants. ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CPB) are targeting children and using their imprisonment to terrorize entire families.

On August 16, federal immigration agents stopped Victor Martinez Nieto in Austin, Texas, as he and his five-year-old son, Liam Tadeo, were traveling to a soccer game. Video of the arrest shows the crying child holding the hand of his cuffed father as agents lead them toward a dark-tinted sport utility vehicle.

Liam was supposed to begin kindergarten last week. Instead, he and his father are imprisoned at the privately operated Dilley Immigration Processing Center, also known as the South Texas Family Residential Center.

“The detention of Liam and my brother-in-law was cruel; they are not criminals,” Liam’s aunt, Patricia Resendiz, wrote in a GoFundMe appeal. “They were simply on their way to a soccer match.” Resendiz said the arrest occurred in front of Liam’s cousin, who heard agents tell the five-year-old, “You can’t escape.”

Liam’s mother remains outside the facility. She has not been given an opportunity to take custody of her son.

After initially refusing to answer questions, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) acknowledged Friday that agents had arrested Martinez Nieto during a vehicle stop. DHS alleged that Nieto reentered the country after accepting voluntary departure in February. It did not accuse him of any criminal offense.

“Martinez Nieto and his son will remain together in ICE custody pending removal,” DHS declared.

The agency claims parents may designate a “safe person” to take their children. Yet CBS Austin reported that DHS refused to explain why Liam was taken into custody rather than released to his mother or another relative. It also refused to say what prompted the vehicle stop, which federal agency initiated it or how long Liam would remain imprisoned.

The scene recalls the January seizure of five-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos during the federal occupation of Minneapolis. He became gravely ill while imprisoned with his father at Dilley before a federal judge ordered their release.

A Brookings Institution analysis estimated that approximately

205,000 children experienced the detention of a parent between January 20, 2025 and April 9, 2026. More than 145,000 were US citizens, and approximately 22,000 lost all their co-resident parents to detention.

Separately, a Factchequeado analysis of ICE records obtained through the Freedom of Information Act found that the Trump administration forcibly deported at least 13,816 children and adolescents between January 20, 2025 and March 10, 2026. Nearly one in five was sent to a country other than that listed as the child’s nationality. More than 99 percent had neither a criminal conviction nor pending criminal charges.

Conditions inside Dilley are horrendous. In the first year after Trump reopened the facility in March 2025, approximately 3,000 children were imprisoned there. Children and parents have reported rotting food, undrinkable water, vermin and the denial of medical care.

The El Gamal family, including four minor children, endured nearly 10 months of hell at Dilley despite none of the six family members being charged with a crime. Hayam El Gamal was taken to an emergency room after requests for medical care were ignored. Her 16-year-old son developed acute appendicitis after detention staff provided nothing beyond Tylenol. Her children wrote that their imprisonment was “slowly killing us on the inside.”

Dilley exposes the bipartisan foundations of the mass deportation apparatus. The 2,400-bed concentration camp was built at the request of the Obama administration and opened in December 2014 as the largest immigrant family detention center in the United States. It is operated by the Corrections Corporation of America, now CoreCivic, which continues to profit from imprisoning parents, children and infants.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact