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"We are not backing down." Tanggol Migrante Movement announces launch as national alliance of former detainees, their families, and Filipino organizations across the US push for immediate government action

USA — Filipino organizations from across the country took a historic step forward to challenge President Donald Trump's deportation drive with the launch of the Tanggol Migrante Movement (TMM).

"We need the Tanggol Migrante Movement," declared Andan Bonifacio of BAYAN USA. "We need a national alliance that can harness the power, skills, and spirit of *bayanihan* from Filipinos across the country to protect, defend, and empower those most vulnerable among us."

The decision to solidify the alliance comes after almost eight months of tireless work under the Tanggol Migrante campaign, which brought together grassroots organizations, labor, churches, health professionals, lawyers, student organizations, elected offices, and most importantly, Filipino detainees and their families to protect migrants threatened by Lani 2149301 Cristobal detention and deportation. The community-driven campaign has resulted in the release of five Filipinos from ICE detention.

"Our goal is to continue growing this movement to provide a space for those impacted and an opportunity for people to get involved. We recognize that this fight is intersectional and that there is great power in community," stated Emily Cristobal, a family member of Lewlyn "Aunty Lynn" Dixon who was released from detention in May.

Organizers, however, acknowledge the need for even more collective action. Since May, Trump has ordered ICE to increase its quota of arrests to 3,000 every day. As of July 2025, ICE has reported over 56,000 migrants in detention, over 70 percent of whom have no criminal convictions. And with the passing of the "Big Beautiful Bill," billions of dollars in federal funds are being directed to these harmful enforcement departments that infiltrate communities, tear families apart, and wreak havoc in people's daily lives, sowing fear and mistrust in systems that are supposed to protect us.

In the Filipino community, it is not only undocumented Filipinos—which conservative estimates place at over 300,000—who face significant risks. As high-profile cases like those of Dixon and Maximo Londonio show, even green card holders are being targeted. The recent deportation of 18 Filipino cruise ship workers despite holding valid visas, and despite ICE being unable to offer any evidence to justify the removal, only underscores the urgency of more tightly coordinated action, organizers of TMM say.

The launch of TMM also comes a week after Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s state visit to Washington DC. To the dismay of many, Marcos did not raise the issue of immigration during his time with President Trump, mirroring the weak stance that organizers say has been adopted by the Philippine embassy and consulates in the U.S. on the matter. "For too long, we hoped [the Philippine government] would be there for us in our time of crisis," explained Donna Cristobal, the niece of Dixon. "We looked to them not just as officials, but as fellow Filipinos—public servants with a duty to care for our *kababayan* abroad. But far too often, we were met with silence, neglect, or dismissal."

Members of the alliance have their hands full, with ongoing campaigns to release Filipinos being held in Washington, Arizona, Indiana, Kentucky, and Georgia. But despite the intensifying crackdown under Trump and frustratingly inadequate response of the Philippine government, the launch of TMM demonstrates that the Filipino community remains undeterred and ready to fight.

“We are calling on others—especially families who feel isolated or afraid—to stand with us,” said Cristobal. “You are not alone. Your voice matters. Your story has power. And together, we are stronger than any system meant to silence us.” ###