



# SENDING HOPE BEHIND BARS

## A MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S DAY CARD ACTION

Many mothers and fathers detained at places like Berks County Residential Center were forced to flee their home countries because their lives were in danger. When they arrive with their kids at the U.S. border asking for protection, they can be locked up for weeks, months, even years. These parents are fighting not only for their lives but for their children's lives.

This Mother's and Father's Day, Amnesty International is collecting solidarity cards from activists like you for parents waiting to be released from Berks with their kids so that they can rebuild their lives in safety. We'll deliver the cards you create for these moms and dads on days that our cultures celebrate them, their love, and their strength.

### HOW TO DO IT

- 1 Write messages of hope and encouragement on paper, construction paper, or holiday cards. Avoid mentioning religion or politics.
- 2 For moms, write a card in Spanish and another in English.
- 3 Make multiple cards for dads, in the different Mayan languages, Portuguese, and English. The majority of parents recently detained in Berk have been fathers.
- 4 Refer to the **sample messages** on p. 2, and use your own words.
- 5 Be creative! Draw, color, decorate with stickers, cut shapes, and share a quote or poem.
- 6 Sign with your first name, city and state.
- 7 **Optional:** Take a photo of you and your card(s), and post it on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram! Use the hashtag **#TheBerksKids** and tag **@amnestyusa**
- 8 On a sheet of paper, write your name, email & number of cards for moms and dads in each language. For groups, list contact info for a point person.
- 9 Place sheet on top of all the cards in a large envelope or box. Don't put cards in individual envelopes. Make a clear separation of the cards for mothers and for fathers, and by language.
- 10 Mail to: **Campaigns, Amnesty International USA**  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Suite #500  
Washington, DC 20003  
United States of America

We're collecting cards for mothers until Tue. May 1, 2018  
and cards for fathers until Fri. June 1, 2018

## **SAMPLE MESSAGES**

### **ENGLISH**

Happy ( Mothers' / Fathers' ) Day!

We stand in solidarity with you.

Today we celebrate the love and strength of ( mothers / fathers ) like you.

### **SPANISH**

¡Feliz día de ( la madre / del padre )!

Manifestamos en solidaridad contigo.

Hoy celebramos el amor y la fuerza de ( madres / padres ) como tú.

### **PORTUGUESE**

Feliz dia ( das mães / dos pais )!

Nos solidarizamos com você.

Hoje celebramos o amor e a força ( das mães / dos pais ) como você.

### **[Mayan Languages]**

#### **MAM**

B'a'n tq'ij ( txuyb'aj / mamb'aj teya )!

Nqo o'nin teya.

Ja'lu nne'x q'ik'sana kypumal ex kyajb'il qe ( txub'aj / mamb'aj ) ikytzan aya.

#### **K'ICHE'**

Ki'kotemal kiq'ij e ( Nan / tat )!

Oj k'o awuk'.

Kamik kaqaq'axej kichuq'ab'il xuquje' kiloq'ob'al e ( nan / tat ) pacha' at.

#### **Q'EQCHI'**

Sahil ch'oolejil cho'q reheb' li ( na'b'ej / yuwa'b'ej ) sa' xjultikankil li xkutankileb'!

Wanko aawik'in.

Anaqwank naqanima li xmetz'ew ut li xraham eb' li ( na'b'ej / yuwa'b'ej ) jo' laa'at.

#### **Q'ANJOB'AL**

Chi jaq' kawil a k'ul yuj k'ual eb ( txutxej / Mamej )!

Chi jaq' a mimank'ulal.

A yet jun k'ual ti chon tzalaj yetoq eb ( txutxej / mamej ) axka ach ti tol hay kamk'ulal yetoq yipalil.

#### **IXIL**

B'anoj i paal va q'iilil ( nan / tat )!

Atilo' sa k'atza.

Cheel niku paasa va q'iilil ti' va yak'il tuch' va sa'one' axh ( nan / tat ).

#### **AKATEK**

Tzalak'ulal yin jun sk'ual sq'in jeb' ( ix txutxe / naj mame )!

Chon eehek' ko q'intzen ja wetoj.

Chiko q'intze tinanik' jun yipal yetoj jun scamk'ulal jeb' ( ix txutxe / naj mame ) jaxka jach tu'.

#### **KAQCHIKEL**

Tiq'ases uxtisan ki q'ij ( teeja' / tata aj )!

Janila yoj kikot a wiq'in.

Wakami nk'aya' ki q'ij ri koblaj y utzilaj ( teej' / tata ) aj ach'el ri rat.

#### **CHUJ**

Tzalajk'olal t'a jun sk'ual ( eb' ix nunab'il / heb' vinh mamab'l )!

Junnhej skutej ko nab'en et'ok.

T'a jun k'u tik sko nakot yipalil yet' schamk'olal heb' ( ix nunab'il / vinh mamab'il ) icha ach tik.

#### **JAKALTEK/POPTI**

Oximi' tzalalal ch'ek'oj ha tz'ayikti' tawu ( mi'e' / mam )!

Chonh kolwahoj tawinhan.

Yinh hun tz'ayikti' xhko Q'inhe yinh k'ul b'oj yinh naj tzalalal maktaj ( mi'e' / mame ) aka' ach han.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Every year, tens of thousands of people come to the U.S. border and ask for asylum. Instead of getting refugee status abroad, they come to the U.S. directly and ask for protection.

The majority come from the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in Central America. But they also come from Africa, South Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere – anywhere people are fleeing armed conflict, horrific violence, and persecution.

But when people seeking asylum – including children and their parents – arrive at the U.S. border, they are locked up and put behind bars. Detaining families undermines their access to asylum and traumatizes people who have already endured violence and psychological harm in their flight from human rights abuses.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detains families seeking asylum at three centers that hold as many as 3,000 kids and parents every day. Berks County Residential Center in Leesport, Pennsylvania is the oldest of these “baby jails.” New families continue to be locked up under difficult conditions at Berks and the other sites in Karnes City and Dilley, Texas.

## WHY IT MATTERS

The Administration and Congress are seeking to criminalize and punish more people – especially children and families – who seek humanitarian protection here. They’re doing this even though U.S. law guarantees the right for people to come here and ask for asylum.

Family detention is inhumane, expensive, and undermines our country’s long history as a beacon of hope for people seeking safety. Instead of being locked up, children and their parents should be treated humanely and able to access protection when they arrive at U.S. borders.

Countries around the world have agreed that people fleeing horrific violence and seeking asylum will be treated with compassion and respect while their claims are reviewed. The U.S. is treating these people like criminals, putting them in detention centers and deporting them before their cases can be heard in court.

Amnesty International is fighting to ensure that people with asylum claims are given a fair hearing and humane treatment. We must do everything we can to ensure protection for people fleeing violence.



Some families are forced to flee their homes because their lives are in danger. Many are from Central America, where Amnesty International has documented horrific violence.

Berks is currently holding at least **60** parents and kids.

Last August, four families were released after being detained for nearly 2 years at Berks. One child was three-years-old when released. He learned to walk and talk in jail. See our [urgent action](#).

