

All the U.S. Citizens Who've Been Caught Up in Trump's Immigration Crackdown

 nymag.com/intelligencer/article/tracking-us-citizens-children-detained-deported-ice-trump-updates.html

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Photo: Aaron M. Sprecher/Getty Images

It's not a matter of *if* U.S. citizens are getting caught up in President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown and mass-deportation efforts but, rather, *how* and *how many*. Some have just been collateral arrests and detentions, in which people are briefly questioned or detained by ICE agents, while others have been jailed for hours or days. Some U.S.-born children have been swiftly deported along with undocumented family members. The reported encounters have happened in at least nine states, though certain details remain murky, unconfirmed, or disputed. In many cases, the victims are filing or considering lawsuits against the government. Below, what we know about the U.S. citizens who have been affected thus far.

NBC News reports that, according to a lawyer with the National Immigration Project, the two children, ages 4 and 7, were put on their mother's deportation flight the day after they were all detained on April 24:

Two U.S. citizen children were sent on their mother's deportation flight to Honduras without the opportunity to speak with attorneys, leaving a 4-year-old boy with Stage 4 cancer without access to his medication, according to the National Immigration Project. Gracie Willis, an attorney with the organization, told NBC News that the boy and his 7-year-old sister were detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Thursday. They were taken to El Paso, Texas, and flown to Honduras first thing Friday morning, Willis said. The 4-year-old boy, who was actively receiving treatment for a rare form of cancer, was flown to Honduras without his medication, according to Willis and the National Immigration Project. Attorneys were preparing a habeas corpus petition when the children were taken out of the U.S. on an ICE charter flight before the petition could be filed, Willis said.

Trump-administration officials insist that it was the family's decision for the children to go with their mother and that no laws were broken.

The toddler, a U.S. citizen, and her undocumented sister and mother were detained on April 22, then deported on April 25 following disputed circumstances, as Axios reports:

The 2-year-old, who was identified in court filings as "V.M.L.," accompanied her mother and 11-year-old sister to a routine check-in as part of the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program, or ISAP, where they were detained, according to a petition filed Thursday by her custodian, who her father appointed.

According to court filings, the girls' father was only able to speak to their mother for around a minute over the phone before an ICE officer allegedly hung up the call as the father was giving her their attorneys' phone number.

When an attorney representing the father spoke with an ICE official, the official allegedly refused to honor a request to release the child to her custodian and said if the father came to retrieve her, he would also be taken into custody.

In a court filing on Friday, U.S. attorneys alleged that the mother in question said she didn't want the girl released from her custody, and that the father and custodian did not provide proof of their identities to ICE. They also provided a handwritten note by the mother saying she was taking the child with her back to Honduras, but attorneys for the family say the note was not a statement of intent.

U.S. District Court Judge Terry Doughty has ordered a May 16 hearing on the case, writing that he has a "strong suspicion that the government just deported a U.S. citizen with no meaningful process."

Juan Carlos Lopez-Gomez, 20, was arrested under questionable circumstances during a traffic stop in Florida on April 16, then held in jail for more than 30 hours before he was finally released. Lopez-Gomez, who was born in Georgia, was a passenger in a vehicle pulled over by a Florida Highway Patrol trooper, who arrested him under a new Florida state law — a law that had been suspended by a federal judge. The trooper says Lopez-Gomez stated that he was in the country illegally, which he denies, as the Florida *Phoenix* reports:

The trooper charged Lopez-Gomez following a traffic stop with illegally entering the state as an “unauthorized alien,” under a new state law that a federal judge temporarily suspended on April 4. Lopez-Gomez, released from Leon County jail Thursday evening, insists he told the trooper he was a U.S. citizen born in Georgia, handed over his Social Security card and Georgia ID, which meets federal security standards under the REAL ID Act of 2005. ...

The arrest report states that Lopez-Gomez said he was in the country illegally and had entered Florida illegally, but turned over his ID. However, the arrest report doesn't mention the Social Security card. The trooper stopped the car Wednesday morning because the driver was going 78 mph in a 65 mph zone, according to the report. Lopez-Gomez was a passenger in the car with two others on his way to a flooring job from Cairo, Georgia, to Tallahassee.

