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NO ONE'S ILLEGAL ON STOLEN LAND

Sophie Watso (Dakota)

Leqaa Kordia (Palestinian)

NO BORDERS
* * *
LAND BACK

Introduction

From the streets of Minneapolis and Los Angeles to the streets of Palestine, we are constantly reminded that the category of 'migrant' (or 'refugee') and that of 'Native' are not mutually exclusive. They never have been.

The city of Minneapolis was built around Fort Snelling, where hundreds of Dakota and Ho-Chunk people were confined in a concentration camp after the Dakota War of 1862. Some Dakota people fled the region's conflict to join their relatives on the Canadian side of the border, where part of Dakota traditional territory sits as well. In 1968, the American Indian Movement was founded in Minneapolis in response to mass incarceration and police brutality against Natives. State repression, and resistance to it, are not something new to Minneapolis, or to other colonized territories, they only take more or less different forms at different times and places.

Before the colonizer's borders crossed us, we moved freely. Once they imposed their lines upon our territories, we continued our movements, as best we could. Sometimes we crossed the line looking for relief from state repression. Aside from the Dakota people who fled to Canada, there were Louis Riel and Little Bear's people, who sought refuge in "Montana"; Sitting Bull and hinmatóowyalahtq̓it's (Chief Joseph's) people, who looked to "Saskatchewan" for the same; and much later, Leonard Peltier, who sought refuge in "British Columbia" and "Alberta"; among other lesser-known examples.

Each Indigenous nation has its own stories and histories. Not all of our peoples were nomadic hunters and gatherers. Some peoples' stories place them in the locations in which they currently live as far back as can be remembered. On the other hand, some of our peoples' stories, including some of our origin stories, are tales of migration. Since before colonialism, we've always traveled, made new relations, and sometimes made new places our homes (or old places our homes once again) as part of making those relations.

The colonizer's imposed borders restrict our movements within our own homelands and prohibit us from welcoming our kin from other places. Settler colonialism has always confined us in various ways and often forced us to move to other restricted areas, at the cost of many lives. This doesn't make us any less Indigenous; it's part of what makes us Indigenous. This system has made us refugees in our own territories, and in the lands of others, but we've always resisted and sought ways to get around or escape their restrictions.

The Jay Treaty of 1794 was supposed to secure freedom of movement for Native persons between Canada and America, but it has not been fully implemented by the US, and Canada doesn't even recognize it. There is no equivalent for the border between the US and Mexico, although some tribes have enhanced identification cards to make their crossings easier.

and gold mine camp-rotting facilities with no plumbing, electricity or toilets." There, they had little potable water, no warm winter clothing, and sub-par food. Nearly 10 percent of the evacuees died in the camps.

Those who lived struggled with the unfamiliar landscape. "The trees, more than anything, represented the strangeness and terror of their sudden relocation," writes Eva Holland for the Alaska Dispatch News. The Aleutians are barren, treeless islands; Southeastern Alaska's trees led the detainees to feel claustrophobic and depressed. Some of the men were even enslaved during their detainment, forced to harvest fur seals and threatened with continued detainment if they refused.

Aleuts were kept in camps as late as 1945—two full years after Japanese troops left the Aleutian Islands. Those who survived the war went home to find their villages burned and destroyed. It took 40 years for the Federal Government's Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to investigate the treatment of Aleut citizens during World War II. In a New York Times op-ed published when the first hearings into EO 9066 began, David Oyama wrote that the Aleut relocation and detention was done "under conditions that are as shocking as any in the long, sad history of the Government's relations with its Native-American citizens."

As Debra McKinney of Anchorage News writes, Aleuts stayed silent about their ordeal for years, suppressing the story out of both grief and fear that they would be considered unpatriotic for speaking up about their traumatic treatment. Though the United States ultimately issued a formal apology in 1988 and provided some reparations to the people detained there, the legacy of the Aleut people's forcible relocation and harsh treatment endures.

[Recommended further reading: Alaska Native Resilience: Voices from World War II, by Holly Miowak Guise, 2024]

on both sides of the border as their rightful home.

"For the Chippewa Cree," Stamper said, "there should not even be a border."

(Brenden Rensink is the author of 'Native but Foreign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands,' a book comparing the experiences of Indigenous migrants and refugees from Canada and Mexico in the United States.)

The U.S. Forcibly Detained Native Alaskans During World War II

Erin Blakemore, Smithsonian Magazine, February 22, 2017

The infamous Executive Order 9066, which singled out "resident enemy aliens" in the United States during World War II, forced 120,000 Americans of Japanese background into relocation camps like Manzanar. The EO targeted Americans of Italian and German ancestry, too, but also deeply affected another group of Americans—not because they were viewed as potential enemies of the state, but rather because indigenous Aleuts [endonym: Unangaŝ] in Alaska were in a combat zone.

As John Smelcer explains for NPR's Code Switch, in 1942, Japanese troops began to bomb the Aleutian Islands, a long chain of islands that stretch between Alaska and Japan in the Pacific Ocean. They seized and occupied parts of the islands—the first time since the War of 1812 that American territory had been occupied. The islands were of strategic value to the United States and Japan. Following Japan's aggression, the U.S. military decided to forcibly evacuate indigenous people from their homes to get them to safer locations, then destroy their villages with a scorched-earth policy to prevent invading Japanese troops from using their housing.

All in all, 881 Aleuts were forcibly relocated and interned, transported to unsanitary camps in southeast Alaska, and held there throughout the war. They were not consulted and, as Christopher Cueva writes for the Alaska Humanities Forum, the evacuation itself was hasty and traumatic. As one Fish & Wildlife Service member recalled, nobody was allowed to bring more than one suitcase of possessions. Troops then set fire to the villages that had been inhabited just days before rather than leave them to the Japanese invaders. Aleuts were shoved onto crowded boats with no idea where they were headed, Smelcer reports.

"The irony was that the Atkans were prepared to evacuate before a Japanese attack, and they could have been given time to take their belongings before the village was destroyed," the report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians later noted.

As the National Park Service writes, the internment camps the Aleut evacuees were forced to live in were "abandoned canneries, a herring saltery,

Most of the 1854-56 Stevens Treaties in the State of Washington prohibit the tribes who signed them from trading with their relatives on the Canadian side of the border and from allowing those relatives to reside with them on Washington reservations without settler consent.

In light of all this it becomes clear that ultimately we can't rely on settler laws to uphold our freedoms, or on the settler system to do the right thing.

We also can't stop the present-day practices of racial profiling, mass incarceration and deportation by throwing our relatives under the bus and saying "hey, look, we're the good ones, we're the ones who belong." We can only stop these kinds of harms by opposing all the white supremacist systems of control that oppress us all. It is in our own interest as Native peoples to act in solidarity with (other) migrants, and it is in our interests as migrants to act in solidarity with (other) Indigenous peoples.

An injury to one is an injury to all. Until every border falls.

