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ICE Deported an Immigrant. Now, No One Can Find Him.

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A Venezuelan man ordered to be deported has vanished into the “black hole” created by the Trump administration’s illegal denial of due process for immigrants.

Ricardo Prada Vásquez was marked for deportation among a group of detainees sent to El Salvador last month as part of Donald Trump's mass deportations under the Alien Enemies Act. But now his name does not appear in the government's records of immigrants to be detained and deported, Venezuelan authorities can't find him, and his family hasn't heard from him in more than a month, according to a Tuesday report from [The New York Times](#).

The 32-year-old father was detained by immigration authorities on January 15 after accidentally driving over the Ambassador Bridge, which connects Michigan to Ontario, while he was working as a food delivery driver. He had immigrated to the U.S. in November 2024 using the CBP One app, and was permitted to remain in the country while his case was considered.

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Prada was initially able to stay in touch with his friend in Chicago, Javier, who spoke to the *Times* under the condition that he only be referred to by his middle name, for fear of becoming a target of immigration authorities. On March 15, Prada called Javier and told him he was being deported, and expected to return to Venezuela. Javier was the last known person to have contact with Prada.

"He has simply disappeared," Javier told the *Times*.

Prada's name was not included in the list of immigrants removed to El Salvador.

Prada's family waited to hear from him but heard nothing. "He fell off the face of the earth," said Prada's mother, Maria Alejandra Vega. "It was sheer agony."

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Prada was among the group of Venezuelan immigrants who were moved south toward Texas, ahead of the Trump administration's staging of a massive deportation under the AEA of detainees it alleged were gang members. Many of these individuals had no criminal record, and evidence of their gang affiliation was thin.

Prada's family told the *Times* that he was not a member of a gang. He did have tattoos, which is one of the characteristics ICE authorities have used to determine alleged gang affiliation. He was initially moved to an ICE facility in Ohio before being sent to the El Valle Detention Facility in south Texas, where, after failing to secure a lawyer, he was ordered to be deported.

"This case represents a black hole where due process no longer exists," Stephen Yale-Loehr, an immigration scholar at Cornell Law School, told the *Times*.

"This case shocks the conscience," he said. "I have not heard of a disappearance like this in my 40-plus years of practicing and teaching immigration law."

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Over the weekend, the Supreme Court [ordered](#) that the Trump administration pause all deportations under the AEA after reports spread that the government was [planning](#) to remove another group of Venezuelan immigrants, in violation of the high court's prior ruling that detainees be given the opportunity to "actually seek habeas relief in the proper venue before such removal occurs."

The court's ruling sent Donald Trump [into a rage](#) Monday, as the administration has continued to ramp up its rhetoric against due process. In reality, there are no "activist" judges stymying the president's wishes, but judges requiring that power to be administered according to the rule of law. And the right of due process is exactly what might ensure that the government does not lose a human being.

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