Lopez-Gomez's mother said that he lived in Mexico for most of his life, before returning to Georgia four years ago, and that his first language is the Mayan language Tzotzil. It took well over a day for authorities to release him, due in large part to a federal request that he be held in jail. Again, per the *Phoenix*:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement issued a detainer asking the jail to hold Lopez-Gomez for 48 hours after his arrest. A Leon County judge cited the ICE hold as the reason she lacked jurisdiction to release Lopez-Gomez, even though she found no probable cause for the arrest after inspecting the Georgia birth certificate and Social Security card his mom brought to court.

The ICE hold states that DHS determined Lopez-Gomez could be deported based on biometric confirmation of his identity and his statements to an immigration officer or “reliable evidence.”

A DHS spokesperson blamed Lopez-Gomez for the mix-up and claimed he was released “immediately after learning the individual was a United States citizen.”

Hermosillo, 19, lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and was visiting Tucson, Arizona, with his girlfriend in early April. He was arrested by Border Patrol agents under disputed circumstances on April 9. He was released on April 17 after his family provided proof of his citizenship and the illegal-entry charge against him was dropped.

According to DHS, Hermosillo walked up to a Border Patrol station in Tucson without identification and told an agent he was born in Mexico and had entered the country illegally. The agent then arrested him. DHS released what it said was Hermosillo's sworn statement attesting to that story, along with a rudimentary signature, and insists that Hermosillo didn't mention he was a U.S. citizen until two days after he was arrested and held in detention. It took another seven days for his family to secure his release. The criminal complaint against Hermosillo also erroneously said he was found by Border Patrol "at or near Nogales, Arizona, without proper immigration documents." Nogales is 70 miles from Tucson, near the U.S.-Mexico border.

Hermosillo said he got lost on a walk and ended up near the Border Patrol station and that he told authorities he was a citizen. His girlfriend says he can't read, calling into question whether or not Hermosillo could have understood the sworn statement he signed. Arizona Public Media reports:

Hermosillo's girlfriend, Grace Hernandez, says he has learning disabilities and is illiterate. "If he did sign it, he doesn't know how to read, or nothing. He doesn't know how to read. He doesn't really understand. He says yes to everything. So he could, he could have done it without knowing what it was."

Contradicting the government affidavit, he says he told officials both when he was getting arrested and while he was detained that he is a U.S. citizen.

"I told them I was a U.S. citizen, but they don't listen to me."

Noriega alleges he was detained and held by ICE for more than ten hours on January 31, despite having his identification on him. The Washington Post reports:

Noriega, a 54-year-old man born and raised in Chicago, said in court documents that he had just finished handing out résumés when ICE officers grabbed him from behind, handcuffed him and put him in a van with other detainees. He said he managed to send a few texts to a loved one before officers confiscated his phone and wallet, which held his Social Security card and driver's license — documents proving his citizenship.

Noriega alleges that he spent the next several hours in ICE custody — first in the van and then in a processing center, handcuffed and without food, water or access to a bathroom. After midnight, he said in the court documents, officers checked his wallet, realized he was a citizen and let him go.

His attorney says the ICE agents didn't question Noriega or try to verify his citizenship, and the agency claimed it had no record of his arrest.

Machado, a 38-year-old naturalized citizen, was driving to work in early March when he was pulled over near his home in Manassas, Virginia, by ICE agents who had apparently mistaken him for someone else, per NBC News:

“They just got out of the car with the guns in their hands and say, ‘turn off the car, give me the keys, open the window,’” Machado told Telemundo 44’s Rosbelis Quinoñez, who first reported his story. “Everything was really fast.”

According to Machado, the agents said the name of a man who had a deportation order, someone who had given Machado’s home address.

Machado told them that wasn’t his name — he didn’t know anyone by that name — and offered to show them his real ID-compliant Virginia driver’s license.

“They didn’t ask me for any ID,” Machado said. “I was telling the officer if I can give him ID, but he said just keep my hands up, not moving. After that, he told me to get out of the car and put the handcuffs on me.”

An agent then asked Machado how did he get into the U.S. and if he was awaiting a court date or if he had a pending immigration case.

