



Coalición de Derechos Humanos

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For Immediate Release

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OPERATION STREAMLINE ACTION ALERT: “IMMIGRANTS SHOULD NOT BE TRIED BEHIND MILITARY WALLS”

Tucson- La Coalición de Derechos Humanos call for immediate action to stop the United States District Court from transferring the prosecution of migrants under the Arizona Denial Prosecution Initiative, (ADPI) the Tucson Border Patrol Sector's version of "Operation Streamline," from the federal courthouse to the detention center located on the Davis Monthan Air Force Base. ADPI is an irresponsible, brutal and costly response to the issue of migration, and to now propose to do this behind military walls is contrary to the spirit of public review and accountability.

Since the mid-1990's, the U. S government has dramatically increased the prosecution of immigrants apprehended in the Tucson Sector for the federal misdemeanor "illegal entry," the felony "illegal re-entry," and a few other immigration-related offenses. (Note: this coincided with the implementation of the "prevention through deterrence" policies, i.e. militarization, that has caused the funneling of migrants through Arizona). During this time and prior to ADPI, only 1% of those migrants apprehended in this sector were criminally prosecuted, but the result has been an ever-growing court system and prison bureaucracy. According to David Gonzales, the U. S. Marshal for the State of Arizona, taxpayers have been paying between \$9 to \$11 million dollars PER MONTH just for the incarceration of these immigrants. The recipient of this money is the private prison corporation Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), which has a checkered past for abuse and corruption. This does not include the costs for the court itself, the judges and their staff, the prosecutors, defense attorneys, marshals, clerks, etc., which has been estimated to be another \$10 million per month.

In 2005, a policy of "zero-tolerance" was introduced in the Del Rio, Texas Sector of the Border Patrol, resulting in the prosecution and imprisonment of EVERY immigrant detained in that sector in an expedited fashion, that is, from initial appearance through sentencing in a matter of minutes. It seems suspiciously convenient that this policy was first instituted in an area where a large private prison had been built, which provided the space necessary for the launching of this test project.

As had been predicted by Derechos Humanos for several years, on January 14, 2008, the Tucson Sector of the Border Patrol launched the ADPI, criminally prosecuting and sentencing more than 40 migrants per day, with individuals receiving criminal convictions and sentences ranging from time-served up to 180 days in CCA. Since then, hundreds of migrants have been "processed" through the U. S. District Court, at a cost that has yet to be determined. An Assistant Federal Public Defender has estimated that the costs for just the defense attorneys for forty people will be a minimum of \$10,000 per day, approximately \$2.5 million per year.

The Border Patrol's stated goal is to prosecute and sentence 100 migrants per day, which would represent approximately 10% of those arrested rather than the 1% previous rate. As expected, the costs have soared, a fact conceded by U. S. Marshal Gonzales. Because the court cannot accommodate 100 people per day, the BP Detention Center, located inside the Davis Monthan Air Force Base, is being proposed as the site for this "new" federal criminal court.

"It is a very dangerous precedent to permit the criminal justice system to diminish meaningful rights and the court environment for those facing convictions and prison terms. It is equally frightening to limit accessibility to the public to observe and monitor our courts" says Isabel Garcia of Derechos Humanos. "Presently, accessibility is already limited to small areas for the public, and the move would dramatically diminish our ability to witness the most-unknown aspect of the 'Border Security'/militarization measures—the criminalization of migrants in federal courts."

Derechos Humanos calls for all allies to call or write to U. S. District Court Judge John Roll, U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, and U. S. Representative Raúl Grijalva to halt the proposal to operate its APDI behind the military walls.

"We cannot allow yet another layer of our rights to be diminished by this action" continued Garcia. "We must stand together to ensure that our government be accountable to our communities, and the human and civil rights of all individuals who go through our court system be respected."

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CALL TO ACTION!

Contact U.S. District Judge John Roll, U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, and U.S. Representative Raúl Grijalva with the following demands:

- Demand that the Arizona Denial Prosecution Initiative, (ADPI), **NOT** be moved behind military walls
- Demand an end to the irresponsible policies and strategies that undermine accountability and serve only the interests of CCA, Wackenhut, and other private corporations who are privatizing the militarization of our society
- Demand an end to the criminalization and prosecutions of hard-working men and women who are the targets and survivors of our irresponsible border and economic strategies

U.S. District Judge John Roll:

Tucson, Arizona: 520.205.4520

U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords:

Washington, D.C. office: 202.225.2542

Tucson, Arizona office: 520. 881.3588

Cochise County, AZ office: 520. 459.3115

U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva:

Washington, D.C. office: 202.225.2435

Tucson, Arizona office: 520.622.6788

Yuma, Arizona office: 928.343.7933