

Domestic Violence and ICE

Last week a victim of domestic violence in El Paso Texas was applying for a protective order from an abusive boyfriend when she was arrested at the courthouse by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers. Media reports suggest officers learned of her presence from a tip made by her abuser.

Safe Alliance is saddened and extremely concerned about these actions. We call upon ICE and our federal government to put an end to such tactics immediately. An abuser's greatest power comes when governments allow an abuser to manipulate our systems to further control, threaten, abuse and even kill victims. This is especially true for undocumented victims whose abusers threaten to turn them in to authorities who will deport them if they seek help just as the abuser in El Paso is alleged to have done.

It is imperative that all victims feel that they can reach out for support, not only from shelters and hotlines, but also from law enforcement and courts. In a moment of crisis, access to both private and public services may be a victim's only tangible lifeline.

It is not an exaggeration to say this is a matter of life and death. According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, nearly 20 people per minute are abused by an intimate partner in the United States. This equates to more than 10 million people annually. The National Network to End Domestic Violence reports that 3 women in our country die each day due to domestic violence.

As a country we cannot condone actions that we know will make these numbers increase, as the decision to arrest an immigrant seeking a protective order in the court house will almost certainly do. We must rise to protest actions that bar victims from accessing safety. The issue is real for all of us documented, undocumented, and citizen alike. Unsafe homes result in unsafe communities. We must work together to ensure safety for everyone. We ask all government leaders at all levels to support victims of domestic violence and take action now!