

Dear Advocate and Supporter of Human Rights:

This Tuesday, August 25, 2009, marks the 1st Anniversary of the Laurel raid. Only 12 months ago, 595 ballast plant workers were terrorized and their lives forever changed by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid on Howard Industries in Laurel, Mississippi. About 480 were detained at the LaSalle Detention Facility in Jena, Louisiana, another 106 were released with electronic monitoring ankle devices, and nine (9) were put into federal criminal proceedings.



Raid victims, friends and family members carry signs and a banner saying "MIRA! No somos criminales. We are not criminals" at a press conference calling for an end to immigration workplace raids and for the repeal of a Mississippi law that makes it a felony to work without authorization. The automatic date stamp on the photo is incorrect. The press conference took place Dec. 4, 2008, at the State Capitol in Jackson, with allies from the Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN).

Listen as one of the survivors speaks:

"Being a single mother of a twelve year old, I found myself completely disconcerted, abandoned and sharing the pain and uncertainty of hundreds of people who like me were affected," said Angelica Olmedo, a survivor who still lives in Laurel.



The husband of a raid survivor helps fit the electronic monitor while their children look on.

"Thanks to the organization MIRA, Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance, we have received not only the much needed financial assistance but emotional aid as well. They taught me that by helping others my pain becomes less. [They] were constantly ...teaching us that as workers but more as human beings we have the right to be treated with dignity and respect."

Indeed, so much has transpired over the past 12 months – advocacy, humanitarian relief, legal representation in immigration proceedings – and generous supporters like yourself have helped to bolster our work. A year later, a handful of raid victims still remain in Mississippi and Louisiana and are fighting to stay in the United States. Our small but committed Legal Project is representing five (5) of these individuals.

Your support is as crucial now as ever. Generous contributions, like a recent \$2,000 gift by *Mr. C.B.* of Fairhope, Alabama, help to fund organizers' and attorneys' time and travel, and to cover raid-impacted clients' court-related expenses. To make an on-line donation, please feel free to visit our website at www.yourmira.org, and click "Donate." You may also send a check or money order payable to MIRA to P.O. Box 1104, Jackson, MS 39215. Finally, you are welcome to become a "Sustaining Member" of our organization by signing up for automatic bank draft. You may do this by calling Alisha Johnson or Juan Carlos Cook at (601)968-5182. MIRA is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, and all contributions are tax-deductible.



MIRA sets up a "distribution center" in Laurel to disburse about \$50,000 in humanitarian relief funds to ICE raid survivors in September 2008. Funds were provided by individual and foundation donors from throughout the United States.

Thank you so much for your continued support of human rights and economic and social justice for all.

Sincerely,

The Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance