

Immigration activists say feds are stepping up home raids

[By Ted Hesson](#)

Federal immigration agents are increasingly turning to an old technique to apprehend immigrants who entered the country illegally or overstayed a visa: home raids.

The National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) interviewed dozens of aid workers, immigrants and legal experts, and found a rising number of what federal officials call “targeted enforcement operations.”

The report [released Wednesday](#) claims the agency charged with carrying out the nation’s immigration laws, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), is becoming more aggressive in the face of impending policy change. President Obama has said he will take executive action after the November midterm elections to make deportation practices more humane. Such changes could mean reallocating resources and giving ICE orders to stand down.

“It’s like someone eating all the ice cream in the freezer on Sunday knowing they’re going on a diet on Monday,” one anonymous community organizer said in the report. “ICE is more out of control than ever.”

Tania A. Unzueta, an NDLON organizer who collaborated on the report, said the agency is concerned with its future as a law enforcement entity.

“We’re in a political battle where ICE is trying to prove its worth, where the [Obama] administration is trying to prove they’re going after dangerous people,” she said.

There’s another reason federal immigration agents are more likely to be knocking on doors. Over the past year, more local and state governments are refusing to cooperate with the agency. A [law in California](#), for example, limits the instances where local police can hold arrestees on behalf of federal immigration officials, a policy known as a [“detainer.”](#)

Gillian Christensen, a spokesperson for ICE, confirmed that targeted enforcement operations have expanded in areas where local authorities are not fully cooperating with the agency.

“While it’s true that jurisdictions not honoring ICE detainers has resulted in an increase of fugitive operations in the field, the agency is focused, first and foremost, on the arrest and removal of convicted criminal individuals who pose the greatest threat to public safety,” Christensen said in an email.

The NDLON report calls into question whether every convicted criminal should be slated for deportation. People convicted for non-violent drug and immigration crimes, for instance, still fall under ICE’s [stated priorities](#) for deportation.

“People with criminal records aren’t by default people who are dangerous to the community,” Unzueta said.

<http://fusion.net/story/20205/immigration-activists-say-feds-are-stepping-up-home-raids/>