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**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



For Immediate Release

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UCC national officer among 112 faith leaders, immigrant activists arrested at White House protesting President's deportation policies

Massive civil disobedience protested President Obama's daily deportation of 1,100 aspiring Americans, as Congress and Administration consider expedited deportation of refugee children

WASHINGTON (July 31, 2014) – At this moment outside of the White House, U.S. Park Police are currently arresting 100-plus faith leaders and immigrant rights activists who traveled from across the country to demand that President Barack Obama end his inhumane immigration enforcement policies.

Bishops, nuns, rabbis, pastors, workers and impacted immigrants urged the president to stop deportations immediately, dramatically expand relief for America's immigrant families and workers, and protect unaccompanied children who have sought refuge in the U.S.

Alongside a crowd of more than 500 supporters, 112 faith and immigrant advocates engaged in civil disobedience along the White House fence to bring moral clarity on the injustice of close to 1,100 deportations per day. After refusing to leave the White House sidewalk with signs calling for the president to act, the advocates were arrested and charged with blocking passage.

Rev. Linda Jaramillo, the first Latina national officer of the United Church of Christ, stated, "The crisis surrounding our country's immigration system has reached a breaking point and now, more than ever, faith leaders need to stand together and make our voices heard. Whether they are fathers and mothers here to provide better lives for their families, or young children escaping violence and persecution in their homelands, we need our government to act with compassion and treat those coming to our country with dignity and respect. The United Church of Christ is proud to be among the hundreds of supporters and advocates ascending on our nation's capital, and I hope our government's leadership hears our call for justice."

"We have come to Washington, DC to tell to President Obama and Congress that kicking out suffering immigrant families and unaccompanied children is not the answer. Immediately stopping the deportations and extending due process to children escaping the violence of drug cartels, gangs and poverty is the just way to respond," said **Bishop Minerva Carcaño**, the United Methodist Bishop in Los Angeles.

Rev. John L. McCullough, President and CEO of Church World Service, stated, "As someone who has benefited from the courage and civil disobedience of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, I cannot stand idly by as I see unjust immigration laws damage our communities and our nation. It is a moral imperative that we take action now, particularly after the House Republican leadership has miserably failed to enact immigration reform that the majority of Americans roundly support."

Gustavo Torres, Executive Director of CASA de Maryland, stated, "I am here today because my members are suffering and my community is devastated. President Obama, I supported you, we supported you, and we know you can eradicate the crisis that immigrant communities are confronting. President Obama, I believe in a United States where CASA Members can live and raise their family and I am asking you to do the same."

"The Sisters of Mercy stand in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters seeking safety and peace within U.S. borders. We strongly support executive action that would eliminate mass deportations, which obstruct the development of children, and further jeopardize vulnerable populations," shared **Sister Eileen Campbell**, Vice President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy. "We urge the President to renew Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status for those who have it, to extend the application timeline, and to implement a similar process of relief for all undocumented immigrants who make contributions to their communities."

"In each generation, America must choose what kind of country we want to be. Will we remain true to our values as a nation of immigrants, a nation with its doors open, that says in the words of the American Jewish poet Emma Lazarus "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free?" Or...will we take a narrow path? The American Jewish community calls upon President Obama to take a strong stand on the side of humanity and go big on administrative relief," said Rabbi **Jason Kimelman-Block**, Deputy Director of Bend Arc Jewish Justice. He also led a time of blessing in Lafayette Park for the arrestees prior to their engagement in civil disobedience.

In a statement released today, The **Rev. Peter Morales**, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, shared: "The Unitarian Universalist Association stands on the side of love with both the 11 million migrants living in this country with no hope of becoming U.S. citizens and the children from Central America fleeing violence in their own countries. With today's action, we call upon President Obama to use the power of the presidency to keep families together by halting deportations and expanding deferred action. Stop the deportations, stop this injustice."

The faith action begins a weekend of activity pushing the President to expand relief and halt deportations with a [march from the national mall to the White House on Saturday the 2nd.](#)

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