

'Beloved' Haitian pastor detained by ICE in Springfield

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Jessica Orozco

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A “beloved” Haitian pastor and community leader in Springfield was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Thursday morning, Aug. 20.

Pastor Gilbert Joubert Adrien was detained at the Sunoco on South Limestone Street, according to advocates with Springfield G92.

Advocates said the move was “a profound wound” to the “embattled” Haitian community.

Another Haitian man, Victor Yonel, was also taken into custody.

Yonel’s wife, who was in the car with the two men and a woman at the time, told advocates that ICE released her and took the men.

Adrien’s church was not identified, “for security reasons.”

This reporter saw multiple ICE agents in the area of Saint Paris Pike at another Sunoco gas station following a suspected arrest around 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 20.

Pastor and G92 founder Carl Ruby argued that detaining Adrien demonstrates the extreme measures ICE is willing to take to intimidate peaceful immigrants.

“Pastor Joubert Adrien left Haiti because his life was in danger, served Christ and his congregation faithfully and his arrest shows how far ICE will stoop to incite panic among people who came here peacefully, came here legally and offered nothing but good to our community,” Ruby said.

In a statement, Viles Dorsainvil, director of the Haitian Support Center in Springfield, spoke of the human cost of detention.

“Behind every number is a human being,” Dorsainvil said. “Behind every detention is a family. Behind every deportation is a mother, a father, a husband, a wife, a child, a friend, a church member, a coworker, or a neighbor whose life may be changed forever.”

More than two dozen Haitian people have been detained and held at the Butler County Jail in recent weeks, evidently on ICE holds, many with connections to Springfield.

In a release, G92 said the organization is set to announce an upcoming event in the coming days, calling on allies to gather in Springfield in a show of support for the Haitian community.