

Migrants rights group protesting treatment

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Migrants rights advocates plan to deliver a letter today to the Department of Homeland Security protesting alleged abuses by border patrol agents.

In what advocates are calling a first-ever union of northern border states, over 100 residents and advocacy groups pooled resources to form the Northern Border Coalition.

The group signed a letter set to be delivered today to Secretary Janet Napolitano urging her "to take back control of her rogue department," advocates explained in a press release.

Several other events are planned this month to call attention to what they allege are "fundamental problems" with DHS patrols in the north.

"For years, northern border residents have endured civil and human rights violations, documenting a long history of racial and religious profiling, harassment, abusive interrogation, searches without probable cause, road checkpoints and sweeps of public transit," says the release.

Local organizations that assisted with the letter were Migrant Support Services of Wayne County and Wayne Action for Racial Equality.

"The letter details various incidents where [Customs and Border Protection] has subjected both U.S. Citizens and non-citizens to several violations," Dr. John Ghertner of Migrant Support Services said in the release. "Sec. Napolitano must understand the urgency in reigning in the staff and officers of the Border Patrol. Changes must be made immediately in the northern border regions in order to avoid further human rights violations."

"This kind of behavior and policing by Border Patrol is not only a violation of our rights, but it also shows a complete disregard for responsible fiscal management on the part of Secretary Napolitano and the Department," said Jim Wood of Wayne Action for Racial Equality in the release. "If Border Patrol is policing birthday parties and Greyhound buses, where does that leave individuals who pose a real threat to public safety? Who is watching for them? The entire Border Patrol needs a complete overhaul."

The Northern Border Coalition is planning a national conference in Detroit Feb. 23 and 24.