Inside Atlanta's Immigrant Cages

A Report on the Conditions of the Atlanta City Detention Center

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Acknowledgements and Methodology

Inside Atlanta's Immigrant Cages is based on research conducted by Project South in conjunction with Georgia Detention Watch. The research and interviews for this project were conducted between January 2017 and July 2018. Volunteer attorneys and Project South attorneys and interns conducted 38 interviews with detained or previously detained immigrants at the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC). Project South and Georgia Detention Watch also communicated with family members of those detained at ACDC. In addition, Project South conducted Attorney Questionnaires with 11 attorneys who represent clients at ACDC and 3 follow up interviews. The report also includes details from an in-person inspection of the detention center on October 24, 2017 by Project South, Georgia Detention Watch, and other community organizations; the report includes comments made by ACDC and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials during the visit.

This report was drafted and edited by Project South Legal Fellow, Priyanka Bhatt, Project South legal interns, Priya Sreenivasan, Anthony Rivera, and Daniel Yoon, and Georgia Detention Watch Steering Committee Member, Kevin Caron. This report was managed by Project South's Legal and Advocacy Director, Azadeh Shahshahani, as well as Project South's Legal Fellow, Priyanka Bhatt.

Interviews were done by the following attorneys: Azadeh Shahshahani, Priyanka Bhatt, Michael Tafelski, Rebecca Hoelting, Sarah Kelsey, Christina Remlin, Zack Greenamyre, Melanie Medalle, Colin Nisbet, Olga Gambini, Emma Meyers. Interviews were done by the following Project South Interns: Erika Voreh, Sarah Mirza, Amanda Parris, Annie Boring, Priya Sreenivasan, and Anthony Rivera.

The authors are indebted to the many detained immigrants who shared their stories of detention for *Inside Atlanta's Immigrant Cages* as well as to the attorneys who shared their experiences representing clients at ACDC. We also thank Andre Greenwood for his help with designing and publishing the report.

About Project South

Project South was founded as the Institute to Eliminate Poverty & Genocide in 1986. Our work is rooted in the legacy of the Southern Freedom Movement, and four primary work areas achieve our mission of cultivating strong social movements in the South powerful enough to contend with some of the most pressing and complicated social, economic, and political problems we face today. The Legal & Advocacy department of Project South connects legal and advocacy work and movement lawyers with grassroots organizations with a focus on immigrants' rights and defending Muslim communities against state repression. Its work is also focused on connecting with and supporting social justice movements in the Global South.

About Georgia Detention Watch

Georgia Detention Watch is a coalition of organizations and individuals who advocate alongside immigrants to end the inhumane and unjust detention and law enforcement policies and practices directed against immigrant communities in Georgia. The coalition includes activists, community organizers, and persons of faith, lawyers, and many more.



Families Belong Together Rally 1 Photo Credit: Chelsea Brookshire

Executive Summary

Inside Atlanta's Immigrant Cages focuses on the conditions of the Atlanta City Detention Center. This report is an update to one created in 2012 titled Prisoners of Profit by the ACLU of Georgia, and a companion to a report created in 2017 titled Imprisoned Justice: Inside Two Georgia Immigrant Detention Centers focused on the Stewart and Irwin County Detention Centers.

On June 20, 2018, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced that the Atlanta City Detention Center would temporarily stop accepting new detained immigrants from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. During the press conference following the decision, Mayor Bottoms added the caveat that Georgia's other detention centers offer "less than desirable conditions with no access, quite often, to the resources that we offer in the City of Atlanta."

However as of October 2017, the Atlanta City Detention Center housed over 200 detained immigrants. These detained immigrants were subject to countless violations of international human rights and detention standards, ICE's Performance-Based National Detention Standards, and the Atlanta Department of Corrections' own operating policies. As revealed by countless personal reports from the victims of the facility's abuse, the Atlanta City Detention Center is, in fact, no model for compliance with standards, humane treatment of immigrants, or respect for human dignity.

This report provides a harrowing account of the conditions at the Atlanta City Detention Center, compiled from interviews conducted with detained immigrants and the attorneys who represent them, communication with previously detained immigrants and their families, and first-hand experience from an in-person inspection of the facility. The stories of dozens of detained immigrants shed light on countless violations of their civil and human rights which are yet to be resolved, despite the city's public posture as a "welcoming city" that is fighting against the Trump's anti-immigrant platform.

