Organizations condemn White House Memo that targets immigrants associated with “Antifa” and racial justice uprisings;  
Call on the incoming Biden Administration to repudiate and rescind policy

The above organizations write to condemn the release of a new White House memo that seeks to bar immigrants from obtaining legal status if they were associated with “Antifa” - emphasizing Antifa participation in Black Lives Matter protests and the racial justice uprisings this summer. Under this January 5th memo, the government would label organizations or protest activity as “Antifa” to bar people from entering the United States or bar people from getting a green card. It could even be used to target immigrants for deportation. It is a menacing attempt to intimidate immigrants from participating in protest and fuels the expansion of surveillance and policing on protests for racial justice.

The memo gives the government broad license to label any protest activity as “Antifa” and would likely be used to target Black and Brown racial justice activists. Even as violent right-wing nationalists stormed Congress in a failed attempt to keep Trump in office, right-wing politicians and media personalities attempted to blame “Antifa” for the violence at the Capitol.

Although the government must release federal regulations for these bars to be applied, it sets a dangerous precedent for further attacks on political rights. Disturbingly, the political motivation behind this memo is made all the more transparent by the fact that it references anti-racist protests as evidence of “Antifa” activity while making no mention of violent far-right protest activity. The memo specifically cites the protests in Kentucky following the murder of Breonna Taylor, uprisings in Portland where federal officers in unmarked cars and with no identification grabbed people off the street, and actions that “destroyed historic landmarks” like Confederate monuments. Moreover, it references the 2017 Berkeley student protests against a well-known far-right speaker, Milo Yiannopoulos. It does not, for example, reference the Charlottesville protests where Proud Boys openly assaulted people of color and protesters. This memo must be understood for what it is: a direct form of retaliation against the Black Lives Matter uprisings and an attempt to repress Black and Brown movements for racial justice.

If Antifa is added to the list of entities labeled as “terrorist organizations,” people suspected of “incidental” involvement with protests could be barred from entering the United States, denied a green card, or even deported. This brazen act of political repression is reprehensible and we call on the incoming Biden Administration to repudiate and rescind this dangerous policy immediately.