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Dutiful to Hooyo honors Somali mothers

By Rachel Ndjondjo with contributions by Dhananji Rathnayake

“When we share our stories, we build bridges. This book is my bridge.”

—Abdullahi M. Ahmed

Portland – On July 24, Abdullahi M. Ahmed, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools in Portland and holder of a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Maine, presented his new memoir *Dutiful to Hooyo (My Mother)* during a book talk organized by Gateway Community Services in partnership with I’m Your Neighbor Books. The event featured an inspiring conversation between the author and Rep. Deqa Dhalac (D-Dist. 120), a prominent Somali American political figure known for her strong community engagement.

A literary tribute to “Hooyo”

In *Dutiful to Hooyo*, Ahmed pays heartfelt tribute to his mother – or *Hooyo* in Somali – celebrating her influence on his personal and professional journey.

“This book is a letter of gratitude to all Somali mothers and to all women who carry their families with courage and dignity,” the author shared with the audience. “My mother taught me how to transform pain into strength and nostalgia into hope.”

Beyond honoring his mother, *Dutiful to Hooyo* addresses universal themes: family, the weight of memories, and the transmission of values. Through his book, Ahmed invites readers to reflect on their own stories and the influence of maternal figures in their lives.

“

There are times you will be at a crossroads, thinking about the past, present, and future all at once. I didn’t know where I was going or what I would be doing in the future. ... but I held onto faith.

—Abdullahi M. Ahmed

.....

A meaningful dialogue with Deqa Dhalac

The presence of Dhalac, who became the first Somali American woman ever elected mayor of a U.S. city (South Portland, 2021) prior to serving as a state representative, added a powerful dimension to the discussion.

“This book tells a universal story: one of migration, loss, and also rebirth,” Dhalac said. “Abdullahi M. Ahmed’s voice is precious because it connects our past and present, while opening doors to younger generations.”

Both speakers shared personal anecdotes and reflections on the Somali diaspora, emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural roots while embracing American culture.

Bridging cultures through literature

“When we share our stories, we build bridges. This book is my bridge,” said Ahmed.

The event brought together a diverse audience including members of the Somali community, educators, social workers, activists, and literature enthusiasts from many different communities in Maine.

After the discussion, Ahmed signed copies of his book and engaged with attendees, some of whom shared their own migration



« Un Burundais arrache sa victoire contre l’expulsion »

Par Éloge Willy Kaneza

Dans une interview exclusive accordée à *Amjambo Africa*, Cassius Shirambere, ancien président de la communauté burundaise du Maine, a partagé une histoire bouleversante qui illustre à la fois la peur et la résilience des communautés immigrées aux États-Unis.

Il s’agit d’un jeune Burundais, membre de la famille de Shirambere, dont le parcours au migratoire américain met en lumière les failles systémiques, la vulnérabilité des demandeurs d’asile et le courage rare de certains juges.

L’épreuve du jeune homme a commencé par ce que beaucoup considéraient comme une infraction mineure: une violation du code de la route dans le Maine.

« Quand des personnes sont arrêtées et placées en détention, cela nous affecte tous, même les immigrés qui sont déjà naturalisés et ont la citoyenneté américaine », explique Shirambere. « Dans ces moments-là, c’est à la communauté d’intervenir, car beaucoup n’ont pas d’avocat. »

Après l’interpellation, le jeune homme a été conduit au poste de police local puis remis aux services fédéraux américains de l’immigration et des douanes (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE). Il a ensuite été transféré dans un centre de détention dans le New Hampshire. Une audience avait été prévue et son avocat s’y préparait, mais avant qu’elle n’ait lieu, le jeune homme a été expulsé vers le Burundi sans préavis, une décision dont même son avocat n’a été informé que par Shirambere et la famille.

« Il y avait peu d’espoir qu’il puisse revenir aux États-Unis », raconte Shirambere. « Mais l’avocat a persévéré et s’est présenté au tribunal à la date prévue. Il a démontré que la loi avait été violée, que le jeune homme avait été expulsé illégalement et renvoyé dans le pays même qu’il avait fui. » Le jeune homme a pu assister à l’audience en ligne depuis le Burundi.

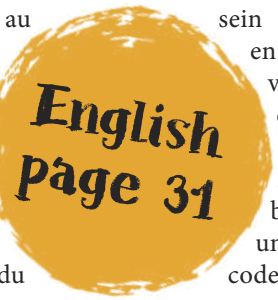
Le juge a finalement statué en sa faveur, reconnaissant les irrégularités et ordonnant son retour aux États-Unis. L’ambassade américaine au Burundi lui a délivré un nouveau visa et payé son billet d’avion. Aujourd’hui, il est de retour dans le New Hampshire, dans le même centre de détention où il avait été incarcéré, mais avec ses droits rétablis.

Shirambere souligne que cette affaire illustre à la fois la fragilité des protections accordées aux demandeurs d’asile et l’importance cruciale de l’assistance juridique.

« Il est essentiel que tous les demandeurs d’asile aient un avocat », dit-il. « Dans ce cas, sans avocat, le jeune homme n’aurait jamais retrouvé ses droits. Toutes les procédures ont été violées : lorsqu’il a été expulsé, les autorités burundaises ne l’ont même pas accueilli correctement, sa famille n’a pas été avertie et il n’avait même pas d’argent pour rentrer. Quelqu’un a dû l’emmener en voiture jusqu’à son domicile de ses parents. »

Les difficultés de ce

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Festival of Nations 2025 sees diminished attendance By Dhananji Rathnayake Photos | Mark Mattos



Founder and Board President Tarlan Ahmadov (center) with members of the Azerbaijan Society of Maine at their information display

"All the borders in this world are created by human beings. In truth, we are one. Unless we come to this realization, we will remain stuck in our egos and conditioned beliefs."
—Jerry Mayfield

More than 15 cultures from around the world were represented at the 23rd annual Greater Portland Festival of Nations 2025, held on July 26 at Deering Oaks Park. However, despite an exciting line-up of vendors and performers – topped off by a beautiful sunny day – the number of participants was down this year.

"We're seeing more immigrants afraid to come out because of what's going on with the current administration," said Michael Odokara-Okigbo, President and Co-Founder of the Festival of Nations. "But we're just trying to celebrate diversity in Maine."

The festival featured food, performances,

and vendors selling international crafts. Local nonprofit organizations, government human services departments, and private businesses also participated.

"It was so nice to see old friends from the community and be reminded, especially in these times, of what a beautiful and enriching thing it is to live within a culturally diverse community," said Caroline Clavel, a teacher of English for speakers of other languages at East End

Community School.

Attendees expressed how much they appreciated the festival and how sad they felt at this year's low turnout. One attendee said, "We always love attending this event. We come here because of our neighbors, who are immigrants. Unfortunately, this year, many of them are afraid to attend public events because of [U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement]. This is a terrible time."

The festival was made possible through the generous support of the city of Portland, as well as a number of local banks and business owners who continue to champion cultural diversity and community connection despite the political climate.



Foods of many nations, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were available throughout the day



Coffee By Design shared samples of many specialty products



Niyat Catering offered Ethiopian specialties including injera, lentil stew, and sambusas

Celebrating culture at Lowell Southeast Asian Water Festival Story and photos by Dhananji Rathnayake



The 28th Annual Lowell Southeast Asian Water Festival was held on August 16 at Lowell Heritage State Park in Massachusetts. Organized by the Greater Lowell Community Foundation with the support of community members, volunteers, vendors, performers, partners, and sponsors, the event attracted more than 60,000 attendees and featured over 70 vendors.

Khmer Maine in Portland arranged free bus service for the Southeast Asian community so they could attend this year's event. "Khmer Maine serves the Cambo-

dian community by improving their social and economic well-being, and part of that means creating opportunities to celebrate, acknowledge, and amplify their culture. This is our first year organizing a free bus trip to Lowell, especially for our elders who can't drive long distances and for families who may not have transportation," said Marpheen Chann, Executive Director of Khmer Maine.

According to the organizing committee, Lowell is home to 25,000 Cambodian residents, which is one of the largest Cambo-

dian American communities in the U.S.. The Water Festival is the second-largest Cambodian festival in the country.

The Water Festival, known as Bon Om Touk, is a major celebration held in Cambodia in late October or early November each year to mark the end of the rainy season and the reversal of the Tonle Sap River's flow. It is a time for Cambodians to give thanks for the fertile land and abundant fish provided by the river.

"Bon Om Touk is a major festival in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia," said Sothea Pich, a senior Cambodian community member. "In front of the Royal Palace, huge crowds gather with colorful lanterns and fireworks to celebrate the river's rich glory and to give thanks for the water."

A highlight of the festival is the Dragon Boat Race, and at the Lowell festival many young people joined the boat race for the first time. "Water is life," said Sopheap Theam, the festival manager. "This festival is especially for our youth, to remind them never to forget our culture. And this year, we have many youth volunteers helping with our festival."

This year's Water Festival featured traditional Southeast Asian foods, music, dance, and martial arts. The Angkor Dance

Troupe performed the Lotus Blooming Dance and the Flower Dance, symbolizing prosperity and gratitude for water. Tiger An's Taekwondo Demonstration Team performed martial arts. Other highlights included KHMMAE Urban Ballet, the Lao Youth Center of Rhode Island, dances by Indra's Artistic Creations, a Coconut Dance by Cambodian American students, a performance by the Philippine Dance and Culture Organization of Massachusetts, and a Vietnamese traditional martial arts showcase by the Binh Dinh Academy. Monks from different temples offered blessings and tied Pirith Nool (holy thread) for good fortune.



Portland bests Halifax in historic first international friendly By Rachel Ndjondjo Photos | Mark Mattos



Portland – In an electric atmosphere blending sporting passion and a festive spirit, the Portland Hearts of Pine made history by winning their very first international friendly match. Facing the Halifax Wanderers, which was reduced to nine players, the home team clinched a 2-1 victory thanks to an early goal from Mickey Reilly and a stoppage-time decider from Ollie Wright.

This unique encounter pitted the boys from Maine against representatives of the Canadian Premier League. Acadian musician Robert Sylvain delivered a moving performance of the national anthems of both countries before Gov. Janet Mills joined the players for the kickoff, surrounded by schoolchildren proudly waving American and Canadian flags.

From the first whistle, Portland showed

its ambitions. Hometown talent Khalid Hersi, along with new signings Séga Coulibaly and Noah Kvifte, made their debuts for the Hearts. The packed stadium – 5,645 fans strong – was already buzzing when, in the 18th minute, Reilly pounced on a loose ball at the edge of the box and sent a precise shot into the bottom corner.

Halifax responded in the 57th minute. After a brilliant pass from Jefferson Alphonse, Tavio Ciccarelli broke through the middle before returning the ball to Alphonse, who unleashed an unstoppable strike past Kash Oladapo.

Coach Bobby Murphy then took advantage of the unlimited substitutions rule to bring in fresh legs: Mikey Lopez, Kemali Green, Patrick Langlois, Michel Poon-Angeron, Ollie Wright, Titus Washington, and Jay Tee Kamara all entered the game.

The intensity rose, and the “friendly” label started to fade. In the 78th minute, Jérémy Gagnon-Laparé received a second yellow card for elbowing Washington, leaving Halifax with 10 men.

The turning point came in the final moments. After a corner was cleared, the ball fell to Wright, who blasted it into the back of the net, igniting an eruption of joy from the crowd. Amid the chaos, goalkeeper Aiden Rushenas shoved referee Andrew Porada, earning a straight red card and reducing Halifax to nine players.

The final whistle ended a match full of twists and turns, leaving Portland fans savoring this historic victory and dreaming of an international rivalry that is only just beginning.



Hearts of Pine vs. Halifax



Hearts of Pine vs. Richmond



Reparations for African Americans are long overdue

By Pious Ali

Over the past few months, I have found myself in conversations about reparations. These discussions have been deep, and at times difficult, but they left me feeling obliged to share my perspective.

The call for reparations in America is both necessary and overdue. It is not a new idea, nor is it a radical one. But it is often misunderstood, particularly within the wider Black community. In my view, reparations should be directed specifically to the descendants of enslaved African Americans, not extended to more recent Black immigrants.

The case for reparations is clear. Generations of African Americans endured centuries of chattel slavery, followed by Jim Crow laws, redlining, disenfranchisement, racial terror, systemic exclusion, mass incarceration, and persistent economic barriers. These injustices were endured directly and continuously by families whose ancestors were enslaved in this country. Reparations are not simply about shared skin color or a collective Black identity; they are about repairing a very specific, historical, and generational harm.

As a Black immigrant, I know firsthand the realities of racism and discrimination in America. I have experienced its sting and its barriers. Yet I cannot claim the historical trauma of enslavement here, nor the compounded injustices that generations of African Americans have faced on this soil. That pain is not mine to inherit, and the debt is not owed to me.

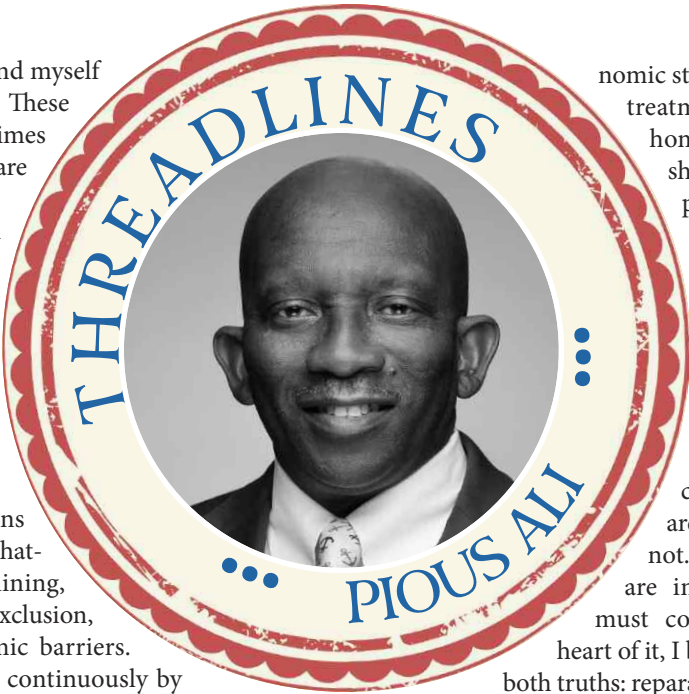
In conversations I have had with other African immigrants, both online and in person, many agree. We face discrimination in housing, in employment, in our neighborhoods, and in encounters with law enforcement. But our families were not enslaved here. We were not stripped of our names, our languages, our cultures, our land, and our wealth across centuries in this country. Our struggles, while very real, are different in origin and must be addressed in their own right. They should not be folded into a debt that belongs specifically to African Americans.

I want to be clear and I say this with the deepest respect and gratitude to African Americans: Your sacrifice, resilience, and courage carved the path that allows me to be here today. The Civil Rights Movement, led and carried by African Americans, opened doors for immigrants like me. The price they paid, often with their lives, created opportunities that my children and I now benefit from. I will never forget that, and I carry that awareness with humility.

Some may worry that drawing such a distinction divides us as a community. I believe the opposite is true. Solidarity is strongest when it is honest. For Black immigrants, standing in solidarity with African Americans means acknowledging that the reparations conversation is not about us. It means recognizing that while racism touches us all, the legacy of slavery created a uniquely American harm that requires a uniquely American response.

Reparations must remain focused. They are not charity, nor a policy favor, but a moral and economic debt owed for centuries of exploitation and violence. Redirecting or diluting that debt does not serve justice. It undermines it.

For Black immigrants, our work is to stand alongside our African American brothers and sisters, to amplify their voices, and to push with them for the repair that is long overdue. At the same time, we must organize and advocate for policies that address our own struggles: immigration reform, cultural preservation, pathways to eco-



nommic stability, and equitable treatment in our adopted home. Our solidarity should be both principled and practical.

Over the past few months, I have heard many perspectives in these conversations. Some immigrants say they do not think reparations include them. Others are unsure and ask why not. These conversations are important, and they must continue. But at the heart of it, I believe we can honor both truths: reparations are for descendants of enslaved African Americans, and immigrants must stand in solidarity while pursuing justice for our own communities.

The fight for reparations is not just about the past; it is about the future. It is about whether America is willing to make right on a debt long denied. It is about whether justice can finally be applied fully and fairly. As an immigrant, I respect that this fight is not mine to lead. But I will always stand with those whose ancestors built this nation with their blood, sweat, and lives, and who are still waiting for the repair they are owed.



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Amjambo Africa welcomes letters to the editor, notices of local events, photographs, and suggestions for future stories.

Contributions are published at the discretion of the editor and as space allows.

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BMV data is secure says Bellows

Shenna Bellows is Maine's 50th Secretary of State, serving in that role since January 2021. Elected every other year by the state legislature, the Secretary of State oversees corporation law and the conduct of elections, as well as the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). Following anecdotal reporting that personal data available to the BMV had been shared with ICE agents, Amjambo Africa reached out to the (BMV) for comment. Bellows wrote this letter in response, assuring the public that such sharing has not happened.



bility to keep your personal information safe and secure seriously. The information you provide to the BMV is confidential and cannot be shared with others except as provided by state or federal laws. BMV employees who handle driver's license and identification card applications may not contact or share information with federal or state law enforcement of their own initiative.



BMV does not share your information even with federal and state law enforcement officials, including ICE, unless they are doing their jobs properly and legally. As of this writing, ICE has not requested information from the Maine BMV about any driver's license or state ID holders.

Dear reader,
There is a lot of fear in many communities right now due to the increase in enforcement activities by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Unsurprisingly, this is leading to concerns and questions about the confidentiality of certain government records and how that information may be used by ICE and other federal agencies.

As Maine's Secretary of State, I oversee Maine's Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). The BMV does keep information about Maine drivers and state identification holders as, by law, anyone applying for a Maine identification card or driver's license must give the BMV their name, birthdate, home address, evidence of being legally present in the U.S., and their Social Security number, if they have one. For driver's licenses and state identification cards that are also REAL ID-compliant, BMV keeps a copy of these documents.

I want to assure you that we take our responsibility

We will continue to serve all the people of Maine and remain committed to protecting the security of your information to the fullest extent of the law. I will always defend the constitutional rights of all people living here in our beloved State of Maine.

Take care,
Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

To the editor:

In 1924 Ralph Owen Brewster, a graduate of Bowdoin College, was running for governor with the overt support of the Ku Klux Klan. At that time, the target of the Klan's hatred in Maine was the Catholic population, primarily French Canadian, Italian, and Irish. Hate speech was used as a tool to promote the Klan's ideas, and Catholics were targeted as immigrants who were not fully American.

One letter writer wrote to the Brunswick newspaper, "Thinking, intelligent people do not believe it is for the best interests of the people to place Catholics in office. If a person is not 100% American, he is not American. Let us elect good people to office." Catholic Mainers were seen as the "other" and not fully American. Hate speech was used to manipulate public opinion in order to gain notice, financial support, and power.

Gov. [Percival] Baxter called the Klan "an insult and affront to American citizens," continuing, "I believe people prefer the light of day to the deeds of darkness."

It has long been a political tactic to use hatred combined with nationalism to gain influence, money, and power. Recently in Maine we have Republican candidate for governor Bobby Charles resorting to such tactics, attacking Rep. Deqa Dhalac from South Portland, using his social media platforms to call her a "radical Somalia-first lawmaker" and more – postings which have resulted in responses including calls for shooting and lynching.

Rep. Dhalac has served her Maine community well, as elected mayor of South Portland and now in the Maine State Legislature.

Good people of Maine, no matter their political party or religious belief, need to stand against hate speech, to rise against hate speech whenever it is used as a tool or tactic. We do not need leaders who base their rise to power on the hatred of others, who appeal to the lowest human instincts in order to gain power and influence. If we truly love our state, Maine needs to be led by the heart, and not by hatred. We prefer the light of day.

Gary Lawless
Brunswick



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Third annual ‘MCSTOYA Connects’ conference empowers educators with diverse books

By Carylssa Baker



I’m Your Neighbor Books provided a selection of multicultural books for attendees to browse

Francie Latour, author of the picture book *Auntie Luce’s Talking Paintings* and co-founder of the social justice program for kids called Wee The People, urged educators at a recent Colby College conference to “invite kids to reimagine the world.”

Over 80 Maine librarians, K-12 teachers, and college professors gathered on August 11 for the third annual MCSTOYA Connects conference, hosted by the Maine County and State Teachers of the Year Association in partnership with I’m Your Neighbor Books, this year with the theme “Migration Reads.” The event focused on diversifying classroom book selections to better reflect immigrant experiences.

Many educators shared a common motivation for attending: to better represent the students they serve. One teacher, who works with multilingual learners, said, “I want to find books that these students can resonate

with.” Others shared how this event has become a yearly tradition for them.

Teachers, especially from rural areas, noted rising tension and racism in their classroom under the new federal administration. They stressed the urgent need for diverse books to counteract hate and support



Micky Bondo

better discussions.

After refreshments and informal conversation among the educators, Abusuana Micky Bondo, Co-Founder of In Her Presence, gave a talk titled “Belonging Through Reading” about how literature can foster identity and belonging in students. She offered honest, practical advice for supporting student identities in classrooms.

Bondo shared how her father gave her books about her culture while she was growing up, helping her develop confidence. She emphasized how transformative that knowledge was and how schools must do the

same: “Let students know who they are is enough.”

She warned of the harm in centering only one culture in the classroom, explaining that it creates false narratives and erases global connection. “The first challenge in the context of education is the danger of a single story,” she said.

Asked what immigrant families need from schools, Bondo replied, “Sometimes we need to find kids where they are at. We need to engage parents and bring them to the table.”

In response to a question about how to stay motivated despite pushback, Bondo pointed to the students: “Our fight is in making sure kids are safe.”

After Bondo’s talk, participants joined breakout sessions, including a panel titled “First Generation Americans Reflect on Fiction and Belonging.” The panel explored how books like *Effren Divided*, *Kareem Between*, *Go Home*, and *Count Me In* reflect first-generation Americans’ experiences and build belonging in classrooms.

Maria Testa, author of *Something About America*, moderated the panel, along with



Lochan Sharma

read from her picture book, which includes Haitian Creole. She said she views the inclusion of Haitian Creole as a form of “Black innovation and radical resistance.”

Latour explained that when she teaches her book in classrooms she often begins with an activity she calls “Re-Imagining Passports” where students use a collage technique to create their own pretend passports as a “vision of what they want the world to

Interview with Lochan Sharma, co-author of *Go Home*

Carly Baker: Could you walk me through the process of co-authoring this book with Terry Farish? How did that work?

Lochan Sharma: Terry had the original idea for the novel, and she came to me with the idea and asked if I want to work on it together. I said yes! A lot of our work was done online. We sent things back and forth – she would write something, then I would look over it, and change things I wanted to change – and the same the other way around. We would kind of give each other assignments, come up with certain things that a character should change or be motivated by. Terry did a lot of the directing. She is a published author and this is my first novel. So she helped with what the story arc should be, and where certain things were needed.

CB: What part of writing this novel was most meaningful to you?

LS: One thing I really liked was the opportunity to reflect on both myself and the culture I come from ... why I see things the way I do, why my family does the things they do.

CB: Do you think *Go Home* has taken on new significance in these times?

LS: When we started writing the novel, we had no idea where the political landscape would be when we finished it. And as things became more evident, as the book got closer to being finished, we realized that it was more important to get this book out there than it was when we started.

Lochan Sharma, co-author of *Go Home*, and Charles Mugabe, Assistant Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services at Catholic Charities Maine.

Testa described these books as mirrors of the last decade in America. “These books are taking us on a walk through the past 10 years of our country,” she said, and emphasized how these stories offer students context, humanity, and a way to discuss difficult realities.

She also stressed the importance of learning from students. “I have learned more about these issues in middle schools than anywhere else,” she added. “How we talk to kids is so much more important right now than anyone knows.”

Asked about changes under the new administration, Sharma described growing fear in his community. “People I know who are here legally are now much more scared ... not knowing if they will sleep in the same bed that night.” He noted that this fear is represented through the stories discussed and reflects the reality of many.

When teachers asked what they could do despite pressure to stay silent, Mugabe said, “Solidarity is more important now than ever ... the legal need is there, but so is the social need.”

The panel highlighted how these books connect students to real-world struggles and offer hope. As Testa said, “Despite these terrible hardships, these are books about hope.”

After the panel, educators met in small groups to share key takeaways and discuss how they can bring these books into their classrooms.

“These Hyphens Run Deep,” Latour’s closing keynote speech, explored immigrant identity through children’s literature. Latour, who was born in the U.S. to Haitian parents,

be.” She explained that for many immigrant children, passports are seen as “instruments of legal violence.”

