

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JACKSON, MS—A series of preparations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on the Gulf Coast has local advocates on edge about the possibility of yet another worksite raid, and yet another devastating blow to businesses, families and communities in the name of immigration enforcement.

“The preparations we are seeing ICE make are alarmingly similar to what occurred immediately prior to the raid on the Agriprocessors, Inc. Kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa, a few months ago,” said Patricia Ice, an immigration attorney and spokesperson for MIRA. ICE has reportedly booked dozens of rooms in hotels on the Gulf Coast. They may be checking in as early as tonight.

Perhaps even more worrisome are the reports that the federal court in Hattiesburg is being readied for a response similar to the response to the raid in Postville, when nearly 400 plant workers were arrested on trumped up identity theft charges, and slammed through criminal prosecution and judicial removal (being forced to waive all their criminal defense and immigration claims) within just days of the raid. “What happened in Postville was an absolute travesty of justice that must never happen again,” said Ms. Ice. “ICE must assure that any future enforcement actions are conducted in a humane manner and that detainees are permitted their constitutional rights to due process and to legal counsel.”

With all the signs pointing to an impending raid, Ms Ice, other staff and local leaders are working quickly to identify possible targets, educate workers and assemble a team of attorneys to offset the burden on public defenders and provide immigration advice.

The Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA) is a membership-based alliance which guarantees the human rights of immigrants and all workers in Mississippi. MIRA works to support immigrants in the exercise of their rights through providing services, organizing, advocacy and public education.