



For Immediate Release

August 18, 2016

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**NIPNLG Statement on the Release of Two North Carolina Youth;
Calls for the Release of Remaining Incarcerated Youth**

After months of community organizing, legal support and Congressional concern, two North Carolina youths arrested in ICE's January raids—[Wildin Acosta and Alexander Soriano](#)—are home with family and community.

While we celebrate their homecoming, we are reminded of the youth still incarcerated—high school students such as [Pedro Salmeron, Bilmer Pujoy](#), and [Jaime Arceno](#)—and call on DHS Secretary Johnson to release all immigrant youth immediately.

“Many of these North Carolina and Georgia youths are now serving their seventh or eighth month of incarceration with no end in sight. As this Administration acknowledges the damage done by mass incarceration policies and [moves forward with criminal justice reform](#), we are deeply disturbed that DHS has chosen [mass criminalization and prison profits](#) over the civil and human rights of immigrants and refugees—who are predominantly communities of color. Moreover, recent attempts by ICE to deport North Carolina youths [Pedro Salmeron](#) and [Bilmer Pujoy](#) while their immigration proceedings remain pending evince this Administration's blatant disregard for due process and refugee protections. This has to stop,” said Julie Mao, Enforcement Fellow at the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild.

Today, we reiterate our call for the release of all youth. They belong in classrooms and back in their communities, not in jail cells in Georgia.

In late January, ICE arrested Wildin Guillen-Acosta, Josue Soriano-Cortez, and hundreds of immigrant youth as part of a national raids initiative termed “[Operation Border Guardian](#)” which targets Central American youth and families. These large scale ICE raids have disproportionately impacted North Carolina and Georgia [with more than one third of all arrests stemming from the Carolinas and Georgia](#).

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For the past few months, NIPNLG have been honored to support North Carolina and Georgia community organizations, labor unions, teachers, students, lawyers, and allies in fighting for the release of these youth. We thank North Carolina and Georgia communities—including members of Action NC, Alerta Migratoria, CIMA, Durham Association of Educators, Durham People’s Alliance, Georgia Latino Alliance of Human Rights, Latin American Coalition, students and parents of Riverside High School, NAACP NC, NC Association of Educators, Unidos We Stand, Unisal, and the pro bono legal community—for their courage, organizing, resilience and unwavering conviction in this fight for freedom.

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