

To President Barack Obama:

We the undersigned clergy, religious and pastoral leaders of Maui together with our ecclesiastical leaders in Hawaii wish to state our concern over the treatment of immigrant families on Maui. We are island-born, recent arrivals and not so recent arrivals from Pacific Islands, Korea, Latin America, Canada, the Philippines, Vietnam, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia -- the whole world. The Hawaiian words inscribed above the Founders Gate at UH Manoa say it best: "Ma luna a'e o na lahui apau ke ola ke kanaka. Above all nations is humanity."

As pastors we remember that the biblical tradition reveals God present in the strangers welcomed by Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18). God is the liberator of the Chosen People from their forced sojourn and enslavement in the land of Egypt. The merciful God "loves strangers, providing them food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18) and commands the people of God to do the same (Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19). We remember that Jesus was a refugee in Egypt (Matthew 2) and is encountered in the experience of strangers, refugees, and migrants throughout history (Matthew 25:38). As people of God we are part of a world-wide community, which embraces refugees and immigrants.

Here on Maui, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids are unreasonably harsh -- they separate mother and child and treat civil infractions as if they were criminal. Such treatment is a violation of the social contract in Hawaii which extends aloha to all arrivals. The raids and detention now happening on Maui need to stop. They are in conflict with our values and do not show the best side of who we are as a people of faith.

We appeal to you, Mr. President, to act to restore the aloha of our islands that has touched all of our hearts by ending the practice of home invasion, work place raids, and random search and seizure of immigrants on Maui.

Rev. Dr. Charles Buck, Conference
Minister, Hawaii Conference
United Church of Christ

Rt. Rev. Robert L. Fitzpatrick,
Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii

Most Rev. Larry Silva, Bishop of the
Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson,
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Rev. Dr. Woong-Min Kim, Hawaii
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Rev. Cecilia Hoopai

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Rev. Matthew Kailihou

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