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## **Latinos Challenge Constitutionality of Home Raids Conducted By ICE**

Lawsuit alleges unlawful entry, illegal detainment and abusive treatment of Latinos by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Division's New York Regional Office

**NEW YORK, NY – September 20, 2007** – Several Latino families and individuals filed a class action suit today against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security charging that its agents unlawfully break into and enter the homes of Latinos in the New York area without judicially issued warrants or other legal justification. The complaint describes armed ICE agents breaking down doors or forcing their way into Latino households in the pre-dawn hours and awakening and terrifying children and adults alike, often looking for individuals who do not even reside in the home.

The Plaintiffs, all Latinos whose homes have been raided this year, are represented by the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) and the international law firm of LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae LLP.

Plaintiffs allege that their homes were raided in the pre-dawn hours by teams of armed ICE agents who stormed their homes, abruptly roused sleeping family members (including young children), and detained and interrogated them without the benefit of legal representation, sometimes forcing them to answer questions without allowing them to get dressed. None of the Plaintiffs were ever shown a warrant though several demanded to see one. The lawsuit claims that the home raids trample on Fourth Amendment rights and leave a trail of harm affecting not only undocumented members of our society, but also U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents.

"The complaint describes how ICE agents entered these homes without judicially ordered warrants or consent, conducted unlawful searches, illegally detained family members and, in some cases, physically abused the victims," said Cesar Perales, PRLDEF President and General Counsel. "No family in this country should be forced to endure such treatment."

The lawsuit seeks damages and an injunction restraining ICE's New York Regional Office from conducting home raids until appropriate procedures are established to assure that the raids will be performed in a manner that protects constitutional and civil rights.

"The Fourth Amendment guarantees to each of us the sanctity and dignity of our homes," said Patrick J. Gennardo, a partner at LeBoeuf Lamb and co-lead counsel for the Plaintiffs. "When we go to bed at night, we should rest assured that our children will not be wrested from their sleep by armed government officials acting without a judicially ordered warrant. Like all government actors, ICE must pursue its mission within the bounds of constitutional protections."

Copies of the complaint are available online at [www.prldef.org](http://www.prldef.org).

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