

# Asylum Now

for Annelise Pineda & Oriana Benavides!

## Picket and Fill the Asylum Trial for the Benavides-Pineda Family

**MON. OCT. 28**

1PM Picket, 2:30PM Hearing  
S.F. Immigration Court, 100 Montgomery St.  
(near Montgomery St. BART), Suite 800



Annelise Pineda and her daughter, Oriana Benavides are members of the Berkeley community, and they need our help to win asylum from being deported back to certain political persecution, torture, or worse in Venezuela. Oriana attends Berkeley High School and Annelise works in Berkeley. Victor Pineda, Annelise's cousin and the family's sponsor, is a member of UC Berkeley's faculty and former ASUC Senator at UC Berkeley.

2-3 years ago, members of the Benavides-Pineda family entered the United States with legal travel documents. Active members of the opposition movement in Venezuela, Rafael and other family members have been physically beaten, tortured, attacked, and threatened for protesting the Maduro regime. Rafael Benavides, his wife, Annelise Pineda, and their three children are part of the mass exodus of political refugees from Venezuela, the largest in the Western Hemisphere, seeking shelter in the United States and several other Central American, South American and Caribbean nations.

Rafael Benavides applied for asylum for himself and his family on November 12, 2017. Only days later, while vacationing in Southern California, the family accidentally drove across the border to Mexico, a common mistake on a confusing highway. This accident has put the family in an impossible situation, where, despite their pending asylum process, they were detained and placed in deportation

removal proceedings. Their experience in America's immigrant concentration camps was hellish and traumatizing.

After spending 8 long months in a Georgia immigration detention center, Rafael Benavides was finally released from detention. Despite tremendous pressure to give up and sign self-deportation papers, Rafael's courage and persistence remained strong. His resolve was strengthened by the determined efforts of family and friends to mobilize support for him. Together with BAMN, they publicly circulated petitions in the schools, spoke at city council meetings and to the media, gathered support letters from community members and educators and mobilized outside of the immigration court hearings in San Francisco. All this made it possible to stop Rafael's deportation and reunite him with family and friends.

The struggle to stop their deportation is not over. They are still in deportation proceedings. **Annelise and Oriana are the first to have their asylum trial, so the outcome of their trial on Oct. 28 in San Francisco will set a precedent for the rest of the family.** But they are closer to victory than ever before because of their public struggle. The Berkeley and Bay Area community that they are now part of has helped to reunite them, prevented their deportation, and also shed light on the plight of thousands of Venezuelan family exiles in the United States.

Here in the Bay Area, the most militant community of the Resistance, the Benavides-Pineda family's courage, together with the leadership of BAMN, provides an urgently needed example that the movement can generalize and implement in order to win in the months to come. Trump continues his brutal and illegal child separation policy while also sending prospective asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their asylum cases are pending.

The political and economic situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate at a rapid pace, in part because of the direct intervention through sanctions by the Trump Administration, who are laying the groundwork for a military coup and even more turmoil. People like the Benavides Pineda family, who have had the courage to speak out and act against injustice in Venezuela, continue to be repressed, and in the worst cases tortured and killed. Massive food shortages, a dearth of medical supplies and services, and rampant violence has led to an outpouring of over 2.6 million exiles who have fled Venezuela in a desperate bid to survive. In the US, the number of migrants seeking asylum from Venezuela is almost three-times as many as from any other country. And yet the Trump Administration continues to turn its back on them and has, in fact, placed Venezuelans on the fast track for deportation.

We cannot rely on the political games of cynical politicians. The national leadership of the Democratic Party has provided ineffective and half-stepping opposition to the criminal abuses of Trump and the Republicans. Until

beginning the long overdue impeachment inquiry, they have been more worried about scoring votes for themselves rather than victories against Trump.

Any illusions of reliance in the legal system to provide justice and safety for refugees also evaporates as Trump appoints dozens of right wing federal judges prepared to carry out his policy of mass deportations of immigrants. It's even worse now with the appointment of Bret Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, a sexual predator and anti-immigrant ideologue who believes in giving free rein to Trump's presidential authority.

The last line of defense for justice and equality in America is the brave and independent leadership and action of the national Resistance to Trump. The movement stopped Trump's first Muslim ban with mass demonstrations that shut down airports rendering his attack a dead letter in practice. Militant leadership from the ranks of the black, Latina/o, and LGBTQ communities, immigrants, women, and youth continue to be a source of inspiration and direction for our movement.

Join us to hear the Benavides-Pineda family speak of their experience in their fight against deportation and for citizenship rights. We will draw lessons from the victories we've had, and plan for the challenges and opportunities we now face in the struggle to win asylum for the Benavides-Pineda family and all other asylum seekers. Every victory we win for immigrant rights is a defeat for Donald Trump, and takes us closer to his impeachment and resignation or removal.

**\*\*Sign the Petition to Stop the Benavides-Pineda Family's Deportation at:  
[Tinyurl.com/PetitionAsylum4BenavidesPineda](http://Tinyurl.com/PetitionAsylum4BenavidesPineda)**

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**No ban, no wall, sanctuary for all!  
Stop I.C.E. terror and all deportations!  
Stop Trump's child separation and family detention policies!  
Shut down the concentration camps! Free all immigrant detainees!  
Stop the "Remain in Mexico" policy!  
Pass the Federal DREAM Act! Defend DACA and TPS!  
Build the independent, integrated Resistance to force Trump to be impeached and removed!**

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**Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality  
By Any Means Necessary (BAMN)**

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