-Ed. (âpihtawikosisân), 2026

'I've become stronger:' Leqaa Kordia on life after ICE detention

Sam Judy, Mondoweiss, April 21, 2026

One month ago, Mondoweiss reported on what would be Leqaa Kordia's final hearing to determine bail eligibility while confined in Prairieland Detention Center in North Texas. Now, she has returned to her home in Paterson, N.J., with renewed strength.

Kordia's release was widely celebrated. Notable supporters like Zohran Mamdani lauded her release, as did organizations including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP). Perhaps the best known Columbia protester who had been arrested, Mahmoud Khalil, also met with Kordia, joining her at a press conference at Paterson City Hall alongside his wife and fellow activist Dr. Noor Abdalla.

Kordia had been detained for a year, with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) claiming a student visa expiration as the reason for her arrest. However, throughout litigation, DHS lawyers alleged that Kordia was potentially tied to terrorism through bank transfers – a point that was proven false when her lawyers presented substantial evidence identifying payments as remittances to family members who had no ties to terrorism. DHS also pointed to Kordia's arrest at a protest outside Columbia University during the campus demonstrations of 2024, which DHS alleges were "pro-Hamas" and supportive of terrorism.

After the judge's order to release Kordia was appealed by DHS twice, her third hearing set her bail at $100,000 and facilitated her subsequent release.

One month after leaving Prairieland, Kordia remains steadfast and determined to shed light on injustice – both in Palestine and in the United

States. In an interview with Mondoweiss, Kordia speaks about life following her detention, the friends she made in confinement, and her identity as a Palestinian.

Mondoweiss: Leqaa, thank you so much for speaking with us. What have you been up to since you've been released?

Leqaa Kordia: It's been catching up with family, spending time with friends, alongside telling the story. I would like to say telling the story, not advocacy – just simply telling my story and the story of the ladies who were detained with me.

Can you tell me more about the strength you gained from friends you made inside and how your release felt knowing how many have remained inside?

So basically, we were a lot of women in one place, trapped in one place. We ate together, we laughed together, we cried together. If somebody was sick, everybody was around trying to help with the little that we have. With all of this, I spent 24/7 with these women. So they became friends, they became kind of family also. They would inspire me.

When I saw a pregnant lady who was in pain and needed medical care, but still, if you talked to her, she was smiling, trying to tell you a joke or something. Or if you saw an elderly woman who could barely walk, but still she would come to you when you were sick and try to make soup or something hot for you in a facility microwave, just to make you feel better – although she herself could barely walk. They inspired me with their strength. They inspired me with their unity. They're very strong women. They're daughters, they're mothers, they're teachers, they're doctors, they're housekeepers. They are just people who love to dream and love to live.

Are there any particular stories that you go back to in your head, or any moments inside that have really stuck out in your memory now that you're out?

I mean, so many stories. It was a whole year taken away from my life, so it was a lot of stories. But there is this one story of an elderly lady in her late 60s. She went to her regular check-in, and she got arrested. They didn't tell her why. They didn't give her charges or anything for months. Then she was ordered to court. She appealed that.

But the story is that she had two grandchildren who were very attached to her – extremely attached to her – and they're very little. She would cry almost every night, and she would be praying out loud to God: "Oh God, I just want to be dying among my family. I just want to be with my family." She would literally tell me, "If the judge ordered me to stay in my son's house and never leave, I will agree."

There is another story of a refugee. She grew up in America. She came as a

them," said Stamper.

When they asked for help, they were often denied. In a blurb headlined, "Indians cry for bread," The Anaconda Standard reported: "Several Cree Indians called on the county of commissioners yesterday with a story of starvation threatening their band ... The commissioners tried to explain to the Indians that they had no claims on this community and had no business to be here, and therefore the county could not assist them."

When cities, counties or Indian agents did provide, it was often with protest. After giving critical food aid to Cree children in the winter of 1912-1913, Hill County complained that "the burden does not properly belong to its taxpayers and [it is] getting tired of being saddled with it."

But Little Bear was determined to secure a permanent Montana home for Crees, despite settler opposition.

In a 1913 newspaper interview, Little Bear said: "My children are not lazy; they are eager and ready to go to work ... we cannot secure employment because of the antipathy of the white man for us. When winter comes we will be without food and wood and clothing and blankets. ... The white man lets foreigners come here and gives them work, but they will not do that for the Indians and we will starve ... there is nothing left but starvation."

He began to build a coalition of businessmen and politicians who could use their personal influence to fight local prejudice and spur federal action. Many of these allies had already been working to settle a band of landless Chippewas led by Chief Rocky Boy in Montana, and eventually included Little Bear's Crees and others in those efforts. In 1916, they successfully secured joint settlement as the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation in 1916. They were finally granted territory, ironically close to where Col. Otis had refused Little Bear's hand and Pershing's deportation campaigns had begun decades earlier.

Little Bear's Crees struggled for three decades as Indigenous refugees in the United States, despite their direct ties to the land and legal protection within US borders. Federal inconsistency, indifference and inaction made resettling in the US even more difficult.

Today, the Chippewa Cree Tribe persists in Montana, providing for a growing population on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation and elsewhere. Now officially recognized as "American" Indians for barely a century, experiences of crossing borders are still part of the tribe's collective memory.

Some families regularly talk about their histories and appreciate what their ancestors went through, says Stamper. Moreover, Stamper says many maintain ties across the border to visit relatives, join in family reunions and attend Sun Dances and powwows in Canada. For some, however, it is a past too painful to revisit. Stamper and others at the tribe's Stone Child College have worked to help the rising generation "retain this history." "The History of the Chippewa Cree of Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation: 2008," co-authored by Stamper, is one of the few books that touches on this story.

Descendents of Little Bear, Rocky Boy and others view the northern Plains

settlement as American Indians.

When Little Bear's Crees arrived in Montana, the government was actively trying to decrease Native land holdings and open them to white settlement. "We have in Montana all the Indians we need ... with a few thousand to spare," wrote The River Press in 1887.

Montana, eager to progress from a territory to a state, needed to increase white settlement to strengthen their statehood petition. Landless Indians not only threatened to deter settlement, but their unregulated presence could dissuade Congress from granting statehood. Unsurprisingly, Montana public sentiment was vocally prejudiced against the Crees wandering the state.

Little Bear appealed to Montana Gov. John E. Rickards on behalf of his Cree band in 1893. Rickards, in turn, advised federal authorities that Crees should either be provided citizenship, granted a reservation or be deported back to Canada. Aware of popular opinion, Rickards favored the latter.

Little Bear then wrote directly to President Grover Cleveland, "The Great Spirit only knows how we shall subsist in case we do not receive assistance from the United States Government." His appeal seems to have gone unanswered.

Instead, just 11 years after Little Bear's Crees were granted asylum, federal authorities opened communication with Canada and arranged for Crees to be physically removed from the US.

In 1896, John J. Pershing and his 10th Cavalry Regiment captured and deported Crees and any other "Canadian" Indians they found. Many American-born Indians and Métis were deported in the process.

