Families Meet With Sec. Mayorkas

August 31, 2021

On August 20, 2021, the Secretary of Homeland Security, who oversees ICE and Border Patrol, met face-to-face with separated families for the first time in history.

During the meeting, hosted by the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP), seven parents who had been forcibly separated from their children while seeking asylum at the Mexico-U.S. border shared their stories with Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. They also told him what actions they wanted him to take as the nation’s most powerful immigration official. The meeting was simultaneously interpreted into English, Spanish, and Mam, a Mayan language.

“The government has the power to change the lives of asylum seekers like myself and recognize the pain and trauma families like ours have been through by providing us with support,” said ASAP member Leticia Peren, an Indigenous woman from Guatemala who was separated from her son for almost three years. “My son and I deserve green cards. We deserve the peace of mind of being able to live in the U.S. safely and together without the fear of being torn apart again.”

ASAP invited many families who survived the Trump Administration’s family separation policy to participate in meeting planning. These families then voted to elect seven parents to serve as group representatives, sharing their stories and their demands for justice directly with Sec. Mayorkas. Leticia was among the parents chosen from this democratic process.
The meeting continues ASAP’s work to reunite separated families, deliver justice and long-term solutions for survivors of family separation, and secure asylum seekers’ futures in the United States.

“Every parent told his or her story and the Secretary promised to provide a better situation for us,” said Keldy Mabel Gonzales Brebe, a mother from Honduras who participated in the meeting.

“I know we can get that done.”

In the News:

- [Families separated at Mexico border ask for residency, aid](https://apnews.com) (AP News)
- [Mayorkas meets with parents of separated families](https://thehill.com) (The Hill)