In this report, readers will find stories of officials confiscating the essential, personal medication of detained immigrants; bands of inmates undergoing hunger strikes to protest inedible food; officers baselessly punishing detained immigrants with solitary confinement; and corrections administrators denying immigrants of faith the most basic needs to practice their religion. These detained immigrants are denied adequate access to legal services and information, refused their fundamental due process rights, and limited from phone access by both high costs and administrative policy.

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations

- Shut down ACDC;
- The City of Atlanta should continue to strive toward becoming a welcoming city to immigrants by ending the Intergovernmental Agreement with the U.S. Marshals Service, relied upon to house detained immigrants at ACDC;
- ICE must ensure that ACDC follows the latest 2011 PBNDS, not the 2000 NDS; and
- ICE must implement policies that will hold contract facilities accountable for not complying with ICE standards.

Due Process

- Detained immigrants must be provided with complete, accurate and timely Notice to Appears (NTAs);
- Deportation Officers must treat detained immigrants with respect and dignity, which includes conducting weekly one-onone visits;
- Detained immigrants must be allowed affordable and regular access to counsel, especially before signing orders of removal;
- Detained immigrants should have regular, daily access to the law library, including access to functioning computers, internet, printers, and copiers;
- Detained immigrants should have access to overnight mailing; and
- Detained immigrants and their attorneys must be provided private, usable spaces for contact visits to exchange legal documents and communicate freely, without fear of monitoring or recording.

Administration

- Detained immigrants must be provided with medical screening, adequate clothing, and a free detainee handbook upon arrival at ACDC:
- Detained immigrants employed in the facility's kitchen must be provided warm, timely meals and adequate monetary compensation;
- All detained immigrants must be provided more visitation time on all days of the week, including contact visits with family and longer visits with attorneys;
- Phone calls should be affordable and accessible by anyone, including indigent detained immigrants;
- ACDC staff must enforce rules in a fair and equitable manner, to treat all detained immigrants consistently and respectfully; and

 Detained immigrants must have access to a grievance process which allows them to voice their complaints without fear of retaliation and with guarantee of a timely response.

Living Conditions and Treatment

- All detained immigrants must be provided a sanitary, spacious, and safe living environment, including comfortable room and water temperatures and functional restrooms;
- Detained immigrants must be guaranteed adequate and comfortable bedding, reasonably portioned meals that conform to an individual's dietary and religious needs, and clean water;
- All detained immigrants must be afforded outdoor recreation;
- Detained immigrants must be guaranteed adequate and timely access to medical care and treatment, especially for serious medical conditions;
- Detained immigrants must be provided access to their prescription medication;
- Detained immigrants must be provided access to psychologists and mental health therapy;
- The practice of solitary confinement, defined as isolation from human contact for 22-24 hours per day, should be abolished;
- Administrative segregation must not be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances;
- Administrative segregation must be carefully and deliberately administered as a last resort, in strict compliance with both national and local policies;
- Detained immigrants in administrative segregation should be permitted to appeal their status within 24 hours;
- All detained immigrants must be allowed to freely profess a religious faith; and
- All detained immigrants must be afforded the basic religious necessities to practice their faith, including accommodations for diet, clothing, and religious texts.

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Introduction

For years, Atlanta has considered itself to be a "welcoming city" towards immigrants.² In 2014, the City even created a Welcoming Atlanta committee to help "foster a welcoming environment in the City of Atlanta for all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or place of origin." In Mayor Kasim Reed's press release, he said "Atlanta's diversity and vitality has been built on the strength of immigrant populations that come to enjoy new freedoms and opportunities."⁴

Ironically and disturbingly, the City of Atlanta is paid \$78 per person per day to detain immigrants at the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC).⁵ In 2012, Atlanta modified an Intergovernmental Agreement with the United States Marshals Service originating from 2002 in order to incarcerate immigrants for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at ACDC.⁶ In Fiscal Year 2016, Atlanta was paid over \$6 million by ICE to detain immigrants at ACDC. During a facility inspection conducted by advocacy organizations on October 24, 2017, ACDC held 270 immigrants—236 male and 34 female.⁷ The jail was built in 1995 and has capacity to house 1,314 individuals.⁸

The interviews conducted by Project South and other volunteers with detained immigrants at ACDC and their attorneys reveal that the facility is plagued with various issues including lack of access to medical and mental healthcare, overuse of lockdown, due process violations, officer and personnel misconduct, lack of nutritious meals, issues with religious freedom, and more. These are clear violations of national and international standards including: the U.S. Constitution; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2000 Detention Operations Manual; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Detention Guidelines: Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention (2012); Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas; United Nations Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Imprisonment; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man; Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Dec. 10, 1984, 1465 U.N.T.S. 85.

