

Fear, Silence, and Uncertainty: The Human Cost of Trump's Immigration Policies

By Casey O'Brien



Under Trump's immigration policies, Talane Sealey, an immigrant from the Bahamas, said fear and silence are constant, forcing her to suppress her voice to avoid detention or retaliation. Photo by Casey O'Brien.

In a dimly lit Caribou Coffee shop in Minneapolis on a rainy afternoon, Talane Sealey, 22, a graduate of the College of St. Benedict, spoke about the heavy toll Trump's policies have taken on immigrant lives—policies she said have made her and her family live in constant fear.

“My sisters and I are all here and we're all immigrants, so it's honestly been really scary just kind of thinking I can't really say anything, which is why at

first I didn't want my name mentioned,” Sealey said. “It's constant monitoring and having to be aware of the news for what's happening so bad things don't happen to me and bad things don't happen to my sisters.”

During his second term, President Donald Trump implemented significant changes to U.S. immigration policies, [according to The Economic Times](#). These included expanding mass deportations, tightening restrictions, and granting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) broader authority to conduct operations in previously protected locations such as schools and hospitals.

Hundreds of immigrants have been deported to El Salvador's mega prison, CECOT, known for its harsh and inhumane conditions, [according to The Associated Press](#). Trump said he would like to ship U.S. citizens who have committed violent crimes to CECOT, which would violate U.S. law, [according to Reuters](#).

Sealey originally came to the United States for her education and now lives with her boyfriend in Minneapolis, she said. Her two sisters live in the United States, and her parents still live in the Bahamas. Despite her many accomplishments, she said the daily uncertainty about her future under Trump's policies and deportation efforts has left her deeply unsettled.

“I can't even publicize any of my thoughts because people are literally getting picked up, taken off the streets and thrown in detention centers,” she said.

Beyond the immediate threat of detention and deportation, Sealey said she feels a broader anxiety over silenced voices.

“There's censorship everywhere now, everyone's scared to speak out, everyone is afraid of retaliation,” she said. “The Trump administration has shown that they will retaliate when they don't like what people say about them.”

During Trump's presidency and under his direction, the government implemented tighter restrictions on White House press access, urged federal officials to investigate CBS over its reporting and criticized other media outlets, [according to Politico](#). Trump also issued executive orders aimed at law firms that either pursued cases opposing him or employed individuals who provoked his disapproval.

Sealey's worry extends to the judicial process, which she said is overwhelmed by a power imbalance that leaves visa holders like herself vulnerable and voiceless.

Growing up in the Bahamas, Sealey witnessed the contributions of Haitian immigrants to her home country's economy, community and culture, she said. She believes the U.S. should embrace immigrants' contributions, but Trump's policies have made her scared and angry.^f

"The Trump administration is basically taking the fruit and then not crediting the labor," Sealey said.

Sealey said a true solution to immigration approaches lies in restoring balance in the judicial system.

"That's the main thing — having someone working together with leaders to coordinate a due process where nobody is abused, everybody's rights are recognized and the person in question who's been invalidated can speak for themselves," she said. "But in this situation, definitely none of that is happening."