The deportation was brutal. Forced to walk north or loaded into cattle cars, families were separated, meager possessions were lost and some Crees died. Despite Canada's cooperation in receiving them at the border — and much to the chagrin of US officials — many escaped and returned to the US. Some "circled around the troops and reached Fort Assiniboine ahead of the soldiers who had taken them across the border," complained The Anaconda Standard.

Canada had promised amnesty for participants of the Northwest Rebellion, but unbeknownst to them, Little Bear and others were excluded from that protection. They were arrested at the border. Somehow, Canadian courts failed to convict all of them, and Little Bear returned to the US in 1897.

With funds spent, the US immediately gave up on more deportations and ignored the returning Crees, who were caught in legal limbo. For the next 20 years, federal government officials hoped that if ignored, the Crees would return to Canada on their own.

Instead, families struggled. They separated to find temporary wage labor, shelter or charity. Bands cycled between cities, frequenting slaughterhouse yards to collect discarded offal, and scavenging wherever possible. Each winter brought exposure, disease and starvation.

"They literally had to live off of rummaging through city dumps, eating their dead horses and dogs in order to survive the starvation that threatened

refugee to America when she was seven years old. She's a green card holder. Her mother is a US citizen. Her siblings are US citizens. Her husband is a US citizen. One day, she received a message from ICE to come to check in. She had never checked in before because she's a green card holder. She went for a check-in. They arrested her without explanation, without any reason. Since then, she's been in detention now for, I think, six months. She's been transferred to different facilities without explanation. She's been denied bond. We're talking about a refugee, a green card holder, married to a US citizen. This is another story of how much injustice there is in this place.

There was this lady who gave birth to her son. A week later, they arrested her. They deported the baby with one of the family members, but they kept her in custody for about three months, then they deported her. You see how cruel it is. They could have deported them together, for example. Even this, they didn't give her. There are so many stories.

Tell me more about your arrest and where your head was at in the aftermath of that.

First of all, I've never committed any crime. I was very shocked and disappointed to know that the reason for my arrest in 2025 was because I practiced my freedom of speech. It was because I called for the end of the genocide. I called for a ceasefire. I called for peace. That was very disappointing and very shocking.

If you talked to me at the beginning, I would have told you, "No, I will be out in like two weeks or so," because I didn't do anything wrong. I went to a protest against a genocide. This shouldn't be something wrong. Every human should be protesting against a genocide. So I still had hope in the system, government, laws, everything. I was like, "No, I'm gonna be out in a short time." When I appealed my first bond, I was really disappointed.

It was hard. It's really hard to know that the land you always heard about as the land of freedom, the land where everybody can be whoever they want with whomever they want – it was very disappointing for me to be held for simply practicing my freedom of speech.

This all technically started at that protest outside Columbia in April 2024, and it feels like such a full-circle moment. How do you feel you've changed from this experience?

I've become stronger. Don't forget that I'm a Palestinian – it runs in my blood. I would often be thinking of my family and my people in Gaza and Palestine, and their resilience would inspire me. Their strength would lift up my spirit. I would be inspired by them, their resilience, and their stories.

I would often also think of the Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli military prisons. There are thousands of Palestinians being held, many of them without trial, many of them without charges, being tortured, abused, denied

basic human rights, starved on a daily basis. This would give me the power to continue to tell the story, to tell my story, because I'm one of them. I'm a Palestinian. I can't separate my story from the Palestinian story.

We often compare ICE with the IDF, given that ICE has literally been trained by them. Did you notice similarities between ICE and the IDF's conduct?

Yes. The humiliation, stripping people of their dignity, not calling us by names but calling us by numbers. Or seeing children – like this girl, she was 16 years old. She told me how ICE agents stormed her school and dragged her in front of her classmates. I saw this happen to my classmates in the West Bank.

Israel is one of the only countries that arrests children and puts them in military prisons, without charges, without trials. And ICE is doing the same.

They arrest children, they jail them, they kill them. My experience in ICE jails brought back all these bad memories of the West Bank and the checkpoints, the surveillance, the humiliation, the controlling. It's extremely similar.

As a Palestinian, what is the thing that you wish people in the States more widely understood?

As a Palestinian, I have the right to live with dignity, to live with freedom, to live with justice. Calling for the end of genocide shouldn't be a question. It shouldn't be, "Is that right or wrong?" Every human being should be calling for an end to genocide.

Our very existence is being questioned. For my entire life as a Palestinian, I live just to prove or just to try to exist. It's almost like we're begging the people of the world just to see us as human beings. I grew up as a Palestinian being used to my voice being silenced, seeing other Palestinian voices being silenced, hearing about people who advocate for Palestine or call for the Palestinian voice being silenced. So it's not a new thing, unfortunately. It's sad, and it hurts me to say that I'm used to this. I don't want to be used to this. I don't want to be just living and that's it. I want to live with freedom and dignity and justice as a Palestinian.

And what do you think people need to understand about what's still going on in Palestine?

Palestine has been under military occupation, under apartheid, for many years. It didn't just start. What's happening in Palestine is genocide against the Palestinian people, no matter what their religion is, no matter what their color is. It's every Palestinian person. It's ethnic cleansing. It's systematic ethnic cleansing. The Israelis are systematically cleansing the Palestinian people. We're not just talking about Gaza. We're talking about what's

"This history is still in the minds of Chippewa Cree tribal members," said Edward Stamper, a tribal member, and retired foundations and research director at Stone Child College. The Chippewa Cree story is little-known outside the tribe, but it echoes the uncertainty in the immigration crises the US faces today.

Just in recent days, the US House of Representatives proposed granting Venezuelan refugees Temporary Protected Status amid a growing humanitarian and political crisis in the South American country. TPS would protect Venezuelans already in the United States from deportation temporarily, but it is no guarantee of long-term residency. In December, the Trump administration revoked protected status of Southeast Asians who have lived in the United States for decades. For growing numbers of asylum-seekers petitioning the US, the idea of receiving — then losing — protected status is alarming. But deporting vulnerable populations has a sordid place in US foreign policy history — and its impact is lasting.

In the fall of 1885, Cree Chief Little Bear approached US Col. C. S. Otis in his office at Fort Assiniboine in Montana Territory and offered his hand. The officer refused. "Your hands are still bloody. I can't shake with you," Otis said.

Little Bear and his small band of 100-200 Indigenous Crees had just fought against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the failed and bloody Northwest Rebellion — a First Nations and Métis uprising against Canadian rule and policies that led to disease and starvation across the northern Plains. The Cree band fled Canada and was seeking asylum in the US, looking for protection from Mounties who were trying to prevent them from crossing the border.

Little Bear's band of Cree families traveled between Ft. Assiniboine and nearby Indian reservations looking for help. Otis and other government officials wanted to force them back to Canada. But without extradition requests, US federal authorities granted amnesty instead. Crees could stay in the country as political refugees.

Still, the cold reception Little Bear received at Fort Assiniboine was a precursor to future struggles. Labeled "foreign" Indians in the US, Crees were denied basic necessities, work — and eventually, even the right to stay in the country.

