

**Todd Lyons,**  
**Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**  
500 12th St SW  
Washington, DC 20536, USA  
Email: Todd.M.Lyons@ice.dhs.gov

Dear Mr. Lyons,

I urge you to immediately release Cesar and Norelia (A#s 246149580 & 246149581) back to their three young children. On 21 March 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Washington, DC, USA, unlawfully detained and separated a Venezuelan family with active and valid Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and pending asylum applications and charged them with “illegal” entry to the United States, more than two years after their arrival at the southern US border.

This is one of the first times that the United States has used 8 U.S.C. 1325, the provision of immigration law that was the basis for the Trump administration’s family separation policy in its first term, to target a family that has been in the United States for years, rather than recent arrivals at the US-Mexico border.

This is a blatant and outrageous subversion of the law being used to target immigrants and separate families that have already built lives in the United States. Everyone has the right to seek asylum. People should be given prompt access to fair and efficient asylum procedures, and under international refugee law, cannot be penalized due to irregular entry into the country where they are seeking protection. Once granted TPS, an individual cannot be detained on the basis of their immigration status in the US.

Young children watched their parents being taken away in handcuffs and thrust into a system that inflicts violence and prolongs their suffering. Separating asylum-seeking families causes long lasting trauma, particularly in children, can amount to torture, and is a flagrant breach of their human rights.

**I urge you to immediately change course and release Cesar and Norelia back to their young children, and end the practice of family separation, family detention, and mass detention and deportations.**

Yours sincerely,