

# *U.S. protests blast ICE in Washington*

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Washington, July 18 (RHC)-- Protesters flooded the streets of Washington, DC, slamming the apprehension and deportation of immigrants by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. The rally drew hundreds of people to the streets in the Columbia Heights neighborhood, blocking traffic outside one of the buildings that had been targeted by the immigration agents.

The protest, organized by the pro-immigration group Sanctuary DMV, was held as a response to reports that at least 15 immigrants had illegally been arrested by the ICE agents in various parts of the U.S. capital last week. "I talked with a number of the family members. Some of these people were fleeing death threats in Honduras or El Salvador. Some of them were fleeing poverty in Mexico," said Ben Beachy, a local activist working with Sanctuary DMV.

The protest came in the wake of public outrage over an announcement by the Trump administration that confirmed it had split hundreds of families who had crossed the U.S.-Mexican border without immigration documents since October last year.

Each week, thousands cross the U.S.-Mexico border and immediately turn themselves in to authorities asking for asylum. In April alone, 50,924 people were detained after crossing the border without papers, including 4,314 unaccompanied children and 9,647 family units, according to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

Early on Monday, U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw temporarily halted the deportations of immigrant families that recently reunited after being separated from their children at the US-Mexico border. The federal judge imposed a delay of at least a week after a request from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which expressed concerns about "persistent and increasing rumors ... that mass deportations may be carried out imminently and immediately upon reunification."

Many migrant children remain separated from their parents or guardians despite President Donald Trump's executive order in June to halt the separations under pressure. More than 2,000 separated children are currently in the U.S. government's custody, according to the Department of Homeland Security, which claims that it is aware of their locations and is making an effort to reunite them with their families.

Donald Trump has signed an executive order to crack down on millions of immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, pledging to deport as many as three million undocumented asylum seekers. Trump has shown little tolerance for undocumented immigrants since taking office last year. The Republican president has promised to build a wall on the border with Mexico to stop migrant flow into the United States.

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