As participants created their passports, Latour shared how she connects with students when reading her book.

“Haitian kids are seeing their worlds light up,” she said.



Francie Latour

While reading her book, Latour highlighted themes for classroom discussion, particularly the need to “rewire anti-Black narratives” and “put Blackness in the center of the frame.”

She emphasized that diverse books help create historical truth-telling, especially beyond Eurocentric narratives. “Getting kids to understand contesting dominant narratives” is essential, she said.

Latour wrapped up her talk with examples of youth-led resistance, including kids protesting with their roller skates.

Her final words of advice, which resonated with an audience eager to make their teaching as inclusive as possible, were “Use art as a vehicle for change.”

Interview with Francie Latour, keynote speaker and author of *Auntie Luce’s Talking Paintings*

Carly Baker: Please tell me about your book – why you decided to write it and what you hope it will do for kids.

Francie Latour: There are a lot of narratives about Haiti that dominate the media and popular culture that kids get exposed to early – Haiti as being poor and violent and corrupt. I wanted to find a way within a children’s book to disrupt and problematize those narratives and establish some context so that folks can be curious about how Haiti came to be the way it is today, and how much the West – the U.S. and Western Europe – are responsible for the way Haiti is today. And how much of what we see in contemporary Haiti is tied to legacies of slavery and colonization.

Our way of educating children tends to be very decontextualized, and that decontextualization ... telling about the layers of history and historical context, and particularly how power has played out in historical contexts, creates an understanding in kids that their worth and their potential, what they can achieve and what they see around them, is all rooted in personal merit and hard work. And that can be very damaging to children because it [blames] groups that are stigmatized or marginalized for the disparities that exist in outcomes such as what we see in education and employment and health and income and well-being.

I feel like children’s literature has a very important role to play in interrogating what’s happening around us and opening the doors to conversations about justice and empathy and solidarity and community – all of which we are going to need if we’re going to get through this moment that we’re in and to try to create the society that we want to see.

Tough conversations for tough times

Children ask questions about ICE By Amy Harris

“Mom, will they come for you one day?” (14-year-old)
“Why don’t they want us here? What did we do to them?” (10-year-old)
“Mom, what is ICE? Why is everyone afraid?” (10-year-old)

These are just some of the difficult questions many new Mainer children are asking their caregivers as local U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity and the threat of possible ICE activity have created a state of fear for immigrant children and families across the state.

Besides worrying about their safety and future, many new Mainer parents and caregivers worry about how to help their families feel safe. All the parents interviewed for this story declined to give their real names because they didn’t want to draw attention to themselves or their children. They fear that telling their stories could put their families in danger. Fawzi S., from Somalia, has four children, all born in the U.S. She admitted that “sometimes at night I cry alone. I don’t want my children to live in fear like me.”

While many caregivers want to protect children from scary news headlines or events around them, the reality, Emily Loder, Youth Program Director at the Westbrook Intercultural Community Center (ICC), said children have “their antennas up and they’re listening. They’re very smart and they 100 percent know what’s going on.”

So rather than shying away from the truth, Loder and her staff are “very blunt” with the fifth- through eighth-grade children at the center’s afterschool and summer programs, when they ask questions about ICE and deportations. “We try to make sure that they know the information they need to. We educate the kids as much as possible so that if something did happen to their parents, they would be prepared,” she said.

Because uncertainty and fear can be overwhelming, many immigrant legal and child advocacy groups agree that giving children practical information can help reassure them. Local organizations such as Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP), Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS), and the Intercultural Community Center in Westbrook all have handouts, resources, and instructions to help caregivers know their immigration rights and what to do if ICE approaches them or their children. Angelica from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with children ages 10, 7, and 3, said parents should look for information such as those listed above: “Not rumors, because fear often comes from things we don’t understand.”

If they are worried about how to talk with their children, some parents practice what to say ahead of time. Agencies suggest making something called a Family Preparedness Plan. Then caregivers should discuss the plan with the children, who often worry about what will happen if a caregiver is taken. Children will be reassured that there is a plan for who will pick

them up or watch them if their caregiver can’t.

It also can be helpful to prepare children for a possible ICE visit to their home. Tell school-age children that they do not have to answer ICE’s questions and that they should not open the door to their living space without first asking ICE to slip their signed judicial warrant under the door for an adult to see. A judicial warrant is signed by a judge and is not the same as an administrative warrant.

Biganza, from East Africa, who has a 7-year-old and a 9-year-old (one of whom is a U.S. citizen), tells his children not to open doors to strangers and not to go with someone they don’t

know. Another suggestion is to give school-age children red cards (printable for free and available in 39 languages from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center) and tell them to slide the card under the door, show it through a window, or give it to any stranger who approaches them.

Safety is most often children’s biggest priority. Caregivers should anticipate that they may report feeling scared. It is helpful to validate that what is happening is scary, and it is normal to feel afraid when things are unsafe.

For reassurance, the parents interviewed for this article remind their children that there are people here in Maine who are fighting to keep their family safe and that “as long as we are together, we are home.” Remind children that they have red cards, Family Preparedness Plans, a community that supports them, and that right now, in this moment, they are safe.

Limiting the amount of media or news headlines about ICE raids, immigration policy changes, and deportations can help the whole household feel less worry or stress. Try not to let children consume media without adult supervision, since it can be hard for kids to decide what is fact and what is

fake news. Some ways to limit media exposure are to turn off all notifications, add tech-free periods to the day, and not bring phones to the dinner table or watch screens while eating together. Limiting youth access to social media to no more than 15 minutes per day (depending on the child’s age) is another way to cut back children’s exposure to scary or upsetting headlines.

Being selective about how and what children hear about ICE, deportations, and immigration does not mean shielding younger people from all news or media. Prohibiting all media could result in youth only hearing bits and pieces of news. Then they might jump to frightening and incorrect conclusions.

Instead, it is helpful to regularly talk as a family about current events. Start by asking open-ended questions that can’t be answered with a “yes” or “no,” such as “How does what you heard at school about ICE make you feel?” Inviting children to use their own words shows them that their caregivers are paying attention to their feelings.

Sometimes talking about feelings and emotions can be difficult for caregivers. They may worry that they don’t have answers and that their uncertainty might upset their child. However, experts say that it is OK and even reassuring for children when caregivers admit they don’t have all the answers. Being present with children in a loving, honest, and calm way will help them feel less anxious about uncertainty.

Writing or other types of creative expression can be helpful for youth who can’t verbally describe what they are feeling. Nick Whiston, Program Director of the Telling Room in Portland, suggested trying to set aside time to write together as a family. Starting with a question, such as “How does the news about ICE make you feel?” and taking 10-15 minutes to write down all thoughts, can be a way for a family or community members to “pause, reflect, and process what is on their mind.” Sharing what one another has written helps build closeness and a sense of being heard.

Telling stories or reading books about immigration together is another strategy to help reassure and provide children with helpful information. Reading books to children or helping them find books about ICE, deportation, or family separation helps them learn about children in similar situations. That way, they might feel less alone. I’m Your Neighbor Books offers a free database that allows parents and youth to search through more than 1,600 titles depicting characters who have migrated or been displaced.

For example, within the theme of “Detention and Deportation,” the site lists 68 books, some for specific communities, and for a range of reader ages from toddler to young adult. Reading aloud to younger children or reading the same book as your school-age child and then asking open-ended questions about the book are ways to start difficult

conversations. Prioritizing time spent together in family or community, “visiting friends and neighbors, praying together, and trying as much as possible not to be alone or isolated” were all suggestions offered by the parents interviewed. Staying connected helps remind worried children that they are part of a supportive community.

Family meals, playing games, and doing art or other projects together also are ways to connect with children who may feel isolated, alone, or afraid. Sometimes just verbally reminding an upset child that you are physically there with them, and that they are safe right now, right in that moment together, is the most powerful way for caregivers to support the children they love.

Lucia, another immigrant mother, had some advice: “Stay close to your children. Don’t let your children grow up in fear alone.”



Podcasts!

Stay connected to what’s going on in Maine in English, French, and Kinyarwanda/Kirundi. Subscribe to our YouTube channel

AMJAMBO Time
Immigration in Maine

WIRIWE Maine
Kinyarwanda/Kirundi

BONJOUR Maine
French/Français

Maine Black Excellence Awards shine in Gray

By Rachel Ndjondjo Photos | Mark Mattos



Third Place Executive Director Adilah Muhammad (l.) and Sue Roche, Executive Director of ILAP, which received the Active Ally Award



Third Place Award recipient Joseph Jackson



Nicole Mokeme Place Maker Award recipient Kareem A. Dieng

On August 1, Caswell Farm & Wedding Barn in Gray hosted the fifth annual Maine Black Excellence Awards, organized by the team at The Third Place. The event brought together dozens of Black leaders, artists, educators, activists, and entrepreneurs from across the state to honor the impact and contributions of the award recipients and the heritage, resilience, and brilliance of Black communities in Maine.



Inclusion Maine conference addresses Maine workforce shortage

By Dhananji Rathnayake Photos | Mark Mattos



(l. to r.) Panelists Marpheen Chann, Ayesha Hall, and Julia Trujillo Luengo

The Fourth Annual Inclusion Maine Conference took place on August 12-14 at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, bringing together more than 500 participants and nearly 50 exhibitors. Since its inception, the conference's mission, according to organizer Muhammad Humza Khan, has been to help employers attract diverse talent and to improve hiring opportunities for people from various backgrounds. This mission aligns with efforts to address Maine's demographic challenges and workforce shortages, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the state's long-term sustainability. As Khan put it, "Success means helping newcomers build a home here,

strengthening our population, workforce, and quality of life for everyone in Maine."

Building Maine's future workforce

According to a 2019 report from Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development, the state faces severe demographic challenges and estimates indicate the state will need 75,000 new skilled professionals by 2029 in order to meet workforce needs. Over 400,000 workers are expected to retire in the next two decades. Among other strategies, the report encourages welcoming immigrants to help fill those needs.



State Leaders Panel: Foundations for Employers to Attract Diverse Talent

THE MAINE NAVIGATOR

practical advice for living in Maine



The articles in the Maine Navigator appear in French, Kinyarwanda, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Swahili, as well as English. The topics in translation this month include an update about privacy at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, information about benefits, and a true story from a resident of Maine. If you have a topic you'd like us to cover, or if you have an event you'd like us to know about, please contact Éloge Kaneza at ekaneza@amjambofrica.com or Kit Harrison at kharrison@amjambofrica.com. We want to hear from you!

Les articles du Maine Navigator sont publiés en français, en kinyarwanda, en portugais, en somali, en espagnol, en swahili et en anglais. Ce mois-ci, les sujets traduits comprennent une mise à jour sur la confidentialité au bureau des véhicules motorisés, des informations sur les aides sociales et l'histoire vraie d'un habitant du Maine. Si vous souhaitez que nous abordions un sujet particulier ou si vous organisez un événement dont vous aimeriez nous faire part, veuillez contacter Elogé Kaneza ekaneza@amjambofrica.com ou Kit Harrison kharrison@amjambofrica.com.

Nous sommes à votre écoute !

— FRANÇAIS —

Je reçois des allocations sociales. Mes informations personnelles sont-elles en sécurité ? Par Deborah Ibonwa

Certaines personnes qui ont droit à des allocations sociales ne les demandent pas parce qu'elles ont entendu dire dans leur communauté que l'administration Trump a demandé des informations aux organismes publics et que ces informations pourraient permettre d'identifier les non-citoyens qui bénéficient de certains programmes d'aide sociale. Cet article résume ce que vous devez savoir si vous êtes immigrant et que vous avez reçu (ou prévoyez de demander) MaineCare, des coupons alimentaires (SNAP), une aide au revenu (TANF), une aide générale (GA) ou tout autre programme d'aide sociale de l'État ou local.

Veuillez noter que si vous souhaitez obtenir plus d'informations, vous pouvez contacter Maine Equal Justice pour obtenir des conseils juridiques gratuits et confidentiels. De nombreux changements fédéraux récents ont eu un impact sur l'accès des immigrants aux aides sociales, et certaines des informations actuelles pourraient changer à l'avenir. Maine Equal Justice s'engage à se tenir informé et à partager autant d'informations précises que possible, afin que vous et vos proches puissiez prendre les meilleures décisions pour vous-mêmes et vos familles lorsque vous recherchez de l'aide pour répondre à vos besoins immédiats.

Vos droits à la vie privée dans le cadre des programmes d'aide sociale

En règle générale, les États ne sont pas autorisés à utiliser ou à partager les informations personnelles contenues dans les demandes d'aide sociale sans avoir demandé et obtenu votre autorisation. Cependant, l'administration Trump teste actuellement ces limites légales. De nombreux États, dont le Maine, se battent contre le gouvernement fédéral devant les tribunaux afin de protéger la confidentialité des informations personnelles des demandeurs. Cela signifie que vos informations sont actuellement protégées par la loi, mais nous ne savons pas ce qu'il adviendra à l'avenir. Le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Maine (DHHS) publiera des mises à jour en ligne afin de garantir que les citoyens soient bien informés sur la confidentialité de leurs données. Maine Equal Justice publiera également ces mises à jour dès qu'elles seront disponibles.

Les États vous demanderont des informations personnelles, telles que votre nom, votre adresse et votre statut d'immigrant, afin de déterminer votre admissibilité à la plupart de ces aides sociales. Mais ils ne peuvent pas vous obliger à fournir ces informations.

Pour la plupart des programmes d'aide sociale, l'État a besoin d'informations vous concernant, telles que votre revenu, votre âge, votre numéro de sécurité sociale (si vous en avez un) et votre statut d'immigrant, afin de vérifier si vous remplissez certaines conditions pour bénéficier des aides que vous avez demandées.

Toutefois, seules les personnes qui demandent des aides doivent fournir des informations sur leur statut d'immigrant, et en général, le DHHS ne peut pas partager ces informations avec qui que ce soit sans votre autorisation préalable.

Exemples d'informations requises pour bénéficier des aides :

• **MaineCare, TANF et SNAP :** lorsque vous faites une demande pour bénéficier de ces allocations auprès du DHHS, vous devez fournir les noms et les informations (telles que les revenus) de toutes les personnes vivant dans votre foyer afin que le DHHS puisse déterminer votre éligibilité. Cependant, vous n'avez pas besoin de fournir le statut d'immigration ou le numéro de sécurité sociale des membres de votre foyer qui ne sont pas éligibles ou qui ne font pas de demande d'aides. Vous devez uniquement fournir les informations relatives au statut d'immigration des personnes qui font vraiment la demande de ces aides.

Par exemple, vous savez peut-être que les adultes qui demandent l'asile ne sont pas éligibles au MaineCare, tandis que tous les enfants du Maine sont éligibles au MaineCare, quel que soit leur statut. Si vous et vos enfants demandez l'asile, vous pouvez demander le MaineCare pour les enfants sans

fournir le statut d'immigration des adultes non éligibles de votre foyer. Si vos enfants ou d'autres membres de votre foyer sont éligibles, ils ne peuvent se voir refuser les aides parce que vous n'êtes pas éligible ou parce que vous avez refusé de fournir des informations sur votre statut d'immigration. Les informations personnelles de quiconque ne doivent pas être divulguées en dehors du DHHS, sauf dans des situations très limitées.

• **Aide Générale (GA) :** Si vous souhaitez bénéficier de l'Aide Générale (GA), vous devrez communiquer votre statut d'immigrant. Tout comme lorsque vous faites une demande pour tout autre programme d'aide publique, vous ne pouvez pas être contraint de fournir vos informations, mais votre demande peut être refusée si vous ne les communiquez pas. Si d'autres personnes vivant avec vous ne souhaitent pas bénéficier de l'Aide Générale, elles peuvent être tenues de communiquer certaines de leurs informations. Le bureau GA de votre ville vous demandera combien de personnes vivent avec vous et quels sont leurs revenus. Cependant, les seules informations qu'ils peuvent exiger pour une demande sont les informations personnelles des demandeurs et des membres de leur famille, ainsi que les revenus et les noms des personnes avec lesquelles les demandeurs vivent et partagent leurs dépenses.

• **Idées clés à retenir :**

1. Si le gouvernement fédéral sait déjà que vous vivez aux États-Unis et connaît votre adresse (par exemple, grâce à une demande d'aide à l'immigration), il se peut qu'il n'y ait aucun nouveau risque lié à la demande d'aides ou de protections si vous cessez d'utiliser ces allocations.

Par exemple, si vous avez une demande d'asile en cours et que vous n'avez pas déménagé, le gouvernement a déjà accès aux informations que vous avez fournies au tribunal de l'immigration ou au département de la sécurité intérieure pour votre demande.

2. Il n'y a pas eu de changements récents dans les règles relatives à la « charge publique ». Le fait de bénéficier de certaines aides sociales a toujours eu une incidence sur la capacité de certaines personnes à obtenir une carte verte, mais n'oubliez pas : Le fait de bénéficier ou non d'aides publiques n'a aucune incidence sur votre demande d'asile ou votre capacité à régulariser votre statut de réfugié ou de demandeur d'asile.

Le fait de bénéficier du MaineCare et du SNAP n'est pas pris en compte dans la détermination actuelle de la charge publique. Mais l'aide générale et le TANF sont pris en compte dans la détermination de la charge publique pour certains demandeurs de carte verte. Si vous bénéficiez du MaineCare et avez besoin de soins dans une maison de retraite, cela peut également être pris en compte.

3. Vous n'êtes pas tenu de fournir les numéros de sécurité sociale ou le statut d'immigration des membres de votre foyer qui ne demandent pas d'aides.

En fin de compte, vous n'êtes jamais tenu de communiquer vos informations personnelles, mais vous risquez de ne pas pouvoir bénéficier de certaines allocations si vous ne les communiquez pas.

Los artículos del Maine Navigator

aparecen en francés, kinyarwanda, portugués, somalí, español y suajili, además de inglés. Los temas traducidos este mes incluyen una actualización sobre la privacidad en la oficina de vehículos motorizados; información sobre beneficios; y una historia real de un residente de Maine. Si tiene algún tema que le gustaría que cubriéramos o si tiene algún evento del que quiera que nos enteremos, por favor, póngase en contacto con Elogé Kaneza/ekaneza@amjambofrica.com o Kit Harrison kharrison@amjambofrica.com

¡Nos gustaría escucharlo!

— ESPAÑOL —

Recibo prestaciones públicas. ¿Está segura mi información privada?

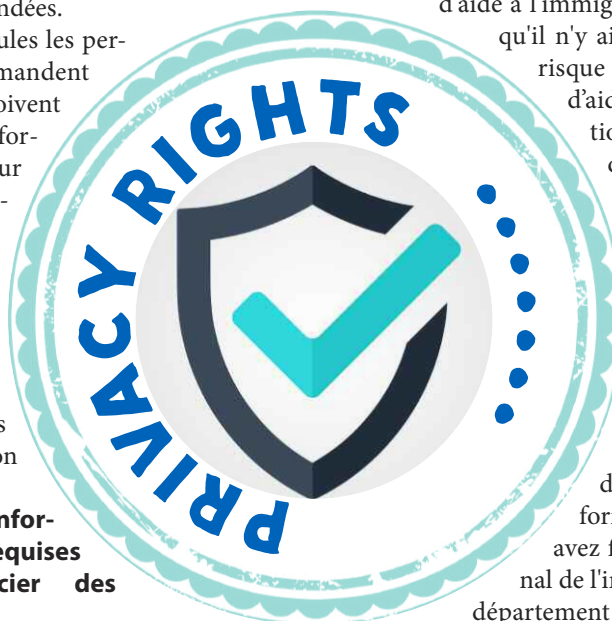
Por Deborah Ibonwa

Algunas personas que son elegibles para recibir beneficios no los están solicitando porque han escuchado a miembros de la comunidad decir que la Administración Trump ha solicitado información a agencias estatales y que esta información podría identificar a personas no ciudadanas que utilizan ciertos programas de beneficios públicos. Esta columna es un resumen de lo que necesita saber si es inmigrante y ha recibido (o planea solicitar) MaineCare, cupones de alimentos (SNAP), apoyo económico (TANF), Asistencia General (GA) o cualquier otro programa de beneficios estatales o locales.

Tenga en cuenta que si desea más información, puede contactar a Maine Equal Justice para obtener asesoría legal gratuita y confidencial. Muchos cambios federales recientes han impactado el acceso de los inmigrantes a los beneficios públicos, y algunas de las cosas que son ciertas ahora podrían cambiar en el futuro. Maine Equal Justice se compromete a mantenerse actualizado y a compartir la mayor cantidad de información precisa posible, para que usted y sus seres queridos puedan tomar las mejores decisiones para sí mismos y sus familias al buscar ayuda para cubrir sus necesidades básicas.

Sus derechos de privacidad en los programas de prestaciones

Generalmente, los estados no pueden usar ni compartir información personal de las solicitudes de prestaciones sin solicitar y recibir su permiso. Sin embargo, la Administración Trump está poniendo a prueba esos límites legales. Muchos estados, incluido Maine, están luchando contra el gobierno federal en los tribunales para proteger



la privacidad de la información personal de los solicitantes. Esto significa que su información está legalmente protegida actualmente, pero desconocemos qué ocurrirá en el futuro. El Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de Maine (DHHS) compartirá actualizaciones en línea para garantizar que las personas estén bien informadas sobre la privacidad de sus datos. Maine Equal Justice también compartirá estas actualizaciones cuando las recibamos.

Los estados le solicitarán información personal, como su nombre, dirección y estatus migratorio, para determinar su elegibilidad para la mayoría de las prestaciones. Sin embargo, no pueden obligar a que usted proporcione dicha información.

Para la mayoría de los programas de prestaciones públicas, el estado necesita información sobre usted, como sus ingresos, edad, número de Seguro Social (si tiene uno) y estatus migratorio, para determinar si cumple con ciertos requisitos para recibir las prestaciones que ha solicitado.

Sin embargo, sólo aquellos que solicitan beneficios necesitan proporcionar información sobre su estado migratorio y, por lo general, el DHHS no puede compartir esta información con nadie más a menos que primero le pida permiso.

Ejemplos de información para los beneficios:

● **MaineCare, TANF y SNAP:** Al solicitar estos beneficios a través del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos (DHHS), debe proporcionar los nombres e información (como los ingresos) de todos los miembros del hogar para que el DHHS pueda determinar su elegibilidad. Sin embargo, no es necesario proporcionar el estatus migratorio ni el número de Seguro Social de los miembros del hogar que no son elegibles o de aquellos que no solicitan beneficios. Solo debe proporcionar la información sobre el estatus migratorio de quienes están solicitando esos beneficios.

Por ejemplo, quizás sepa que los adultos que solicitan asilo no son elegibles para MaineCare, mientras que todos los niños en Maine sí lo son, independientemente de su estatus migratorio. Si usted y sus hijos solicitan asilo, puede solicitar MaineCare para ellos sin proporcionar el estatus migratorio de los adultos no elegibles de su hogar. Si sus hijos u otros miembros del hogar son elegibles, no se les pueden negar los beneficios por no ser elegible ni por haberse negado a proporcionar información sobre su estatus migratorio. La información personal de nadie debe compartirse fuera del DHHS, excepto en casos muy limitados.

● **Asistencia General (GA):** Si desea recibir la GA, deberá informar su estatus migratorio. Al igual que al solicitar cualquier otro programa de beneficios públicos, no se le puede obligar a proporcionar su información, pero se le puede denegar si no la proporciona. Si convive con otras personas que no desean recibir la GA, es posible que se les pida que compartan parte de su información. La oficina de GA de su ciudad o pueblo le preguntará con cuántas personas vive y cuáles son sus ingresos. Sin embargo, la única información que pueden solicitar para una solicitud es la información personal de los solicitantes y sus familiares, junto con los ingresos y los nombres de las personas con las que viven y comparten gastos.

● Ideas clave para recordar

1. Si el gobierno federal ya sabe que usted reside en EE. UU. y conoce su dirección (por ejemplo, a partir de una solicitud de ayuda migratoria), es posible que no existan nuevos riesgos asociados con la solicitud de beneficios, ni protecciones si deja de usar ese beneficio.

Por ejemplo, si tiene una solicitud de asilo pendiente y no se ha mudado, el gobierno ya tiene acceso a la información que proporcionó al Tribunal de Inmigración o al De-

partamento de Seguridad Nacional para su solicitud.

2. No ha habido cambios recientes en las normas de "carga pública". Recibir ciertos tipos de beneficios públicos siempre ha afectado la posibilidad de que algunas personas obtengan la tarjeta de residencia permanente (Green Card), pero recuerde:

El hecho de recibir o no beneficios públicos no afecta su solicitud de asilo ni su posibilidad de ajustar su estatus como refugiado o asilado.

