



NEWLY RELEASED EMAILS EXPOSE DETAILS OF RETALIATION AGAINST IMMIGRANT ACTIVISTS

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[Newly uncovered emails](#) have exposed unsettling details of retaliation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) against immigrant rights activists. The [disturbing email messages](#) are part of ongoing litigation in *NWDC Resistance et al. v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement et al.*, a case brought in federal court by Washington State community groups [La Resistencia](#) and the [Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites](#).

One name appears repeatedly in the ICE emails, which were obtained through the discovery process: Maru Mora Villalpando. The inflammatory messages express hope that the initiation of removal proceedings against Mora-Villalpando would “[take away some of her ‘clout’](#)” and describe a desire to “[take on” the “punks.”](#)”

Mora Villalpando leads [La Resistencia](#), a grassroots organization based in Washington State working to end the detention of immigrants and stop deportations. She is one of a number of activists targeted by ICE nationwide described in the [underlying lawsuit](#), which challenges ICE's unconstitutional policy to systematically target, surveil, detain, and deport people who speak out about immigration policies and practice.

Mora Villalpando explains, “*Now more than ever we need all our people and resources to support detained hunger strikers who are protesting the serious threat of a COVID outbreak in detention centers. The same ICE employees who targeted me for speaking out now claim that ICE respects everyone’s right to free speech and does not retaliate for hunger strikes.*”

Peter Strand, an organizer at the [Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites](#), agrees. “*It’s clear that ICE’s intention is not only to silence Maru. The attack on Maru is meant to weaken the movement against detention and deportations by bullying other activists into submission.*”

Attorneys at [Just Futures Law](#) and [Davis Wright Tremaine](#) cite the [email exchanges](#) between high-level ICE employees in the Seattle area as supporting evidence of a pattern and practice of retaliatory enforcement actions against immigrant activists engaging in protected political speech.

Sejal Zota, legal director at [Just Futures Law](#), said, “*The emails demonstrate what we have long known, which is that ICE has an unconstitutional policy of selective intimidation and retaliation against immigrant activists who speak out about harmful immigration policies.*”

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