



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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**Faith-Based and Immigrants' Rights Organizations Unite
to Demand ICE out of ABQ**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM— In light of the recent detention of Juan Martinez, an Albuquerque immigrant worker and father of four children, and an uptick of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in Albuquerque, El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos and the New Mexico Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice joined forces at a vigil to highlight the chilling impact that ICE is having on public safety. Together, they denounced the erosion of equal access to justice for immigrants and urged ICE to allow Juan Martinez to post a low bond so he can be united with his family while he pursues possible immigration relief.

“All this is overwhelming and exhausting but my daughters keep me going” explains Hilaria Martinez, immigrant mother, student, wife of Juan Martinez, and main organizer of this event. “My 7-year-old daughter told me "Mommy, you have to fight for the other families too, I do not want other children to go through the pain that I'm going through." Our community provides the support of this economy, we work under the sun, we work overtime, we do the jobs that nobody else wants to do, however, the Trump administration is targeting our families. I urge the community not to be afraid, to keep fighting together, supporting each other. United we cannot be defeated.”

Organizers of the vigil stressed that the collaboration between local government institutions and ICE jeopardizes the safety of all communities in Albuquerque. Fabiola Bawden, immigrant mother and civil rights organizer with El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos highlights the organizing power of immigrant communities "Today we say enough is enough! We will not

allow our families to continue to be criminalized. As an immigrant mother, this family's story is heartbreaking, however, we will continue fighting for our communities. Our families are being attacked and we are fighting back!"

"The encroachment of ICE into our public institutions and justice system has not improved our public safety; it has only served to sow fear and the division of families in our community." Said Justin Remer-Thamert, Executive Director of the NM Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice "As people of faith and people of conscience, we stand with the spouses and children of men like Juan, ripped apart by unjust policies that would deport a father and sole breadwinner. We call on our leaders to serve our neighbors and regain community trust by keeping ICE out of our courts, out of our probation offices, and out of our neighborhoods."

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****El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos is a grassroots, immigrants' rights and workers' justice organization based in Albuquerque, NM that works with Latino immigrant communities and allies to defend, strengthen, and advance the rights of our community.***