

# COMING OUT OF EXILE SONG + THE NOT1MORE CAMPAIGN



## WHY IS SONG PART OF A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN (NOT1MORE)?

While the South is where SONG works and grows, and where we are most accountable, we know that we owe our base, and Southern people, organizing that reflects that we understand that we are part of a bigger picture. We are part of movements that the South will play a key role in *and* that have impacts outside of this region.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer people understand a good deal about being pushed into the shadows to suffer and die because of who we are and where we sit in any given moment of political history. We know what it is like to long to be reunited with our loved ones, and we know what it is like to live in fear as we walk down the street. While our realities can be different, the hounding, caging and exiling of immigrant people is either our reality because *we are* LGBTQ undocumented people or because it reverberates with the homophobia and transphobia that haunts our lives. ***Our lives as out LGBTQ people have been shaped by a colonial legacy of social exile and we know what coming out can do to transform our lives, our imaginations, and our future.***

It is not surprising then that the Not1More campaign, through Shutdown ICE actions, the unrelenting prioritization of undocumented people and its *coming out spirit*, has captured the hearts of people in SONG's base and leadership. We are very proud that our people have been willing to take the risks and make the choices necessary to fight the exile, caging, and forced removal of undocumented people through our work to support the call of the Not1More campaign, and we have been transformed by those choices.

We have chosen to be part of the Not1More campaign because it is a *multiple-strategy campaign* that places accountability on President Obama to provide an immediate Administrative Relief solution, such as an Executive Order that expands Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to all, and halts deportation numbers that are currently nearing two million. This number does not represent two million anonymous or hypothetical lives, but two million of ourselves, our family members, and our people. Our political priority mandates that not one more precious loved one is ripped out of our communities via the Poli-Migra deportation machine.

Not1More is a place where SONG's work and values align, where we can support accountable and visionary national immigrant rights leadership, and where we can be accountable to our base and our communities in helping to advance the demands of a growing national movement where the fight around immigrant rights meets LGBTQ self-determination. We have much to learn from our work in Not1More through both action and reflection on the ways to confront power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; lessons that our base desperately wants and needs.

## **SONG'S POSITION ON COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM**

SONG understands that historically Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) has been the primary demand of the immigrant rights movement, and a place of hope and unity for many immigrants struggling every day with the constant limitations and the challenges of being undocumented, but we believe that CIR cannot be the only strategy or demand.

In January 2014, the Pew Research Center released a finding that a majority of Latinos and Asian Americans want deportation relief *more* than a path to citizenship. We must be accountable to that grassroots reality, and avoid the trap of assuming people do not want a permanent solution, because it acknowledges the desperation many of us feel when we have to choose our immediate safety versus our long term well-being. We know many in our communities have immediate needs that include legal residency, driver's licenses, documentation to work, the ability to apply to colleges and universities, legal protection from violence, and access to healthcare. We know the painful reality of not being able to go to our countries of origin to visit families and loved ones or to even be able to bury our ancestors in our homelands. Those hard realities cannot be changed by a symbolic head nod that CIR will eventually pass.

For SONG, our political position is not a question of CIR vs. nothing, nor is it a question of whether CIR is 'politically dead.' The immigrant rights movement grows stronger and bolder by the day, and *SONG will continue to push for tactical and strategic decisions that strengthen that movement.* Our position is guided by both the real suffering of our people *and* the life, dreams, desires, and strength of the immigrant rights movement. At the heart of that strength is our people's organizing power and resiliency, as well as the ultimate *shared demand for the decriminalization of immigrant people and a permanent citizenship policy solution.*

## **SOUTHERN HISTORY + CITIZENSHIP**

Not1More is about more than just ending deportations and demanding Administrative Relief. It is a call to end the demonizing and criminalization of immigrant people and people of color made 'illegal' through a history of White Supremacy, U.S. colonialism, and slavery. This history has perpetuated a rogue and broken immigration system that does not allow our people to move closer to a permanent residency or citizenship solution, and has punished us based on our ethnicities, economic class, religion, genders and sexualities, disabilities, and our refusal to assimilate into a white-washed culture. President Obama, and many administrations before his, have been satisfied with "enforcement only" approaches as a means to address the growing numbers of our undocumented families living in the shadows of our legal and economic systems.