Due to these significant violations, over the past years, ACDC has been the target of various demonstrations, rallies, and vigils calling for its closure—including the vigil in 2016 remembering Atul Kumar Babubhai Patel who died in ICE custody after being detained at ACDC.

This report is divided into 13 sections. It begins by sharing testimony from incarcerated immigrants at ACDC and goes on to document violations related to: Due Process, Admissions, Housing and Recreation, Medical and Mental Health, Segregation, Work Program, Religious Freedom, Visitation and Phone Access, Staff and Administrative Issues, Hunger Strike, Food and Water and, Conclusion and Recommendations.



The Stories From Inside the Cages

A. Background

During each interview at ACDC, detained immigrants were asked about their migration to the United States and the circumstances that led to their detention. The detained immigrants we interviewed at ACDC came from Cuba, Venezuela, Mozambique, India, Nigeria, Morocco, El Salvador, Canada, Mexico, Ghana, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, Jamaica, England, Liberia, Palestine, Nicaragua, and Senegal. They came to the United States to flee violence and persecution, to pursue their studies, to reunite their families, or to create a better life in the U.S. As one immigrant describes, "We are...people that came here to work and have a better future." Some of their stories are described below.

Eleven of the detained immigrants interviewed report having children, some as young as two years old. ¹⁰ Seven immigrants report being detained upon entry into the U.S., even those who possessed valid visas upon arrival. ¹¹ Several immigrants also described facing a harrowing choice between staying in their home country at risk of imminent harm or traveling to the U.S. to find safety. ¹²

An immigrant from El Salvador, describes that she was detained after arriving in the U.S. in March 2016 with a tourist visa to visit a friend's baby. At 27 years old, her plan was to take the GRE and study poultry science in the U.S. In Instead, when she arrived at the airport, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) took her into custody. EDP officials took her phone and, while reviewing her text messages, came across a message that made mention of bartending. Even though she was never paid for bartending and only received tips, the CBP officials claimed she was in violation of her visa for unauthorized employment. She was held at the airport for 13 hours, denied a phone call, and did not receive food until that night. While describing the officers, she stated, "They are rude to you, [they] intimidate you by saying things like 'you're not telling the truth'.

Other detained immigrants also noted the poor and unethical treatment by CBP officers at the Atlanta Airport.²⁰ Several detained immigrants said they weren't given food,²¹ and they were yelled at and were intimidated by the officers.²² One detained immigrant, Axel Antonio Vasquez, recalled that during his interrogation, he said one thing, but the officer wrote down something different – a statement that potentially incriminated his father who was also detained. Then, Axel was forced to sign the inaccurate statement.²³ Another detained immigrant shared a similar experience, stating CBP officers misrepresented his statements in their documentation, weakening the merits of his immigration case.²⁴

An immigrant from Nigeria, who was an attorney in his home country, explained that he came to the U.S. when his wife was pregnant with a baby girl who was being threatened with female genital mutilation.²⁵ He stated, "There is freedom and liberty; that's why I came here."²⁶ In Nigeria, he and his wife felt pressed to leave as quickly as they could, as his wife and baby were facing constant threats of being taken away.²⁷ They purposefully decided to apply for a visitor visa instead of asylum because the process would be faster.²⁸ His wife left before him, in search

of safety.²⁹ Despite his valid visa, when he arrived at the Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport, he was detained by CBP.³⁰ After finding a letter of resignation from his job in Nigeria, **the CBP officer attempted to threaten him into signing deportation papers by reaching for a gun, but he refused**.³¹ Ignoring his valid visitor visa, the officer then charged him with "not knowing his intentions" and took him to ACDC. At the time of the interview, he had been detained for four months.³²