Recibir MaineCare y SNAP no se considera en la determinación actual de carga pública. Por otro lado, la Asistencia General y la Asistencia Temporal para Familias Necesitadas (TANF) sí se consideran para la determinación de carga pública de ciertos solicitantes de Green Card. Si tiene MaineCare y necesita atención en un hogar de ancianos, eso también podría considerarse.

3. No tiene que proporcionar los números de Seguro Social ni el estatus migratorio de ningún miembro de su hogar que no solicite beneficios.

En definitiva, nunca está obligado a proporcionar su información personal, pero corre el riesgo de no poder acceder a ciertos beneficios si no la comparte. Por lo tanto, para cada programa al que solicite, considere el valor de recibir esa ayuda frente al posible riesgo de que se comparta su información. La situación variará para cada familia según su presupuesto, su estatus migratorio y otros factores.

Os artigos no Maine Navigator aparecem em francês, kinyarwanda, português, somali, espanhol e suaíli, bem como em inglês. Os tópicos em tradução este mês incluem uma atualização sobre privacidade no departamento de veículos motorizados; informações sobre benefícios; e uma história real de um morador do Maine. Se você tem um tópico que gostaria que cobrissemos, ou se você tem um evento que gostaria que soubéssemos, entre em contato com Eloge Kaneza/ekaneza@amjamboafrika.com ou Kit Harrison/kharrison@amjamboafrika.com.

Queremos ouvir a sua opinião!

— PORTUGUÊS —
Recebo benefícios públicos. As minhas informações privadas estão seguras? Por Deborah Ibonwa

Algunas personas que são elegíveis para benefícios não estão se candidatando a eles porque ouviram pessoas da comunidade dizerem que o governo Trump solicitou informações de agências estatais, e que essas informações poderiam identificar não-cidadãos que usam certos programas de benefícios públicos. Esta coluna é um resumo do que você precisa saber se você é um imigrante e recebeu (ou planeja se candidatar) ao MaineCare, vale-alimentação (SNAP), apoio à renda (TANF), Assistência Geral (GA) ou qualquer outro programa de benefícios estadual ou local.

Tenha em atenção que, se quiser mais informações, pode contactar a Maine Equal Justice para obter aconselhamento jurídico gratuito e confidencial. Muitas mudanças federais recentes afetaram o acesso dos imigrantes aos benefícios públicos, e parte do que é verdade agora pode mudar no futuro. A Maine Equal Justice está empenhada em manter-se atualizada e partilhar o máximo de informação exata possível, para que você e os seus entes queridos possam tomar as melhores decisões para si e para as suas

famílias quando procuram ajuda para satisfazer as suas necessidades básicas.

Os seus direitos de privacidade em programas de benefícios

Geralmente, os estados não têm permissão para usar ou compartilhar informações pessoais de aplicativos de benefícios sem pedir – e receber – sua permissão. No entanto, a Administração Trump está a testar esses limites legais. Muitos estados, incluindo o Maine, estão lutando contra o governo federal nos tribunais, buscando proteger a privacidade das informações pessoais dos candidatos. Isto significa que as suas informações estão atualmente legalmente protegidas, mas não sabemos o que acontecerá no futuro.

O Departamento de Saúde e Serviços Humanos do Maine (DHHS) compartilhará atualizações on-line para garantir que as pessoas estejam bem informadas sobre sua privacidade de dados. O Maine Equal Justice também compartilhará essas atualizações quando as virmos.

Os Estados solicitarão informações pessoais, como nome, endereço e status de imigração, para determinar sua elegibilidade para a maioria dos benefícios. Mas eles não podem forçá-lo a dar essa informação. Para a maioria dos programas de benefícios públicos, o estado precisa ter informações sobre você – como sua renda, idade, número de segurança social (se você tiver um) e status de imigração – para ver se você atende a certos requisitos para receber os benefícios para os quais você se candidatou. No entanto, apenas aqueles que solicitam benefícios precisam fornecer informações de status de imigração e, geralmente, o DHHS não pode compartilhar essas informações com ninguém, a menos que eles primeiro peçam sua permissão. Exemplos de informações necessárias para os benefícios:

● **MaineCare, TANF e SNAP:** Quando você solicita esses benefícios através do DHHS, você tem que fornecer os nomes e informações (como renda) de todos que vivem na casa para que o DHHS possa determinar a elegibilidade. No entanto, você não precisa fornecer o status de imigração ou número de seguro social de membros inelegíveis da família ou membros da família que não estão solicitando benefícios. Você só tem que fornecer as informações de status de

imigração de pessoas que estão realmente solicitando esses benefícios.

Por exemplo, você pode saber que os adultos que estão buscando asilo não são elegíveis para o MaineCare, enquanto todas as crianças no Maine são elegíveis para o MaineCare, independentemente do status. Se você e seus filhos estão buscando asilo, você pode solicitar o MaineCare para as crianças sem fornecer o status de imigração dos adultos inelegíveis em sua casa. Se os seus filhos ou outros membros do agregado familiar forem elegíveis, não lhes podem ser negados benefícios porque não é elegível ou porque se recusou a fornecer informações sobre o seu estatuto de imigrante. As informações pessoais de ninguém devem ser compartilhadas fora do DHHS, exceto em situações muito limitadas.

● **Assistência Geral (GA):** Se você quiser receber GA, você será obrigado a compartilhar seu status de imigração. Assim como quando você se candidata a qualquer outro programa de benefício público, você não pode ser forçado a fornecer suas informações, mas você pode ser negado se não compartilhá-las. Se houver outras pessoas com quem você mora que não querem receber GA, elas podem ser obrigadas a compartilhar algumas de suas informações. O escritório de GA da sua cidade perguntará com quantas pessoas você mora e qual é a renda delas. No entanto, as únicas informações que podem exigir para uma candidatura são as informações pessoais dos requerentes e dos membros da família do requerente, juntamente com os rendimentos e os nomes das pessoas com quem os candidatos vivem e partilham as despesas.

● **Ideias-chave para lembrar**

1. Se o governo federal já está ciente de que você mora nos EUA e sabe seu endereço (por exemplo, de um pedido de isenção de imigração), então pode não haver novos riscos associados à solicitação de benefícios – ou proteções se você parar de usar esse benefício.

Por exemplo, se tiver um pedido de asilo pendente e não se tiver mudado, o governo já tem acesso às informações que forneceu ao Tribunal de Imigração ou ao Departamento de Segurança Interna para o seu pedido.

2. Não houve alterações recentes nas regras de "cobrança pública". Receber alguns tipos de benefícios públicos sempre im-



01

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pactou a capacidade de algumas pessoas obterem um green card, mas lembre-se:

O facto de receber ou não benefícios públicos não afeta o seu pedido de asilo ou a sua capacidade de ajustar o seu estatuto de refugiado ou asilado.

Receber MaineCare e SNAP não são considerados na determinação de cobrança pública atual. Por outro lado, a Assistência Geral e o TANF são considerados para a determinação da taxa pública para certos requerentes de green card. Se você tem MaineCare e precisa de cuidados em uma casa de repouso, isso também pode ser considerado.

3. Você não precisa fornecer números de segurança social ou o status de imigração de qualquer pessoa em sua casa que não esteja solicitando benefícios.

Em última análise, você nunca é obrigado a fornecer nenhuma de suas informações pessoais, mas corre o risco de não ser capaz de acessar certos benefícios se não compartilhar essas informações. Portanto, para cada programa ao qual você se candidata, pense no valor de receber essa assistência contra o possível risco de suas informações serem compartilhadas. A situação será diferente para cada família com base em seu orçamento, seu status de imigração e outros fatores.

Inkuru mu Mugenzi muri Maine ziboneka mu Gifaransa, Ikinyarwanda, Igiportugali, Igisomalia, Igispanish n'Igiswahili ndetse no mu Cyongereza. Inkuru zashyizwe muri izi ndimi muri uku kwezi harimo iy'ibijyanye n'amakuru y'ibanga mu rwego rushinzwe ibinyabiziga, amakuru ajyanye n'ubufasha; ndetse n'inkuru y'ukuri y'umuturage wa Maine. Niba ufite inkuru wifuza ko dutangaza, cyangwa niba ufite igikorwa ushaka ko tumenya, wakwandikira Eloge Kaneza /ekaneza@amjamboafrika.com cyangwa Kit Harrison/kharrison@amjamboafrika.com.

Twifuza ko mutuvugisha!

—IKINYARWANDA—
Mpabwa ubufasha na Leta. Ese amakuru yanjye y'ibanga ararinzwe?
Inkuru ya Deborah Ibonwa

Bamwe mu bantu bemererwa ubufasha ntabwo bari kubusaba bitewe n'uko bumvise bamwe muri bagenzi babo bavuga ko ubuyobozi bwa Trump bwasabye amakuru mu nzego za leta, kandi ko aya makuru ashobora kugaragaza abatari abenegihugu bahabwa zimwe mu serivisi zigenerwa abantu. Iyi nkuru ni incamake y'ibyo ukwiye kumenya igihe uri umwimukira kandi ukaba uhabwa cyangwa warasabye (cyangwa uteganya gusaba) MaineCare, Food stamps (SNAP), ubufasha bw'inyunganizi (TANF), ubufasha rusange (GA), cyangwa se ubundi bufasha bwa Leta cyangwa se bw'agace utuyemo buhabwa abantu.

Menya ko igihe ukeneye andi makuru ushobora kuvugisha Maine Equal Justice ku buntu, ugahabwa inama mu by'amategako kandi mu ibanga. Impinduka nyinshi mu miyoborere y'igihugu yagize ingaruka ku bufasha buhabwa abimukira n'uburyo babubona, kandi bimwe mubyemewe uyu muni bishobora kuzaba byarahindutse mu gihe kizaza. Maine Equal Justice yiyemeje kukumenyera amakuru agezweho kandi ik-agusangiza amakuru yizewe cyane uko bishoboka kose, kugirango wowe n'abo ukunda mushobore gufata icyemezo gikiwiye kuri mwebwe ubwanyu no ku miryango yanyu igihe muri gushaka ubufasha bwatuma mubasha kubona iby'ingenzi bikenerwa.

Uburenganzira ku Ibanga Muri Gahunda Z'ubufasha

Muri rusange, Leta ntabwo zemerewe gukoresha cyangwa gusakaza amakuru y'umuntu ziyakuye mu mpapuro zisaba kunganirwa zitabanje kubigusabira uburenganzira ndetse zigategereza ko ubwo burenganzira butangwa. Cyakora, ubuyobozi bwa Trump buri kugerageza ngo bu-rebe igihe ibi bintu bizakomereza kumera bitya. Leta nyinshi, harimo na Maine, ziri kuburana n'ubuyobozi bw'igihugu mu nkiko, bushaka kurinda ibanga ry'amakuru y'ababagana. Ibi bivuze ko amakuru yawe kuri ubu arinzwe, gusa ntawamenya uko ibintu bizaba bimeze mu bihe biri imbere. Urwego rwa Maine Rushinzwe Ubuzima n'Imibereho Myiza (DHHS) ruzagenda rutangaza amakuru agezweho kuri interineti kugirango abantu babe bahawe amakuru rwose arebana n'ibanga ku makuru yabo. Maine Equal Justice natwe tuzabagezaho ayo makuru mashya igihe tuyabonye.

Leta zizakwaka amakuru yawe bwite, nk'amazina yawe, aho utuye, ndetse na sitati yawe y'ubwimukira, kugirango hamenyekane uburyo wakwemererwa ubufasha. Gusa ntabwo bagutegeka gutanga ayo makuru.

Kuri nyinshi muri gahunda z'ubwunganizi, leta zigomba kuba zifite amakuru kuri wowe – nk'ayo ukorera, imyaka, umubare uranga umuntu (igihe uwufite), ndetse na sitati yawe y'ubwimukira – kugirango hamenyekane ko wujuje ibisabwa runaka kugirango uhabwe ubufasha cyangwa ubwunganizi wasabye.

Cyakora, abasaba ubwunganiriza nibo gusa basabwa kugaragaza sitati yabo y'ubwimukira, kandi muri rusange DHHS ishobora kutazatangaza aya makuru kuwo ariwe wese keretse gusa babanje kubigusabira uruhusa.

Ingero z'amakuru akenerwa ngo ufashwe:

• **MaineCare, TANF, na SNAP:** Igihe uri gusaba ubu bufasha binyuze muri DHHS, uba ugomba gutanga amazina n'andi makuru (nk'amadolari winjiza) y'umuntu wese utuye mu murango kugirango DHHS ibasha kumenya ko wemerewe ubufasha. Ntabwo usabwa kugaragaza sitati y'ubwimukira cyangwa umubare uranga umuntu, w'umuntu utarebwa n'iyi gahunda utuye mu rugo, ariko akaba atari gusaba ubufasha. Usabwa gusa kugaragaza sitati y'ubwimukira y'abantu bari gusaba ubwo bwunganizi.

Urugero, ushobora kumenya ko abantu bakuru bari gusaba ubuhungiro batemerewe MaineCare, mu gihe abana bose muri Maine bemerewe MaineCare hatitawe kuri sitati. Mu gihe wowe n'abana bawe muri gusaba ubuhungiro, ushobora gusabira MaineCare abana, utiriwe utangaza sitati y'ubwimukira y'umuntu mukuru utarebwa n'ubu busabe mu rugo rwawe. Mu gihe abana bawe n'undi muntu mu rugo bo bakwemererwa, ntabwo bazimwa ubufasha bitewe n'uko wowe utarebwa n'iyi gahunda cyangwa se bitewe n'uko wanze gutanga amakuru arebana na sitati yawe y'ubwimukira. Nta makuru y'umuntu n'umwe akwiye gutangazwa hanze ya DHHS uretse gusa mu gihe runaka cyihariye.

• **Ubufasha Rusange (GA):** Niba wifuza kwakira GA, uzasabwa kugaragaza sitati yawe y'ubwimukira. Nka kwakundi bigenda iyo uri gusaba ubufasha muri gahunda rusange yindi yose, ntabwo wategewe gutanga ayo makuru, gusa ushobora kwimwa ubufasha kuko utayatanze. Niba hari abandi bantu mubana badashaka guhabwa GA, bashobora gusabwa gutanga amwe mu makuru. GA y'umujyi wawe bazakubaza abantu mubana ndetse n'icyo binjiza. Cyakora, amakuru yonyine bashobora kwakira mu gihe uri gusaba ubufasha, ni amakuru y'umuntu ku giti cye y'abasaba ndetse n'abagize umuryango w'ababaza, hamwe n'umutungo wabo n'amazina by'ab-

bantu babana n'abasaba kandi bafatanyaga gukoresha umutungo.

• **Iby'Ingenzi Ugomba Kwibuka**

1. Niba ubuyobozi bw'igihugu busanzwe buzi ko utuye muri U.S. kandi bukaba buzi aho utuye (urugero, babikuye mu busabe wasabye inkunga ihabwa abimukira), birashoboka ko nta ngorane zaturuka mu gusaba ubufasaha - cyangwa ku kurindwa igihe wahagirika gukoresha ubwo bufasha.

Urugero, igihe ufite ubusabe butegereje gusubizwa busaba ubuhungiro kandi ukaba utarimutse, guverinoma isanzwe ibite neza amakuru wabahaye mu Rukiko rw'Abimukira, cyangwa se ku biro bishinzwe umutekano w'imbere mu gihugu ubwo wasabaga.

2. Nta mpinduka mu mategeko zihurika kuba mu bihe byavuba, "ku kwemererwa ubufasha abimukira". Kwakira bumwe mu bufasha iteka byashoboraga kugira ingaruka ku buryo abantu babasha kubona green card, cyakora ibuka ko:

Waba uhabwa ubufasha cyangwa utabuhabwa, ibi ntabwo byagira ingaruka ku busabe bwawe, cyangwa ku bushobozi bwawe bwo kugorora sitati yawe nk'im-punzi.

Kwakira MaineCare na SNAP ntabwo bishingirwaho kuri ubu ngo hamenyekane niba wemererwa ubusha cyangwa ubwimwa. Ku rundi ruhande, Ubufasha Rusange na TANF byo bibarwa nk'ibishingira ku kugenzura ko umwimukira abyemererwa ku busabe bwa green card runaka. Igihe ufite MaineCare ukaba ukeneye kujya gufashirizwa munzu z'abafite imbaraga nke, ibi nabyo bishobora kurebwa.

3. ntabwo utegetswe gutanga umubare wawe ukuranga cyangwa sitati yawe y'umuntu uwo ari we wese mu rugo rwawe utari gusaba ubufasha.

Muri rusange, ntabwo rwose utegetswe gutanga amakuru ayo ari yo yose akureba,

gusa bishobora gutuma utabona bumwe mu bufasha igihe utatanze aya makuru. Ubwo rero kuri buri gahunda usaba kwemererwa, banza utekereze ku gaciro ko kwakira ubwo busabe ubugereranye n'ingaruka zo gutanga amakuru yawe. Ibintu biba bitandukanye kuri buri murango bitewe n'ubukungu bwawo, sitati y'ubwimukira, ndetse n'ibindi.

Nakala za Kifaa cha uongozaji cha Maine zinapatikana katika Kifaransa, Kinyarwanda, Kireno, Kisomali, Kihispania, na Kiswahili, na pia Kiingereza. Mada katika tafsiri ya mwezi huu ni pamoja na sasisho kuhusu faragha katika ofisi ya magari; habari juu ya faida; na hadithi ya kweli kutoka kwa mkazi wa Maine. Ikiwa una mada ambayo ungependa tuangazie, au ikiwa una tukio ambalo ungependa tu-fahamu, tafadhali wasiliana na Eloge Kaneza/ekaneza@amjamboafrika.com au Kit Harrison/kharrison@amjamboafrika.com.

Tunataka kusikia kutoka kwako!

— KISWAHILI —
Ninapokea manufaa ya umma. Je, maelezo yangu ya faragha ni salama?
Na Deborah Ibonwa

Baadhi ya watu wanaostahiki manufaa hawatumii maombi yao kwa sababu wamesikia watu katika jamii wakisema kwamba Utawala wa Trump umeomba taarifa kutoka kwa mashirika ya serikali, na kwamba maelezo haya yanaweza kuwatambua wasio raia wanaotumia programu fulani za manufaa ya umma. Safu hii ni muhtasari wa kile

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unachohitaji kujua ikiwa wewe ni mhamiaji na umepokea (au unapanga kutuma ombi la) MaineCare, stempu za chakula (SNAP), usaidizi wa mapato (TANF), Usaidizi wa Jumla (GA), au mpango wowote wa manu-faa wa serikali au wa ndani.

Tafadhali kumbuka kuwa ukitaka maelezo zaidi unaweza kuwasiliana na Maine Equal Justice kwa ushauri wa kisheria bila malipo na wa siri. Mabadiliko mengi ya hivi majuzi ya shirikisho yameathiri ufikiaji wa manufaa ya umma kwa wahamiaji, na baadhi ya mambo ambayo ni kweli sasa yanaweza kubadilika katika siku zijazo. Maine Equal Justice imejitolea kusasisha na kushiriki taarifa sahihi kadri tuwezavyo, ili wewe na wapendwa wako mfanye maamuzi bora zaidi kwa ajili yako na familia zako unapotafuta kukusaidia kukidhi mahitaji yako ya kimsingi.

Haki zako za Faragha katika Mipango ya Manufaa

Kwa ujumla, majimbo hayaruhusiwi kutumia au kushiriki maelezo ya kibinafsi kutoa kwa maombi ya manufaa bila kuomba - na kupokea - kibali chako. Walakini, Utawala wa Trump unajaribu mipaka hiyo ya kisheria. Majimbo mengi, ikiwa ni pamoja na Maine, yanapambana na serikali ya shirikisho katika mahakama, yakitaka kulinda usiri wa taarifa za kibinafsi za waombaji. Hii inamaanisha kuwa maelezo yako yamelindwa kisheria kwa sasa, lakini hatujui kitakachotokea katika siku zijazo. Idara ya Afya na Huduma za Kibinadamu ya Maine (DHHS) itashiriki masasisho mtandaoni ili kuhakikisha watu wanapata taarifa za kutosha kuhusu faragha ya data zao. Maine Equal Justice pia tutashiriki masasisho haya tutakapoyaona.

Majimbo yatakuuliza maelezo ya kibinafsi, kama vile jina lako, anwani, na hali ya uhamiaji, ili kubaini kustahiki kwako kwa manufaa mengi. Lakini hawawezi kukulazimisha kutoa habari hiyo.

Kwa programu nyingi za manufaa ya umma, serikali inahitaji kuwa na maelezo kukuhusu - kama vile mapato yako, umri, Nambari ya Usalama wa Jamii (ikiwa unayo), na hali ya uhamiaji - ili kuona kama unakidhi mahitaji fulani ili kupokea manu-faa ambayo umetuma maombi.

Hata hivyo, ni wale tu wanaomba manufaa wanaohitaji kutoa maelezo ya hali ya uhamiaji, na kwa ujumla DHHS haiwezi kushiriki maelezo haya na mtu mwingine yeyote isipokuwa kwanza akuombe ruhusa.

Mifano ya taarifa zinazohitajika kwa manufaa:

● **MaineCare, TANF, na SNAP:** Unapotuma maombi ya manufaa haya kupitia DHHS, ni lazima utoe majina na maelezo (kama vile mapato) ya kila mtu anayeishi katika kaya ili DHHS iweze kubaini kustahiki. Hata hivyo, huhitaji kutoa hali ya uhamiaji au nambari ya Usalama wa Jamii ya wanafamilia wasiostahiki au wanakaya ambao hawatumi maombi ya manufaa. Ni lazima tu utoe maelezo ya hali ya uhamiaji ya watu ambao kwa hakika wanaomba manufaa hayo.

Kwa mfano, unaweza kujua kwamba watu wazima wanaotafuta hifadhi hawastahiki MaineCare, ilhali watoto wote huko Maine wanastahiki MaineCare bila kujali hali. Ikiwa wewe na watoto wako mnatafuta hifadhi, unaweza kutuma maombi ya MaineCare kwa ajili ya watoto bila kutoa hali ya uhamiaji ya watu wazima wasiostahiki katika kaya yako. Ikiwa watoto wako au wanafamilia wengine wanastahiki, hawawezi kunyimwa manufaa kwa sababu hustahiki au kwa sababu ulikataa kutoa maelezo yako ya hali ya uhamiaji. Hakuna maelezo ya kibinafsi ya mtu yeyote yanayopaswa kushirikiwa nje ya DHHS isipokuwa katika hali chache sana.

● **Usaidizi wa Jumla (GA):**

Ikiwa unataka kupokea GA, utahitajika kushiriki hali yako ya uhamiaji. Kama vile unapotuma ombi kwa mpango wowote wa

manufaa ya umma, huwezi kulazimishwa kutoa maelezo yako, lakini unaweza kukataliwa usipoyashiriki. Ikiwa kuna watu wengine unaoishi nao ambao hawataki kupokea GA, wanaweza kuhitajika kushiriki baadhi ya taarifa zao. Ofisi ya GA ya jiji au jiji lako itauliza ni watu wangapi unaoishi nao na mapato yao ni nini. Hata hivyo, taarifa pekee wanazoweza kuhitaji kwa ajili ya maombi ni taarifa za kibinafsi za waombaji na wanafamilia wa mwombaji, pamoja na mapato na majina ya watu ambao waombaji wanaishi na kushiriki nao gharama.

● **Mawazo Muhimu ya Kukumbuka**

1. Iwapo serikali ya shirikisho tayari inafahamu kuwa unaishi Marekani na unajua anwani yako (kwa mfano, kutokana na ombi la usaidizi wa uhamiaji), basi kunaweza kusiwe na hatari zozote mpya zinazohusiana na kutuma maombi ya manufaa - au ulinzi ukiacha kutumia manufaa hayo.

Kwa mfano, ikiwa una ombi linalosubiri la kupata hifadhi na hujahama, serikali tayari ina ufikiaji wa maelezo uliyotoa kwa Mahakama ya Uhamiaji au Idara ya Usalama wa Nchi kwa ajili ya ombi lako.

2. Hakujawa na mabadiliko ya hivi majuzi kwa sheria za "tozo ya umma". Kupokea aina fulani za manufaa ya umma kila mara kumeathiri uwezo wa baadhi ya watu kupata kadi ya kijani, lakini kumbuka:

Au kutopokea manufaa ya umma hakuathiri ombi lako la hifadhi au uwezo wako wa kurekebisha hali yako kama mkimbizi au hifadhi.