While Republicans and Dixiecrats alike use the 'immigration debate' to promote their narrow view of white nationalism, it is important to understand that in the years where Democrats have held the upper hand in both the legislative and executive branches, they have squandered the opportunity to pass an immigration reform solution believing that to do so would jeopardize their political majority and their elected positions. Instead, this misplaced fear and unwillingness to act has not only cost them our political trust, but, most importantly,

it has cost us millions of our families, our safety, and our livelihoods. We must hold them accountable for the human cost of this crisis.

Part of SONG's role in the place where the immigrant rights movement and the LGBTQ movement intersect is to help expand our collective understanding about the root causes of global migration, and migration into the U.S. and the South. We know our struggles are connected to global movements for Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation that were born in opposition to imperialism, colonization and slavery. These global movements have helped us see that the U.S. South has always been shaped by the very idea of 'citizenship' and determining who does or does not qualify for it based on an imposed definition meant to further White Supremacy. The question of citizenship here has always been: *who is a master and who is property?* Those who do not meet the requirements of citizenship are treated as property and labeled as 'criminal,' a classification informed by the Criminal (in)Justice system that was historically built for the purpose of policing, controlling and punishing black and brown communities. This system has funneled generations into the unrelenting machine of mass incarceration; because of this, we know that ***citizenship without justice is simply not enough.*** A narrow citizenship demand will only continue to perpetuate an immigration policy that rewards whiteness and forces us to gamble away those deemed as 'criminal' to the benefit of the 'good immigrants.'

The Right Wing political majority in the South propagates this thinking by forcing policies on us that restrict our reproductive rights, our access to healthy food, our access to public spaces, our right to vote, our right to organize, our right to healthcare and our educational rights to Black, Chicano and LGBTQ history. They defend laws such as 'Stand Your Ground' that are built on White Nativist sentiments that allow white people to play vigilantes armed with entitlement and racist assumptions that allow our peers and children to be murdered on the streets for being Black / Brown / Asian + Pacific Islander / Muslim / Poor / Trans / Queer. While we align nationally with Not1More, we are grounded and remain committed to the growing momentum to fight back these realities in our local campaign sites in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Alabama and Georgia. Our work from the local to the national is intrinsically connected by our desires, our dreams, and our imperative to work for a 'citizenship' that transforms our culture and this moment and that takes us beyond a symbolic relic of the American Dream.

At its root, the immigrant rights movement's demand for permanent citizenship should stem from the need to transform the very idea of citizenship and free us from the historical criminalization of indigenous people and other folks of color based on the imposition of colonial borders that have been militarized and have become the graveyards for thousands of people seeking a better life. Our root demand, the same demand that we fight and struggle for as LGBTQ communities, is *self-determination*, choosing our lives for ourselves. For all these reasons, we will continue engaging in Not1More and at the intersection of LGBTQ and Immigrant Justice. We invite you into the same call as we gear up for escalated action to transform this moment and the South by building the political majority we need to make our vision a political and cultural reality.

## GET DOWN WITH US!

### The #Not1More Call to Action

The Not1More campaign is gearing up for mobilizations around the country on **April 5th** to amplify the call for an end to deportations. SONG will be collaborating on actions in Georgia and Virginia. We invite you to join us or consider planning an action or event in your community!

1. Want to mobilize with SONG in your town or city? Contact Paulina at [paulina@southernersonnewground.org](mailto:paulina@southernersonnewground.org)
2. Add your events, get graphics, tweet the white house and more at <http://bit.ly/april5n1m>
3. Help promote the national day of action by sharing NDLO's image on social media  
<https://www.facebook.com/NDLON/photos/a.285998971428417.90403.109002312461418/796960986998877/?type=1&theater>
4. Contribute to the Path to 2 Million Deportations Timeline and help us compile all the events big and small that have built up to the 2 million deportations to show that it's not natural or inevitable but calculated and made by concrete decisions. Check it out at <http://bit.ly/pathto2million>



We hope to see you in the streets!!  
SONG family

### Watch Our Queering Immigration Video



#Not1More #ShutDownICE #queeringimmigration