

Bayfield business owner deported to Honduras

Edin Ramos, who has lived in U.S. since 2003, leaves wife and three kids behind

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Edin Ramos, a Bayfield business owner who has been held in an Immigration and Custom Enforcement detention center in Aurora since February, has been deported to his home country, Honduras.

Ramos, a husband and father of three, was detained by ICE on Feb. 5. He had earlier been detained by ICE in 2012 but was granted a stay of removal, or temporary postponement. He had successfully renewed his stay of renewal every year until November 2017, when he was denied and given a grace period to get his affairs in order before being deported.

According to Ramos' deportation order, Edin will have to stay out of the United States for 10 years before he can apply for a waiver to return.

"I think it's going to be very destructive to our society, to our community over the long-term if we continue to separate families, separate children from their parents," said Thalía Ramos, Edin's wife. "As a society, we need to recognize and realize that children need a healthy upbringing, have a healthy outlook on life. By doing this, they're traumatizing the children. It's going to create issues down the long term."

Ramos had been living undocumented in the U.S. when he fled from Honduras in 2003 to escape from violence and political unrest, [according to a previous interview](#) with The Durango Herald. He moved to Bayfield and met Thalía in 2006, where the couple opened Sun Cleaning, a medical facility cleaning business. In 2015, the couple opened Sun Linen Services, a commercial laundry business.

Thalía spoke with Edin on the phone every day during his detainment, and visited him in person three times, she said.

“Speaking to some people, they have no idea what a detention center is, but it’s a jail,” Thalia said. “You go in there, you can speak through a telephone between a piece of glass, that’s about it. Definitely no physical contact at all. We did see each other, but it was a little difficult.”

On April 27, Edin was transferred to Arizona, where detainees are held before they are deported. On Tuesday, Edin received a medical evaluation and told Thalia he believed he would be deported the next day.

The next day, Thalia never received a phone call from Edin. He reached out to her late that evening to inform her he was in Honduras. He is currently living back and forth between his father’s and sister’s homes.

Thalia said her lawyer has told her there’s not much legally that can be done to bring him back.

“There’s a possibility that if something were to happen to him while he was in Honduras, that he could try to reapply for asylum or something,” Thalia said. “That’s not exactly something you wish to happen, even if it is to get back with your family.”

The La Plata County Economic Development Alliance helped the Ramos family by writing letters to three congressional offices and to the Colorado Office of Economic Development to try to stop the deportation.

“(Edin’s businesses) were filling a missing service in our local economy, and he was employing 13 people in Bayfield doing this,” said Roger Zalneraitis, executive director of the alliance. “There’s a very big risk that a business will close as a result of this deportation. That’s why we got involved.”

Thalia said she isn’t sure what the family will do with their businesses. Currently, she will continue to operate the companies while looking for ways to transition out, she said.

“Our plan for now is to allow for some long-distance management situations for the businesses that would eventually enable me to either move to Honduras or somewhere else safer to live and have a better education for the kids,” Thalia said.

Thalia said her kids are upset about the situation and want to visit their father in Honduras. She also plans to get counseling for her oldest son to help deal with the situation, she said.

“As soon as they knew he was there, they told me that they wanted to go down there and be with him,” she said.

The children understand Spanish but don’t speak it well, which could make them easy targets for violence if they moved to Honduras, she said.

The Ramos family situation has garnered support from various community members.

On March 23, a candlelight vigil was held in Buckley Park in support of Edin. And on Monday, the American Service Friends Center held a rally at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility where Ramos was held. Both Edin and Thalia called in to speak to the protesters.

“The community has been incredibly supportive to us, and that’s been an incredible blessing for us,” Thalia said. “I can’t imagine going through this where the community response is negative and not supportive at all. It would be a lot harder showing your face in places.”

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