Kupokea MaineCare na SNAP hazin-gatiwi katika uamuzi wa sasa wa malipo ya umma. Kwa upande mwingine, Usaidizi wa Jumla na TANF huzingatiwa kwa uamuzi wa malipo ya umma kwa waombaji fulani wa kadi ya kijani. Ikiwa unayo MaineCare na unahitaji utunzaji katika nyumba ya wau-guzi, hiyo inaweza pia kuzingatiwa.

3. Si lazima utoe nambari za Usalama wa Jamii au hali ya uhamiaji ya mtu yeyote katika kaya yako ambaye haombi faida.

Hatimaye, huhitajiki kamwe kutoa taarifa zako zozote za kibinafsi, lakini una hatari ya kutoweza kufikia manufaa fulani ikiwa hutashiriki maelezo haya. Kwa hivyo kwa kila programu unayotuma ombi, fikiria juu ya thamani ya kupokea usaidizi huo dhidi ya hatari inayowezekana ya kushirikiwa kwa maelezo yako. Hali itakuwa tofauti kwa kila familia kulingana na bajeti yao, hali yao ya uhamiaji, na mambo mengine.

Maqaallada ku jira Maine Navigator waxay ku qoran yihiin Faransiis, Kin-yarwanda, Boortaqiis, Soomaali, Isbaanish, iyo Swahili, iyo sidoo kale Ingiriisi. Mawduucyada tarjumaadda bishaan waxaa ka mid ah cusbooneysi-inta ku saabsan sirta ee xafiiska baabu-urta; macluumaadka ku saabsan faa'iidooyinka; iyo sheeko dhab ah oo ka timid qof degan Maine. Haddii aad hayso mawduuc aad jeceshahay inaanu ka hadalno, ama haddii aad leedahay dhacdo aad jeclaan lahayd inaan ogaano, fadlan la xidhiidh Eloge Kaneza/ekaneza@amjamboafrika.com ama Kit Harrison/kharrison@amjamboafrika.com.

Waxaan rabnaa inaan kaa maqalno!

—SOMALI—
Waxaan qaataa manfa-cyada guud. Macluumaad-kayga gaarka ah ma badbaado baa?
Waxaa qoray Deborah Ibonwa

Qaar ka mid ah dadka xaq u leh ceyrta ayaan codsanayn, sababtoo ah waxay

maqleen dad ka tirsan bulshada oo sheegaya in maamulka Trump uu war ka codsaday hay'adaha dowladda, xogtan ayaa lagu ogaan karaa dadka aan muwaadiniinta ahayn ee isticmaala barnaamijyada faa'iidada dadwey-naha qaarkood. Tiirkani waa soo koobid waxa aad u baahan tahay inaad ogaato had-dii aad tahay muhaajir oo aad heshay (ama aad qorshaynayso inaad codsato) MaineCare, food stamps (SNAP), kaalmada dakhliga (TANF), Kaalmada Guud (GA), ama barnaamij kasta oo kale ama gobol ama barnaamij kasta oo faa'iido deegaan ah.

Fadlan ogow haddii aad rabto maclu-umaad dheeraad ah waxaad kala xiriiri kar-taa Maine Equal Justice si bilaash ah, talo sharci oo qarsoodi ah. Isbeddelo badan oo federaali ah oo dhowaan dhacay ayaa saameeyay gelitaanka faa'iidada dadwey-naha ee muhaajiriinta, iyo waxa run ah oo hadda jira ayaa isbeddeli kara mustaqbalka. Maine Equal Justice waxaa ka go'an in aan sii wadno oo wadaagno macluumaadka saxda ah inta aan awoodno, si adiga iyo kuwa aad jeceshahay aad u gaartaan go'a-mada ugu fiican naftiinna iyo qoysaskiinna markaad raadinaysaan caawinaad buux-inta baahiyahaaga aasaasiga ah.

Xuquuqdaada Khaaska ah ee Barnaamijyada Faa'i-idooyinka

Guud ahaan, gobo-lada looma ogola inay isticmaalaan ama wadaagaan macluumaadka shakhsiyeed ee codsiyada wax-tarka iyaga oo aan waydiisan - oo aan helin - ogolaansha-haaga. Si kastaba ha ahaatee, maamulka Trump ayaa tijaabinaya xadkaas sharci. Gobolo badan, oo ay ku jirto Maine, ayaa maxkamadaha kula dagaallamaya dowladda federaalka, iyagoo doonaya inay ilaaliyaan sirta macluumaadka shakhsiyeed ee codsadayaaasha. Tani waxay ka dhigan tahay in macluumaadkaaga hadda si sharci ah loo ilaaliyo, laakiin ma garanayno waxa dhici doona mustaqbalka. Waaxda Caafi-maadka iyo Adeegyada Aadanaha ee Maine (DHHS) waxay wadaagi doontaa wixii ku soo kordha onlayn si loo hubiyo in dadka si wanaagsan looga warhayo xogtooda gaarka ah. Maine Equal Justice ayaa sidoo kale wadaagi doonta wararkan markaan aragno.

Dawladuhu waxay ku waydiin doonaan macluumaadka shakhsiyeed, sida maga-caaga, ciwaankaaga, iyo heerka socdaalka, si loo go'aamiyo u-qalmitaankaaga faa'i-idooyinka badankooda. Laakin kuma qasbi karaan inaad xogtaas siiso.

Inta badan barnaamijyada waxtarka dad-weynaha, gobolku wuxuu u baahan yahay

inuu helo macluumaadka kugu saabsan - sida dakhligaaga, da'daada, Lambarka Bul-shada (haddii aad mid leedahay), iyo xaal-adda socdaalka - si loo eego haddii aad buuxisay shuruudaha qaarkood si aad u hesho dheefaha aad codsatay.

Si kastaba ha ahaatee, keliya kuwa cod-sanaya dheefaha ayaa u baahan inay bixiyaan macluumaadka xaaladda soc-daalka, iyo guud ahaan DHHS lagama yaabo inay la wadaagto macluumaadkan cid kale ilaa ay marka hore ku weydiyaan og-golaanshahaaga.

Tusaalooyinka macluumaadka looga baahan yahay dheefaha:

● **MaineCare, TANF, iyo SNAP:** Markaad ka codsatid dheefahaan DHHS, waa inaad keentaa magacyada iyo macluumaadka (sida dakhliga) qof kasta oo ku nool guriga si ay DHHS u go'aamiso u-qalmitaanka. Si kastaba ha ahaatee, uma baahnid inaad bix-iso heerka socdaalka ama lambarka Social Security ee xubnaha qoyska ama xubnaha qoyska ee aan xaq u lahayn ee aan codsan dheefaha. Kaliya waa inaad bixisaa maclu-umaadka xaaladda socdaalka ee dadka dhab ahaantii codsanaya dheefahaas.

Tusaale ahaan, waxaa laga yaabaa inaad ogaato in dadka waaweyn ee magan-galyo doonka ah aysan u qalmin MaineCare, halka dhammaan carruurta Maine ay xaq u leeyihiin MaineCare iyada oo aan loo eegin xaal-addooda. Haddii adiga iyo carruur-taada aad magangelyo doondoontaan, waxaad u codsan kartaan MaineCare carru-urta adoon siinin sharciga socdaalka ee dadka waaweyn ee aan u qalmin gurigaaga. Haddii carruurtaada ama xubnaha kale ee qoyskaagu ay u qalmaan, looma diidi karo dheefaha sababtoo ah ma aad u qalantid ama sababtoo ah waxaad diiday inaad bixiso xaaladdaada socdaalka. Qofna macluulkiisa gaarka ah waa in lala wadaagaa meel ka baxsan DHHS marka laga reebo xaalado aad u xaddidan.

● **Kaalmada Guud (GA):** Haddii aad rabto inaad hesho GA, waxaa lagaaga baahan doonaa inaad la wadaagto xaaladdaada soc-daalka. Si la mid ah barnaamijyada kale ee waxtarka dadweynaha, laguguma qasbayo inaad bixiso macluumaadkaaga, laakiin waxaa laga yaabaa in lagu diido haddii aadan wadaagin. Haddii ay jiraan dad kale oo aad la nooshahay oo aan rabin inay helaan GA, waxaa laga yaabaa in looga

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baahdo inay wadaagaan qaar ka mid ah macluumaadkooda. Xafiiska GA ee magaal-adaada ama magaaladaada ayaa ku weydiin doona inta qof ee aad la nooshahay iyo waxa dakhligoodu yahay. Si kastaba ha ahaatee, macluumaadka kaliya ee ay uga baahan karaan codsiga waa macluumaadka shakhsiyeed ee ku saabsan codsadaha iyo xubnaha goyska codsadaha, oo ay la socoto dakhliga iyo magacyada dadka codsadu- hu la nool yahay oo ay la wadaagaan kha- rashaadka.

Qodobbada muhiimka ah ee lagu xasu-usto

1. Haddii dawladda federaalku ay hore u o- tahay inaad ku nooshahay Maraykanka oo ay taqaano ciwaankaaga

(tusaale ahaan, codsiga socdaalka), markaa ma jiraan khataro cusub oo la xid- hiidha codsiga dheefaha - ama ilaalinta haddii aad joojiso istic- m a a l k a dheefahaas.

Tusaale ahaan, haddii aad haysato codsi magange- lyo oo la sugayo oo aanad guurin, dawladdu waxay hore u heshay macluumaadka aad u gudbisay Maxkamadda Socdaalka ama Waaxda Amniga Gudaha ee codsigaaga.

2. Ma jiraan wax isbeddel ah oo dhowaan lagu sameeyay xeerarka "dacwaynta dad- weynaha". Helitaanka nooc ka mid ah faa'i- idoooyinka dadweynaha waxay had iyo jeer saamaysay awoodda dadka qaarkood si ay u helaan kaarka cagaaran, laakiin xusuusnow:

Haddii aad qaadato manfacyada guud iyo in kale saamayn kuma yeelanayso codsi- gaaga magangelyo ama awoodaada inaad wax ka beddesho xaaladaada qaxoontinimo ama magangalyo.

Helitaanka MaineCare iyo SNAP laguma tixgalin go'aaminta kharashka dadweynaha ee hadda jira. Dhanka kale, Caawinta Guud iyo TANF ayaa loo tixgaliyay go'aam- inta kharashka dadweynaha ee codsa- dayaasha kaararka cagaaran qaarkood. Haddii aad ku leedahay MaineCare oo aad u baahan tahay daryeel gudaha guriga kalkaalinta, taas sidoo kale waa la tixgelin karaa.

3. Uma baahnid inaad bixiso lambarada Sooshal Sakuuritiga ama xaaladda socdaalka qof kasta oo goyskaaga ka tirsan oo aan cod- sanin dheefaha.

Ugu dambeyntii, marnaba lagaagama baahna inaad bixiso mid ka mid ah maclu- umaadkaaga khaaska ah, laakiin waxaad halis u tahay inaad awoodin inaad hesho faa'iidooyinka qaarkood haddii aadan wadaagin macluumaadkan. Haddaba bar- naamij kasta oo aad codsato, ka fakar qi- imaha helitaanka kaalmadaas oo lid ku ah khatarta suurtagalka ah ee macluumaad- kaaga in la wadaago. Xaaladdu way ka duwanaa doontaa goys kasta iyadoo lagu saleynayo miisaaniyaddooda, xaaladda soc- daalkooda, iyo arrimo kale.

—ENGLISH—

I receive public benefits. Is my private information safe?

By Deborah Ibonwa

Some people who are eligible for benefits are not applying for them because they have heard people in the community say that President Donald Trump's administration has requested information from state agen- cies, and that this information could identify noncitizens who use certain public benefit

programs. This column is a summary of what you need to know if you are an immi- grant and have received (or plan to apply for) MaineCare, food stamps (SNAP), in- come support (TANF), General Assistance (GA), or any other state or local benefit pro- gram.

Please note that if you want more infor- mation you can contact Maine Equal Justice for free, confidential legal advice. Many re- cent federal changes have impacted immi- grants' public benefit access, and some of what is true now could change in the future. Maine Equal Justice is committed to staying up to date and sharing as much accurate in- formation as we can, so that you and your

loved ones can make the best deci- sions for yourselves and your families when looking for help meeting your basic needs.

Your privacy rights in benefits pro-grams

Generally, states are not allowed to use or share per- sonal information from benefit appli- cations without ask- ing for - and receiving - your per- mission. However, the Trump administration is testing those legal limits. Many

states, including Maine, are fighting the federal government in the courts, seek- ing to protect the privacy of applicants' per- sonal information. This means that your information is currently legally protected, but we don't know what will happen in the future. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will share up- dates online to ensure people are well-in- formed about their data privacy. Maine Equal Justice will also share these updates when we see them.

States will ask you for personal infor- mation, such as your name, address, and immi- gration status, to determine your eligibility for most benefits. But they cannot force you to give that information.

For most public benefit programs, the state needs to have information about you - like your income, age, Social Security num- ber (if you have one), and immigration sta- tus - to see if you meet certain requirements to receive the benefits for which you have applied.

However, only those applying for benefits need to provide immigration status infor- mation, and generally DHHS may not share this information with anyone else unless they first ask your permission.

Examples of information required for benefits:

• **MaineCare, TANF, and SNAP:** When you apply for these benefits through DHHS, you have to provide the names and information (such as income) of everyone who lives in the household so that DHHS can determine eligibility. However, you don't need to pro- vide the immigration status or Social Secu- rity number of ineligible household members or household members who aren't applying for benefits. You only have to pro- vide the immigration status information of people who are actually applying for those benefits.

For example, you may know that adults who are seeking asylum are ineligible for MaineCare, while all children in Maine are eligible for MaineCare regardless of status. If you and your children are seeking asylum, you can apply for MaineCare for the kids without providing the immigration status of the ineligible adults in your household. If your kids or other household members are eligible, they can't be denied benefits be- cause you're ineligible or because you re-

fused to give your immigration status infor- mation. No one's personal information should be shared outside of DHHS except in very limited situations.

• **General Assistance (GA):** If you want to receive GA, you will be required to share your immigration status. Just like when you apply to any other public benefit program, you can't be forced to give your information, but you can be denied if you don't share it. If there are other people you live with who do not want to receive GA, they may be re- quired to share some of their information. Your city or town's GA office will ask how many people you live with and what their in- come is. However, the only information they can require for an application is the personal information of the applicants and members of the applicant's family, together with the income and names of the people the appli- cants live and share expenses with.

• Key ideas to remember

1. If the federal government is already aware that you live in the U.S. and knows your address (for example, from an applica- tion for immigration relief), then there may not be any new risks associated with apply- ing for benefits - or protections if you stop using that benefit.

For example, if you have a pending appli- cation for asylum and you haven't moved, the government already has access to the in- formation you supplied to the Immigration Court or Department of Homeland Security for your application.

2. There have been no recent changes to the "public charge" rules. Receiving some kinds of public benefits has always impacted some people's ability to get a green card, but remember:

Whether or not you receive public benefits does not impact your application for asylum or your ability to adjust your status as a refugee or asylee.

Receiving MaineCare and SNAP are not considered in the current public charge de- termination. On the other hand, General Assistance and TANF are considered for the public charge determination for certain green card applicants. If you have MaineCare and need care in a nursing home, that could also be considered.

3. You do not have to provide Social Se- curity numbers or the immigration status of anyone in your household who is not apply- ing for benefits.

Ultimately, you are never required to give out any of your personal information, but you risk not being able to access certain ben- efits if you do not share this information. So for each program you apply to, think about the value of receiving that assistance against the possible risk of your information being shared. The situation will be different for every family based on their budget, their im- migration status, and other factors.

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— PORTUGUÊS —

SER IMIGRANTE NOS EUA COMO DIGNIDADE DESMORONA

Esta é uma história real escrita por um morador do Maine. Ela é mãe de dois meninos e pediu para compartilhar sua história através da Amjambo Africa.

Portland – Há algum tempo que as máscaras têm vindo a cair. À nossa volta, os sorrisos tornaram-se menos frequentes, os olhares endureceram e os silêncios tornaram-se mais pesados. Percebemos agora que algumas pessoas neste estado nunca nos aceitaram verdadeiramente – apenas fingiram aceitar-nos. E agora, com o clima político a oferecer uma sensação de impunidade, a sua rejeição de nós tornou-se visível, palpável e brutal.

Somos imigrantes. Para algumas pessoas, esse status por si só é suficiente para nos negar respeito, justiça e um reconhecimento de nossa humanidade.

Víamos aqui para escapar da pobreza, da violência e, às vezes, da guerra. Víamos para proteger nossos filhos, reconstruir nossas vidas e viver com dignidade. No entanto, hoje, somos tratados como intrusos, ameaças e indesejáveis.

Meu marido, um homem trabalhador e confiável, sofreu recentemente uma injustiça que nos quebrou. De um dia para o outro, o seu salário foi cortado e o seu horário de trabalho reduzido. Sem aviso. Sem explicação. Apenas uma frase proferida pelo chefe: "Aceite ou vá embora".

O chefe alegou que toda a equipe teve suas horas e salários cortados. Mas, depois de verificar, descobriu-se que ele era o único que tinha sido alvo. A única pessoa negra. O único imigrante. Um alvo óbvio e silencioso que eles provavelmente esperavam que renunciasse silenciosamente.

Como não clamar contra a injustiça quando os factos falam por si? Como não chorar quando um homem digno, honesto e trabalhador é humilhado simplesmente por causa de sua cor de pele e status?

Hoje, vivemos com medo. Ameaçado de despejo porque o nosso aluguel está atrasado. O meu marido já não ganha o suficiente para cobrir tudo. Todas as noites, nossos dois meninos adormecem sem

saber se ainda estaremos nesta casa amanhã.

Vivemos na ansiedade, na humilhação e no silêncio. E este silêncio é talvez o mais cruel de todos. Porque à nossa volta, muito poucos se atrevem a falar, muito poucos se atrevem a dar uma mão. A sociedade segue em frente, indiferente à nossa dor.

Mas o nosso sofrimento é real. Tem nomes, rostos e corações partidos. Não estamos a pedir caridade. Pedimos simplesmente para ser vistos. Para ser ouvido. Ser tratado como ser humano.

Com dignidade. Com respeito. Com justiça.

— IKINYARWANDA —

UMWIMUKIRA MURI U.S. MU GIHE AGACIRO KE KARI GUTAKARA

Iyi ni inkuru yanditswe n'umuturage wa Maine. Ni umubyeyi w'abana babiri, wasabye ko inkuru ye yasanzizwa abandi binyuze muri Amjambo Africa.

Portland – kuva mu gihe gishize, abantu batangiye kugenda bigaragaza uko bari. Mu bo tubana, kwa kumwenyura kwatangiye kugenda kubura, uguceceka kuba kwinsi. biragaragara ko hari abantu bamwe muri iyi Leta batigeze batwakira by'ukuri – icyo bakoze ni ugusa nk'aho batwakiye. None kuri ubu, mu gihe ikirere cya politiki kiri gufungurira imiryango ibisa nko kubura ubumuntu, ukutatwakira kwabo kwatangiye kwigaragaza no gusakara bivanze n'uburakari.

Turi abimukira. Ku bantu bamwe, iyo sitati yonyine irahagije kugirango batwime agaciro, ubutabera ndetse no kwemera ubumuntu bwacu.

Twaje hano duhunga ubukene, amakimbirane, ndetse rimwe na rimwe intambara. Twaje ngo turinde abana bacu, twongere twiyubake, maze tubeho dufite agaciro. None kuri ubu, turi gufatwa nk'abanyamahanga, abantu bateje ikibazo, mbese abantu batifuzwa.

Umugabo wanjye, umukozi cyane, kandi akaba n'umugabo w'inyangamugayo, mu minsi ishize yahuye n'akaren-

gane kadushegeshe cyane. Mu ijoro rimwe, umushahara we waragabanyijwe, ndetse n'amasaha ye y'akazi aragabanywa. Bikorwa nta nteguza. Bikorwa nta bisobanuro. Interuro imwe gusa yavuzwe n'umukoresha yagiraga iti: "Byemere cyangwa ugende."

Uyu muyobozi yavuze ko abakozi bose bagabanyirijwe amasaha ndetse n'umushahara. Gusa nyuma yo kugenzura, byagaragaye ko ari we gusa wakorewe icyo kintu. Ni we mwirabura wenyine byabayeho. Birashoboka ko bibwiraga ko mu buryo budasakuje biri butume ahita yikura mukazi.

Nonese ni gute umuntu atarangurura ngo yamagane ihohoterwa? Ni gute umuntu atagira agahinda mu gihe umugabo w'agaciro, inyangamugayo kandi w'umukozi cyane ateshejwe agaciro agasuzugurwa, bitewe gusa n'ibara rye ry'uruhu ndetse na sitati ye?

Uyu munsu turi kubaho mu bwoba. Dukangishwa kwirukanwa mu mazu bitewe n'uko ubwishyu bwacu bwakereewe. Umugabo wanjye ntabwo agikorera ahagije yabasha kwishyura byose. Buri joro, abahungu bacu babiri baryama batazi ko ejo tuzaba tucyemerewe kuba munzu.

Turi kubaho mu bwoba, duteshwa agaciro, ntawe uvuga. Nyamara kandi iri ceceka usanga ari ryo ribi cyane kurusha ibindi. Bitewe n'uko aho turi, bake aribo batinyuka kuvuga, Umuryango urakomeza ukabaho, hatitawe ku kababaro kacu.

Nyamara umubabaro wacu ni ukuri. Ufite amazina, isura kandi udushengura umutima. Ntabwo turi gusaba kugirirwa impuhwe. Turasaba gusa kubonwa. Kumvwa. Gufatwa nk'ibiremwa-muntu.

Mu gaciro. Mu cyubahiro. Mu butabera.

— KISWAHILI —

KUWA MHAMIAJI HUKO MAREKANI KAMA HESHIMA INAVYOPOROMOKA

Hii ni hadithi ya kweli iliyoandikwa na mkazi wa Maine. Yeye ni mama wa wavulana wawili, na aliomba kushiriki hadithi yake kupitia Amjambo Africa.

Portland - Kwa muda sasa, vinyago vimekuwa vikianguka. Karibu nasi, tabasamu zimepungua mara kwa mara, macho yamekuwa magumu, na kimya kimekuwa kizito. Tunatambua sasa kwamba baadhi ya watu katika hali hii hawakutukubali kikweli - walijifanya kutukubali. Na sasa, huku hali ya kisiasa ikitoa hali ya kutokujali, kutukataa kwao kumeonekana, dhahiri, na ukatili.

Sisi ni wahamiaji. Kwa baadhi ya watu,

hadhi hiyo pekee inatosha kutunyima heshima, haki, na kukiri ubinadamu wetu.

Tulikuja hapa ili kuepuka umaskini, jeuri, na nyakati nyingine vita. Tulikuja kulinda watoto wetu, kujenga upya maisha yetu, na kuishi kwa heshima. Bado leo, tunachukuliwa kama wavamizi, vitisho, na wasiohitajika.

Mume wangu, mwanamume mchapakazi na mwaminifu, hivi majuzi aliteswa na ukosefu wa haki ambao ulituvunja moyo. Usiku kucha, mshahara wake ulikatwa, na saa zake za kazi zikapunguzwa. Bila ya onyo. Bila maelezo. Neno moja tu lililotamkwa na bosi: "Ikubali au uondoke."

Bosi huyo alidai timu nzima ilikuwa na saa zao na kukatwa mshahara. Lakini baada ya kuangalia, ikawa ni yeye peke yake ambaye alikuwa amelengwa. Mtu Mweusi pekee. Mhamiaji pekee. Lengo la wazi, la kimya ambalo labda walitarajia angejiuzulu kimya kimya.

Je, mtu hawezi kupiga kelele dhidi ya ukosefu wa haki wakati ukweli unajieleza wenyewe?

Je, mtu hawezi kulia jinsi gani wakati mwanamume mwenye heshima, mwaminifu na mchapakazi anafedheshwa kwa sababu tu ya rangi na hadhi yake?

Leo, tunaishi kwa hofu. Tunatishiwa kufukuzwa kwa sababu kodi yetu imechelewa. Mume wangu hana tena mapato ya kutosha kufunika kila kitu. Kila usiku, wavulana wetu wawili hulala bila kujua ikiwa bado tutakuwa nyumbani hapa kesho.

Tunaishi katika wasiwasi, unyonge, na ukimya. Na ukimya huu labda ndio ukatili kuliko wote. Kwa sababu karibu nasi, ni wachache sana wanaothubutu kusema, ni wachache sana wanaothubutu kunyoosha mkono. Jamii inaendelea kusonga mbele, bila kujali maumivu yetu.