HM came to the United States with a work visa in 2009, fleeing organized crime and government-sanctioned violence in Mexico.³³ HM explained that in his area of Mexico, people were not able to vote, in fear that "the bodies of their family [would] turn up on the side of the road."34 He stated that his brother-in-law was killed, and even people who did not vote would constantly feel unsafe.35 When he first arrived in the U.S., he did not seek asylum because he had already secured a work visa.³⁶ He later attempted to apply for asylum, but was told he did not qualify as a victim of political violence because he never voted, and therefore could not prove retaliation.³⁷ After a trip to Mexico to help his family, HM attempted to return to the United States through an established port of entry, but was detained by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officers.³⁸ The officers claimed that he failed to declare all of the items he brought with him, and charged him with failing to apply for asylum.³⁹ HM recounted that ICE held him and other detained immigrants in Florence, Arizona for several days, and attempted to transfer them to Georgia on three separate occasions.⁴⁰ The first time, ICE sent a group of detained immigrants on an old plane with a confused pilot who flew around for some time and ended up coming back to the facility in Florence.⁴¹ The next day, officials tried again to send the same group to Georgia, but the plane smelled of burned wires and again returned to Florence. 42 On the third attempt, the group finally arrived in Georgia.⁴³ He stated, "I know the government of this country has to protect its citizens, but I promise I'm not here to hurt them. I just want to be with my wife and kids, and make money so they can be safe."44

Eight immigrants who were interviewed crossed the U.S. border without a visa seeking refugee status or asylum.⁴⁵

One immigrant from Ghana reported that he fled his country because his "family is in deep crisis." His sister lost one of her legs in an accident and needs care. Though he used to work in Ghana to support his family, community members terrorized and attacked him because his job involved working with individuals who identify as gay, which was stigmatized. He did not want to leave, but felt he had no choice because of persecution. He sought asylum at the U.S. border in Mexico where he was detained and sent to a detention facility in California operated by Core-Civic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America). Then, he was transferred to the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia where he spent 14 months before being transferred again to ACDC.

A female immigrant from Mexico walked across the U.S. border while she was 6 months pregnant.⁵¹ After drug dealers kidnapped and killed her uncle, this 26-years-old immigrant fled Mexico in search of a better life for her baby.⁵² She was detained after turning herself in at a designated checkpoint.⁵³



Families Belong Together Rally , Photo Credit: Priyanka Bhatt



Vigil for Atul Kumar Babubhai Patel on July 2017; Photo Credit Susan Krysak

An immigrant who was born in Mozambique stated that he and his family had been living in South Africa until the police attacked him for refusing to pay them a bribe to retrieve his car after it was stolen.⁵⁴ The police told him, "you lost your car, you're going to lose your life."⁵⁵ He loves his children, but explained that the only way to help them was to go to a new place where he can get a job without living in fear.⁵⁶ He travelled to the United States with a valid B-1 visa, but was detained at the airport because CBP officers claimed he was "hiding something."⁵⁷ At the airport, he was told to sign a piece of paper in a dimly lit room.⁵⁸ He saw the papers again in front of an immigration judge, and only then realized that the form he signed allowed his deportation.⁵⁹

Khalid Shahzad Gul left Afghanistan because of religious persecution.⁶⁰ He stated that he was "trying to look for a better life," as his mother told him "if you stay [in Afghanistan], they'll kill you." ⁶¹

Another detained immigrant fleeing violence in India expressed, "They can shoot me here, but I can't go back there." 62

Another immigrant from Mexico described that he came to the United States without documentation in 2002 when he was 12 years old, because his parents wanted a "better future for us." He graduated high school, and was granted status under the Deferred Action for Childhood for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in 2014. In 2015, a judge dismissed a 2012 charge he had for driving with a suspended license. In 2017, he was pulled over in Forsyth County for driving with a suspended license. Though he paid the \$1400 bond to be released, ICE took custody of him within 48 hours. He has two kids and stated, "I'm the one who's supporting my family."

