November 30, 2018

Sean Gallagher  
Field Office Director  
Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
180 Ted Turner Dr. SW, Suite 522  
Atlanta, GA, 30303

Dear Mr. Gallagher:

The 75 undersigned national, local, and state organizations, concerned about the treatment of immigrants, asylum seekers, and survivors of domestic violence, ask that you immediately release Vilma Viviana Carrillo Carrillo from your custody.

Vilma is a mother from Guatemala who suffered from years of severe domestic violence at the hands of her husband. Now, she is also the victim of a cruel and painful separation from her 11 year-old daughter, Yeisvi. Their story was featured in the New York Times on Friday, November 23, 2018.

After years of enduring beatings from her husband, Vilma decided to take the risk of fleeing Guatemala with Yeisvi. The violence in her home had intensified, and included her husband throwing hot coals at her and knocking out her front teeth. Yeisvi begged her father not to kill her mother. Seeking safety, Vilma and Yeisvi fled Guatemala for the U.S., but on arrival in May 2018 they were separated from each other under the administration’s “zero-tolerance” policy. Vilma is currently detained at Irwin Detention Center, in Georgia, while her U.S. citizen daughter is in foster care in Arizona.

Because her mother is in detention, the courts have filed dependency proceedings against Vilma which may lead to the termination of her parental rights. The state’s only reason for taking Vilma’s daughter is her current detention. ICE has refused her attorneys’ requests to release Vilma despite knowing all that is at stake for the mother and her daughter. If Vilma is not released, her parental custody will be terminated and her daughter will be a ward of the state, instead of being in the loving care of her mother, where both can begin to heal from the years of abuse they have experienced.

It is unconscionable and a betrayal of our values as a nation to keep Vilma and Yeisvi apart, especially given the trauma they have experienced. We urge you to facilitate their reunification immediately.

Sincerely,

Al Otro Lado  
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children  
Apna Ghar, Inc. (Our Home)
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
ASISTA Immigration Assistance
Asylee Women Enterprise
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Children's Advocacy Institute
Church World Service
Coalition on Human Needs
DASH Inc.
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
DC SAFE
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
DV LEAP
End Domestic Abuse WI
Faith in Public Life
Family Law Practice Clinic, CUNY School of Law
Family Shelter Service
First Focus
Futures Without Violence
Gabriela Matthews & Associates, PA
Hispanic Federation
HOPE of East Central Illinois
Human Rights First
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Immigrant Families Together
Justice in Motion
KAN-WIN
Law Office of Peggy J. Bristol
Law Office of Shara Svendsen
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
Migrant and Immigrant Community Action (MICA) Project
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Mujeres Latinas en Accion
Mutual Ground, Inc.
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Alliance of Children's Trust Funds
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
National Women’s Law Center
Neopolitan Lighthouse
New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence
New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Riverview Center
Sarah's Inn
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
South Suburban Family Shelter
Stopping Woman Abuse Now
Tahirih Justice Center
Texas Council on Family Violence
Turning Point, Inc.
Ujima Inc: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community
United We Dream
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Violence Free Colorado
Violence Prevention Center of Southwestern IL
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)
We Are All America
Women's Refugee Commission
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights
YWCA of the Sauk Valley