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# Trump ordered a critically ill four-year-old Mexican girl to leave the country. She could die within days, experts say

Deysi Vargas and her 4-year-old daughter were granted temporary humanitarian permission to enter the U.S. in 2023 due to a life-threatening condition

Rhian Lubin in New York • Wednesday 28 May 2025 23:39 BST •  Comments



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The family of a critically ill Mexican girl who “could die within days” if her treatment is paused fears they could be deported after the Trump administration prematurely revoked her humanitarian parole, their lawyers said.

Deysi Vargas’s 4-year-old daughter, Sofia, urgently required better medical care for a life-threatening condition and was granted temporary humanitarian parole to enter the U.S. from her home country of Mexico in 2023, *The Los Angeles Times* reports.



Deysi Vargas’s 4-year-old daughter Sofia requires constant medical treatment for her condition and was granted temporary humanitarian permission to enter the U.S. in 2023 (*Jeremy Cohen/Courtesy of Public Counsel*)

Sofia has short bowel syndrome, a rare condition that stops her from absorbing nutrients in food. When she was born in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, she had to be attached to feeding tubes 24 hours a day. Since moving to the U.S., her condition has significantly improved, but she still requires treatment every day.

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The **Trump administration** prematurely revoked Sofia's **humanitarian parole on April 11**, leaving her at risk of death if she has to leave the country, an attorney representing the family said.

"This is a textbook example of medical need," Rebecca Brown of the pro bono firm Public Counsel told the paper. "This child will die and there's no sense for that to happen. It would just be a cruel sacrifice."

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The family is currently living in Bakersfield, California, just over 100 miles north of Los Angeles.

The threat to Sofia's life was confirmed by Dr. John Arsenault of the Children's Hospital Los Angeles, where she receives regular treatment every six weeks.

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Now the Trump administration has told the family to leave the country. Sofia's doctor said that if her treatment is interrupted, 'it could be fatal within a matter of days' (*Jeremy Cohen/Courtesy of Public Counsel*)

Arsenault said in a letter seen by *The Los Angeles Times* that if there is an interruption to administering nutrition to her system, "it could be fatal within a matter of days."

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The doctor added that patients who receive the treatment, called Total Parenteral Nutrition, at home “are not allowed to leave the country.”

“The infrastructure to provide TPN or provide immediate intervention if there is a problem with IV access depends on our program’s utilization of U.S.-based healthcare resources and does not transfer across borders,” Arsenault explained in the letter.

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Following news coverage about her case, the Department of Homeland Security said Sofia's parole was "still being considered" in a statement to *The Independent*.

"Any reporting that Vargas and her family are actively being deported are FALSE. This family applied with USCIS for humanitarian parole on May 14, 2025, and the application is still being considered," a senior DHS official said.

Sofia was born one month premature and had to undergo six surgeries due to an intestinal blockage, as medics struggled to get the condition under control in

Mexico

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During one surgery, Vargas, 28, told the newspaper that doctors cut out too much, leaving Sofia with short bowels. One blood infection she suffered as a result nearly killed her.





Little Sofia has spent much of her young life in the hospital undergoing treatment. She was finally discharged in September 2024, but requires daily care and medication (*Deysi Vargas*)

While she was being kept alive in Mexico, her condition was no better by the age of two and Vargas knew the family would have to move to get her better care.

Vargas signed up to the Biden administration's CBP One app to book an appointment with border agents in Tijuana to receive two-year protection from deportation. The app is now used by the Trump administration **to notify migrants to self-deport or face the consequences.**

At the appointment on July 31, 2023, agents could tell that Sofia was seriously unwell just by taking one look at her. "God knew she needed better treatment," Vargas told

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*The Los Angeles Times*. “When we got to the entrance, they saw her and asked us if we needed medical help.”

That same day, the family was taken to Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego and her condition improved quickly. A year later, Sofia was referred to the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, which has one of the highest-ranked programs for gastroenterology in the U.S.

Under their care, by September 2024, Sofia was discharged and could receive treatment in the comfort of her home. Meanwhile, her parents were working hard to hold down odd jobs in Bakersfield.





Sofia was born one month premature and had to undergo six surgeries due to an intestinal blockage, as medics struggled to get the condition under control in Mexico (*Deysi Vargas*)

“It was incredible,” Vargas, who found a steady job as a cleaner at a restaurant, told the outlet. “I had waited so long for doctors to tell me, ‘Ma’am, your daughter is OK now. She can go home.’”

Sofia’s care is still gruelling. She must still spend 14 hours a night hooked up to the intravenous feeding system and Vargas also has to administer different medication that goes into her stomach through a gastric tube four times a day. At preschool, a school nurse has to administer nutrition daily.

As things were beginning to look up, the notice from immigration arrived, swiftly

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Their attorney believes the family's legal status was terminated by mistake and has submitted a petition for a continuation of temporary humanitarian legal status because of Sofia's medical condition.

"This is the intended purpose — to help the most vulnerable who need attention here," Brown said. "We can avoid having harmed the child and the family."

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Vargas added that they only intend to stay for as long as Sofia requires treatment, which is unclear.

*This article was amended on May 28 to include a statement from the Department of Homeland Security*

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