Lakini mateso yetu ni kweli. Ina majina, nyuso, na mioyo iliyovunjika. Hatuombi sadaka. Tunaomba tu kuonekana. Ili kusikilizwa. Kutendewa kama wanadamu.

Kwa heshima. Kwa heshima. Pamoja na haki.

— ESPAÑOL —

SER INMIGRANTE EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS MIENTRAS LA DIGNIDAD SE DESMORONA

Esta es una historia real escrita por una residente de Maine. Es madre de dos niños pequeños y pidió compartir su historia a través de Amjambo África.

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Portland – Desde hace un tiempo, las más-caras han ido cayendo. A nuestro alrededor, las sonrisas se han vuelto menos frecuentes, las miradas se han endurecido y los silencios se han vuelto más pesados. Ahora nos damos cuenta de que algunas personas en este estado nunca nos aceptaron de verdad; solo fingieron aceptarnos. Y ahora, con el clima político que ofrece una sensación de impunidad, su rechazo hacia nosotros se ha vuelto visible, palpable y brutal.

Somos inmigrantes. Para algunas personas, esa sola condición es suficiente para negarnos el respeto, la justicia y el reconocimiento de nuestra humanidad.

Vinimos aquí para escapar de la pobreza, la violencia y, a veces, la guerra. Vinimos para proteger a nuestros hijos, reconstruir nuestras vidas y vivir con dignidad. Sin embargo, hoy en día, se nos trata como intrusos, amenazas e indeseables.

Mi esposo, un hombre trabajador y confiable, sufrió recientemente una injusticia que nos destrozó. De la noche a la mañana, le recortaron el sueldo y le redujeron las horas de trabajo. Sin previo aviso. Sin explicación. Solo una frase del jefe: "Aceptalo o vete".

El jefe afirmó que a todo el equipo le habían recortado las horas y el sueldo. Pero después de verificar, resultó que él era el único al que habían atacado. La única persona negra. El único inmigrante. Un objetivo obvio y silencioso que probablemente esperaban que renunciara discretamente.

¿Cómo no protestar contra la injusticia cuando los hechos hablan por sí solos?

¿Cómo no llorar cuando un hombre digno, honesto y trabajador es humillado simplemente por su color de piel y su estatus?

Hoy vivimos con miedo. Amenazados de desalojo porque nos atrasamos en el pago del alquiler. Mi esposo ya no gana lo suficiente para cubrir todo. Cada noche, nuestros dos hijos se duermen sin saber si mañana seguiremos en esta casa.

Vivimos en la ansiedad, la humillación y el silencio. Y este silencio es quizás el más cruel de todos. Porque a nuestro alrededor, muy pocos se atreven a alzar la voz, muy pocos se atreven a ayudar. La sociedad sigue adelante, indiferente a nuestro dolor.

Pero nuestro sufrimiento es real. Tiene nombres, rostros y corazones rotos. No pedimos caridad. Simplemente pedimos ser vistos. Ser escuchados. Ser tratados como seres humanos.

Con dignidad. Con respeto. Con justicia.

—SOMALI—

KU-SOO-GALOOTIGA
MARAYKANKA SIDA
SHARAFTU U BURBURTO

Tani waa sheeko run ah oo uu qoray qof degan Maine. Waa hooyada laba wiil oo yaryar, waxayna codsatay inay sheekadeeda la wadaagto Amjambo Africa.

Portland - In muddo ah hadda, maaskaro ayaa soo dhacayay. Hareerahayaga, dhoola cadeyntu waa ay yaraatay, eegi waa adkaaday, aamusnaantuna way sii cuslaatay. Waxaan hadda ogaanay in dadka qaar ee gobolkan aan waligood si dhab ah noo aqbalin - kaliya waxay iska yeelyeeleen inay na aqbaleen. Hadda, iyadoo jawiga siyaasadeed uu soo bandhigay dareen la'aan, diidmadooda na waxay noqotay mid muuqata, la dareemi karo, iyo naxariis darro.

Waxaan nahay muhaajiriin. Dadka qaarkiis, maqaamkaas oo keliya ayaa inagu filan ixtiraamka, caddaaladda, iyo qirashada dadnimadeena.

Waxaan halkaan u nimid inaan ka baxsanno saboolnimada, rabshadaha, iyo mararka qaarkood dagaal. Waxaan u nimid inaan ilaalino caruurteena, dib u dhisno nolosheena, oo aan ku noolaano si sharaf leh. Haddana maanta, waxaa naloola dhaqmaa sidii kuwo soo galay, hanjabaad, iyo kuwo aan la rabin.

Ninkaygii oo ahaa nin hawl kar ah oo la aamini karo, ayaa dhawaan waxaa la kulmay cadaalad darro na jabisay. Habeenkii ayaa mushaharkii laga jaray, waxaana la dhimay saacadihii shaqada. Digniin la'aan. Sharax la'aan. Kaliya hal weedh oo uu ku dhawaaqay madaxii: "Aqbal ama ka tag."

Madaxa ayaa ku andacoodey in kooxda oo dhan laga jaray saacadahoodii iyo mushaarkoodii. Laakin markii la hubiyay, waxaa soo baxday in uu yahay ka kaliya ee la beegsaday. Qofka kaliya ee Madow. Soogalootiga kali ah. Bartilmaameed cad oo aamusan oo ay u badan tahay inay rajaynayeen inay si aamusnaan ah isu casilaan.

Sidee buu qofku xaqdarada uga qaylin karin marka ay xaqiiqadu isu sheegto? Sidee loo ooyi waayey marka nin sharaf leh, daacad ah, hawl kar ah si fudud loo bahdilo midabkiisa iyo maqaamkiisa darteed?

Maanta, waxaan ku noolnahay cabsi. Waxaa loogu hanjabay guri ka saaris sababtoo ah kiradayadu way daahday. Ninkaygu hadda ma helo dakhli uu ku daboolo wax walba. Habeen kasta, labadayada wiil way seexdaan iyagoon garanayn inaan weli gurigan sii joogi

doono berri.

Waxaan ku noolnahay welwel, bahdil, iyo aamusnaan. Aamusnaantan ayaa laga yaabaa inay tahay tii ugu arxanka badnayd. Sababtoo ah hareeraheenna, in yar ayaa ku dhiirata inay hadlaan, in yar ayaa ku dhiirrata inay gacan siiyaan. Bulshadu way sii socotaa, iyada oo aan dan ka lahayn xanuunkayaga.

Laakiin dhibkayagu waa dhab. Waxay leedahay magacyo, wejiyo, iyo qalbi jaban. Ma waydiisanayno sadaqo. Waxaan si fudud ku codsanaynaa in nala arko. In la maqlo. In loola dhaqmo sidii dadnimado.

Si sharaf leh. Iyadoo ixtiraam leh. Cadaalad leh.

— FRANÇAIS —

ÊTRE IMMIGRANT AUX
ÉTATS-UNIS ALORS QUE LA
DIGNITÉ S'EFFRITE

Il s'agit d'une histoire vraie écrite par une habitante du Maine. Elle est mère de deux jeunes garçons et a demandé à partager son histoire via Amjambo Africa.

Portland – Depuis quelque temps, les masques tombent. Autour de nous, les sourires se font plus rares, les regards se durcissent et les silences deviennent plus lourds. Nous réalisons aujourd'hui que certaines personnes dans cet État ne nous ont jamais vraiment acceptés – elles ont seulement fait semblant de nous accepter. Et maintenant, avec le climat politique qui offre un sentiment d'impunité, leur rejet à notre égard est devenu visible, palpable et brutal.

Nous sommes des immigrants. Pour certaines personnes, ce statut suffit à lui seul à nous refuser le respect, la justice et la reconnaissance de notre humanité.

Nous sommes venus ici pour échapper à la pauvreté, à la violence et parfois à la guerre. Nous sommes venus pour protéger nos enfants, reconstruire nos vies et vivre dans la dignité. Pourtant, aujourd'hui, nous sommes traités comme des intrus, des menaces et des indésirables.

Mon mari, un homme travailleur et digne de confiance, a récemment subi une injustice qui nous a brisés. Du jour au lendemain, son salaire a été réduit et ses heures de travail diminuées. Sans avertissement. Sans explication. Juste une phrase prononcée par le patron : « Acceptez-le ou partez. »

Le patron a prétendu que toute l'équipe avait vu ses heures et son salaire réduits. Mais après vérification, il s'est avéré qu'il était le seul à avoir été visé. Le seul Noir. Le seul immigrant. Une cible évidente et silencieuse dont ils espéraient probablement qu'il démissionnerait discrètement. Comment ne pas crier contre l'injustice quand les faits parlent d'eux-mêmes ? Comment ne pas pleurer quand un homme digne, honnête et travailleur est humilié simplement à cause de la couleur de sa peau et de son statut ?

Aujourd'hui, nous vivons dans la peur. Menacés d'expulsion parce que notre loyer est en retard. Mon mari ne gagne plus assez pour tout couvrir. Chaque soir, nos deux garçons s'endorment sans savoir si nous serons encore dans cette maison demain.

Nous vivons dans l'angoisse, l'humiliation et le silence. Et ce silence est peut-être le plus cruel de tous. Car autour de nous, très peu osent s'exprimer, très peu osent nous tendre la main. La société continue d'avancer, indifférente à notre souffrance. Mais notre souffrance est réelle. Elle a des noms, des visages et des cœurs brisés. Nous ne demandons pas la charité. Nous

demandons simplement d'être vus. D'être entendus. D'être traités comme des êtres humains.

Avec dignité. Avec respect. Avec justice.

—ENGLISH—

BEING AN IMMIGRANT IN
THE U.S. AS DIGNITY
CRUMBLES

This is a true story written by a resident of Maine. She is the mother of two young boys, and she asked to share her story through Amjambo Africa.

Portland – For some time now, masks have been falling. Around us, smiles have grown less frequent, gazes have hardened, and silences have become heavier. We realize now that some people in this state never truly accepted us – they only pretended to accept us. And now, with the political climate offering a sense of impunity, their rejection of us has become visible, palpable, and brutal.

We are immigrants. For some people, that status alone is enough to deny us respect, justice, and an acknowledgment of our humanity.

We came here to escape poverty, violence, and sometimes war. We came to protect our children, rebuild our lives, and live with dignity. Yet today, we are treated as intruders, threats, and undesirables.

My husband, a hardworking and trustworthy man, recently suffered an injustice that broke us. Overnight, his salary was cut, and his work hours reduced. Without warning. Without explanation. Just one phrase uttered by the boss: "Accept it or leave."

The boss claimed the whole team had their hours and salary cut. But after checking, it turned out he was the only one who had been targeted. The only Black person. The only immigrant. An obvious, silent target they probably hoped would resign quietly.

How can one not cry out against injustice when the facts speak for themselves? How can one not weep when a dignified, honest, hardworking man is humiliated simply because of his skin color and status?

Today, we live in fear. Threatened with eviction because our rent is late. My husband no longer earns enough to cover everything. Every night, our two boys fall asleep not knowing if we will still be in this home tomorrow.

We live in anxiety, humiliation, and silence. And this silence is perhaps the cruelest of all. Because around us, very few dare to speak up, very few dare to lend a hand. Society keeps moving on, indifferent to our pain.

But our suffering is real. It has names, faces, and broken hearts.

We are not asking for charity. We simply ask to be seen. To be heard. To be treated as human beings.

With dignity. With respect. With justice.



— ESPAÑOL —

La información del BMV están seguros, afirma Bellows

Shenna Bellows es la 50.^a Secretaria de Estado de Maine, cargo que ocupa desde enero de 2021. Elegida cada dos años por la legislatura estatal, la Secretaria de Estado supervisa la legislación corporativa y la celebración de elecciones, así como la Oficina de Vehículos Motorizados (BMV). Tras un informe anecdótico sobre el intercambio de información personal a disposición del BMV con agentes del ICE, Amjambo África contactó al (BMV) para obtener comentarios. Bellows escribió esta carta en respuesta, asegurando al público que dicho intercambio no se ha producido.

Estimado lector,

Actualmente, existe mucho temor en muchas comunidades debido al aumento de las actividades de control por parte del Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE). Como era de esperar, esto genera inquietudes y preguntas sobre la confidencialidad de ciertos registros gubernamentales y cómo el ICE y otras agencias federales podrían utilizar dicha información.

Como Secretaria del Estado de Maine, superviso la Oficina de Vehículos Motorizados (BMV) de Maine. La BMV conserva información sobre los conductores y titulares de identificaciones estatales de Maine, ya que, por ley, cualquier persona que solicite una tarjeta de identificación o licencia de conducir de Maine debe proporcionar a la BMV su nombre, fecha de nacimiento, domicilio, comprobante de residencia legal en EE. UU. y su número de Seguro Social, si lo tiene. En el caso de las licencias de conducir y las tarjetas de identificación estatales que también cumplen con la ley REAL ID, la BMV conserva una copia de estos documentos.

Quiero asegurarle que nos tomamos muy en serio nuestra responsabilidad de mantener su información personal segura. La información que proporcione al BMV es confidencial y no se puede compartir con terceros, salvo según lo dispuesto por las leyes estatales o federales. Los empleados del BMV que gestionan las solicitudes de licencias de conducir y tarjetas de identificación no pueden contactar ni compartir información con las autoridades federales o estatales por iniciativa propia.

El BMV no comparte su información ni siquiera con agentes del orden público federales y estatales, incluido el ICE, a menos que realicen su trabajo de forma correcta y legal. Al momento de redactar este documento, el ICE no ha solicitado información al BMV de Maine sobre ningún titular de licencia de conducir o identificación estatal.

Seguiremos sirviendo a todos los habitantes de Maine y mantendremos nuestro compromiso de proteger la seguridad de su información con todo el rigor de la ley. Siempre defenderé los derechos constitucionales de todas las personas que viven aquí en nuestro querido estado de Maine.

Cuidense, Shenna Bellows
Secretaria del Estado

— IKINYARWANDA —

Bellows yavuze ko amakuru ya BMV atekanye

Shenna Bellows ni Umunyamabanga wa Leta ya Maine ushinze ububanyi n'ama-

hanga wa 50, akaba ari muri izi nshingano kuva mu kwa mbere 2021. Uyu mwanya utorerwa rimwe mu myaka ibiri, agatorwa n'abagize inteko muri Leta. Uyu Munyabanga wa Leta, areberera amategeko agenga umurimo, n'imigendekere y'amatora, hamwe n'ibiro bishinzwe ibinyabiziga (BMV). Nyuma y'ikwirakwira ry'amakuru y'uko amakuru y'ibanga afitwe na BMV yaba yarahawe abakozi ba ICE, Amjambo Africa yegereye (BMV) igira icyo ibivugaho. Bellows yasubije yifashishije iyi baruwa, ahumura abaturage avugako uko gutanga amakuru kutabayeho.

Ku basomyi, Hari ubwoba bwinshi mu bice bitandukanye muri iki gihe butewe n'ukwiyongera kw'ibikorwa by'urwego rushinzwe Abimukira n'iyubahirizwa ry'Amategeko Agenga Imipaka (ICE). Mu buryo budatunguranye, ibi biri kuganisha ku mpungenge n'ibibazo by'ikoreshwa ry'amakuru y'ibanga aboneka mu mpapuro zimwe na zimwe zibitswe na guverinoma, akoreshe na ICE n'izindi nzego z'igihugu.

Nk'Umunyabanga wa Maine ushinze ububanyi n'amahanga, nshizwe ibiro bya Maine bishinzwe ibinyabiziga (BMV). BMV ibika amakuru y'abatwara ibinyabiziga bo muri Maine ndetse n'abafite indangamuntu zitangwa na leta. Nk'uko bigenwa n'itegeko, umuntu wese usaba icyangombwa kimuranga cya Maine, cyangwa uruhushya rwo gutwara ibinyabiziga, agomba guha BMV, amazina ye, itariki y'amavuko, aho atuye, icyemeza ko ari muri U.S. mu buryo bwemewe n'amategeko, ndetse n'umubare uranga umuntu, igihe bawufite. Ku basaba impushya zo gutwara ibinyabiziga n'indangamuntu zo ku rwego rwa REAL-ID, BMV ibika kopi y'ibyangombwa byabo.

Ndashaka kubahumura mbamenyesha ko dukoranana ubunyamwuga akazi kugirango turindire umutekano usesuye amakuru yanyu. Amakuru utangariza BMV ni ibanga kandi ntabwo ashobora gutangarizwa abandi keretse ari ko bigenwa n'amategeko y'igihugu. Abakozi ba BMV bakurikirana ubusabe bw'impushya zo gutwara ibinyabiziga ndetse n'indangamuntu bashobora kudahamagaza ngo batangarize inzego z'igihugu cyangwa iza Leta zishinzwe iyubahirizwa ry'amageko amakuru yawe ari bo babyihitiramo.

BMV ntabwo itanga amakuru yawe no kubashinzwe iyubahirizwa ry'amategeko mu gihugu cyangwa muri Leta harimo na ICE, keretse igihe bari gukora akazi kabo mu buryo bunoze kandi bukurikije amategeko. Mu gihe turi kwandika iyi baruwa, ICE ntirigera isaba amakuru avuye muri BMV ya Maine arebana n'umushoferi uwo ari we wese cyangwa se umuntu ufite indangamuntu.

Tuzakomeza gukorera abaturage bose ba Maine kandi ntutuzatezuka ku ntego yacu yo kurindira umutekano usesuye amakuru yanyu mu buryo bwose kandi bwuzuye buteganywa n'itegeko. Nzakomeza iteka guharanira ko uburenganzira bugenwa n'itegeko-nshinga bwubahirizwa kuri bose batuye baho muri

Leta yacu dukunda ya Maine.

Mugire amahoro, Shenna Bellows
Umunyamabanga wa Leta

— KISWAHILI —

Habari za BMV ni salama anasema Bellows

Shenna Bellows ni Katibu wa Jimbo wa 50 wa Maine, akihudumu katika jukumu hilo tangu Januari 2021. Akichaguliwa kila mwaka na bunge la jimbo, Katibu wa Jimbo husimamia sheria za shirika na uendeshaji wa uchaguzi, na vile vile Ofisi ya Magari (BMV). Kufuatia ripoti ya hadithi kwamba data ya kibinafsi inayopatikana kwa BMV imeshirikiwa na mawakala wa ICE, Amjambo Africa iliwasiliana na (BMV) kwa maoni. Bellows aliandika barua hii kujibu, na kuwahakikishia umma kuwa ushiriki kama huo haujafanyika.

Mpendwa mso-maji,

Kuna hofu kubwa katika jamii nyingi hivi sasa kutokana na kuongezeka kwa shughuli za utekelezaji na Uhamiaji na Utekelezaji wa Forodha (ICE). Haishangazi, hii inasababisha wasiwasi na maswali kuhusu usiri wa rekodi fulani za serikali na jinsi maelezo hayo yanaweza kutumiwa na ICE na mashirika mengine ya shirikisho.

Kama Katibu wa Jimbo la Maine, ninasimamia Ofisi ya Maine ya Magari (BMV). BMV huwa haihifadhi taarifa kuhusu madereva wa Maine na wenye vitambulisho vya serikali kama, kisheria, mtu yeyote anayeomba kadi ya utambulisho wa Maine au leseni ya udereva lazima awape BMV jina lake, tarehe ya kuzaliwa, anwani ya nyumbani, ushahidi wa kuwepo kihalali nchini Marekani, na Nambari yao ya Usalama wa Jamii, ikiwa wanayo. Kwa leseni za udereva na kadi za utambulisho za serikali ambazo pia zinatii vitambulisho HALISI, BMV huhifadhi nakala ya hati hizi.

Ninataka kukuhakikishia kwamba tunachukua jukumu letu la kuweka maelezo yako ya kibinafsi kwa usalama na kwa umakini. Taarifa unayotoa kwa BMV ni ya siri na haiwezi kushirikiwa na wengine isipokuwa kama inavyotolewa na sheria za serikali au shirikisho. Wafanyakazi wa BMV wanaoshughulikia maombi ya leseni ya udereva na kadi ya kitambulisho hawawezi kuwasiliana au kushiriki maelezo na watekelezaji sheria wa serikali au serikali kwa hiari yao wenyewe.

BMV haishiriki taarifa zako hata na maafisa wa serikali na serikali, ikiwa ni pamoja na ICE, isipokuwa wanafanya kazi zao ipasavyo na kisheria. Kufikia hili, ICE haijaomba maelezo kutoka kwa Maine BMV kuhusu leseni yoyote ya udereva au wenye vitambulisho vya serikali.

Tutaendelea kuwatumikia watu wote wa Maine na tutaendelea kujitolea kulinda usalama wa taarifa zako kwa kiwango kamili cha sheria. Siku zote nitatetea haki za kikatiba za watu wote wanaoishi hapa katika Jimbo letu tunalopenda la Maine.

Jihadharini, Shenna Bellows

Katibu wa Jimbo

— PORTUGUÊS —

Os dados da BMV estão seguros, diz Bellows

Shenna Bellows é a 50.^a secretária de Estado do Maine, exercendo o cargo desde janeiro de 2021. Eleito a cada dois anos pela legislatura estadual, o Secretário de Estado supervisiona o registro de sociedades, a condução das eleições e o Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). Após relatos anedóticos de que dados pessoais disponíveis no BMV teriam sido compartilhados com agentes do ICE, o jornal Amjambo Africa entrou em contato com o órgão para pedir esclarecimentos. Em resposta, Bellows enviou uma carta ao público assegurando que tal partilha não ocorreu.

Caro leitor,

Há muito medo em muitas comunidades neste momento devido ao aumento das atividades de fiscalização por parte do Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Sem surpresa, isso está levando a preocupações e dúvidas sobre a confidencialidade de certos registros governamentais e como essas informações podem ser usadas pelo ICE e outras agências federais.

Como Secretário de Estado do Maine, supervisiono o Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) do Maine. O BMV mantém informações sobre motoristas do Maine e titulares de identificação do estado, pois, por lei, qualquer pessoa que solicite um cartão de identificação ou carteira de motorista do Maine deve fornecer ao BMV seu nome, data de nascimento, endereço residencial, prova de estar legalmente presente nos EUA e seu número de segurança social, se tiver um. Para carteiras de motorista e cartões de identificação do estado que também são compatíveis com REAL ID, a BMV mantém uma cópia desses documentos.

Quero assegurar-lhe que levamos a sério a nossa responsabilidade de manter as suas informações pessoais seguras e protegidas. As informações que você fornece ao BMV são confidenciais e não podem ser compartilhadas com outras pessoas, exceto conforme previsto por leis estaduais ou federais. Os funcionários da BMV que lidam com pedidos de carteira de motorista e cartão de identificação não podem entrar em contato ou compartilhar informações com as autoridades federais ou estaduais por sua própria iniciativa.

A BMV não compartilha suas informações, mesmo com autoridades policiais federais e estaduais, incluindo o ICE, a menos que eles estejam fazendo seu trabalho de forma adequada e legal. Até o momento, o ICE não solicitou informações ao Maine BMV sobre qualquer carteira de motorista ou detentores de identificação estadual.

Continuaremos a servir todas as pessoas do Maine e continuaremos comprometidos em proteger a segurança de suas informações na máxima extensão da lei. Sempre defenderei os direitos constitucionais de todas as pessoas que vivem aqui no nosso amado Estado do Maine.

Cuida-te, Assinatura Shenna Bellows
Secretário de Estado

— SOMALI —

Xogta BMV waa aamin ayuu yidhi Bellows

Shenna Bellows waa Xoghayihii Gobolka 50aad ee Maine, isagoo xilkaas hayay tan iyo Janaayo 2021. Waxaa sannad kasta soo

doorta sharci-dejinta gobolka, Xoghayaha Dawladda wuxuu kormeeraa sharciga shirkadaha iyo qabashada doorashooyinka, iyo sidoo kale Xafiiska Gaadiidka (BMV). Ka dib markii ay soo baxday xog-ururin ah in xogta shakhsiyeed ee ay heli karto BMV lala wadaagay wakiilada ICE, Amjambo Africa waxay la xidhiidhay (BMV) si ay faallo uga bixiso. Bellows waxa uu qoray warqadan jawaab celin ah, isagoo shacabka u xaqiijinaya in wadaagga noocaas ah aysan dhicin.

Akhristaha sharafta lahow
Waxaa jira cabsi badan oo ka jirta bulshooyin badan hadda taas oo ay ugu wacan tahay kor u kaca hawlaha falinta. Dhaqan Celinta Socdaalka iyo Kastamada (ICE). La yaab ma leh, tani waxay keenaysaa walaac iyo su'aalo, ku saabsan sirta ah ee diiwaan-nada dowladda qaarkood iyo sida macluumaadkaa ayu isticmaalo karto ICE iyo hay'adaha kale ee federaalka.