How could they be refugees when they were indigenous to the land? Borders transformed Native landscapes — regardless of whether or not they recognized those borders as valid. Little Bear's Crees, and other groups, both flouted the border and co-opted its power. They crossed at will, showing that they did not recognize the power of the border to divide their lands. But they also used the border to escape — knowing that it meant something to US and Canadian officials, and they couldn't be followed across the line.

Crees had been present in Montana for decades and viewed their homeland as the northern Plains on both sides of the border. But because they were considered foreign, Little Bear's Crees were not granted reservation

said. He started taking Know-Your-Rights cards to work, according to his daughter.

"He'd tell them to be informed and not to be afraid. He told them it was all going to be OK," she said, breaking into tears. In January, she says, he'd also made it a point to memorize her number "so that way, if his phone got taken away he could still call me. He'd have the number."

She still hasn't heard from him.

One of the few details Carlos Gonzalez has been able to gather keeps him up at night. He's heard from a handful of people that his brother tried to evade officials during the raid.

"He and some other coworkers tried to get away from it. They tried hiding. ... And just knowing that he tried and failed, it hurts," he said.

It makes him think that ICE officials arrived at the warehouse with a list of names, Gonzalez said. "I feel like if it's just a quick raid or just an unexpected raid, you pick up the people that you can and you leave. But considering that they made sure to get every last person, that's kind of I don't know, to me, it's suspicious. Sketchy."

Their small family is devastated, he said. His mother is beside herself, and his sister, who lives with the elder, now-detained Gonzalez, is frantically trying to get information about where he is. They have lined up a lawyer, he said, who still hasn't been able to locate where Gonzalez is being held.

The same day he was arrested, Gonzalez and his sister went to the LA County Jail, where many of the people arrested by ICE are being detained. Gonzalez said they were told to come back the following day, Saturday, because several of the arrestees hadn't been processed yet. Then, when they showed up on Saturday, they were told to come back again on Sunday, for the same reason. "On Sunday they told us that they moved him to Santa Ana but we don't know where," he said.

County jail officials did not respond to NPR's requests for comment.

And that's where things currently stand. Gonzalez says he's afraid his brother will be moved to a detention center in Adelanto, a two-hour drive away. Or worse, that his sibling will be taken out of state.

In addition to trying to track him down, Gonzalez says he and other families are trying to figure out how to get the workers' most recent pay. Friday was payday.

Ignored and deported, Cree 'refugees' echo the crises of today

Brenden Rensink, The World, January 28, 2019

Indigenous Crees were native to Montana and the northern Plains long before the US-Canada border divided the region. But bisected by the line, Crees became asylum-seekers on their own lands 150 years ago. Though some were granted political refugee status, Crees were still denied basic rights. Instead, many were killed, ignored and deported on both sides of the border.

happening in Jerusalem, the lands of '48 [areas within Israel's 1948 borders].

What's happening in Gaza is devastating. Bombs are still dropping, snipers are still shooting, tanks are still rolling, destroying buildings, cars, properties. And people still don't have access to medical care, basic medical care – something like a painkiller, for example. They still don't have easy access to it. Food and water is very, very minimal in Gaza.

Israel says they're allowing food trucks into Gaza. But most of the time, when the Palestinians – when my family – go to take this food, they're shot dead. They're killed by the Israeli military, by a strike, by a sniper. My family, for example – all of them, whoever's left in Gaza – they live in tents. In the winter, they're soaked with water. In the summer, they can barely breathe. You can't breathe in these tents made of plastic and UN-donated flour bags.

So the situation in Gaza is very devastating, and we could take hours to talk about it. But in general, what's happening in Palestine is not only about Gaza, not only about the West Bank, not only about Jerusalem – it's about the entirety of Palestine. And don't forget also the Palestinians in the diaspora. There are more than 5 million Palestinians who are refugees and denied the right to return to Palestine. Often, when we talk about Palestinian rights, some people might say, "Oh, just stop killing them, and that's it." And we forget about the more than 5 million Palestinian refugees outside of Palestine who are denied their basic right to return to their homeland.

What's your favorite thing about Palestine? What sticks out in your memory?

Everything is beautiful about Palestine. The land, the trees, the sea, the soil. Everything is beautiful about Palestine. Everything speaks in a poetic way. I'm about to cry. I can't tell you what's my favorite thing about Palestine. Palestine is a piece of heaven on earth.

Have you stayed in contact with your friends that are still inside? How are they doing?

Yes, I am still in touch with the ladies inside. The situation is still horrible. The conditions seem like they're getting worse every time. We're trying to talk more about the conditions so they can improve them and do something better, but it seems like nobody's caring. It gets worse and worse and worse.

For example, I'll tell you the story of an Iranian lady who came to the US as a UN refugee. She was paying her taxes. She was going to her regular check-ins, and one day she got arrested by ICE. She suffers from a rare sickness. She needs special medical care. She needs proper food – she needs to be careful about what she's eating, what she's drinking, all that. And in ICE jails, the food is not edible. The water has things swimming in it. They don't give you fruits or vegetables or anything like that.

So what happened to this lady is that she's not getting even the basic medical care. Now she's literally half paralyzed – the left side of her body became

paralyzed, completely paralyzed. I asked, “What medication are they giving you?” She said, “Nothing.” “What food are they giving you? Are they giving you fruits, at least, or vegetables?” She said, “No.” So this is one of the stories of the ladies that I’m still in contact with.

I would love to hear more about your conversation with Rashida Tlaib while inside. Tell me about that.

Congresswoman Tlaib was very eager to see with her own eyes what’s going on. I had the honor to meet her in person. She’s an incredible person. She has this dedication to helping people and trying to do anything to improve things, to make the situation better.

What she’s said [about ICE detention] is completely true. What we know is that all of these ICE jails are privately owned businesses for different companies, and they’re working with the government. They’re profiting from the government, and the government is profiting from them. So yes, her statement is completely correct.

What was the thing about being inside that disheartened you the most, and on the other hand, what was the moment inside that gave you the most hope?

It’s interesting, because they’re both kind of connected, kind of the same. What really disheartened me the most was being denied my basic religious rights and human rights, and also thinking of my family in Palestine. All I could do when I was outside was go to protests calling for the end of the genocide, and when I was inside the jail, I couldn’t even do this. Being denied my religious rights would really, really break my heart and make me sad all the time.

But what lifts my spirit, either in the jail or now, is actually my connection with Allah. This gives me more strength and keeps me going, having this tranquility and this peace inside me – just the mindset that Allah took care of me. I’m not alone. This was very, very important for me.

Sand Creek Massacre Foundation alleges ICE actions echo the federal government’s treatment of Native Americans

Briana Heaney, KRCC, February 9, 2026

The Sand Creek Massacre Foundation is accusing the federal government of repeating history.

“We are again witnessing the dehumanization of targeted groups of people, the deputizing of an untrained militia given extrajudicial rights to attack civilians, egregious disregard for the rule of law, and the disintegration of human rights,” the Foundation said in a statement put out on Friday. “The forces behind these government-sanctioned acts happening today in the

Firearms and Explosives, and the U.S. Marshals Service, among other agencies, assisted in carrying out the arrests for alleged "administrative immigration violations in support of worksite enforcement operations."

