

Ibrahim Parlak granted 90-day stay from deportation

By Joel Porter |

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Supporters of a Turkish refugee were rallying at his southwest Michigan restaurant Wednesday evening, once again urging the US government to allow him to stay.



Supporters light candles as they gather around Ibrahim Parlak outside his southwest Michigan restaurant in a vigil the week of Christmas.

Organizers of the vigil say they thought the evening vigil was going to be one big goodbye since they didn't know if they'd ever see Ibrahim Parlak again.

But the sadness turned to happiness as Wednesday afternoon, the Department of Homeland Security announced it'd hold off on any plans to deport Parlak for 90 days to allow his supporters to file another appeal with the Board of Immigration.

Dozens of well-wishers flooded into Ibrahim Parlak's roadside restaurant on Wednesday evening.

As his deferral expired, Parlak faced potential deportation to Turkey. Instead of a goodbye, people were relieved, lighting candles and sharing messages of love.

“When he's up against it, people drop everything and they show up and say 'we believe in this man',” Parlak's brother-in-law Nick Gazzolo said.

“Instead of going into hiding, here we are. We are open and so thank you!” Parlak told supporters.

A hearty cheer went up as on Wednesday afternoon, the Department of Homeland Security granted a 90-day stay which will allow Parlak's supporters time to appeal to the Board of Immigration.

“We think we have an excellent argument. We put it together as quickly as we could in light of the time constraints of not knowing when they were going to knock on this door, or order him to Detroit. And now we have some breathing room to augment it,” attorney Robert Carpenter said.

“Three months. It's around the corner, but still, it's a lot better than being worried, are they going to pick me up tomorrow?” Parlak said.

In the meantime, Parlak says he'll relax and enjoy the holiday with his family and friends without looking over his shoulder.

“It's more important to be fighting for something than against something. And right now, I think thousands of people are fighting for Ibrahim. For freedom, for a friend, for a brother, for a father, and we're just happy to be here tonight,” Parlak's brother-in-law Paul Gazzolo said.

“We have faith in the courts. We have faith in the justice system. Still, it's not the thing you prefer. I want to be in charge of my life. Not a judge telling me what it should be,” Parlak said.

Dzuris says the stay allows Parlak's supporters time to make the case that he's in mortal danger if he's deported to Turkey.

The Board of Immigration Appeals in Virginia will decide Parlak's fate after the hearing.

Martin Dzuris, one of Parlak's closest supporters says they're waiting to find out when the hearing will be scheduled. It may not require oral arguments, simply filing paperwork.

Dzuris says with recent developments in Turkey involving ISIS, suicide bombings and treatment of Kurds, they're confident they can prove Parlak's life would be in danger if deported.