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NINA MOINI: During Operation Metro Surge, thousands of people detained by federal immigration agents ended up getting put on a plane and flown to detention centers out of state. According to an analysis by our partners at Sahan Journal, 3,400 people were flown to Texas. As of early March, 530 remained there. It's unclear now how many are still in detention as of today.

One detainee's experience has gotten the attention of lawmakers. First reported by the Minnesota Reformer, Andrea Pedro-Francisco of Burnsville has a tennis ball-sized ovarian cyst. She was scheduled to have surgery to treat the cyst, but was detained before it could happen. While in ICE detention, Andrea says she has not gotten the medical care she needs for her cyst.

Democrat US Representative Angie Craig, whose district includes Burnsville, went down to visit Andrea at Camp East Montana in El Paso, Texas. This was yesterday. Congresswoman Craig joins me now to talk about her experience. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

ANGIE CRAIG: Thank you, Nina.

NINA MOINI: As I mentioned, you went down to meet with Andrea Pedro-Francisco. Was it difficult to get to meet with her, and what did she tell you about the care she's now receiving?

ANGIE CRAIG: Well, the most difficult part was we had been trying to see her for a couple of months, and we had to wait until a measles outbreak had subsided in Camp East Montana. But we were able to meet with her yesterday, actually at the El Paso processing center, where she's now been moved. She's still in an enormous amount of pain. It really was just a heartbreaking situation where now for more than two months, she's been denied the care that Minnesota doctors have said that she's needed since she was detained by ICE.

NINA MOINI: Did she say she's in need of surgery, or what did DHS officials tell you about her medical care and what she's receiving?

ANGIE CRAIG: Well, we were finally able to get medical release records to ICE. And so it's been a little bit confusing to Andrea and her attorneys as well as to us yesterday, because at Camp East Montana, she was examined by a physician, and they determined that she no longer had an ovarian cyst. However, now that she's been moved to the processing center, again, because of her severe pain, she was sent outside that facility for an ultrasound just about three days ago.

And they did conclude that she indeed does still have the ovarian cyst that she was scheduled to have surgically removed in Minnesota just six days after she was detained by ICE. So look, these are some of the most notorious detention centers in the country. And what I saw there and, of course, what she has experienced, just being told that she didn't have a cyst, now she's told she does have a cyst, and we're just trying to work to make sure that she gets the medical care and surgery that she needs.

Physicians have written in to ICE to say this is a very dangerous situation with someone with a tennis ball size ovarian cyst goes untreated. So we're going to keep working to push for ICE to get her the treatment that she deserves. We did get some bad news this morning, unfortunately, from Andrea's attorneys. Her humanitarian parole request was denied today. So unfortunately, they are not going to parole her back to Minnesota to get the treatment that she needs. And we'll, obviously, await her attorneys to decide what the next steps are.

NINA MOINI: What about other Minnesotans in detention centers in Texas? Do you know how many Minnesotans are there? Is anybody tracking the numbers?

ANGIE CRAIG: Well, I asked that yesterday. I was able to tour Camp East Montana, as well as the processing center, and what I got from them is they could not tell me how many Minnesotans were being held in the facility right now.

They obviously felt like they were overwhelmed with Minnesotans during Operation Metro Surge. That was relayed to me from some of the people who were around at the locations yesterday. They felt very overwhelmed with-- and frankly, I don't think they got a heads up that Operation Metro Surge was going to be put in place and this number of detainees would be coming into their care.

And really to give you a sense of what I experienced yesterday, there are three examination rooms for the 800 people being detained, which is just inadequate. And we have seen a five-fold increase in deaths while in ICE detention in this country, really numbers that we haven't seen in more than two decades. And it's my goal to make sure that Andrea isn't another one of those statistics. So they wouldn't tell us how many Minnesotans were here. They told us to follow up with the Office of congressional Affairs, and that they would try to get us those numbers.

NINA MOINI: Just lastly, Congresswoman. You are in a race for a US Senate seat, and immigration has become pretty central to the race that you're in. In March, you shared you regretted your vote in support of the Laken Riley Act, which is a federal law that expanded who could be detained by ICE, including undocumented immigrants accused of low level crimes.

I believe Andrea does not have a criminal record. You're also one of few Democrats who signed on to a resolution that included language expressing, quote, "gratitude to ICE officers." Both of those votes have led to criticism. What did this trip symbolize for you as it relates to your voting record?

ANGIE CRAIG: Well, think about what this administration has done. Only about 10% of the folks detained under Operation Metro Surge had any kind of criminal background or record at all. This isn't what the Trump administration said they were going to do. But what I will tell you is that I have accepted and said to Minnesotans that I regret that vote, even if they aren't using that particular law to detain individuals, giving this administration any additional capacity to detain individuals is something that I regret.

And as an elected leader, as someone who ran for public office to help my constituents, I think it's really important for us to hold ourselves accountable and be honest with Minnesotans that I represent, and to those that I seek to represent as the next US senator.

I'll just end with this. My time with Andrea yesterday was incredibly personal. I spent 40 minutes with her, and she expressed to me that she's incredibly sad to be away from her family and friends and her brothers and sisters at church, where she plays the bass guitar and the piano. She'd love to be able to hug her mom, especially again. Learn the words she said that had the most impact to me is we may be poor, but we were together.

And as the congresswoman from the second district and as someone who could serve as the next US senator from Minnesota, what I took away most from this visit is the fact that we need to be a country that respects our history of welcoming immigrants into this country.

And I resolve to fight for comprehensive immigration reform for people like Andrea, who were brought here at 16 years old, had no criminal background or record, paid taxes, and contributed to our community. We can't accept this administration's cruelty and that we need to fight with all of our might for comprehensive immigration reform in our country. And that's my commitment to Minnesota.

NINA MOINI: Congresswoman, thanks so much for your time.

ANGIE CRAIG: Thank you.

NINA MOINI: That's Congresswoman Angie Craig of Minnesota second district.