Several immigrants interviewed at ACDC were detained after reporting to regularly scheduled ICE check-ins.⁶⁹ One immigrant, James, came to the U.S. in 1997 and was a lawful permanent resident.⁷⁰ After he served a 4-6 month sentence in prison when he was 19 years old, James renewed his status as a permanent resident without any problems.⁷¹ However, during an ICE check-in in 2017, ICE attempted to re-charge him in order to deport him.⁷² He stated, "I wasn't expecting anything like this...They can't charge me twice for the same thing."⁷³

One immigrant from Cuba stated that he took a plea deal while in the U.S. as his lawyer did not advise him about the potential collateral immigration consequences of the plea.

B. Death of Mr. Atul Kumar Babubhai Patel

On May 16, 2017, Atul Kumar Babubhai Patel, originally from India, died in ICE custody at Grady Memorial Hospital after his detention at ACDC. According to a report from the Fulton County Medical Examiner's Office, Mr. Patel's death was a result of congestive heart failure.⁷⁴ Mr. Patel was detained at ACDC because he reportedly "did not have the required immigration documents," when arriving at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International airport on May 10, 2017.⁷⁵

The narrative provided by ICE and different media sources states that Mr. Patel's initial medical screening showed he had high blood pressure and diabetes.⁷⁶ Then after 3 days, a nurse checking his blood sugar noticed he had "shortness of breath and he was promptly transported to Grady Memorial Hospital" where he received treatment and later died.⁷⁷

From an open records request looking into the matter in October 2017, Project South found several alarming problems with this narrative. According to a memo of the investigation done by the Georgia Department of Corrections on June 20, 2017⁷⁸, when Mr. Patel arrived at ACDC on May 11, 2017, he received a medical screening which found his blood pressure "was extremely high" and that he "should have been checked 2 hours after the initial check." Mr. Patel's medical intake form shows that he also suffered from blurry vision and having "open or draining sores." According to the Georgia Department of Corrections investigation, after doing Mr. Patel's initial intake, The nurse on duty (Nurse 1) was supposed to make sure Mr. Patel's blood pressure was checked, however the "nurse that was assigned to that housing unit had already left for the day and she [Nurse 1] was unable to have his blood pressure re-taken." The investigation states, "she [Nurse 1] should have gone to the housing unit herself or sent a Medical Assistant to recheck detainee Patel's blood pressure, but she did not."

On May 12, 2017, during lockdown, Mr. Patel was reported to be "anxious", "nervous" and "didn't understand what was going on." He "wouldn't stop banging on the door." According to the officer on duty, "Patel appeared to be agitated and anxious and he wanted to come out of the cell." Nurse 1 was called into his cell where they did "some breathing relaxation exercises" and he was told to "write about his frustrations to ICE" after which he reportedly felt better. 85

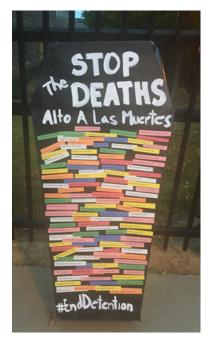
The next day on May 13, other detained immigrants in Mr. Patel's unit informed the officer in charge that Mr. Patel was not feeling well. When an officer went to check on Mr. Patel, Mr. Patel's eyes were swollen and he complained that "he had chest pains and was having trouble breathing." After this incident, Mr. Patel was taken to the medical unit and was seen by a different nurse (Nurse 2) who noted that Mr. Patel complained of "shortness of breath and chest pains." Nurse 2 also noted that his vitals were high and he had "pitting edema on both of his legs and he had some open wounds on both of his arms and legs." He was then taken to Grady Memorial Hospital where he later died from "congestive heart failure due to atherosclerotic coronary artery disease."

The Memorandum of Disciplinary Complaint by the Georgia Department of Corrections found that Nurse 1 violated Employee Work Rule 2.36, Unsatisfactory Performance because she:

- 1) Failed to conform to operational procedures as dictated by the City of Atlanta Department of Corrections Hypertension and Diabetes Protocols. Per the Hypertension Protocol, Mr. Patel's "blood pressure should have been re-taken after 1 hour, but Nurse 1 failed [to] ensure the procedure was followed."
- 2) Failed to call the doctor for 70/30 insulin orders after Mr. Patel's initial Medical Screening as she was required to do by the Diabetes Protocol since Mr. Patel's blood sugar was 243. 91

In addition to problems with medical staff, a detained immigrant who was in the same pod as Mr. Patel stated that Mr. Patel also suffered due to the cold temperature and cold showers in the pod as well as an officer taking away Mr. Patel's blanket. 92 He stated:

"Mr. Patel was elderly and each day went to medical, but the staff/guards would take him at erratic times, varying from 4-7 pm. One day he took a cold shower, because the showers don't have hot water, and returned to the cell he had to himself. After that shower his health started to worsen." He further noted that Mr. Patel was given two blankets because he was cold, but another officer "confiscated the second blanket. A couple days later Mr. Patel was disoriented and his eyes were bulging. Finally, he was taken to medical and did not return...Mr. Patel was evidently vocal about his cold and discomfort."







