



SDIRC

July 28, 2023

Human Relations Commission
202 C Street, 12th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Chair Nash and Commissioners,

The San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium (SDIRC) is a coalition of approximately 50 diverse organizations across San Diego County that fights to protect and advance the human and civil rights of immigrants and refugees. Our organizational members come from the faith, legal, labor, and community sectors of justice work in our border region. As such they are very active and engaged with the immigrant community and border issues. SDIRC respectfully requests time during the Human Relations Commission August meeting to present on the illegal and inhumane detention of migrants that occurred in San Ysidro and Jacumba during the lifting of Title 42.

In the weeks leading up to Title 42 being lifted in May, AFSC San Diego and Friends of Friendship Park observed hundreds migrants being detained by Border Patrol in open air conditions between the layers of the border wall in San Ysidro. Individuals and families were held there for days, unable to leave, without food, water, shelter and access to bathrooms and showers. AFSC San Diego, Friends of Friendship Park, Alliance San Diego, Universidad Popular and other SDIRC members and partners quickly mobilized to bear witness and provide humanitarian aid at the site in San Ysidro. Later, Catholic Charities and Alliance San Diego were alerted that a similar situation was taking place in Jacumba, where over a thousand migrants were being detained outside by Border Patrol. SDIRC mobilized partners to assist the volunteers in Jacumba who were organizing water, food and supply drops.

The open air detention centers in San Ysidro and Jacumba escalated into a humanitarian crisis that reached national levels of concern. Due to the vigilance and quick response of civil society groups, we were able to prevent a public health nightmare and loss of life in our region. This is not the first humanitarian emergency in our region and it certainly will not be the last. We believe the County of San Diego has a role to play in future responses, and we would like to be able to present to the Commission to open discussion on how the County could potentially coordinate with non profits and provide resources for more effective responses in the future.

We propose the following presenters for the discussion:

- Pedro Rios/Adriana Jasso, AFSC San Diego
- Arcela Nuñez Alvarez/Flower Alvarez Lopez, Universidad Popular
- Lilian Serrano, Southern Border Communities Coalition Director
- Mary Baker, Southern California Care Community
- Tom Wong, United States Immigration Policy Center (USIPC) at UCSD

We feel it is also be important for the following county department heads to be present, and respectfully request that the Human Relations Commission invite them:

- Lucero Chavez Basilio, director of the County Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
- Jeff Toney, director of the County Office of Emergency Services
- Dr. Elizabeth Hernandez, director of County Public Health Services
- Dr. Eric C. McDonald, director of the County Health and Human Services Agency
- Michael Garcia, Chief Deputy of the Office of Assigned Counsel

Finally, we offer the following materials ahead of the meeting to help provide context.

- Complaint filed with the Department of Homeland Security Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Office by the Southern Borders Communities Coalition – [SBCC DHS CRCL Complaint](#)
- Survey of migrants detained in Jacumba by USIPC – [Lives in Danger: Seeking Asylum Against the Backdrop of Increased Border Enforcement](#)
- AFSC: [Humanity and solidarity defies the border wall, providing basic needs to asylum seekers](#)
- Universidad Popular incident debrief – [Human Dignity Violated on U.S. Soil ¡Agua. Agua por favor!](#)

We hope to be able to brief the Commission so we can open a discussion on how the County can better respond and partner with nonprofits during future humanitarian emergencies. Thank you for the opportunity to present.

Sincerely,



Paulina Reyes, Esq.
Chair, San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium