

## IMMIGRATION ACTIVISTS RALLY ON SATURDAY

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### **Body**

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**IMMIGRATION**, it is no secret, has become a human rights scandal of major proportions.

Every year the number of desperately poor people who perish at the borders increases, as does the number of hardworking families ripped apart by the repressive policies that pass for **immigration** reform these days.

But don't be fooled: Those who die in the Arizona desert and those fathers and mothers who are summarily deported have nothing to do with terrorism or with U.S. security.

The failure of Congress to act on a comprehensive and fair reform has been largely responsible for turning the **immigration** crisis into the far-reaching human tragedy it is today.

"Instead, Homeland Security has stepped up its campaign of fear and disappearances through workplace raids and deportations," said a statement from New York United for Immigrant Rights, an umbrella organization of more than 60 New York groups.

To demand the end of repression and to ask for Congress to recognize and address the systemic failures of 20 years of **immigration** policy, New York United is holding a march and **rally** on **Saturday** under this slogan: No deal: full legalization now!

"We don't need walls, we need bridges. We don't need repression, we need a real solution to the **immigration** problem," said Joel Magallán, a Jesuit brother who is the executive director of Asociación Tepeyac, a Mexican community organization and one of the **rally** organizers.

Instead of the desperately needed comprehensive reform, the country is getting a shameful border wall and merciless raids and deportations.

"We want real **immigration** reform, and this is what it means: Stop mandatory detention and deportations, not guest worker programs but full legalization," said Aarti Shahani of Families for Freedom, a multiethnic network that fights deportation.

Shahani is actually articulating two of the demands New York United wants to stress with **Saturday's** march.

The group also is asking for an immediate end to the deaths at the border, which in 2005 reached 460, almost 40% more than in 2004 and the highest number since the Border Patrol began counting in 1998.

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The New York United leadership says the bill authorizing the \$6 million wall at the border, passed by both Houses last month and quickly signed by President Bush, is "a new low in the attack on workers' rights and immigrants' rights."

The wall "is certain to add to the death toll of 4,000-plus children, women, and men in the desert," they said.

The marchers on **Saturday** will have their own response to the Wall of Shame in the form of a symbolic Wall of Remembrance and Resistance.

"It will be symbolic, with the names and pictures of those who have died crossing and of those who have been taken from their families and jobs to be deported," said Walter Sinche of Pachamama, an Ecuadoran organization in Queens. "They are human beings, and even if they have no papers, they have human rights."

DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving - a group that organizes low-income South Asian immigrants, mainly from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, is also part of New York United.

"South Asians make up the fastest-growing ethnic community and second-largest Asian immigrant community in the city," said DRUM's founder, Monami Maulik. "And after 9/11, we have been targeted and racially profiled. South Asians, especially the young, are routinely asked for their **immigration** papers by police and by city agencies in New York, despite Executive Order 41. We want this to stop."

"This is a time for unity and for keeping up hope," Magallán said. "We invite all New Yorkers to join us on **Saturday** at 1 p.m. at Union Square Park."

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