(Administrative immigration violations include overstaying a permitted visa, entering or reentering the U.S. without proper authorization, or making false statements on immigration forms.)

Amid the chaos, Carlos Gonzalez said he worked his way up to the gate and finally caught a glimpse of his brother.

"They had him up against a wall. Him and a bunch of other people were lined up and then I saw [officials] put chains on him and that was hard," Gonzalez said.

The 22-year-old said he was close enough to see the expression on his brother's face.

"Most people would think that it was very stoic, very calm," Gonzalez said. "But I grew up with him and I was able to see that he was scared. ... I know he was scared."

In those few terrifying moments, he said, it was as if he could see that his older brother was processing the possibility that he'd have to leave behind the entire life he'd built for himself over the years.

Gonzalez said he tried shouting to tell his brother he was there but the chaos around them made it impossible to communicate. So he stood there, watching as his brother and several other people he knows, were handcuffed and loaded into white nondescript vans.

Gonzalez declined to share how long his 35-year-old sibling has been in the United States. But he confirmed that his family, and the families of about a dozen others who were swept up in Friday's raid at the Ambiance Apparel warehouses, all come from the same small area in Veracruz, a Mexican state with a large indigenous Zapotec population.

How did they all end up packaging clothes or loading and unloading boxes out of cargo containers in Los Angeles?

"Word of mouth," Gabriel Vasquez told NPR in Spanish. Vasquez's brother, Jacob, was also among those arrested at the warehouse.

Gabriel Vasquez explained that over the years, word has spread about the jobs available at this particular company. "Someone finds out there's an opening, and then you tell your sister or your cousin, ... and that's how my brother got his job," he said. "He heard from a childhood friend who now is also detained."

Ambiance Apparel did not respond to NPR's requests for comment.

Apparently the arrival of ICE and other federal agents was not entirely unexpected. Sarai Ortiz told NPR that her father, Jose Ortiz, who was also detained by ICE on Friday, had been following immigration raids in the news.

Jose Ortiz was a floor manager and had been with the company for 18 years — he's been in the U.S. for 30 years. He was proud of working his way up the ladder and being a good manager. So, he made it his job to get informed, she

but also that economic support, because people were suffering after the harassment campaign and the 'garbage' insult from the president."

Reinvigorating public life for the Somali community may prove a tall order. With even citizens fearful, those non-citizens among Minnesota's Somalis are continuing to be aggressively targeted by Trump administration policies.

On Tuesday, the administration announced that it will end Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for Somalis in March, effectively forcing thousands of Somalis out of the country unless a court pauses the revocation of their protected status.

Somalis were just the new target group for anti-immigrant rhetoric, said another Somali cab driver, who asked to not be identified by name due to fear of retaliation.

"Before, it was 'Haitian people eating cats and dogs.' It was 'Mexicans are all rapists, all criminals.' Now, it's us," the driver said. "Tomorrow, who's it gonna be?"

After ICE raids in LA, families of those detained are desperate for answers

Vanessa Romo, KUOW, June 10, 2025

They're cousins, uncles, brothers, or in-laws.

"We're a close community. We all kinda know each other," Carlos Gonzalez told NPR. He said that's why he was getting call after call. "My phone was just ringing."

When he finally picked up, he said, his heart dropped. It was a friend of the family calling Friday to tell him that ICE had shown up at the Los Angeles warehouse where his older brother, Jose Paulino Gonzalez, has worked for the last 2 1/2 years.

They were rounding people up.

Federal agents arrested more than 40 people in workplace raids, including about two dozen employees from Ambiance Apparel in downtown LA's Fashion District. Many of those workers formed part of a close-knit community, with ties to the same indigenous Zapotec town in Veracruz, Mexico.

So as soon as he heard, the younger Gonzalez threw on some clothes and rushed out toward the Fashion District.

The scene was already a melee by the time he got there, he recounted. Protesters were chanting and yelling at officials who were outfitted in tactical gear, helmets and masks as they executed a federal search warrant.

In an emailed statement, ICE officials wrote, "ICE and its federal partners are doing their job, enforcing immigration law and removing criminal aliens from Los Angeles communities." Forty four people were arrested in Friday's raid, ICE said.

According to the statement, ICE, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

United States are the same as those that drove the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864."

The comments come as tensions across the country have escalated after the killing of two civilians by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Minnesota, multiple shootings of civilians by federal agents, and recent arrests of Native Americans by ICE.

"I'm going to cry," Dodie White Eagle, a member of the foundation's board and descendant of survivors of the massacre, said. "The kidnapping of children, the invading of our sovereign lands, and they're taking our own people."

The Sand Creek Massacre Foundation was created more than 150 years after the Sand Creek Massacre, when the U.S. Army opened fire on 230 unsuspecting Native Americans who were mostly women, children, and the elderly.

In the statement, the foundation said it exists to learn from the past and works to make sure atrocities, like the ones the Cheyenne and Arapaho people faced, never happen again.

White Eagle told KRCC she grew up always by her grandma's side, listening to her stories, and learning the Native American history she was never taught in school.

"(My grandma told) her story and the atrocities that they faced, and having to hear about how at the battle, how she ran," White Eagle said.

The generational memories that White Eagle carries are what she said pushed her to advocate for the foundation to publish the 2026 statement titled "Komaahe vo'estaneo'o tsesaa'evahosetseto'omeneheheo'o."

Translated from Cheyenne to English, it reads, "So that nobody else will have to suffer similar hardships."

"It's triggering all of the pain and the trauma that my grandmother would talk about and (why) they advocated tirelessly so that their memories wouldn't be forgotten," White Eagle said.

Attached to the statement is a poem from Cheyenne Ve'Kesohnestoohe, a descendant of a Sand Creek Massacre survivor. It's an adaptation of a sermon by Martin Niemoller, a German pastor who spoke out against Nazi rule.

"First, they came after the Mexican people. I did not speak out because I was not a Mexican person," Ve'Kesohnestoohe's poem begins.

"Then they came for the Cheyenne people," Ve'Kesohnestoohe's poem ends. "When they came after me, there was no one left to speak for me."

Dakota woman recounts more than 48 hours in immigration detainment

Amelia Schafer, ICT, February 2, 2026

More than 162 years after the Mdewakanton Dakota people were forcibly detained and held at Fort Snelling in Minnesota, a Mdewakanton woman found herself detained in the same place her ancestors had been.

On the drive into Fort Snelling, Sophie Watso, 30, said she closed her eyes and prayed. She sang a song in Dakota, a prayer song, asking her ancestors for guidance.

Upwards of 3,000 Dakota and Ho-Chunk people were imprisoned at Fort Snelling, a concentration camp, during the winter of 1862 following the Dakota Indian Wars. Approximately 300 Native people died there.

Aside from being the site of a former concentration camp, the area is also a site of creation for the Dakota people. B'dote, where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers meet, is one of the Dakota peoples' creation sites. Today, B'dote is visible from the bluffs at the historic Fort Snelling complex.