Anigoo ah Xoghayaha Gobolka Maine, waxaan kormeeraa Xafiiska Gawaadhida Maine (BMV). BMV-gu wu sameeyaa, hayso macluumaadka ku saabsan darawalada Maine iyo dadka sita aqoonsiga gobolka sida, sharci ahaan, qof kasta oo codsanaya a, Kaarka aqoonsiga Maine ama shatiga darawalnimada waa inuu bixiyaa BMV magacooda, taariikhda dhalashada, cinwaanka guriga, caddaynta inay si sharci ah u joogaan Maraykanka, iyo Lambarkooda Sooshal Sekuuriti, haddii ay mid haystaan.

Waayoshatiga darawalnimada iyo kaadh-hadka aqoonsiga gobolka kuwaas oo sidoo kale ah aqoonsi REAL ah, BMV waxay haysaa koobiga dukumentiyadan.

Waxaan rabaa inaan kuu xaqiijiyo inaan qaadanay mas'uuliyaddayada si aan u ilaalino macluumaadkaaga khaaska ah oo sugan si dhab ah. Macluumaadka aad siiso BMV waa sir oo lama wadaagi karo dadka kale marka laga reebo sida ay dhigayaan

sharciyada gobolka ama federaalka. Shaqaalaha BMV ee gacanta ku haya shatiga darawalnimada iyo

Codsiyada kaararka aqoonsiga lagama yaabo inay la xiriiiraan ama la wadaagaan macluumaadka sharciga federaalka ama gobolka fulinta hindisahooda.

BMV lama wadaagto xogtaada xitaa saraakiisha sharci fulinta ee federaalka iyo gobolka, oo ay ku jiraan ICE, ilaa ay si sax ah oo sharci ah u qabsanayaan shaqadooda. Ilaa hadda qoraalkan, ICE ma codsan macluumaadka Maine BMV ee ku saabsan shatiga darawalnimada ama kuwa haysta aqoonsiga gobolka.

Waxaan sii wadi doonnaa u adeegidda dhammaan dadka Maine waxaan sii wadi doonnaa ilaalinta amniga macluumaadkaaga ilaa xadka sharciga ah. Waxaan mar walba difaaci doonaa xuquuqda dastuuriga ah ee dhammaan dadka ku nool halkan aynu jecelnahay ee Maine.

iska ilaali Shenna Bellows
Xoghayaha Dawladda

— FRANÇAIS —

Les données du BMV sont sécurisées, affirme Bellows

Shenna Bellows est la 50eme secrétaire d'État du Maine, poste qu'elle occupe depuis janvier 2021. Élu.e tous les deux ans par l'assemblée législative de l'État, le/la secrétaire d'État supervise le droit des sociétés et le déroulement des élections, ainsi que le Bureau des véhicules motorisés (BMV). À la suite d'informations anecdotiques selon lesquelles des données personnelles auxquelles le BMV avait accès auraient été partagées avec des agents de l'ICE, Am-

jambo Africa a contacté le BMV pour obtenir des commentaires. Mme Bellows a répondu par cette lettre, assurant au public qu'un tel partage n'avait pas eu lieu.

Cher lecteur, chère lectrice,
Il règne actuellement une grande inquiétude dans de nombreuses communautés en raison de l'intensification des activités de contrôle menées par l'Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Sans surprise, cela suscite des préoccupations et des questions concernant la confidentialité de certains dossiers gouvernementaux et la manière dont ces informations peuvent être utilisées par l'ICE et d'autres agences fédérales.

En tant que secrétaire d'État du Maine, je supervise le Bureau des véhicules motorisés (BMV) du Maine. Le BMV conserve des informations sur les conducteurs et les titulaires de pièces d'identité de l'État du Maine, car, conformément à la loi, toute personne qui demande une carte d'identité ou un permis de conduire du Maine doit fournir au BMV son nom, sa date de naissance, son adresse personnelle, une preuve de sa présence légale aux États-Unis et son numéro de sécurité sociale, si elle en possède un. Pour les permis de conduire et les cartes d'identité de l'État qui sont également conformes à la norme REAL ID, le BMV conserve une copie de ces documents.

Je tiens à vous assurer que nous prenons très au sérieux notre responsabilité de protéger vos informations personnelles. Les informations que vous fournissez au BMV sont confidentielles et ne peuvent être communiquées à des tiers, sauf dans les cas prévus par les lois fédérales ou de l'État. Les employés du BMV qui traitent les demandes de permis de conduire et de cartes d'identité ne peuvent pas contacter

ou communiquer des informations aux autorités fédérales ou étatiques de leur propre initiative.

Le BMV ne partage pas vos informations, même avec les autorités fédérales et les autorités de l'État chargées de l'application de la loi, y compris l'ICE, à moins qu'elles n'exercent leurs fonctions de manière appropriée et légale. À l'heure où nous écrivons ces lignes, l'ICE n'a pas demandé au BMV du Maine d'informations sur les titulaires de permis de conduire ou de cartes d'identité délivrées par l'État.

Nous continuerons à servir tous les habitants du Maine et à nous engager à protéger la sécurité de vos informations dans toute la mesure permise par la loi. Je défendrai toujours les droits constitutionnels de toutes les personnes vivant ici, dans notre cher État du Maine.

Prenez soin de vous, Shenna Bellows
Secrétaire d'État



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— KISWAHILI —

WAKATI WATOTO WANAPOULIZA MASWALI KUHUSU ICE

- 1. Waulize watoto maswali kuhusu kile wanachokijua au walichosikia kuhusu ICE na sahihisha taarifa yoyote isiyo sahihi.
- 2. Kuwa mwaminifu kwa watoto. Ni sawa kusema kwamba unahofia, hujui, au huna majibu kwa maswali yao.
- 3. Wahimize watoto kuonyesha hisia zao na kuzungumza kuhusu hofu zao na wewe kwa kusoma vitabu kuhusu uhamiaji, kuandika, au kuunda sanaa pamoja.
- 4. Tengeneza mpango wa dharura wa familia na fikiria kuwa na watoto wakubwa wabebbee Red Cards (Kadi nyekundu).
- 5. Tengeneza mpango wa dharura wa familia na fikiria kuwafanya watoto wakubwa wajiandae kwa uwezekano wa kutembelewa na ICE. Wazoeze watoto kusema, "Siwezi ku-fungua mlango kwa wageni."
- 6. Baki ukiungana na wengine. Waonyeshe watoto kwamba wanazungukwa na jumuiya inayowasaidia. Pata muda na jamaa nyingine na marafiki pamoja na familia yako ya karibu.

— ESPAÑOL —

CUANDO LOS NIÑOS HAGAN PREGUNTAS SOBRE ICE

- Pregunte a los niños sobre** lo que saben o han oído sobre ICE y corrija cualquier información errónea.
- Sea honesto con los niños.** Está bien decir que tiene miedo, incertidumbre o que no sabe las respuestas a sus preguntas.
- Anime a los niños** a expresar sus emociones y hablar de sus miedos con usted leyendo libros sobre inmigración, escribiendo o creando arte juntos.
- Elabore un plan de emergencia** familiar y considere que los niños mayores lleven consigo Tarjetas Rojas.
- Prepare a los niños** para una posible visita de ICE. Pídeles que practiquen decir: "No puedo abrir la puerta a desconocidos".

— FRANÇAIS —

LORSQUE LES ENFANTS POSENT DES QUESTIONS SUR ICE

- 1. Posez aux enfants des questions sur ce qu'ils savent ou ont entendu à propos de l'ICE et corrigez toute information erronée.
- 2. Soyez honnête avec les enfants. Vous pouvez leur dire que vous avez peur, que vous êtes incertain.e ou que vous ne connaissez pas les réponses à leurs questions.
- 3. Encouragez les enfants à exprimer leurs émotions et à parler de leurs craintes avec vous en lisant des livres sur l'immigration, en écrivant ou en créant des œuvres d'art ensemble.
- 4. Élaborez un plan d'urgence familial et envisagez de demander aux enfants plus âgés de porter des Cartes Rouges.
- 5. Préparez les enfants à une éventuelle visite de l'ICE. Demandez-leur de s'entraîner à dire : « Je ne peux pas ouvrir la porte à des inconnus. »
- 6. Restez en contact. Montrez aux enfants qu'ils sont entourés d'une communauté solidaire. Passez du temps avec d'autres familles et amis, ainsi qu'avec votre propre famille nucléaire.

— ENGLISH —

WHEN CHILDREN ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT ICE

- Ask children questions about what they know or have heard about ICE and correct any misinformation.
- Be honest with children. It is ok to say that you are afraid, uncertain, or don't know the answers to their questions.
- Encourage children to express their emotions and talk about their fears with you by reading books about immigration, writing, or creating art together.
- Create a family emergency plan and consider having older children carry Red Cards.
- Prepare children for a possible ICE visit. Have them practice saying, "I can't open the door for strangers."
- Stay connected. Show children that they are surrounded by a supportive community. Spend time with other families and friends as well as with your own nuclear family.

— KISWAHILI —

MWONGOZO KWA WAZAZI KUTOKA MSAADA WA KISHERIA WA PINE TREE

Kumbuka: Maelezo haya yametolewa kutoka kwa mwongozo kamili zaidi, unaopatikana kwa ptla.org/parents-protect-children# au kwa kupiga simu 207-942-8322. Pine Tree itatoa mtafsiri bila gharama yoyote ikiwa ataulizwa.

Ni wazo nzuri kwa kila mzazi kuwa na mpango ikiwa hawawezi kumtunza mtoto wao. Hii inaweza kuepuka kuchanganyikiwa na kupunguza mafadhaiko na kutokuwa na uhakika kwa mtoto wako. Sehemu ya kwanza na muhimu zaidi ya kufanya mpango ni kuamua ni nani unataka kumtunza mtoto wako ikiwa huwezi. Mtu huyo anapaswa kuwa wa kuaminika na wa kuaminika; uwezo wa kukidhi mahitaji ya kimsingi ya mtoto wako kama vile kuwapeleka kwa daktari na kutoa nyumba nzuri na utunzaji; mtu ambaye ataen-delea kuwasiliana nawe; Mtu ambaye mtoto wako anamjua na yuko vizuri naye. Ikiwa unalazimika kuondoka nchini, mtu anayemtunza mtoto wako anapaswa kuwa na uwezo wa kufanya mipango inayohitajika ili kuwapeleka kwako. Mtu huyo anapaswa kuwa na nambari yako ya "A", ikiwa unayo, na jina na maelezo ya mawasiliano



— ESPAÑOL —

GUÍA PARA PADRES DE PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Nota: Esta información es un extracto de una guía más completa, disponible en ptla.org/parents-protect-children# o llamando al 207-942-8322. Pine Tree proporcionará un traductor gratuito si lo solicita.

Es recomendable que todos los padres tengan un plan en caso de no poder cuidar a su hijo. Esto puede evitar confusiones y reducir el estrés y la incertidumbre para su hijo. Lo primero y más importante al elaborar un plan es decidir quién quiere que cuide a su hijo si usted no puede. La persona debe ser confiable; capaz de satisfacer las necesidades básicas de su hijo, como llevarlo al médico y brindarle un buen hogar y atención; alguien que se mantenga en contacto con usted; alguien que su hijo conozca y con quien se sienta cómodo. Si se ve obligado a salir del país, la persona que cuida a su hijo debe poder hacer los arreglos necesarios para que se lo envíen. Esta persona debe tener su número de registro de extranjero "A" (si lo tiene) y el nombre y la información de contacto de su abogado.

— FRANÇAIS —

UN GUIDE POUR LES PARENTS DE PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Remarque : Ces informations sont extraites d'un guide plus complet, disponible sur ptla.org/parents-protect-children# ou en appelant le 207-942-8322. Pine Tree fournira un interprète gratuitement sur demande.

Il est judicieux pour chaque parent d'avoir un plan au cas où il ne pourrait plus s'occuper de son enfant. Cela peut éviter la confusion et réduire le stress et l'incertitude pour votre enfant.

La première étape, et la plus importante, dans l'élaboration d'un plan est de décider qui vous souhaitez voir s'occuper de votre enfant si vous ne le pouvez pas. Cette personne doit être : fiable et digne de confiance, capable de répondre aux besoins fondamentaux de votre enfant (comme l'emmener chez le médecin, lui offrir un foyer stable et de bons soins), quelqu'un qui reste en contact avec vous, une personne que votre enfant connaît et avec qui il se sent à l'aise.

Si vous êtes contraint de quitter le pays, la personne qui prend soin de votre enfant doit être en mesure de faire les démarches nécessaires pour le faire venir auprès de vous. Elle doit également avoir votre numéro "A" (si vous en avez un), ainsi que le nom et les coordonnées de votre avocat.

— ENGLISH —

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS FROM PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Note: This information is excerpted from a more complete guide, available at ptla.org/parents-protect-children# or by calling (207) 942-8322. Pine Tree will provide a translator at no cost if asked.

It is a good idea for every parent to have a plan in case they cannot care for their child. This can avoid confusion and reduce stress and uncertainty for your child. The first and most important part of making a plan is deciding who you want to care for your child if you can't. The person should be reliable and trustworthy, able to meet your child's basic needs like getting them to a doctor and providing a good home and care, someone who will stay in touch with you, someone your child knows and is comfortable with. If you are obliged to leave the country, the person caring for your child should be able to make the arrangements needed to send them to you. The person should have your "A" number, if you have one, and the name and contact information for your attorney.

— IKINYARWANDA —

INYANDIKO IGENEWE ABABYEYI YATANZWE NA PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Icyitonderwa: Aya makuru ni igice cyakuwe mu nyandiko irambuye iboneka kuri ptla.org/parents-protect-children# cyangwa uhamagaye 207-942-8322. Pine Tree izatanga umusemuzi ku buntu nibisabwa.

Ni igitekerezo cyiza kuri buri mubyeyi kugira umugambi wo gufasha umwana mu gihe yaba atagishoboye kumwitaho. Ibi bifasha kwirinda urujijo, bigatuma umwana agira ituze no kumva ko atekanye.

Igice cya mbere kandi cy'ingenzi mu gutegura uwo mugambi ni guhitamo umuntu ushobora kwita ku mwana wawe igihe utabishoboye. Uwo muntu agomba kuba: Yizewe kandi w'inyangamugayo, Ushoboye kuzuza ibikenewe by'ibanze by'umwana, nko kumujyana kwa muganga, kumuha aho kuba heza, no kumwitaho uko bikwiye, Ushobora kugumana itumanaho nawe, Umwana wawe azi kandi yisanzuraho.

Niba usabwe guhunga cyangwa kuva mu gihugu, uwo muntu wita ku mwana wawe agomba kuba ashoboye gute-gura uburyo bwose bwemewe bwo kumwohereza akagusanga aho uri.

Agomba kandi kugira numero yawe ya "A" (niba uyifite), hamwe n'izina n'imikoranire ya avoka wawe (umunya-mategeko).



Trump’s immigration crackdown in Maine

By Andy O’Brien

In the first six months of President Donald Trump’s second term in office, daily arrests on immigration charges in Maine have soared by 50 percent over the previous year, according to government data released by the Deportation Data Project. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has arrested about 100 people in Maine during that period, according to DDP.

The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP), which provides legal services to new Mainers, said these immigration-related arrests are being conducted by ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Local law enforcement is playing a role in immigration-related arrests by handing people over to immigration officers at minor traffic stops.

“All of this is having a profound and lasting impact on ILAP’s immigrant communities, and our state as a whole,” said Sue Roche, Executive Director of ILAP.

Many new Mainers arrested on immigration charges are being detained in Maine and New Hampshire jails as well as in privately owned detention centers in Arizona, Louisiana, and Texas. The centers are run by for-profit private prison companies – among them Geo Group and CoreCivic. These corporations are making significant profits. According to ABC News, “CoreCivic reported a total revenue of \$538.2 million during their second quarter, a 9.8 percent increase from the same quarter in 2024.”

Many immigration detainees are known as “collaterals,” meaning that at a traffic stop for the driver of a vehicle, an arresting officer asked for identification from the vehicle’s passengers, or from other people in the area, and then called immigration enforcement.

In addition to traffic stops, agents frequently surveil gas stations in the morning, looking for immigrant construction workers who are on their way to worksites, advocates report.

The nonprofit Mainers for Humane Immigration (MHI), which assists immigrant detainees in southern Maine, said it has also handled cases where people say they were followed by law enforcement during the night, and then arrested the following day.

“A lot of times the pretense for arresting people is a parking ticket or traffic stop violation,” said MHI Executive Director Marcia Garnecky. Agents also sometimes follow new Mainers who are attending a court hearing, often for an offense as minor as a speeding ticket. Then, as they emerge from the hearing, the agent arrests the person.

Advocates with Presente! Maine, a nonprofit, said that immigrant enforcement agencies have been flying drones to conduct surveillance on job sites.

“We’ve heard reports of drone surveillance being used to do racial profiling on work sites,” said Keyko Torres, Presente! Maine’s Community Health and Wellness Director. “So literally just seeing brown people [working] on a roof” appears to be enough to make an officer go to the site.

The arrests put a major strain on families, who have to deal with both the emotional toll of family separation and the economic impact of losing a primary breadwinner. This is compounded by the increasingly common practice of sending people detained in Maine to far off detention centers out of state. Often families and lawyers don’t know where the detainee has been taken, making it very hard to advocate for them.

“We had one case of someone who finally made it out of detention from Texas,” said Torres. “Their wife had to drive to Texas to bring them back home, and they [also]

picked up another person from New England who also had just been released.”

In reaction to the mass immigration crackdown, a wave of fear has swept immigrant communities in Maine. As *Amjambo Africa* reports elsewhere in this issue, attendance was down at the 23rd annual Greater Portland Festival of Nations this year, since immigrants fear gathering in large groups because of the possibility of immigration raids.

“Community events have all but ceased for immigrant populations.”

“We’re not going to gather in a large group and make it easy for them to come and grab all of us,” Torres reported that community members said.

Advocates report that immigrant parents are afraid to send their kids to school, and that children worry that their parents won’t be home when they get back from school at the end of the day.

Torres said people are afraid to apply for the benefits to which they are entitled by law. This is because the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been giving immigration enforcement officials access to the personal information – including home addresses – of Medicaid (MaineCare) enrollees. Recently, a federal judge ordered DHHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to stop sharing this data with immigration enforcement.

Even people from mixed status households, where some family members are citizens, are afraid to apply for MaineCare coverage, Torres said. She added that a lot of immigrants doing gig work, such as with Door Dash, Instacart, and Walmart Spark, have left their jobs for fear of being detained by immigration enforcement.

Mainers for Humane Immigration said most of the people they are helping who have been detained had already applied for asylum, and were awaiting decisions on their cases when they were arrested. In general, once people are arrested by ICE, they are put on an expedited path to deportation. As a result, they are forced to skip their first court hearing (the “master hearing”) and move straight to their individual hearing, which is when a final decision on their asylum case is made.

“That means they have just a few weeks to get things together for those cases,” said Garnecky.

This administration has repealed temporary protected status (TPS) for people from certain countries, including Haiti, Honduras, and Venezuela.

TPS is granted to people from countries where violence, natural disasters, and political instability make their home countries unsafe. “For a lot of those people, it’s just not safe to go back to their home country, but we know this administration doesn’t care,” Torres said. “There has been an increase in arrests of folks who would normally be considered having legal or protected status being picked up [by ICE].”

Some immigrant families with community connections have been able to crowd-fund money to get family members released on bond from detention, but other detainees have been languishing in jail cells due to their inability to pay legal costs and bonds.

According to Mainers for Humane Immi-

gration, these families were already struggling financially, yet now they must come up with up to \$5,000 or more for bond. MHI is currently trying to raise \$25,000 to launch a fund to help detainees who have been granted bond.

Presente! Maine, the Community Organizing Alliance, MaineTransNet, Gateway Community Services Maine, Khmer Maine / SEA (Southeast Asian) Collaborative and Community Change, Inc., have launched the Maine Solidarity Fund to raise money to help with bail funds, private attorneys, court attendance costs, emergency housing, and survivor support for immigrants seized in immigration raids.

Meanwhile, Congress recently quadrupled ICE’s budget to carry out the president’s mass deportation scheme, including indefinite detention

of children and families. In addition, the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill Act provides about \$32 billion for immigration agents and operations related to enforcement and deportation.

Sue Roche said ILAP expects to see increased immigration enforcement in Maine, so it is important for new Mainers to understand their rights, seek qualified immigration legal help, and make plans for their families, should they be arrested.

The most important thing Maine can do, Roche said, is to pass legislation to “prohibit state and local law enforcement from step-

ping outside the bounds of their roles to engage in civil immigration enforcement.”

In June, Gov. Janet Mills opted not to sign LD 1971, “An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities,” a bill that would prohibit law enforcement from stopping, investigating, interrogating, arresting, or detaining someone solely for the purpose of immigration control.

“A crucial step that our state can take to help protect Maine residents from mass deportation is to ensure that our state and local law enforcement aren’t diverting their resources to the Trump administration’s agenda,” said Roche.

In January, when the second half of the legislative session starts, the governor has the option to veto the bill or let it become law. “ILAP urges all Maine people to support this critically needed law and to continue to raise their voices to all levels of government [saying] that all of Maine’s residents are valued and needed,” Roche said.

In the meantime, ILAP recommends the following resources for new Mainers impacted by an ICE detention:

- ILAP’s Know Your Rights resources: <https://ilapmaine.org/know-your-rights>
- Pine Tree Legal Assistance resources on making a plan for children: <https://www.ptla.org/parents-protect-children>
- ILAP’s legal services (including upcoming walk-in hours in Portland and Lewiston, and an intake system for individual appointments): <https://ilapmaine.org/get-legal-help>

“All of this is having a profound and lasting impact on ILAP’s immigrant communities, and our state as a whole

— Sue Roche

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Fear divides us, but courage, compassion build community

By Éloge Willy Kaneza

When fear infiltrates everyday life, it changes everything: how people leave their homes, how children attend school, how families plan their futures. For the immigrant and refugee communities in Maine, that fear has become a constant presence. It has left many feeling isolated, vulnerable, and uncertain. But amidst this climate of anxiety, many people are working tirelessly to bridge the gap between fear and hope, including Ifraax Saciid-Ciise, Founder and Executive Director of Ifka Community Services in Lewiston.

Born in Somalia and arriving in Lewiston as a teenager, Saciid-Ciise understands firsthand the complexities of migration and integration. Her mother, the owner of Mogadishu Store, is a well-known entrepreneur in the city. The young Ifraax graduated from Lewiston High School and later earned a degree at the University of Maine. Rather than building her life outside of Lewiston, she chose to return to serve the community that once welcomed her, determined to ease the path for others facing similar hardships.

“Coming to a new country as a young person is hard,” she said. “You don’t just learn a new language or culture – you learn to navigate systems that aren’t always designed for you. I wanted to make sure no one had to do that alone.”

A climate of fear and distrust

Today, she said, the environment feels more hostile than ever. President Donald Trump’s executive orders directly target immigrants. “Since the current administration took office, our community has been under siege. People stopped going to work out of

fear of being detained. Parents hesitated to send kids to school. Even going to the grocery store became risky.”

Saciid-Ciise recalled reports of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents spotted in Lewiston neighborhoods and how those reports spread rapidly, prompting many to stay indoors for days. “ICE was arresting people without warrants, knocking on doors in the middle of the night. People were whispering to each other, warning each other to be careful. The trust in law enforcement and public institutions crumbled overnight,” she said.

The Somali-speaking community of Lewiston, many with roots in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and now faces a dual challenge: coping with trauma from displacement while confronting suspicion from the wider public. “The community is resilient, but the fear is real,” Saciid-Ciise said. “They feel like they are being watched, judged, and criminalized for simply existing. Even if you are a citizen, you start questioning whether you are safe.”

She has heard from elders who no longer walk to the mosque alone, mothers who avoid playgrounds, and students who miss school for fear of encountering authorities. “When you live like that, every knock on the door feels like it could change your life,” she said quietly.

Misplaced blame, youth violence

Lewiston, like many small cities, has seen a rise in youth gun violence. But instead of focusing on solutions, some people are quick to point fingers at immigrants, Saciid-Ciiselfraax said. “I keep hearing people say

these kids brought violence here from their war-torn countries,” she said, her voice firm. “That’s not just inaccurate – it’s dangerous. It dehumanizes young people and gives an excuse for harsh immigration crackdowns.”