Dia De Los Muertos Vigil outside ACDC on November, 2017 commemorated all the lives lost in ICE custody - All 3 Photos by Priyanka Bhatt.



Due Process and Legal Access

A. Legal Standards

The Fifth Amendment protects all persons in the United States and bars government denial of "life, liberty or property without due process of the law," irrespective of one's race or national origin. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Zadvydas v. Davis* held that due process is guaranteed to those whose presence in the U.S. "is unlawful, temporary, or permanent." The Court in *Zadvydas* also held that "[g]overnment detention violates [the Due Process] Clause [of the Fifth Amendment] unless it is ordered in a criminal proceeding with adequate procedural safeguards or a special justification outweighs the individual's liberty interest." ⁹⁷

The Ninth Circuit in *Lanza v. Ashcroft* found that persons who are noncitizens, whether their entry was legal or illegal, cannot be removed from the U.S. "without the government following established procedures." 8 U.S.C. § 1229(a)(1) states that persons in removal proceedings must be given written notice that includes the nature of the proceedings and charges against them. Further, the U.S. Supreme Court held this year in *Pereira v. Sessions* that "[a] putative notice to appear that fails to designate the specific time or place of the noncitizen's removal proceedings is not a 'notice to appear under §1229(a) . . . "100

Although "detained immigrants are not entitled to representation under the Sixth Amendment" because they are not in criminal proceedings, ¹⁰¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1362 states that anyone in removal proceedings has the right to be represented by counsel. ¹⁰² Moreover, courts have held that noncitizens have the right to access *pro bono* or free legal services. ¹⁰³ ICE's 2000 NDS provides that each facility "promptly and prominently post [an official, current list of *pro bono* legal services providers] in detainee housing units and other appropriate areas." ¹⁰⁴ Further, the 2000 NDS states that detained immigrants shall not be required to pay for calls to legal service providers. ¹⁰⁵ The 2000 NDS also discusses "pre-representation" meetings between a detained immigrant and a prospective attorney, stating that during "the 'pre-representation' stage . . . legal service providers need <u>not</u> complete a Form G-28¹⁰⁶to meet with a detainee." ¹⁰⁷

Facilities are also responsible for establishing procedures to assist illiterate and non-English speaking detained immigrants with contacting *pro bono* legal service providers, and for providing "a law library in a designated room with sufficient space to facilitate detainees' legal research and writing," which each detained immigrant is permitted access to for at least five hours per week.¹⁰⁸

The Atlanta Department of Corrections' (ADC) Standard Operating Procedure states that "Housing Unit Officers will allow detainees to sign up for one hour sessions [to use the law library] during general dayroom hours." The ADC further provides that detained immigrants will have access to computers "during general library, law library sessions and designated dayroom hours." Further, detained immigrants "will have access to federal owned computers in the program room seven days a week . . . for legal research, educational purposes and as needed to retrieve various forms that detainees may need related to the immigration process while in cus-

tody."111 Additionally, detained immigrants should not be "charged for printed items that must be supplied to the courts . . ."112

The ADC also protects correspondence between attorneys and detained immigrants, stating that privileged correspondence will not be "read or censored unless there is a legitimate facility interest of order and security."¹¹³

The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man ("American Declaration") also requires that anyone accused of an offense have the right to be tried in court, as well as "the right to have the legality of his [or her] detention ascertained without delay by a court, and the right to be tried without undue delay, or, otherwise to be released."¹¹⁴ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR") which the U.S. has ratified further emphasizes the latter right, stating that anyone who is arrested or detained has the right "to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful."¹¹⁵ The American Declaration also states that everyone "has the right . . . to seek and receive asylum in [a] foreign territory . . . ," and "may resort to the courts to ensure respect for his [or her] legal rights."¹¹⁶