As historic immigration raids play out across the Twin Cities, several Native people have reported being detained at Fort Snelling. The Bishop Henry Whipple Building in Fort Snelling is being used as an ICE detainment and processing facility by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Watso was detained on Wednesday, Jan. 14, in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, a suburb immediately north of the city of Minneapolis. Watso wasn't released from ICE custody until Jan. 16, more than 48 hours after her initial encounter with ICE.

The Mdewakanton Dakota woman said she was monitoring ICE activity from her vehicle when agents and another group who she initially believed were local law enforcement approached her in her truck.

The video shows agents with the words "Police ICE" on their vests, which makes Watso believe they were all immigration enforcement personnel. Some agents or officers in the area have had the words "Police" or "ICE" labeled on them.

"It was a very confusing situation," she said. "Because of the way that they [ICE agents] do not identify themselves, right?"

One agent told Watso she was in violation of U.S. Code 18 section 111, which is a federal charge pertaining to imposing, obstructing or assaulting a federal law enforcement agent while on duty. ICE agents are allowed to detain U.S. citizens believed to be in violation of the code.

ICE agents have used this same charge against at least two other Native American people, William LaFromboise, a Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota man arrested while protesting ICE on Jan. 26, and Jose "Beto" Ramirez, a Red Lake Nation descendant detained on Jan. 7. Ramirez was charged nearly two weeks after his detainment.

Watso said one of the men told her she was impeding or obstructing an

and hot chocolate at a vigil near the site of Good's fatal shooting.

"We are not garbage. We are good people. We're Somali," Saman told The Intercept at the memorial. "You see that we are helping the Minneapolis community?"

Though out of the house now, Saman said she has been traveling with her U.S. passport and Social Security card.

"In case of ICE..." she said, trailing off.

Saman is not the only one. In the Twin Cities, many Somali citizens and permanent residents have taken to carrying their papers — especially cab drivers, whose jobs keep them in public.

"We have started carrying our passports at all times, for fear of when an ICE agent will pull us over, even those of us who are citizens," said Mustafa Mohamed Abdile, a board member of the Minnesota Uber/Lyft Drivers Association. "We are worried about ICE, and we are also worried about passengers who might support ICE."

One driver, Abdi, who asked to be identified only by his first name for fear of retribution, was asked by an elderly white customer where he was "originally" from — and repeated invective from the viral right-wing YouTube videos upon learning Abdi was Somali. "'Somalis are lining their pockets with millions by using government welfare money,'" Abdi recalled the man saying.

Abdi chuckled.

"If that were the case," he told the man, "I would not be driving you 10 miles on these slippery roads late on this cold night for just $15."

Despite the large numbers of citizens among the community, public life for Somalis in Minnesota has receded into private spaces.

In southern Minneapolis, the Karmel Mall — known informally as the Somali mall — would usually have a bustling crowd. On Saturday evening, however, the mall bore a deserted look, as it has for the past month.

"We open our shops everyday but people hardly come," said Abdul, a shopkeeper who sells perfumes and asked The Intercept to withhold his last name for fear of retribution. "I wouldn't have had time to speak to you if you came here a few months ago, I'd be that busy with customers. Now, it's all barren."

A co-owner of a Somali cafe in a racially diverse neighborhood in south Minneapolis, Duniya Omar has noticed immigrant-run stores and restaurants locking their doors and closing their shutters. At her cafe too, the flow of customers is down to a trickle.

"It makes a huge financial difference," said Omar, who has lived in Minneapolis since she was five. "Our business has been affected, 100 percent."

Local Somalis have organized to drum up business for their community.

Abdi Mohamed, a Somali American filmmaker, said, "There was an event that we had, where we invited people to come to the Somali mall and patron our businesses, eat from our restaurants — to have not only that solidarity

earned his moniker because, living in the camp, he learned English strictly by watching the BBC and would practice by speaking like a news anchor.

"We fled a civil war," Hasan said. "We are more resilient than they think."

The Somalis of Minnesota have been under near-constant attack from the highest levels of the Trump administration for months. In December, right-wing media began focusing on a long-running scandal involving day care centers accused of defrauding the government. Many of the claims made by right-wing YouTuber Nick Shirley — who has an anti-immigrant history and relied on a source who has made anti-Muslim remarks — have been debunked.

"Their country stinks, and we don't want them in our country," Trump said in a tirade that was bigoted even by the president's standard. "We're going to go the wrong way if we keep taking in garbage into our country."

On December 17, as ICE and other federal agents were flooding into Minnesota, a group of Somali leaders came together to form SALT, the Somali American Leadership Table, an acronym chosen as a nod to melting ice. The group was brought together because the founders saw the assault on their fellow Minnesotans as a risk to the entire community.

"The armed men and women, with their faces covered, roaming our streets and profiling us," said Imam Yusuf Abdulle, a SALT co-founder. "We thought we had left all that behind, but now this moment in America is reminding us again of the Somali civil war."

"But we are fighting," said Abdulle, who is also director of the Islamic Association of North America, which includes close to 40 Islamic centers across the country. "We didn't come this far, make our lives here, to again be targeted and abused like this."

When Renee Nicole Good was shot and killed by ICE agent Jonathan Ross last week, SALT leaders organized a protest where elderly Somali women handed out tea and homemade sambusas.

"Renee died for us, she died protecting us," said Jamal Osman, a Somali American and the vice president of the Minneapolis City Council. "Trump is singling us out, but our allies here are doing everything they can to protect us."

Somalis in Minnesota are overwhelmingly citizens. Nearly 58 percent of them were born in the U.S., the Census Bureau reports. Of the foreign-born Somalis in the state, 87 percent are naturalized U.S. citizens, according to CNN.

ICE's aggressive targeting, though, has meant even citizens have been afraid to venture out. Saadia Saman, a citizen employed at a Minneapolis warehouse, hadn't gone to work for three days after ICE operations ramped up in the early days of the new year.

Hours after Good was killed, federal agents swarmed outside a nearby high school and violently seized a Spanish-language translator. One of Saman's daughters, a 10th grader, was there and came home crying.

The following night, Saman, clad in a yellow bib, was distributing free food

ongoing federal immigration investigation, but another told her if she didn't stop what she was doing she would then be in violation of the code.

"A lot of people were talking at the same time," she said. "At that point, I was already pulled over. So I had already stopped everything I was doing."

Agents asked for her identification, Watso said she did not feel comfortable stepping out of her vehicle or handing over her ID.

Some tribes have reported incidents where individuals posing as ICE questioned members and asked for their identification.

Roughly three hours south of Minneapolis, the Meskwaki Nation in Tama, Iowa, reported at least one tribal member was questioned by men in nearby Toledo, Iowa, pretending to be immigration agents. The tribe said upon investigation, the individuals were confirmed to not be ICE personnel.

"I didn't know who these people were," Watso said. "They're just some masked men that approached my window. So I didn't feel comfortable giving them my identification."

