



### **Call for Release of Tia Nuestra:**

The Advocates for Human Rights and the Law Office of Taylor Levy are calling for the immediate release from Department of Homeland Security custody of our client—nicknamed by her separated nieces as “Tia Nuestra”—who was detained for over 35 days in unacceptable conditions at a El Paso area Border Patrol Holding Facility.

Tia Nuestra crossed the border in late May with her two nieces, ages 6 and 12, and the family immediately turned themselves in to Border Patrol agents, requesting asylum on the basis of fleeing severe persecution in their home country. Despite having raised her nieces for the past four years with their mother’s permission after she herself was forced to flee, Tia Nuestra was forcibly separated from her nieces who were then classified as “unaccompanied minors” and transferred to the Clint Border Patrol Station.

Reeling from their separation from Tia Nuestra, the girls experienced the same conditions already described by children detained in the now-infamous facility—insufficient food; insufficient bedding; insufficient medical care; and insufficient caretaking, love, and emotional support for deeply-traumatized children. Additionally, the girls were hospitalized repeatedly for influenza and respiratory issues exacerbated by the deplorable conditions of their confinement.

After approximately 12 days in Border Patrol custody—far beyond the 72-hour limit mandated by law—the girls were released to their biological mother. The family’s attorneys applaud Border Patrol for exercising their legal discretion in this case to do the right thing by reunifying the girls with their mother.

Unfortunately, Border Patrol chose against exercising this same discretion in the case of Tia Nuestra. Instead, Tia Nuestra was detained in Border Patrol holding facility in the El Paso sector for over 35 days—a facility that, by Border Patrol’s own standards, is not meant to house anyone for longer than 72-hours. Just this weekend, the family received a call from Tia Nuestra saying she believes she has been transferred to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Arizona. However, her name is not showing up on the ICE Detainee Locator and her exact location remains unknown.

The girls have been deeply traumatized from their continued separation from Tia Nuestra, their primary caregiver over the past four years. Additionally, the girls’ asylum case is inextricably linked to Tia Nuestra, and her separation threatens their fundamental right to due process and a fair trial.

Therefore, the Advocates for Human Rights and the Law Office of Taylor Levy are calling for the Department of Homeland Security to immediately exercise their legal discretion to release Tia Nuestra on her own recognizance so that she can be reunified with her young nieces and pursue her valid asylum claim from the interior of the United States. **We are grateful for the support of members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congresswoman Ilhan Omar in calling for the release of Tia Nuestra.**

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