

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Office of the Executive Secretary – MS0525  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528-0525

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write today on behalf of our constituents from the Indonesian Christian community here in New Jersey. We urge the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to take immediate action to prevent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from detaining and deporting this group of New Jersey residents who arrived here decades ago as refugees fleeing religious persecution in their home country.

After the downfall of the Suharto regime in Indonesia in the late 1990s, many Indonesian Christians settled in Central New Jersey, and have become integral members of our communities. For nearly 30 years, these Christian refugees have raised families, bought homes, attended church services, and volunteered countless hours to aid neighbors. These New Jerseyans exemplify the best qualities of our state. Their ability to continue living and working safely in New Jersey is critical to the well-being of their U.S. citizen children and to the benefit of their church communities and neighbors they serve. Detaining or deporting these individuals would be contrary to the priorities set forth in Acting Secretary Tae Johnson's Memo (Johnson Memo) of February 18, 2021.

Dozens of community members in New Jersey entered an agreement with ICE in 2009 whereby members agreed to come forward in exchange for Orders of Supervision permitting them to live and work in the United States without fear of deportation, given that they were exceptionally low enforcement priorities. Under President Trump's leadership, ICE reneged on its agreement, seeking to detain and, in some cases, deport several members of the community in 2017 and 2018, including a number of fathers as they were dropping off their children at school. This included local hero Harry Pangemanan, who was recognized for his volunteer work rebuilding over 200 homes destroyed by Superstorm Sandy.

In response to an ACLU lawsuit, on February 2, 2018, a federal judge issued a temporary stay of removal, allowing time for community members to file motions to reopen their asylum cases. While the putative class members in this lawsuit have acted diligently in retaining counsel and filing motions to reopen, roughly two dozen individuals still have motions to reopen pending without decision and remain vulnerable to deportation if the temporary stay is lifted. In connection with the pending lawsuit, ICE has refused to make any assurances that it will not detain or deport putative class members – even though, to the best of our knowledge, none of these people are enforcement priorities under the terms of the Johnson Memo.


As our nation rallies to stop the wave of hate crimes against members of the Asian American community, we are deeply troubled to see that ICE has not disclaimed the senseless and xenophobic actions taken against the Indonesian Christians living in our communities. ICE has a responsibility to fully implement the Johnson Memo and any failure to do so specifically in these cases risks the well-being of the U.S. citizen children of these Indonesian Christians, as well as the lives and safety of these refugees should they be forced to return to Indonesia. Christians in Indonesia remain targets of extremist violence, which was most recently demonstrated on March 28, when suicide bombers set off an explosion outside of a Catholic church after a Palm Sunday Mass in Mr. Pangemanan's hometown on Sulawesi Island.

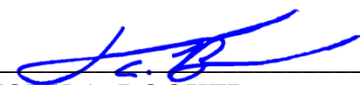
We respectfully request that DHS take the following steps with respect to all Indonesian nationals within the jurisdiction of the Newark ICE Field Office who have administratively final orders of removal predating 2009 and who, at any point in time during or after 2009, were subject to an order of supervision<sup>1</sup>:

- Issue Orders of Supervision and Stays of Removal upon request;
- Agree not to take any steps to deport, detain, electronically monitor, nor impose onerous reporting requirements on these individuals.


We urge DHS to put ICE's new priorities into practice immediately on behalf of these constituents. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and we look forward to your response and swift action to protect these vulnerable New Jerseyans.

Sincerely,

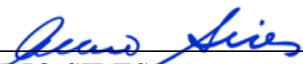
  
FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

  
CORY A. BOOKER  
United States Senator

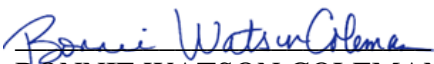
  
ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator

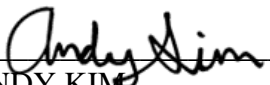
  
TOM MALINOWSKI  
Member of Congress

  
BILL PASCRELL, JR.  
Member of Congress

  
ALBIO SIRES  
Member of Congress

  
MIKIE SHERRILL  
Member of Congress

  
BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
Member of Congress

  
ANDY KIM  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> This group is the putative class in *Pangemanan v. Tsoukaris*, No. 18-cv-1510 (D.N.J.).