

According to VIA and CEPAZ

“Deporting those fleeing the Venezuelan regime is a violation of the international law principle of non-refoulement.”

The recent decision by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to suspend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans has raised serious concerns among human rights organizations.

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) and the Center for Justice and Peace (CEPAZ) have strongly condemned this measure, warning that it will endanger the stability and security of approximately 300,000 people, who could now face mass deportations. According to representatives from both organizations, TPS holders who are deported would be forced to return to a country where their lives and fundamental rights will be gravely threatened.

Niurka Meléndez, co-director of VIA, and Beatriz Borges, director of CEPAZ, add that an additional 250,000 Venezuelans who still have TPS protection under the 2021 designation are also deeply concerned. They fear this decision marks the beginning of a shift toward more restrictive immigration policies, putting their status at risk in the future.

A Dangerous and Misleading Narrative

Meléndez and Borges explain that “the rhetoric surrounding it is even more concerning than the policy change itself. The decision has been followed by misleading claims that falsely associate Venezuelan migrants with criminal organizations. From our organizations, we emphasize that these characterizations are not only baseless but also fuel discrimination, criminalization, and xenophobia against the Venezuelan community in the United States,” they assure.

The activists say that “DHS’s data contradicts this narrative, showing that less than 1% of TPS beneficiaries have any ties to criminal activities. The portrayal of Venezuelan migrants as a security threat lacks factual basis and undermines the significant contributions they make to U.S. society and the economy.”

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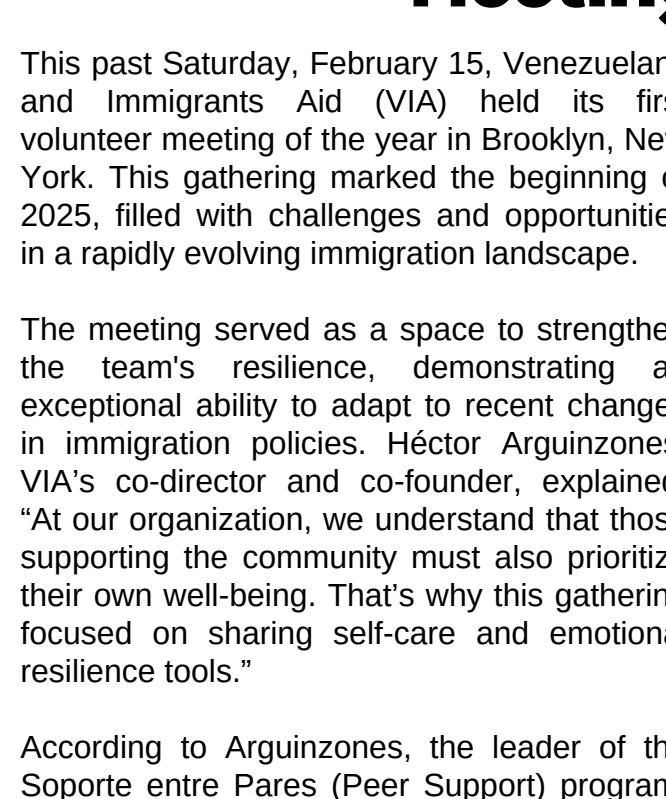
An Ignored Humanitarian Crisis
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 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Co-Counsel Attorneys Warn: “Failing to Appear in Immigration Court for Fear of Deportation Is a Big Mistake”

Co-Counsel attorneys Rebecca Press and Terry Lawson are sounding the alarm about the risks faced by the migrant community, particularly Venezuelans in the United States. In a critical discussion, they address the lawsuit against the termination of TPS, the impact of expedited removal, and available legal options such as the Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa (SIJ).

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Favorable Ruling Would Benefit Everyone
Attorney Rebecca Press clarifies a common concern within the community: “It is not necessary to register with any organization to benefit from a possible favorable ruling in the lawsuit. If the court determines that the revocation was illegal, the benefit will apply to all group individuals, not just an exclusive group,” she explains.

Expedited Removal: Who Is Protected and What to Do
Terry Lawson explains that expedited removal is a process used by ICE to deport individuals without emphasizing that not everyone is vulnerable to this procedure, as certain groups are protected.

“People who have resided in the United States for more than two years are exempt from expedited removal. Additionally, those who entered the country with a visa or parole cannot be deported through this process. Another group that is protected from expedited removal are unaccompanied minors, who have specific legal safeguards to prevent rapid deportation,” Lawson states.

According to Co-Counsel attorney, Arguinzones, the leader of the Soprote Entre Pares (Peer Support) program, “the organization has strengthened its education and assistance programs, providing essential resources such as the safety plan and document checklist compiled by the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) to help individuals understand their rights and the impact of the government’s actions on the immigrant community.”

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Expanding Access to Information
As part of these efforts, VIA has organized Instagram and YouTube and in-person discussions featuring the organization’s key directors. Furthermore, over 50 informative posts have been shared on Instagram to current migration challenges.

Miracle Mondays: A Safe Haven for Migrants
One of VIA’s most impactful initiatives is Miracle Mondays, in-person events providing legal guidance and support to the migrant community. These events have been held in New York City, and the organization has also participated in online discussions and webinars.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Attorney Rebecca Press Clarifies Concerns
Legal experts such as Guillermo Gómez have also participated in online discussions and are committed to keeping the migrant community informed about the legal status in the U.S. affecting their rights.

Protecting Against Immigration Scams
In a climate where desperation can lead to risky decisions, VIA has emphasized the importance of avoiding immigration-related scams.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa (SIJ)
Another key topic is the Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa (SIJ), a form of relief for migrant minors. Press and Lawson emphasize that this visa is a lifeline for many young people, and finding free legal assistance for such cases can be challenging.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Knowledge and Action as Keys to Success
The Co-Counsel attorneys emphasize that the best way to protect oneself from current immigration policies is to stay informed and act swiftly. Resources such as the Declaration of Inapplicability of Expedited Removal, access to the court to file a SIJ application, and the migrant community’s right to avoid deportation are critical in avoiding greater risks. The organizations’ community is willing to help, but taking the initiative and not missing legal deadlines is essential, they warn.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Commitment to Reliable Information and Community Support
With the success of these initiatives, VIA remains committed to organizing both in-person and virtual activities to ensure that the migrant community in New York has access to reliable information and essential resources.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Miracle Mondays Will Continue to Grow
Miracle Mondays will continue to grow as a fundamental pillar of support and guidance for the immigrant community.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Conclusion
In times of uncertainty, “information is power,” and community is our greatest strength. VIA reaffirms its commitment to providing reliable information and guidance to the migrant community.

 Photo Courtesy: elpais.com

Final Thoughts
The event concluded with a symbolic gesture: the sharing of a traditional Venezuelan drink, “tizana,” a sweet drink made with pieces of fruit and ingredients, representing the values that unite the community: resilience, organization, leadership, and solidarity.

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Conclusion
Arguinzones concluded, “At VIA, we are not a beacon of hope, but a lighthouse, guiding their journey in a new country.”

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