Many of the young people involved were either born in the U.S. or came here at a very young age, she explained. “They didn’t bring violence from somewhere else. What they face here is poverty, trauma, isolation, and a lack of safe spaces. These are local problems that require local solutions.”

The reality, she stressed, is that violence often stems from desperation and disconnection. “If you grow up with nothing to do, nowhere to go after school, and no one to

enough to step outside again. That’s the kind of change we work for.”

The stigma, however, remains a significant barrier. “I’ve had parents say, ‘We don’t do mental health, that’s for crazy people.’ I tell them, ‘No, it’s for everyone.’ Mental health is health. And when we take care of our minds, we take care of our families.”

The pandemic and aftermath

The COVID-19 pandemic created new layers of difficulty for immigrant families. With schools moving online, parents who did not speak English – and in some cases had little or no formal education – suddenly became responsible for teaching their children. Saciid-Ciise said, “Some [immigrant] moth-

“
Lewiston gave me a home when I was young ...
now it’s my turn to give back, to make sure
the door stays open for others.

— IFRAAX SACIID-CIISE

• • • • •

guide you, you start to feel invisible. That’s when risky behavior becomes appealing.”

For Saciid-Ciise, youth safety is tied to opportunity. “When young people see a path forward – through education, sports, jobs – they make better choices. But those programs are being cut, and the blame is being misdirected.”

The problem, she noted, is compounded by mistrust. “Instead of working together, the wider community and immigrant families often see each other as adversaries. This creates more division, more finger-pointing, and fewer real solutions.”

Struggles amidst shrinking resources

Financial pressure is another battle Ifka Community Services must fight daily. Federal funding cuts and intense competition have made survival harder for small non-profits. “We rely heavily on private donations,” Saciid-Ciise explained. “But as the political climate hardens, donors become more cautious, and grants are harder to secure. Meanwhile, the need only grows.”

The organization had to make a painful decision to reduce staff and scale back some services. “It’s heartbreaking,” she said. “Every time I turn someone away because we don’t have the capacity, I feel like I’ve failed them. But we can only stretch so far.”

Despite these constraints, the organization remains committed to its core mission: mental health and crisis support for migrants and refugees. “Many of our clients come from places where mental health is taboo or unavailable,” she said. “They don’t know where to begin, and they fear being judged or labeled.”

Hidden crisis of mental health

Untreated trauma is one of the greatest threats to the community’s stability, Saciid-Ciise said. “We have people here carrying years of pain from war, from refugee camps, from dangerous journeys – and then they arrive here and are met with suspicion and hostility. It’s too much for anyone to bear alone.”

She takes a hands-on approach: staff accompany clients to therapy, help them navigate the medical system, arrange transportation, and mediate with schools and landlords. “It’s about showing up, consistently, until people know they can count on you,” she said.

In one case, a mother had stopped leaving her apartment after hearing about ICE raids. “Her kids were missing school. She was struggling with severe anxiety. We went with her to appointments, connected her with a therapist, and slowly she began to feel safe

ers didn’t know how to read. They couldn’t help their children, but the schools expected them to.”

The result was that many children fell years behind academically, and behavioral issues worsened. “We are still dealing with the consequences,” she said. “Youth are disengaged from education, struggling with substance abuse, and vulnerable to violence. The pandemic exposed gaps that were already there and widened them.”

Building bridges for the future

For Saciid-Ciise, the path forward depends on unity and mutual respect. “We need to stop pointing fingers and start working together. Safety should not come at the cost of dignity. We all want to live in a safe city, that’s something we have in common.”

She envisions a Lewiston where youth programs are restored and expanded, where mentorship and job training are available for every teenager who needs them, and where cultural understanding is fostered through partnerships. “When people know each other’s stories, it’s harder to fear each other,” she said.

Law enforcement, she added, must also play a role in rebuilding trust. “If people can’t call the police when they need help because they’re afraid of being deported, then no one is safe. We need policies that separate public safety from immigration enforcement.”

An act of resistance and hope

In a time of uncertainty, Saciid-Ciise’s work is both practical and symbolic. It is about meeting urgent needs – a rent payment, a counseling session, a school meeting – but also about defending the idea that migrants deserve to live without fear.

“Every day I get calls from families terrified, from youth struggling with trauma, from elders feeling invisible,” she said. “It would be easier to give up. But that’s not who we are. We keep going because our community depends on it.”

Her determination is rooted in her own journey. “Lewiston gave me a home when I was young,” she reflected. “Now it’s my turn to give back, to make sure the door stays open for others.”

In a city shaped by both welcome and suspicion, her voice is a call to remember our shared humanity.



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Maine joins Head Start, soup kitchen, shelter screening lawsuit

By Andy O'Brien

Whether or not 13 federally funded programs will continue to serve undocumented immigrants in Maine is up in the air. On July 10, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that the programs would be off limits to undocumented immigrants. Then on July 25, 21 attorneys general, including Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey, filed a lawsuit challenging that decision. The Donald Trump administration then agreed to a temporary stay on the order in the 21 states that filed the lawsuit through September 3. The temporary stay has now been extended to Sept. 10.

Head Start, which serves over one million children ages birth to 5 from low-income families each year, is among the 13 federally funded programs that would become unavailable to noncitizens. Other federally funded programs such as adult education, Meals on Wheels, community health centers, and workforce programs would also become unavailable to undocumented immigrants.

If enacted, the Trump administration's efforts to restrict access to public assistance benefits would reverse nearly 30 years of precedent.

President Bill Clinton's Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 already dramatically restricted access to social welfare programs and disqualified certain categories of noncitizens from receiving certain public assistance benefits, including Medicaid (which Maine calls MaineCare) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Since 1996, the federal government has told states that no one has to produce government identification to enter a soup kitchen, food bank, or community health center.

New York Attorney General Letitia James is leading the lawsuit filed by the 21 attorneys general. "For decades, states like New York have built health, education, and family support systems that serve anyone in need," James wrote in a statement. "These programs work because they are open, accessible, and grounded in compassion. Now, the federal government is pulling that foundation out from under us overnight, jeopardizing cancer screenings, early childhood education, primary care, and so much more. This is a baseless attack on some of our country's most effective and inclusive public programs, and we will not let it stand."

Trump's executive order conflicts with the Violence Against Women Act, which requires domestic violence programs to provide services without regard to someone's immigration status. Although federal grant guidelines require that shelters must comply with executive orders, they also state that they don't prohibit shelters from serving all people in compliance with existing laws. So far the federal government has not rescinded funding for shelters in Maine.

"We strongly believe that we are in compliance with federal law. Executive orders are not new laws," explained Francine Garland Stark, Executive Director of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. "Executive orders or changes in other grant requirements don't trump the law. This [executive order] is in violation of a law

that's already on the books." Stark added that the president's immigration executive orders are encouraging the public to surveil their neighbors and are creating a climate of fear. The screening requirement appears to be part of the president's efforts to make it as difficult as possible for undocumented immigrants to remain in the U.S.

In a statement on July 10, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., argued that the federal government had been using tax dollars to "incentivize illegal immigration." The action, he said, "protects vital resources for the American people."

The lawsuit argues that the new rules will pose an insurmountable administrative burden for social service providers and will prevent low-income people from accessing critical nutrition, education, and healthcare programs. It notes that many of these programs – like homeless shelters and emergency crisis lines –

cannot realistically verify immigration status at the door. James also noted that programs like Head Start "operate on razor-thin margins" and likely can't absorb the administrative cost of running screenings. Requirements to verify immigration status will force critical community programs to make the "impossible choice between shutting their doors or risking an immediate cutoff in federal funding."

"For the first time, millions of people are facing a new demand before they can access the Nation's most essential programs: 'show me your papers,'" the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit further notes that social service providers would need significant training to learn how to implement immigration verification processes because they would have to distinguish undocumented immigrants from other immigrants, such as asylum applicants with work authorization, individuals who have student visas, and immigrants who have green cards.



"For the first time, millions of people are facing a new demand before they can access the Nation's most essential programs: 'show me your papers,'" the lawsuit states.



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Potential risks associated with naturalization from Immigrant Legal Resource Center

Note: Immigration law and policies are highly complex and subject to change. The safest course of action is to check with an experienced immigration lawyer so you can find the best path forward for yourself and your family.

For many noncitizens, naturalization is the best defense against deportation from the United States. However, filing an Application for Naturalization can be risky for some individuals because it can instigate immigration enforcement. This concern has increased following President Donald Trump’s February 28, 2025, policy memorandum, “Issuance of Notices to Appear (NTAs) in Cases Involving Inadmissible and Deportable Aliens,” which requires U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to issue Notices to Appear when the agency denies an immigration benefit and believes the applicant is deportable.

Lawful permanent residents (LPRs) are vulnerable to denial of their N-400 and placement into removal proceedings if they obtained their LPR status without complying with all the eligibility requirements, have been convicted of certain crimes after obtaining LPR status, have abandoned their LPR status, or are otherwise deportable.

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Continued from page 1

stories and journeys of resilience. Kirsten Cappy, Director of I'm Your Neighbor Books, noted: "Books like Dr. Ahmed's help weave connections, deepen understanding of migration stories, and foster respectful dialogue among all."

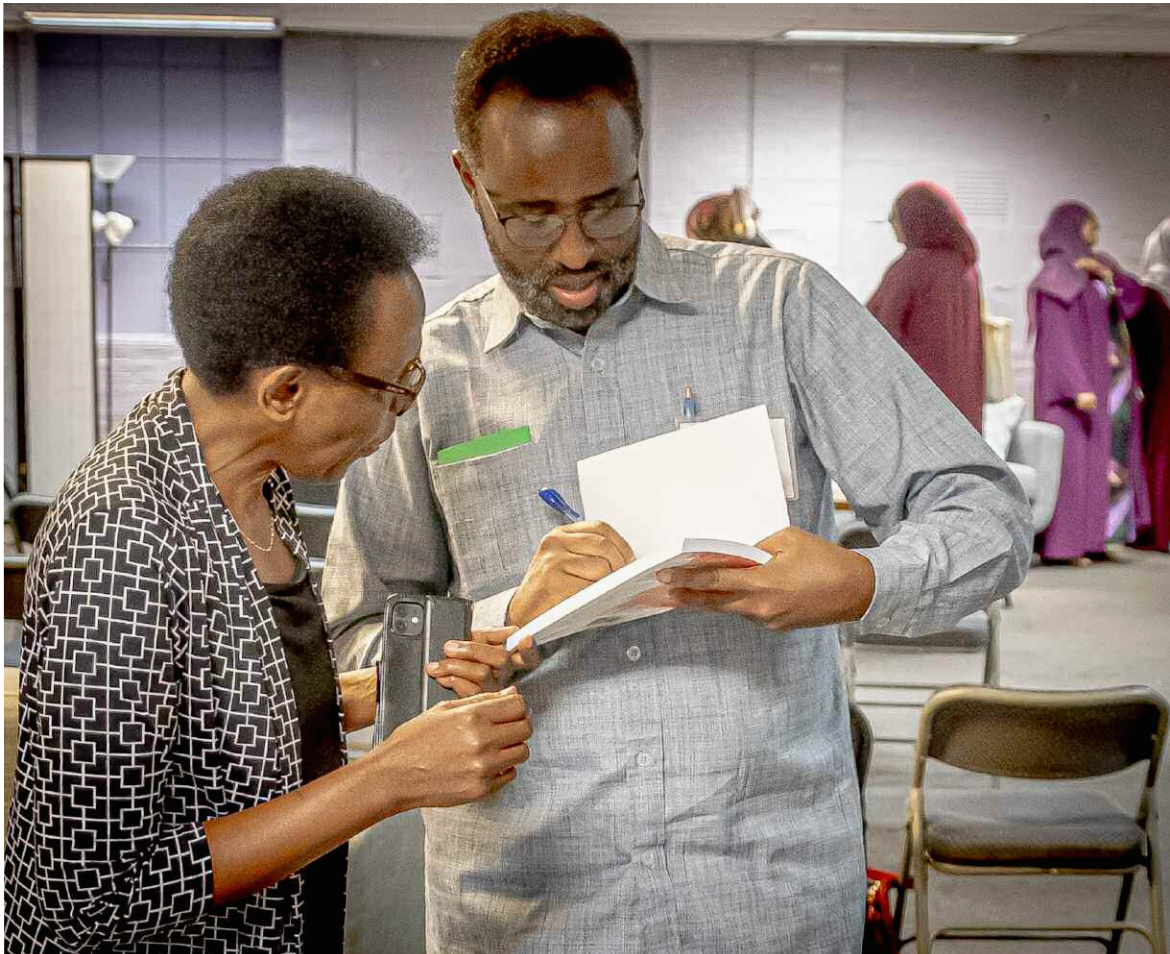


Rep. Deqa Dhalac | Photo Mark Mattos



Abdullahi M. Ahmed (center front) with family, friends, and colleagues to celebrate the release of *Dutiful to Hoooyo* | Photo Mark Mattos

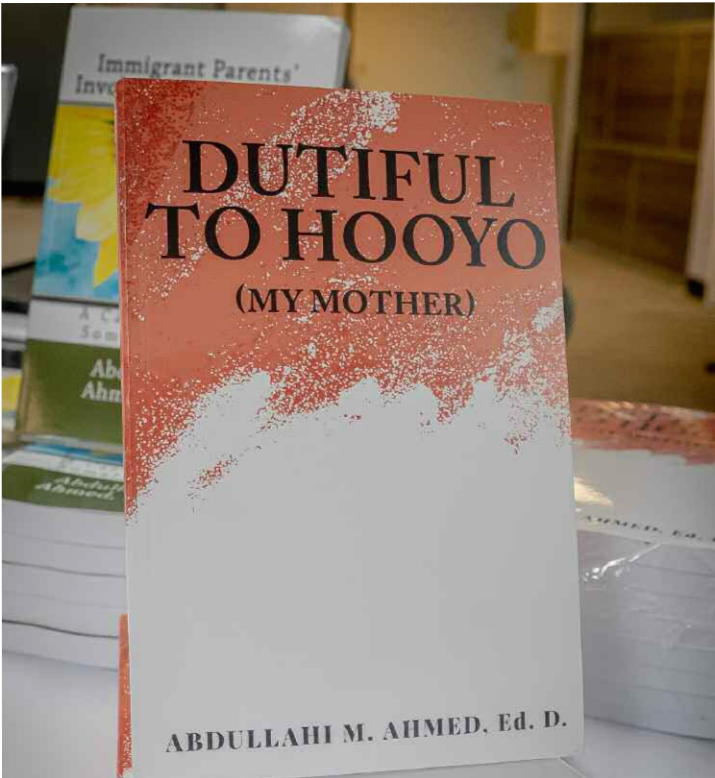
“With difficulty comes ease.”



Abdullahi M. Ahmed | Photo Mark Mattos

“ Even in her last days, [my mother] still had a plan for me. She never stopped caring, never stopped guiding me. This book is my tribute to her and to all the immigrant mothers like her. So many of their sacrifices go unspoken and unrecognized. My hope is that this book encourages young people to express their love, to notice the quiet strength of their mothers, and to acknowledge the deep care and intention behind everything they do. Because sometimes, the most powerful love is the kind that doesn't ask for anything in return, but simply shapes you into who you are meant to be.

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Uganda joins countries willing to take deportees

By Ignatius Ssuuna

KAMPALA, Uganda — Authorities in Uganda have confirmed that the east African nation will take in unwanted migrants deported from the U.S. Whether or not Uganda will be paid for accepting the migrants has not been announced.

Amjambo Africa previously reported that neighboring Rwanda has agreed to accept 250 deportees. President Donald Trump has made other deals with a handful of countries in Africa and Latin America.

In Africa, Uganda has been hailed for its open policy toward refugees, and long-time leader President Yoweri Museveni has been recognized for this position. In mid-August, a Ugandan government official who requested anonymity had denied that the country would accept the migrants, arguing that Uganda lacked adequate infrastructure

to handle the deportees. But this position was walked back a day later. The deportees have been rejected by their own countries, the official said, and final details regarding this deportation plan are still being worked on.

“Individuals with criminal records and unaccompanied minors will not be accepted,” Uganda’s Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. He also said that Uganda would prefer that the deportees be individuals from African countries.

Relations between Uganda and the U.S. were frayed when Uganda passed an anti-homosexuality bill in 2023 that punishes consensual same-sex conduct with penalties including life imprisonment. At the time, the U.S. threatened consequences and also

issued travel bans targeting Ugandan top officials.

Officials hope that the agreement to accept deportees will improve ties between the two countries. Uganda will hold presidential elections in 2026.

The deal has been criticized by human rights groups, saying that the deportations violate international law and put vulnerable people at risk.

In July, the U.S. deported five men with criminal records to the southern African kingdom of Eswatini, and also sent eight more to South Sudan. The migrants include men from Cuba, Jamaica, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Yemen. The men had either

completed their prison sentences or were about to complete them when they were deported.

According to the BBC, El Salvador and Costa Rica have already accepted deportees from the U.S. under the Trump administration, and Angola, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, and Moldova are potential recipient countries.



Rwanda to take migrants deported from U.S.

By Ignatius Ssuuna

KIGALI, Rwanda — Rwandan government spokesperson Yolande Makolo has confirmed that the east African nation will accept up to 250 deportees under an agreement with the U.S. The U.S. Department of State has not commented on details of the deportation deal. So far, there is no timeline as to when the deportees will arrive in Rwanda, and it also is not clear whether Rwanda will receive money in return for accepting the deportees.

The agreement follows a 2022 deal with the U.K. to accept migrants who had arrived in the U.K. to seek asylum. That deal eventually collapsed after Keir Starmer and the Labor Party won the 2024 general election. The total cost of the scheme was estimated to be £700 million. Rwanda was heavily criticized by human rights groups when it struck that deal, and Britain’s Supreme Court ruled in 2023 that the deal was “unlawful because Rwanda was not a safe third country for migrants.”

Makolo told the Associated Press that the agreement with the U.S. was Rwanda doing its part in helping with international migration issues. “Our societal values are founded on reintegration and rehabilitation,” Makolo said.

Many Rwandans are hopeful that the



agreement will improve relations between the U.S. and Rwanda.

Gonzaga Munganwa, Rwandan political analyst and former Executive Secretary of the Rwanda Journalists Association, said, “There is no surprise here as it was public knowledge that the Rwandan government was negotiating with the U.S. government on welcoming deportees. This is consistent with Rwanda’s long-term policy of welcoming refugees, immigrants, and vulnerable people.”

Eric Ndushabandi, a professor of political science at the University of Rwanda, said, “This migration deal should be understood from Rwanda’s foreign policy perspective. Welcoming 250 immigrants from the U.S. should go along with developing more spaces for resettlement, social protection, education, health infrastructures, and job creation to respond at the minimum to the aspirations and dreams of immigrants for their well-being.”

Previously, the government has said there is already infrastructure in place to host migrants. According to U.N. figures, Rwanda was hosting more than 127,000 refugees as of September 2023, almost half of them chil-

dren. The majority were Congolese, followed by Burundians.

One of the places intended as a host site for migrants from the U.K. before that deal was scrapped was Hope Hostel. The hostel is located in Kagugu, a vibrant upscale neighborhood in Kigali that is home to many expatriates and several international schools.

The hostel once housed college students whose parents had died in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, which saw the deaths of more than 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutus who tried to protect them. Authorities are yet to comment on whether Hope Hostel will accommodate the deportees from the U.S.



An M23 rebel fighter during the capture of Bunagana, a key strategic border town in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, June 13, 2022. This takeover marked a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict in the region, leading to widespread displacement and increased regional tensions

The science and politics of HIV/AIDS

By Ssuuna Katera

At the 13th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science held in Kigali, Rwanda, in July, African scientists touted an innovative, long-acting, injectable HIV prevention drug called Lenacapavir PrEP.

However, the excitement about Lenacapavir PrEP comes during a period when scientists, researchers, policy makers, and HIV/AIDS advocates are raising the alarm over sudden international funding cuts and the devastating impact of the global HIV/AIDS response.

Presenters warned that decades of concerted effort and hard-won progress in pushing back the HIV/AIDS global pandemic could be undone if urgent action is

not taken to make up for funding shortfalls. The cost of Lenacapavir PrEP is \$8,000 per person, and two doses are needed. Uganda has given the greenlight to using the drug, but the cost is prohibitive for most of the population.

Scientists from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America presented data showing stalled treatment programs, rising rates of HIV infections, and strained health systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, as a direct result of the funding cuts.

Presenters at the conference also highlighted potential vaccine candidates, as well as the need for new treatment guidelines for

aging populations afflicted with HIV. Dr. Loice Ombajo, an infectious disease specialist and Co-Director at the Center for Epidemiological Modeling and Analysis (CEMA) at the University of Nairobi, shared data revealing that older people living with HIV have more comorbidities, a greater reliance on medication, and higher rates of kidney impairment and osteoporosis compared to their HIV-negative peers.



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Ethiopians seek greener pastures abroad despite perilous journey

By Samuel Getachew



Amid raging conflict, inflation pressures, unemployment, and widespread famine, Ethiopians are fleeing their country in large numbers, attempting the dangerous journey across the Gulf of Aden in search of greener pastures in Europe, Yemen, or other wealthy gulf states.

The trek is risky and far too often ends in tragedy, such as on August 4 when a grossly overcrowded boat capsized and at least 68 Ethiopians perished in the Gulf of Aden. Over 130 more African migrants remain unaccounted for from that disaster, and they are presumed dead.

Despite the dangers, Ethiopians continue to plan their migration journeys. The alternative, which is to stay in Ethiopia, is untenable, they say.

Henok Tesfaledet

Tesfaledet was born in Ethiopia, and has been making plans for months to embark on the same migration route so many others have taken in recent years, to escape from a life he described as doomed. He said it would be impossible to realize his dreams in his motherland.

"I graduated from university – the first in my family – hoping that I would have a fulfilling employment and a future, but conflict, unemployment, and war has become my reality," the 27-year-old said, speaking to *Amjambo Africa* in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city.

Tesfaledet is a native of Bahir Dar, in the volatile Amhara region, and like many other young people, he has paid a smuggler to help him, selling his family's three-wheel taxi and using collateral from a family property for a chance to be included in a group that would soon head to Djibouti, and from there onward to Yemen.

"I drove a taxi for years, saved up some money, but there seems to be no change in my life and the only remaining option was to take a risk or die a slow death in Ethiopia," Tesfaledet lamented.

Daniel Asnake

Asnake has made two failed attempts to cross into Saudi Arabia. The first time he tried, he was stopped by traffickers on his way to Yemen and robbed of all the money he had. He was forced to call his mother for financial assistance to secure his release. The captors demanded 1 million Birr (the equivalent of \$7,000 USD), later negotiated down to 500,000 Birr.

"My mother, who works, but is still a poor citizen, sold all her belongings to have me released, and ensure I could head to Yemen,

where I faced violence at the border of Saudi Arabia," Asnake said.

Then two years ago, Asnake was forced to return to Ethiopia, having lost a limb in a shootout that occurred between migrants and Saudi Arabian security guards. Since his return, he has been plagued with traumatic flashbacks.

The 2023 Human Rights Watch report "They Fired on Us like Rain" described the near-death experiences of many migrants and spoke of the actions of the Saudi border guards as "a crime against humanity."

"Saudi border guards have used explosive weapons and shot people at close range, including women and children, in a pattern that is widespread and systematic," the report said. "In some instances, Saudi border guards first asked survivors in which limb of their body they preferred to be shot, before shooting them at close range."

Martha Seyoum

Seyoum is a 19-year-old university dropout who was displaced from her home town of Adigrat during the Tigray War and forced to join a rebel group. When she was younger, she aspired to work as a cabin crew on Ethiopian Airlines, but now with talk of a possible war in the far northern part of Ethiopia, her mind is on migration.

She is considering a well-trodden legal migration route involving the Ethiopian government, which has signed a deal with Saudi Arabia creating a pathway for more than one million domestic workers to migrate to the wealthy nation. The undesirable aspects of the program, which include confiscation of one's passport until the working contract is fulfilled, have made response to the program lukewarm.

Nonetheless Seyoum is eyeing this route, since she is having trouble raising funds for a trafficker. However, she views the program as exploitative. "The official channel forces us to use a local bank account and we are to be paid in Birr, instead of USD, but it will at least give me an opportunity to leave Ethiopia," she said, hoping she will be sent to the United Arab Emirates, instead of Saudi Arabia, as the latter presents a tougher environment for migrant workers.

According to a 2022 report from Amnesty International, illegal migrants arriving in Saudi Arabia are treated harshly. "Saudi Arabia has arbitrarily detained and forcibly returned hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian migrants in conditions so abusive and inhumane that many developed serious long-term physical and mental conditions as a result."