Moments later, Watso said the agents used a window breaker to smash in her truck's driver's side and passenger side windows.

Watso's dog, a small pomeranian named Modean, was sitting on the passenger seat. She grabbed Modean to try and shield him from the shattered glass. Around her, prairie sage from her dashboard fell around the truck.

Watso, who is 5 feet, 2 inches tall, said it wasn't difficult for the agents to pull her out of her truck from the broken window and place her on the ground. She held tight to her dog, who she feared was injured from the broken glass.

"There was nothing I could hold on to," she said. "I was just holding on to my dog, and they put me on the ground on top of the glass that they just broke. And that's when they were just trying to rip my dog from my arms."

Watso said agents grabbed Modean from her arms and took him away from her before laying her face down on the ground, on top of the broken glass, a few agents leaned their full weight on her back and placing her in handcuffs. She could barely breathe, she said.

Fortunately, some of her friends were in the area and able to record the interaction, she said.

"I was yelling to them," she said. "I told them, 'Tell them where my dog is,' and they were also malicious about that.

Watso said her friends were able to locate her dog at a nearby pound while officers drove her to the Whipple building in Fort Snelling for processing. Her friends then took her dog to stay with Watso's mother.

At this point, knowing she was on her way to Fort Snelling, Watso began to sing.

"So it was important to me to sing a song, one of the only songs that I know by heart," she said. "It's a prayer song, and it's asking for help."

She felt like she was captured, she said, and began reflecting on what her Mdewakanton ancestors had experienced a century ago.

"The words in this song are asking for help, telling the creator that I want to

live," she said. "Not only am I praying for my safety, but I was also praying and wanting to greet my ancestors, in our language, with a song, because I know that my ancestors are there."

Agents began to make fun of her singing, she said, asking if she was on drugs. But she didn't care.

"I don't do drugs and I don't drink alcohol, but I expected that from them," she said. "I understood that these people are colonized and they have the intention of degrading you."

So she made sure to look them in the eyes as she sang.

"I wasn't going to show them that I'm a spectacle," she said.

Once inside of the Whipple building, Watso said she waited for several hours in a warehouse-like facility, her arms and legs shackled. She felt scared but oddly enough comforted at the same time, knowing her ancestors were there, she said.

"I knew that I wasn't alone," she said. "I knew that my people have suffered here, but I also knew that people have lived here."

She said she took comfort in that fact.

While detained, Watso said she was not offered an opportunity to speak with a lawyer. Watso said she at one point verbally requested to speak with a lawyer, but was not given the opportunity. Since she was not able to speak with a lawyer, Watso was further transferred out of the Whipple building to an ICE partner facility, the Sherbourne County Jail.

Sherbourne was a much better experience than being kept at the Whipple building, she said.

"The people at Sherbourne County, these are just sheriffs, people who work there, and they're actually nice to you," she said. "They actually treat you like a human. They ask you if you want water and they give it to you. They talk to you normally like you're a person."

In Sherbourne on Thursday, Jan. 15, Watso said was finally given an opportunity to make phone calls. Watso was then able to contact a lawyer and has since been working with the Native American Rights Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to the legal protection of Indigenous people, tribes and tribal organizations.

Because no charges were filed against her, Watso was let go from Sherbourne after a 48-hour hold on Friday, Jan. 16.

Following her release from Sherbourne, Watso said was taken back to the Whipple building in Fort Snelling by two Homeland Security department agents. Watso was given paperwork and her possessions back at Fort Snelling and informed she could now go home, but it wasn't the end, she said.

While leaving, Watso said she wasn't given clear instruction by the agents on how to exit the building. While making her way through the parking lot, jogging to speed up her journey due to the below freezing temperatures, Watso was tackled by several ICE agents who assumed she was attempting to break out of the facility.

Watso said at least four agents dressed in full gear tackled her, leaving her

"But I am a citizen. I need to do this for my community," he said, speaking to The Intercept on Sunday, through a friend who translated.

The only breaks Yusuf takes are at mosques or the West Bank Diner, a restaurant that gives free tea and sambusas, a savory Somali pastry, to anyone who is part of the patrol.

Creating new ICE watch patrols and rapid response networks, fearing going to work or leaving home, watching their shared community spaces grow desolate and their shops sit empty — these are the experiences of Somali residents of the Twin Cities who spoke with The Intercept about being under siege in their own hometowns.

While many of the state's residents are being impacted by President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, Somalis in particular know they are targets of the administration and the thousands of federal immigration agents deployed to Minnesota.

Yusuf's Signal chat includes eight Somali founding members among the hundreds of volunteers belonging to a patrol group created last month after Trump's surge of force began.

"When ICE started showing up in our neighborhoods," said Abdi Rahman, a 28-year-old founding member of the West Bank neighborhood patrol, "we realized we can't fight the federal government. But we can come together and patrol the neighborhood, keep ICE out, deescalate, keep some of these right-wing lunatics out of our neighborhood."

The Somali community in the Twin Cities is putting up a resistance against ICE, pooling resources, and trying to protect its more vulnerable members from arrest.

In the past two weeks, videos of U.S. citizens of Somali heritage confronting ICE have spread online. Most Somali people in the Twin Cities are citizens or permanent residents, but the many who are not find themselves vulnerable to the vagaries of the federal government.

"The non-citizens have stopped stepping out entirely. We buy groceries for them and drop them off at their homes," Rahman said.

The current moment is reminiscent of the unrest that swept Minneapolis in 2020, Rahman said, after police murdered George Floyd. "The Somali community came together back then too, and it really helped keep us safe."

Rahman had just ended his own patrol on a 35-degree day — balmy by the standards of January in Minneapolis. A resident of the West Bank, walking around the neighborhood of over 10,000 families instilled Rahman with a sense of belonging.

"That's why I hate that Trump questions whether we belong here or not," he said. "I am a true Minnesotan. This is not even what I consider cold!"

For many Somali residents of the Twin Cities, the Trump administration's racist tirades and crackdown aren't the first adversity they've experienced — and not the first time they've set their sights on persevering.

Mahmoud Hasan, a community activist whom everyone refers to as BBC, was in a refugee camp after fleeing civil strife in Somalia in the 1990s. He

support the city can provide."

Added Her, "We support whatever steps they take to protect their workforce during this temporary closure."

UNITE Here Local 17, the union that represents hospitality workers at both hotels, has not responded to a request for comment on the closures.

For more than a week, some members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe have posted questions to social media about whether federal law enforcement, including ICE agents, were staying at the band's hotels.

Virgil Wind, the Mille Lacs Band chief executive, posted a cell phone video last Monday on his personal social media page that said it was possible ICE agents were staying at the hotels.

"The answer is that we very well could be," Wind said in the video.

Mille Lacs band tribal members protested outside the tribe's government buildings on Friday. Tribal member Daphne Shabaiash was among those present at that protest.

"It wasn't OK that we were doing it for financial gain," Shabaiash said. "It was like a moral duty for me to speak on the issue. I felt like other people were kind of being hushed. I wasn't willing to be hushed because it had affected me personally with family members of mine in the cities."