In addition to stating a right for "all persons deprived of liberty" to counsel, the Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas (PPDL) provides for "the right to communicate privately with . . . counsel, without interference or censorship, without delays or unjustified time limits, from the time of their capture or arrest and necessarily before their first declaration before the competent authority."¹¹⁷

B. Notice to Appear

In violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1229(a)(1) and the ICCPR, twelve detained immigrants reported never receiving a Notice to Appear (NTA).¹¹⁸ One detained immigrant, Oussama Aziz, noted that his Deportation Officer refused to provide him with one.¹¹⁹ This results in detained immigrants not having sufficient time to prepare for their hearings. Because many detained immigrants are representing themselves *pro se*¹²⁰, it is critical that they receive ample notice of their court appearance so that they can prepare and fight their case.

An attorney who currently represents multiple clients at ACDC stated:

"Another issue is that people often don't get notice of their first court hearing. Several people have told me that they only found out about their first master calendar hearing the day that it was scheduled, when they were taken to immigration court "121

Two other detained immigrants noted that they received NTAs containing errors. ¹²² One male detained immigrant said he received a NTA stating that the appearance date was "to be determined." ¹²³ As a result, he had to frequently call the court to make sure he did not miss the date. ¹²⁴ Another male detained immigrant, Steve Orlando McPherson, recalled that the charges on his NTA listed the wrong statute. ¹²⁵ This led to many of the *pro bono* organizations he contacted

rejecting his case, since many of them do not handle cases concerning that statute.¹²⁶ It took two months for the charges on his NTA to be corrected, but by that time he had already lost his case and spent a lot of money on legal representation.¹²⁷

C. Right to Counsel

I) Detained Immigrant Perspective

Detained immigrants at ACDC also report infringements on their right to counsel. Seven detained immigrants stated that they did not know about *pro bono* legal representation. One detained immigrant from Jamaica said that he was not provided a list of available *pro bono* services, and was under the impression that he had to pay for an attorney. Additionally, five other detained immigrants stated that the list of *pro bono* legal services provided by ACDC included organizations that charge for representation.

Those that do have attorneys note violations of attorney client confidentiality. Two detained immigrants stated that the calls between them and their attorneys are recorded.¹³¹ Another detained immigrant, Silvio Condomina-Palenzuela, reported that **the staff at ACDC refuses detained immigrants' requests for free phone calls to their attorneys "every time," claiming that they are too busy.**¹³² Further, although the 2000 NDS requires that detained immigrants not be required to pay for calls to legal services providers, two detained immigrants reported having to pay for calls they made to their attorneys. ¹³³ Detained immigrants report that calls within the U.S. cost \$0.18 per minute while international calls cost approximately \$1 per minute. ¹³⁴ **One male detained immigrant from Senegal stated, "A lot of people lose their case because of communication [problems]... Phone call costs too much." ¹³⁵**

In addition to the phone calls within the pods being recorded, phone calls inside the visitation booths that attorneys sometimes use at ACDC were said to be recorded as well. While ACDC denied that the calls are recorded, Priyanka Bhatt, a Legal Fellow at Project South, stated "the phones in the visitation booths, that you are forced to use since you can't hear otherwise, are in fact recorded... the recorded message [when you pick up the phone] explicitly states that the conversations are recorded."¹³⁶ It was only after Ms. Bhatt notified an official in the Atlanta Mayor's office about this recording that ACDC changed its automated message in the visitation booths to state that the conversation was not recorded. Because ACDC's prior message claimed these conversations between visitors, including attorneys, and detained immigrants were recorded when they in fact were not, free speech during visits was constrained, a violation of the First Amendment. Amendment.