Amanuel Mental Specialized Hospital, Ethiopia's government-run psychiatric institution, treats returnees from Saudi Arabia who arrive reeling from mental health challenges, triggered either from their voyage or from aborted journeys and horrendous experiences along the way.

A doctor who requested anonymity described the situation as difficult to sustain amid dwindling resources.

"We have hundreds of patients whom we cannot assist, having experienced sexual and physical abuse, and mental issues that have overwhelmed us and there is little we can

do for them," said the doctor.

"We don't have the medicines or the know-how to support them, let alone feed them, and we release them when they have not fully recovered."

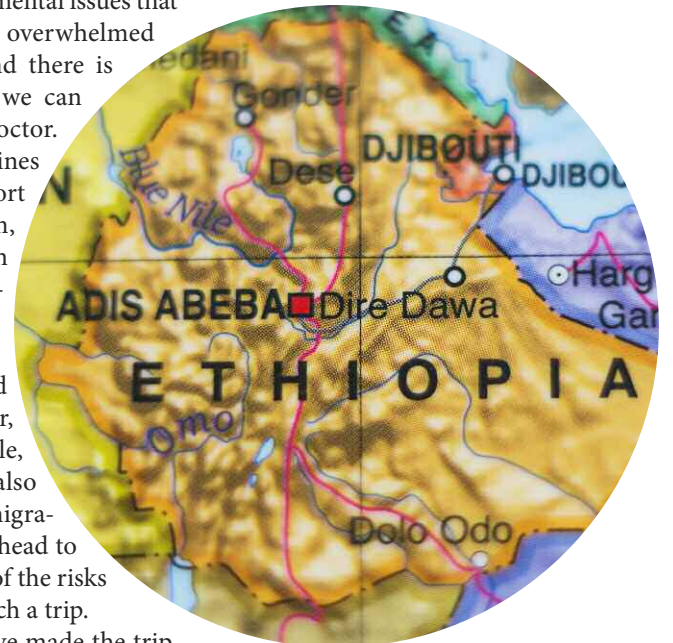
Meaza Kifle

Kifle, a middle-aged woman who, before the war, was a hotelier in Mekelle, Tigray's capital city, is also busy raising funds for a migration journey. She plans to head to Europe and is fully aware of the risks that are associated with such a trip.

Most of her cousins have made the trip, she said, and some are in Italy now. Others

became victims of traffickers who demanded ransoms midway, and others have not been heard from in a long time. Kifle has heard horrific stories of the migration journey – even of people whose kidney was stolen on their journey. But Kifle said she would rather die en route to greener pastures than stay at home.

"What future do I have here when I barely have enough to eat, let alone earn a living wage?" Meaza asked *Amjambo Africa* at an internet café, where she was waiting to make a copy of her identification card to hand over to the trafficker with whom she made a deal. The trafficker has experienced a brisk business in recent years, dealing with people who are willing to pay a hefty fee for a chance to head to foreign destinations, rather than remain in poverty in their own motherland.



Cholera spreads through displacement camps in Sudan and Chad

By Violet Ikong



Volunteers carrying out household spraying in Tawila, North Darfur State, following the cholera outbreak. Photo credit: Tawila ERR/Facebook

About a year after Sudan’s Federal Ministry of Health announced an outbreak of cholera in the country, the disease has resurfaced, spreading rapidly across towns and displacement camps.

In an August 14 report, international humanitarian organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) described the situation as the worst the country has had in recent years, with most cases being recorded in the Darfur region.

According to MSF, about 99,700 suspected cases have been reported across the country since August 2024, with over 2,470 related deaths. In late July this year, the organization treated over 2,300 patients in the town of Tawila, North Darfur, where over 40 died. Tawila hosts more than 380,000 displaced people living in camps marked by poor sanitary conditions and facilities, aiding the spread of the disease.

“In displacement and refugee camps, families often have no choice but to drink from contaminated sources, and many contract

cholera,” said Sylvain Penicaud, MSF project coordinator in Tawila. “Just two weeks ago, a body was found in a well inside one of the camps. It was removed, but within two days, people were forced to drink from that same water again.”

In an interview with *Amjambo Africa*, Imran Mohamed, a local humanitarian volunteer in Tawila, highlighted that the newly built Daba Naira camp is one of the hardest hit and requires urgent attention. “The situation in Tawila, especially the Daba Naira camp, is largely due to overpopulation. We have thousands of displaced persons sharing a limited number of bathrooms and having to defecate in the open due to the absence of toilets,” Mohamed said.

Areas like Golo, Zalingei, and Rokero in Central Darfur State have also recorded hundreds of cases. “MSF opened a 73-bed cholera treatment centre in Golo hospital. This centre was quickly overwhelmed, with 137 patients arriving on 3 August alone,” the organization said in its report.

Because the situation remains dire, the

cholera, with symptoms that include acute diarrhea with vomiting, have been reported at the Dougui Health Center, with 44 patients currently receiving treatment,” the International Medical Corps (IMC) said in an August 1 situation update report.

The international nonprofit also reported that at least five lives have been lost so far in the camp, which hosts close to 20,000 refugees.

Response efforts

Despite security and financial challenges, international humanitarian organizations and local volunteers are working together to raise awareness on cholera prevention, to vaccinate people, and to contain the spread of the disease.

“Local emergency response rooms in Tawila have been working tirelessly to create awareness among the displaced community and teach them to keep their shelters clean,” Mohamed told *Amjambo Africa*.

In its statement, UNICEF said it plans to deliver more than 1.4 million doses of oral vaccine as well as soap, latrine slabs, and plastic sheets to civilians. “The agency is



Cholera patients in Tawila being attended to by health professionals. Photo credit: Tawila ERR/Facebook

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has warned that attacks on health facilities by warring factions make it difficult for people, especially children, to access treatment in places like Tawila. “With hospitals bombed and many health facilities shuttered, Tawila – located just 70 kilometres from the besieged state capital El Fasher – has become a flashpoint of overlapping crises,” the U.N. agency stated in a report.

According to UNICEF, more than 300 child cholera cases have been recorded in Tawila alone since June this year.

Spreading across borders

In early June, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned there could be a spread of cholera from Sudan to neighbouring Chad, where hundreds of thousands of civilians who fled war now live as refugees.

Weeks later, Chad’s Ministry of Public Health and Disease Prevention announced an outbreak in the Dougui refugee camp, located in the country’s Ouaddai province, which borders Sudan to the east.

“Since July 13, 128 cases of suspected

scaling up its emergency response in Tawila and across Darfur, distributing Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), chlorinated water, and hygiene kits,” UNICEF said.

Since April 2023, generals of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been involved in a violent power struggle that has claimed thousands of lives, displaced millions, and continues to pose health challenges for civilians trapped in the war.



A volunteer carrying out household spraying in Tawila. Photo credit: Tawila ERR/Facebook

Hunger, protests as WFP slashes aid in Kenyan camps

By Violet Ikong



Dadaab refugees during a recent protest over food cuts. Photo credit: Aden Murtile/Facebook

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has begun fully withdrawing food and cash support from thousands of refugees in Kenya and is leaving others with paltry rations.

This development follows the U.N. agency's shift from the long-existing general assistance system, where every documented refugee benefited from monthly aid, to a differentiated assistance approach.

Driven by global funding challenges across the humanitarian sector, the new policy for food aid adopts a tiered system, categorizing displaced persons according to their perceived individual needs and their own ability to address them. The cuts have impacted approximately 800,000 displaced persons.

"[The WFP staff] visited camps to interview refugees. We were asked questions like if we had educational or vocational certificates, or if we owned businesses," said Kuol, a South Sudanese refugee in Kakuma.

After speaking with sources and reviewing WFP communication materials, *Amjambo Africa* learned that the WFP has grouped refugees into four categories according to level of desperation. The category with the highest priority for aid consists of people who have no means to meet their basic needs. This group includes households headed by children, single mothers, chronically ill individuals, or persons living with disability. Under the new aid policy, people in this category will receive 40 percent of the 2,100 kilocalories per person that the WFP has determined is necessary for an adult.

In two of the world's largest refugee camps – Kakuma and Dadaab – this will amount to one liter of oil for a month and about 5 kg of grains. In the Kalobeyei integrated settlement, refugees will not get food at all but instead will receive monthly mobile cash transfers with which they can purchase food. The cash allowances will be KSh1060 (approximately \$8 USD) to purchase food items for one month per adult.

The steep reduction leaves the most vulnerable with insufficient food, and it also places those in the next most vulnerable category at an even greater disadvantage – allowing them to receive just 20 percent of the average minimum dietary energy require-

ment.

This second category includes skilled refugees without work authorization, as well as those who run small businesses. These refugees in Kakuma and Dadaab will receive 95 g of cereals, 25 g of pulses, and 15 g of vegetable oil per day, while their counterparts in Kalobeyei will get KSh 530 (approximately \$4) per month.

Refugees in categories three and four will receive no food or cash support, but they will continue to receive other forms of support from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), such as protection, water, and shelter.

"Refugees in categories three and four are considered to be self-reliant and capable of surviving without aid. They are people who have vocational skills or jobs that bring in money regularly," Kuol said.

"No one deserves to be left without food."

Since the new aid delivery model took effect in July 2025, refugees in Kenya have held protests, condemning WFP's decision to leave many hungry.

"We are not just numbers. We are families, mothers, fathers, children, and elders. No one deserves to be left without food," representatives of refugees in Dadaab said in a joint Facebook post during a July 9 protest.

"We urge the UNHCR, WFP, and the government of Kenya to hear our voices and

take urgent action to ensure fairness, dignity, and inclusion in humanitarian aid," they said.

On July 28, displaced persons in Kalobeyei held a similar demonstration, which later turned violent when police opened fire on protesters, killing one person and injuring several others. According to refugees in Kakuma, the protests delayed the August distribution of food to people in categories one and two, as authorities feared another protest was going to break out. However, distribution began on August 11 with armed policemen stationed at distribution centers to ensure a peaceful process.

"Kakuma refugees in categories three and four have said there's no way we can be divided because we all came here for the same

reason: to seek protection. They warned those in categories one and two not to accept food rations if everyone isn't included," Kuol explained.

Funding crisis

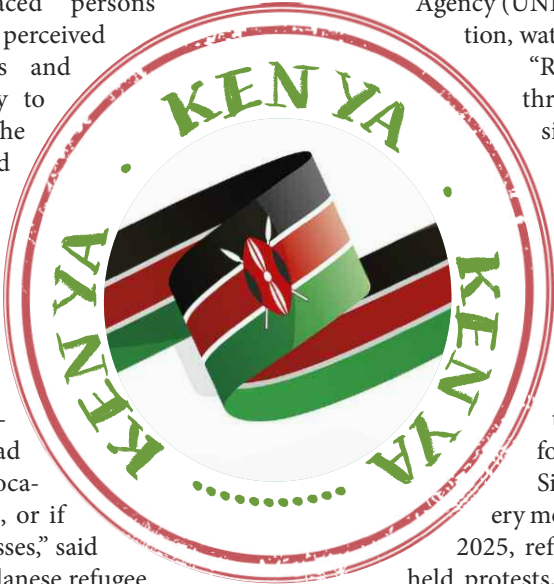
Like many humanitarian agencies and organizations, WFP is facing a funding crisis following cuts to U.S. foreign aid under the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump. For years, the U.S. has been the WFP's largest donor, contributing over \$4 billion of the \$9.7 billion raised by the agency for its humanitarian response in 2024.

This year, the agency needs \$16.9 billion if it is to reach vulnerable communities worldwide, but as of August 4, only \$3.7 billion had been raised, with the U.S. contributing only about \$980 million.

The impact of the funding setbacks is not limited to refugees in Kenya, but is felt across sub-Saharan Africa, a region hosting more than 26 percent (18 million) of the world's refugees. In countries like Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Uganda, the aid agency has suspended or drastically cut food rations for vulnerable populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons.

In Kenya, the strain is pushing many to abandon life in refugee camps and return to their home countries, despite ongoing instability. "People are suffering, and many are leaving [Kakuma] daily, not minding the instability back home," Kuol said.

With malnutrition already surfacing in camps and families struggling to adapt to life without aid, refugees fear there could be a rise in crime and gender-based violence if equitable rations are not restored.



Categories 1 and 2 refugees in Kakuma outside a food distribution center. Photo credit: Facebook



Refugees in Dadaab protesting food cuts. Photo credit: Aden Murtile/Facebook

YWCA expands local connections to boost community programs

By Carly Baker



Founded in London in 1850, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has been a leading force in helping women gain independence and stability through housing, job training, and education. Today, the Lewiston branch, soon to celebrate its 150th anniversary, serves as a living example of the YWCA tradition of empowering women and girls while also addressing broader social inequalities.

YWCA history

In its first years, the YWCA offered women practical skills like typing to help them enter the workforce. By 1870, it opened its first U.S. location in Boston as a boarding house for women. The YWCA then expanded nationwide. By the 1920s, it provided bilingual instruction to help immigrant women navigate work and daily life, travelers' aid for women arriving from other cities or from overseas, and support groups for the families of Black soldiers.

The YWCA came to Lewiston in 1878, aiming to support the growing number of immigrant women arriving to work in the city's textile mills. It offered housing, language classes, and job training, along with social and recreational programs that helped women build community in a new place.

In recent years, the YWCA Central Maine has stayed true to its roots of empowering women and eliminating racism, while adapting to the changing community needs following the arrival of Somali refugees in Lewiston. As the website states, "All YWCA services work toward the realization of gender and racial equity through providing accessible and culturally appropriate resources for health and wellness, recreation, childcare, and advocacy. The advancement of women, people of color, and economic justice in Lewiston-Auburn is integral in all that we do."

Recent impact

Responding to a need in the immigrant community, the YWCA has expanded youth programming, including eight-week beginner swim-

ming lessons focused on water safety. They offer free, women-only swim sessions, as well as free swim sessions for girls ages 5 - 12. Tiffany Salter, Chief Program and Impact Officer, told *Amjambo*, "It was really important to us that we're serving a community that has not historically had access to pools and to swimming lessons. ... There's so much water in Maine."

The swimming program has enjoyed wide community support from organizations such as the Djiboutian American Community Empowerment Project, Sustainable Livelihoods Relief Organization, and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations.

Job training continues to be a major focus for the Lewiston YWCA. The YW Strive program, which meets twice a week for 10 weeks, serves cohorts of up to 20 people. Participants learn how to use Google Suite and write resumes and cover letters, and attend a mock interview program with local employers. Salter said the program "allows the participants an opportunity to have a real conversation with an interviewer in a low-stakes environment before they actually have to go through the interview process." The Strive program also teaches people social-emotional skills that many employers value, such as conflict resolution, customer service, and professionalism.

From June to August, the YWCA runs a summer camp led by young adult counselors. This year, campers went on field trips to nearby lakes and places like Monkey C

Monkey Do, an adventure park in Wiscasset. The camp also includes workshops taught by a local teacher focused on emotional skills such as how to be a good friend, respect others, and practice communication.

During the school year, the YWCA offers before and after school care, as well as full-day care for younger children. These programs provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks.

Reflecting on their programming, Salter said, "The Strive program has been one of the most rewarding things that I've worked on this year." The swim program is also a highlight for Salter. "It's been wonderful to

be with the kids. The kids being empowered to feel safe in the water, or at least safer, is really a lovely feeling."

On her hopes for the YWCA's future, Salter said, "Being able to adapt the resources that we already have to help partner organizations in the community - it's amazing to have the privilege to do that work."



Melissa Jackson, COO (left), and Gabrielle Bailey, Customer Service Manager (right)
Photo Echo Paradis



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jeune homme ne sont pas isolées. Selon Shirambere, de nombreux immigrés aux États-Unis se retrouvent piégés dans le système après des infractions mineures, comme une simple contravention routière, qui les amènent à être livrés à l’ICE.

« C’est un signe que la police collabore avec ICE », estime-t-il. « Comment savent-ils que la personne arrêtée est en situation irrégulière ? »

Les demandeurs d’asile sont particulièrement vulnérables. « Ils n’ont même pas droit à une libération sous caution, contrairement aux citoyens américains ou naturalisés », explique Shirambere. « Il est absurde d’accuser quelqu’un de dépassement de séjour alors qu’il a déposé une demande d’asile. »

Ces pratiques ont aussi un impact psychologique profond:

« Les gens vivent dans la même peur que dans les pays qu’ils ont fui », dit-il. « Beaucoup sombrent dans la dépression, craignant d’être tués s’ils sont renvoyés, tout en étant traqués dans un pays censé défendre les droits humains. »

Les séparations familiales sont une autre conséquence dramatique. Dans de nombreuses familles, certains membres sont citoyens naturalisés, tandis que d’autres sont encore en procédure d’asile. Une arrestation peut ainsi briser des foyers entiers. « Certains n’osent plus aller travailler quand ICE est dans le quartier, mais ils doivent payer le loyer et envoyer leurs enfants à l’école. Dans un pays comme celui-ci, ICE devrait protéger ceux qui sont venus légalement au lieu de les persécuter. »

Le système érode aussi la confiance dans les forces de l’ordre. « Certaines personnes sont arrêtées alors qu’elles sortent juste pour sortir les poubelles. Les agents ICE les guettent. C’est une persécution contre les immigrés », dénonce Shirambere.

Mais malgré tout, l’histoire du jeune homme démontre aussi la résilience du système judiciaire américain.

« J’ai partagé ce cas avec d’autres commu-



Cette affaire montre que même dans ces temps difficiles, il existe encore des juges et des avocats prêts à défendre la justice



nautés parce qu’il montre qu’il existe encore des juges courageux et que la loi fonctionne toujours », a affirmé Shirambere. « Le juge a ordonné son retour parce qu’il avait été expulsé illégalement et lui a donné une nouvelle convocation. »

Il insiste sur l’importance de l’entraide communautaire, de l’accès à des avocats et d’une meilleure organisation. « Quand des personnes sont arrêtées, les communautés réagissent, mais il faut un cadre structuré pour garantir une aide juridique rapide. Nous devons trouver des solutions durables, car ces cas se multiplient. »

Aux demandeurs d’asile, il conseille :

« Surmontez la peur et continuez à sortir, mais évitez les erreurs inutiles. Avant tout, trouvez un avocat et évitez les infractions routières, car vous pouvez facilement être étiquetés criminels ou dangereux. Il est très difficile de se défendre seul, surtout en détention, menotté et enchaîné devant le tribunal. »

Il rappelle aussi l’importance de rompre avec certaines habitudes culturelles : « Dans ces moments difficiles, les gens doivent s’entraider et se soutenir mutuellement, même si dans certaines cultures, on évite de partager ses problèmes personnels. »

L’histoire de Shirambere est un rappel puissant de la vulnérabilité des communautés immigrées aux États-Unis, mais aussi de leur résilience. Elle met en évidence l’importance de la représentation juridique, de la solidarité et de la vigilance pour défendre les droits humains- des principes que les États-Unis ont promis de respecter en ratifiant le Protocole de 1967 relatif au statut des réfugiés.

« Cette affaire montre que même dans ces temps difficiles, il existe encore des juges et des avocats prêts à défendre la justice », conclut Shirambere. « Cela nous donne de l’espoir, malgré la peur persistante. Mais je demande aussi aux sénateurs et représentants de prendre ce sujet au sérieux. Nous avons besoin de lois et de politiques qui protègent les communautés immigrées, garantissent l’accès à une assistance juridique et empêchent les expulsions arbitraires. Nos communautés ne peuvent pas continuer à vivre dans la peur alors qu’elles respectent la loi. C’est la responsabilité des autorités de protéger les droits humains de tous, y compris des demandeurs d’asile. »

Deported illegally, saved by justice: A young Burundian’s battle in the U.S.

By Éloge Willy Kaneza

In an exclusive interview with *Amjambo Africa*, Cassius Shirambere, former president of the Burundian Community in Maine, shared a harrowing story that captures both the fear and resilience within immigrant communities in the U.S. The story centers on a young Burundian man, a family member of Shirambere’s, whose journey through the U.S. immigration system exposes systemic flaws, the vulnerability of asylum seekers, and the courage of some professional judges.

The young man’s ordeal began with a simple traffic violation in Maine.

“When people are arrested and put in detention, it affects all of us, even those immigrants who are now naturalized and have U.S. citizenship,” Shirambere explained. “When it happens, it is the community that must step in to help because many do not have lawyers.”

After the traffic stop, the young man was taken to the local police station and subsequently handed over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). He was transferred to a detention center in New Hampshire. Initially, a court date had been scheduled,

and his lawyer was preparing to represent him. But before the hearing could take place, the young man was deported to Burundi without notice, an act that even his lawyer learned about only through Shirambere and the family.

“There was little hope that he would be returned to the United States,” Shirambere said. “But the lawyer remained patient and presented himself before the judge on the

scheduled hearing date. He demonstrated how the law had been violated, how the young man had been deported illegally, and how he had been sent back to the very country he had fled.” The young man was able to participate in the hearing online from Burundi.

The judge ultimately ruled in favor of the young man, recognizing the procedural violations and ordering his return to the U.S. The U.S. Embassy in Burundi issued a new visa and covered his flight costs. Today, he is back in New Hampshire, in the same detention facility where he had been held before deportation.

Shirambere emphasized that this case illustrates both the fragility of protections for asylum seekers and the importance of legal representation. “It is crucial for all asylum seekers to have lawyers,” he said. “In this case, the young man would not have reestablished his rights without one. All the procedures were violated: when he was deported, the Burundian authorities did not even receive him properly, his family was not notified, and he had no money for transportation. Someone had to give him a ride to reach his parents’ home.”

The challenges faced by the young man are not isolated. Shirambere highlighted a broader pattern affecting immigrant communities across the U.S. Many people, he explained, first encounter law enforcement through minor issues, such as traffic violations, only to end up in ICE custody because of their immigration status.

“This is a sign that the police are collaborating with ICE,” he said. “How do they know someone has been arrested and their immigration status?”

He further noted that asylum seekers face unique vulnerabilities. “They are not even allowed to be bailed out, unlike U.S. citizens or naturalized individuals,” he said. “It doesn’t make sense to accuse someone of overstaying when they have submitted their asylum application.”

Shirambere also shed light on the psychological impact these practices have on communities. “People now live in the same fear they experienced in the countries they fled,” he said. “Many are depressed, thinking they may be killed if deported to their countries of origin, while being targeted in a country that is supposed to protect human rights.”

Family separation is another devastating consequence. In many households, some members are naturalized citizens while others are still seeking asylum. Arrests can split families, creating instability and hardship. “Some avoid going to work when ICE is in the neighborhood, yet they must pay rent and send children to school. In a country like this, ICE should protect those who came legally instead of persecuting them.”

The system, Shirambere noted, also un-

dermines trust in law enforcement. “Some people are taken when they go out to perform everyday tasks, like taking out the trash. ICE agents ambush them. It’s persecution against immigrants.”

Despite these challenges, the young man’s story also highlights the resilience of the U.S. legal system. “It is something I shared with other communities because it

shows that there are still courageous judges, and the law still works here,” Shirambere said. “The judge ordered he be taken back because he was deported illegally and gave him a new appointment.”

He stressed the importance of community support, proper legal guidance, and awareness. “Communities help when people are arrested, but there must be an organized assistance framework so people have access to legal aid on time. We must find durable solutions because we are facing many such cases.”

Shirambere also offered advice to asylum seekers navigating these difficult circumstances: “Overcome fear and go out, but avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Above all, find a lawyer and avoid traffic violations, because you can easily be labeled as a criminal or dangerous for society. It is hard to represent yourself without a lawyer, especially when detained. People are handcuffed and shackled in court, making it difficult to explain why they fled their countries.”

He added a cultural dimension, noting that some communities discourage sharing personal struggles. “In these difficult times, people must come together, open up to each other, and support one another, even though in some cultures, personal matters are kept private.”

Shirambere’s account is a stark reminder of both the vulnerability and resilience of immigrant communities in the U.S. It underscores the critical need for legal representation, community solidarity, and vigilance in protecting human rights-principles that the United States pledged to uphold when it ratified the United Nations 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

“This case shows that even in these difficult times, there are judges and lawyers willing to uphold justice,” Shirambere concluded. “That gives us hope, even as fear persists. But I also want senators and representatives to take this matter seriously. We need legislation and policies that protect immigrant communities, ensure access to legal counsel, and prevent arbitrary deportations. Our communities cannot continue living in fear while following the law. It is their responsibility to safeguard human rights for everyone, including asylum seekers.”



This case shows that even in these difficult times, there are judges and lawyers willing to uphold justice



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