“And I told him I was an American citizen,” Machado said. “He looked at his other partner like, you know, smiling, like saying, can you believe this guy? Because he asked the other guy, ‘Do you believe him?’”

Machado said he was uncuffed and immediately released after showing his driver’s license.

The girl, a native-born U.S. citizen who underwent surgery to remove a rare brain tumor last year, was detained on February 3 with her undocumented parents and her four siblings, who are also U.S. citizens, at a Border Patrol checkpoint while the family was driving the girl to a hospital. On previous trips, officers had allowed the family through. According to the family’s attorney, CBP officers confirmed the girl was being treated at the hospital but still detained her and the others for six hours. The family was then transferred to a detention center and deported to Mexico the next day. The Washington Post reports:

“One of the first things [Customs and Border Protection] did was call the hospital, and a social worker confirmed everything and made it pretty clear that they needed to be let through because of the nature of her condition,” [Texas Civil Rights Project attorney Danny] Woodward said. “But rather than do anything to make sure that this U.S. citizen child got treatment she needed, they detained the whole family and took away the girl’s medication.”

Inside the detention center, the family was separated by gender and held in a brightly lit, sweltering room the mother described to Woodward as “an incubator.” Several times, agents threatened to take away their children if the parents refused to sign papers agreeing to be deported, Woodward said. ...

Now, the family lives in hiding in Mexico. The children haven’t gone to school or seen a doctor since being deported. The mother is struggling to get medication from the U.S. Her oldest son, still in Texas, is working to make rent and finish high school alone.

In late January, Navajo Nation officials said that more than a dozen Indigenous people in Arizona and New Mexico had reported being questioned and/or briefly detained by federal law-enforcement officers during immigration raids after Trump took office. Per a [January 27 CNN report](#):

At least 15 Indigenous people in Arizona and New Mexico have reported being stopped at their homes and workplaces, questioned or detained by federal law enforcement and asked to produce proof of citizenship during immigration raids since Wednesday, according to Navajo Nation officials. ...

The reported raids and the exact number of Diné/Navajo and other Indigenous tribal citizens who were apprehended are still under investigation, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley told CNN. It is unclear if Immigration and Customs Enforcement or other law enforcement entities were conducting the apprehensions. ICE has not responded to CNN’s request for comment.

In some instances, the people said they were questioned for hours before finally being released. [Native News Online](#) reported on the incidents as well:

[In a January 24 radio interview, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren] reported receiving troubling accounts of Navajo citizens experiencing “negative and sometimes traumatizing encounters” with federal agents targeting undocumented individuals in the Southwest. ...

The Navajo Nation Office of Vital Records has been inundated with calls from tribal members residing off-reservation, many of whom report being questioned by ICE agents about their identity.

Arizona state Senator Theresa Hatathlie (Navajo), who represents Arizona’s sixth senate district, highlighted a specific incident where a Navajo citizen was detained for nine hours. She stressed the urgent need for emergency protocols to protect tribal members. ...

Hatahlie stressed that many tribal members struggle with documentation, which has worsened under the recent ICE sweeps. Despite possessing Certificates of Indian Blood (CIBs) and state-issued IDs, several individuals have been detained or questioned by ICE agents who do not recognize these documents as valid proof of citizenship.

On January 23, ICE agents raided Ocean Seafood Depot in Newark, New Jersey, and detained the facility’s warehouse manager, a U.S.-military veteran who was born in Puerto Rico and had reportedly worked at the business for a few years. The man has not been publicly identified, but his brief detention has been confirmed by multiple people. The business’s co-owner told reporters that the ICE agents only appeared to be targeting Hispanic-looking people, and Newark mayor Ras Baraka said after the raid that the warehouse manager “suffered the indignity of having the legitimacy of his military documentation questioned.”

Local authorities and reporters in Wisconsin weren’t able to confirm a viral story from late January about a Puerto Rican family of three allegedly being detained by ICE and taken to a detention center in Milwaukee. An ICE spokesperson called the story “completely false.” An anonymous Puerto Rican man, who said his sister was one of the people detained, told Telemundo Puerto Rico that ICE agents detained them and brought them to the facility but didn’t take them inside. He said the family did not want to be identified.

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