Shabaiash, who describes herself as a person of "Native American and Mexican decent," said members of her family who live in St. Paul have been negatively affected by ICE operations.

She praised the tribe's decision to close the hotels.

"Housing those agents caused real harm and frustration within our communities, and many tribal and community members had to speak up forcefully to be heard." Shabaiash said.

Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures and the Mille Lacs band of Ojibwe refused interview requests.

Somalis are fighting back, from homemade sambusas for protesters to foot patrols on the lookout for ICE

Fatima Khan, Meghnad Bose, The Intercept, January 17, 2026

Kamal Yusuf doesn't speak English. That hasn't stopped him from getting involved as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents flood his immigrant-heavy Minneapolis neighborhood.

For the last two weeks, he has been on the streets actively looking out for any ICE presence.

From 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Yusuf travels through the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, popularly known as West Bank, on foot in biting cold and on slippery ice. The instant he spots ICE agents, he immediately informs a Signal chat and whistles for several minutes without pause.

Yusuf, with his neon orange vest and black beanie that says "FUCK ICE," is not an inconspicuous presence.

with back pain and further traumatizing her. She was placed back in handcuffs and again taken into the Whipple building where another agent verified she had been released from custody, at which point she was freed again, this time with a ride home.

"It's all on surveillance video," she said. "Here I am free, running, and then I'm tackled, brutalized, cuffed back up and brought back inside. Every time I go outside now, my head is on a swivel, like, left, right, left, right, turn behind you. 'Is there anyone behind me?' I'm traumatized."

Watso said as of Jan. 26 she had not yet been able to go to the hospital to have her injuries evaluated. She has, however, been able to visit with a therapist and is staying with friends for safety, she said.

The experience has left her completely terrified, she said. Since she's staying with friends, on one occasion she accidentally locked herself out of the apartment and began to panic.

"I was here alone, and I was outside, and I didn't have anything, any identification on me, so I was immediately terrified," she said.

Fortunately, a couple welcomed her into their home until her brother was able to come pick her up.

"That was a crazy feeling," she said. "For people like me, who look like me, you don't even want to leave your house because you're scared ICE is going to take you."

Watso said she wants to share her story to raise awareness to what's really happening in Minneapolis, a place she moved to two years ago to be closer to her ancestral homelands.

"[I moved back] to reconnect to the land and my people and to live on this land," she said. "So many people don't get to live on their ancestral homelands in America, so I felt like it was important to do that."

After hearing about charges pressed against Jose Ramirez, a Red Lake nation descendant who was detained by ICE the week prior, Watso was scared of the potential for the same thing to happen to her.

"I feel like it's important to speak out about what happened to me," she said.

Being surrounded by friends and family is helping her heal, she said. Leaning on prayer and medicine has helped to center her.

"I haven't been to sweat yet but I'm planning on it," she said. "I know that there's definitely a lot to process, but at the same time I don't want to. I don't want to think about it."

Excerpt from 'For Minneapolis's Native Americans, a New Fight Echoes a Bitter History'

Matthew Purdy, New York Times, January 28, 2026

...One of many moments from her [Sophie Watso's] trip to Whipple sticks in her mind: An agent, noting that her driver's license listed her address as outside the city, said: "You're not even from Minneapolis. Why do you care?"

"This is Dakota land" she recalled saying. "I'm Dakota."

Protest breaks out at Dilley immigration detention facility holding 5-year-old Liam Ramos

David Martin Davies, Texas Public Radio, January 26, 2026

A protest broke out Saturday at the South Texas family detention complex in Dilley, about 70 miles south of San Antonio, after guards abruptly ordered attorneys to leave while detainees — many of them children — poured into open areas of the facility chanting "Libertad," or "Freedom," according to an immigration attorney who witnessed the event.

Immigration attorney Eric Lee said he was at the Dilley facility for a confidential visit with clients — an immigrant family of six, including five children — when guards began shouting for everyone in the waiting area to leave, citing what they described as "an incident."

As the Michigan-based attorney walked toward his car, he said he heard what sounded like "hundreds of children" shouting, with voices he described as "high-pitched" and "urgent." He said he could see children streaming from dormitory areas behind a chain-link fence and chanting "Libertad."

Lee said clients he later spoke with told him the protest was triggered by concerns over the treatment of Liam Conejo Ramos, a five-year-old who was taken into custody with his father in Minnesota earlier this week and transferred to the Dilley facility.

School officials in Columbia Heights, Minnesota, have said federal agents took the child from a running car in the family's driveway and directed him to knock on the door of the home — an action the superintendent described as "essentially using a 5-year-old as bait."

The Department of Homeland Security has disputed that account, saying agents did not target the child, were focused on apprehending the child's father—whom DHS said fled on foot—and attempted to have the child's mother take custody of the boy.

Lee described Saturday's action inside the facility as a peaceful demonstration, not a riot, and said the show of solidarity carried risk for detained families.

Lee said the protest unfolded against what he described as harsh day-to-day conditions inside the Dilley detention center. He characterized the facility as

"a horrible, horrible place," alleging that drinking water is "putrid" and often undrinkable, and that meals have contained "bugs," dirt, and debris.

"The guards are just as tough as the guards at the adult facilities. This is not a place that you would want to have your child be for even 15 minutes," Lee said.

Lee said the site does not operate as "civil detention," arguing it functions like a punitive facility despite housing families.

CoreCivic, the private prison company that operates the site under federal contract, has previously said the facility is intended to provide an "open and safe environment" with access to services such as recreation, counseling, and legal resources.

Texas Public Radio reached out to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for comment on the disturbance and on Lee's allegations regarding Liam Ramos' treatment but had not received a response by Saturday evening.

The Dilley detention complex — known for years as the South Texas Family Residential Center — closed in 2024 and later reopened, as federal authorities expanded detention capacity for immigrant families, according to prior reporting and company statements.

Saturday's episode comes amid heightened scrutiny of immigration enforcement nationally, including protests in Minneapolis following the January 7 killing of Renée Macklin Good during an ICE operation, and another fatal shooting involving federal immigration agents reported Saturday.

Tribal-owned hotels temporarily shutter in St. Paul due to 'safety' concerns

Melissa Olson, MPR News, January 19, 2026

Two St. Paul hotels — The DoubleTree St. Paul Downtown and the Intercontinental St. Paul Riverfront — temporarily shuttered on Sunday.

Both properties are owned by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, a tribal nation in central Minnesota and is a part of the band's portfolio of businesses, which includes Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Hinkley.

The Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures Board of Directors says they made the decision to "temporarily suspend" operations at the hotels "in response to elevated safety and security concerns."

On Sunday morning, guests at the downtown hotels received letters saying their reservations were cancelled.

"Due to heightened safety concerns in St. Paul, we have made the difficult decision to temporarily close our hotel, and your reservation will be cancelled effective Sunday, January 18th at 12 p.m.," the letter read.

Combined, the two hotels account for more than 600 rooms.

St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her said in a statement to MPR News that her office has been in contact with Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, "to determine what