



National Latina/o  
Psychological Association  
Asociación Nacional de Psicología Latina

June 1, 2016

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The National Latina/o Psychological Association (NLPA) is a national organization of mental health professionals, academics, researchers, and students whose objective is to generate and advance psychological knowledge and foster its effective application for the benefit of the Latina/o community. We stand together with the National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women in their call to stop the announced wave of deportations targeting Central American mothers and their children by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

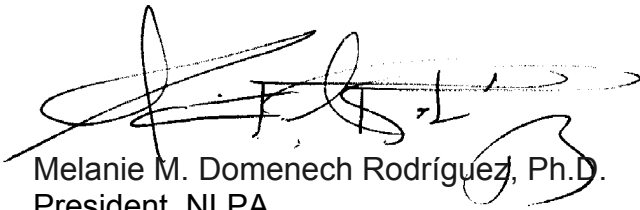
It is well documented that women and children from the countries that belong to the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala) are escaping horrific gang violence; risk of femicide; physical, psychological, and sexual abuse; extreme poverty; trafficking; and the lack of basic infrastructure to safeguard their well-being. For the vast majority, the only means of ensuring their families' safety and survival is to make the treacherous journey to the United States. The decision to leave their country however comes with its own set of perils. Many are vulnerable to continued exposure to life-threatening events at every stage of the migration process, and these further exacerbate the trauma they have already faced.

The act of deporting families who are seeking protection is a humanitarian crisis that demands immediate attention. As a signatory to the *United Nations Convention against Torture*, the United States has a moral obligation to protect those who otherwise would be victimized. Rather than criminalizing the efforts of individuals seeking a safe haven for themselves and their families, we must consider the complex circumstances of vulnerable populations and develop alternative responses that do not further endanger these women and children. Our country has a rich history of assisting the disenfranchised, neglected, and persecuted. Presently, we have an opportunity to once again demonstrate our compassion, and provide safety and hope to those who desperately need it most.

We recognize the concerns of the Administration regarding unauthorized immigration. However, sending innocent children and families back to life-threatening circumstances is not the answer. We risk destroying the future potential and contributions of untold numbers. If this is allowed to happen, future generations of Americans will look upon

this time with great regret and embarrassment. We stand ready to provide support and guidance around this very difficult issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie M. Domenech Rodríguez', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Melanie M. Domenech Rodríguez, Ph.D.

President, NLPA

Professor of Psychology

Utah State University

[www.nlpa.ws](http://www.nlpa.ws)

[melanie.domenech@usu.edu](mailto:melanie.domenech@usu.edu)