

For Immediate Release - December 30, 2020

**IAJE Speaks Out Against Systemic Injustice Faced by Immigrants in
Canton, Mississippi**

*The Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equity (IAJE) Condemns the Disrespectful Treatment of
Crimes Against Immigrants by Canton Police Department, and Urges Black/Brown Solidarity.*

Press Contact: Jessica Manriquez, iajemississippi@gmail.com

On December 29, 2020, the Canton immigrant community awoke to the news of yet another alleged robbery gone wrong. In the early hours of Tuesday morning, Martina Ramirez, 19, along with her unborn child and her brother, Faustino Ramirez, 20, were killed. Ramirez's one year old daughter was shot in the face. Ramirez's teenage brother, 15 year old Robert Ramirez, escaped with his life by hiding from the attackers.

IAJE connected with Noah, a family member of the deceased, who said, "That night while I was at work, I received a call from my brother with the sad news. I went as fast as I could to my sister's house, but it was too late. This is the second time my brother's house has been broken into. The thieves must have known that one of the persons who lived in the house was going to New York on Thursday and had money. I do not understand why they had to kill a pregnant woman and her child."

This is but one example of an alarming yet long trend of violence against immigrants that even Canton Police Chief Otha Brown acknowledges. In a press statement on Tuesday, Chief Brown said, "Hispanics are known to hold a lot of money on them, not going to the bank – holding a lot of money for whatever reason. And people are breaking in on them and robbing them, getting their money."

While researching this story, IAJE encountered many Canton residents who assert that the Hispanic communities in Canton have been targets of violence for years. Through our statewide work, we have found that immigrant communities all across Mississippi are unprotected by local and county law enforcement, and oftentimes neglected by emergency services.

Noah said, "The owner of the house arrived before me and said that my sister-in-law was still alive (when he got there). This is what makes me sad the most. If only the ambulance had arrived faster, or if the police had acted faster or more fairly. The police were laughing when I got there, not even the ambulance people were on our side. I want the police to do something this time."

Historically, people of color in Mississippi have been targets of police violence and face discrimination by the healthcare community. In light of these tragic slayings, IAJE is calling for Black, Brown, and immigrant communities to stand together as one to keep each other safe.

We demand accountability from the Canton Police Department. We are demanding that CPD make a statement addressing the immigrant community who face so many challenges, from the threat of ICE to the fear of crime and violence against them, to COVID-19. We want assurance that CPD will protect each and every resident of Canton as they are sworn to do. We demand that this horrible murder is not ignored or forgotten, that all communities of Canton feel safe, and these three deaths will not be in vain.

We must look at the larger picture: this was an act of violence perpetrated by one member of a vulnerable community against members of a vulnerable community. People of color, particularly in rural areas, are under-resourced, under-protected, and underserved.

The Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equality (IAJE) is a statewide organization founded by an immigrant for immigrants as a political home where immigrants and their children are encouraged to educate, empower, and organize each other to better their communities. Find IAJE on social media @IAJEofMS.

###