

Guatemalan Woman Reunited With Son

By MELISSA GOMEZ

A Guatemalan woman and her son, who were separated in May at the United States border with Mexico, were reunited early Friday at a Maryland airport after she sued in federal court for his return.

Inside the airport, Beata Mariana de Jesus Mejia-Mejia wrapped her 7-year-old son, Darwin, in a blanket and cried as she hugged him, according to video captured by an immigrant legal services group that assisted her.

"No one is going to separate us again," Ms. Mejia-Mejia later said at a news conference.

Their reunion comes just days

after President Trump signed an executive order meant to end the separation of families at the border by detaining parents and children together for an indefinite period.

Darwin's whereabouts was not known to Ms. Mejia-Mejia, 38, at the time she filed the lawsuit Tuesday in federal court in Washington in an effort to challenge the government's separation of the two, according to the complaint. On Thursday, federal authorities agreed to release Darwin to her, according to Mario Williams, Ms. Mejia-Mejia's attorney. Ms. Mejia-Mejia was released from federal custody on June 15 after the legal

services group, Libre by Nexus, put up her bond, said Mike Donovan, chief executive and president of Nexus Services Inc., which owns and funds Libre by Nexus and the law firm representing Ms. Mejia-Mejia.

By Thursday night, Darwin, who was being held in a facility in Arizona, was flown out to meet his mother, Mr. Donovan said. Libre by Nexus specializes in providing bail and legal advice for immigrants.

Mr. Donovan did not immediately respond to a request to comment on the accusations.

A spokesman for the Justice Department, which is representing



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the federal government in the case, declined to comment on Friday.

Ms. Mejia-Mejia is seeking damages for pain and suffering over the separation, according to the complaint. She and Darwin had planned to spend Friday in Washington before traveling to Austin, Tex., while she waits to hear whether she and her son will be granted asylum, Mr. Donovan said.

"She was wronged. Her rights were violated," Mr. Williams said. "What we want to do is have this whole process condemned by a jury."

In mid-May, Ms. Mejia-Mejia and Darwin reached the southern border of the United States, seeking asylum after fleeing from Guatemala where she received

Beata Mariana de Jesus Mejia-Mejia and her son, Darwin, 7, after their reunion at Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

death threats from her husband, according to the complaint.

Ms. Mejia-Mejia surrendered to Border Patrol agents and was placed in a cell with her son, according to the complaint. Two days later, "men dressed in green uniforms (border agents) told Ms. M. they needed to take her son and would not tell her why," the complaint said. Mr. Williams confirmed Ms. Mejia-Mejia was "Ms. M."

She was transferred to the Eloy Detention Center, in Arizona, later finding out that her son was in Phoenix, but she was not told his exact location, the complaint said. She was allowed one phone call with her son, according to the complaint, during which she "could clearly hear her son saying, 'Mama! Mama! Mama!' in a distressed voice over and over and over again."

After the two were reunited at Baltimore-Washington International Airport, Ms. Mejia-Mejia told reporters how grateful she was and how she cried when she first saw him. She also pulled him close and kissed him on the forehead.

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