II) Attorney Perspective

Attorneys representing clients at ACDC also reported barriers to representation. Out of the eleven attorneys who completed the questionnaire, seven reported issues with staff at ACDC requesting a signed Form G-28 in order to visit their client.¹³⁹ Four of those attorneys stated that ACDC staff requested a signed Form G-28 prior to them seeing their client for the first time.¹⁴⁰One female attorney who at the time represented over 10 detained immigrants at ACDC expressed her frustration in the below response to our questionnaire:

"ACDC is the only immigration detention facility in Georgia that requires a signed G-28 in order for an attorney to have a contact visit; but you can't get a signed G-28 until you have a contact visit, so it's a catch 22." 141

In addition, attorneys reported that the staff would lose their G-28 forms. One attorney noted, he would be asked to fill out a G-28 form every time he went to ACDC. They would scan it in, but when he came back, they would not have it in the system. Another attorney also said that the staff lost his G-28 Form. Disorganization and refusal to follow stated standards and protocols on the part of ACDC staff combine to make it increasingly difficult and time consuming for attorneys to meet with their clients.

Several attorneys also raised concerns over the length of time they were forced to wait to see their clients. One attorney noted that he had no choice but to do a contact visit in the pod because the facility's visitation booths do not allow for the passing of legal documents back and forth to clients. This meant he regularly had to wait 2 hours in order to do a contact visit—he said it took about an hour to go up to the unit and another hour to get out because of the long waits for officers to escort him each way. Priyanka Bhatt, Legal Fellow with Project South, echoed these concerns saying she, too, frequently spent 1-2 hours waiting to be taken to a unit at ACDC in order to see a detained immigrant.

Multiple attorneys noted that the staff did not know or understand their facility's own rules. ¹⁴⁶ One attorney said there is a lot of inconsistency regarding what the rules are and that it really depends on which staff member you talk to on a particular day. ¹⁴⁷ For example, he said he was always allowed to have an expert witness or interpreter in the booth, but was recently told this would not be permitted. Another attorney stated that ACDC is understaffed, and therefore, the staff is often "confused" and don't know who is doing what. ¹⁴⁸ One female attorney complained about gender bias by ACDC staff:

"The other female associate [I work with] and I are always asked for signed G-28s for contact visits with clients, but my male boss and the male associate are almost never asked for signed G-28s for contact visits with clients . . . My male boss and the male associate can call ACDC and get A numbers of our clients over the phone, but if a female calls, the ACDC employees more often than not will not give A numbers over the phone." ¹⁴⁹

Another attorney stated that he heard from an ICE attorney that Atlanta Immigration Court is planning to begin conducting hearings with detained immigrants at ACDC via videoconference despite ACDC being walking distance from the courthouse. This would apply to both master calendar and individual hearings. Another attorney stated that hearings done via videoconference would prejudice detained immigrants by making it harder for them to convey credibility. The state of th

D. Access to Legal Materials

I) Legal Standard

As required by ICE 2000 NDS, ¹⁵³ ACDC has a "law library" that is supposed to provide detained immigrants access to legal materials to "facilitate legal research and writing." In addition, an ICE official stated that each pod has a computer with a legal database to further help detained immigrants at ACDC. ¹⁵⁴ However, interviews with detained immigrants and the October 2017 inspection of the facility illustrate many deficiencies in detained immigrants' ability to access legal materials.

II) Difficulty Accessing Law Library

At ACDC, detained immigrants are told that they are allowed to go to the law library 5 days a week for up to an hour.¹⁵⁵ However, some detained immigrants stated that they were only allowed to use the library for 30 minutes. 156 One detained immigrant said the length of time individuals are permitted to stay at the law library is "at the discretion of law librarian." ¹⁵⁷ In order to go to the law library, detained immigrants must put their name on a sign-up sheet and a guard is supposed to take them. However, several immigrants note that, at times, even if they have their names on the sign-up sheet, guards would not take them to the law library. One individual estimated that about 10% of the time, guards would not take those who had signed up to the law library. 158 During an interview, another detained immigrant shared that despite sending his law library request more than a week and a half prior, he still had not been taken to the library. 159 Others claim to have been denied access altogether at the whim of those in charge. For example, one detained immigrant from Mexico reported that ACDC officers deny access to the law library arbitrarily, noting that "the person getting the request [to use the law library] will ask why you want to go. If you do not provide a reason he likes, he won't let you go."160 Another individual from Senegal reported that his flash drive containing helpful materials regarding habeas petitions was taken from him.¹⁶¹ He planned on using these materials to file a habeas petition on his own behalf and assist other detained immigrants with their petitions. 162 He was told by ACDC that he was "stirring up stuff," and that ICE had to approve of anything he wanted to research. 163 This man also noted that "[p]eople get deported because they have no help [fighting their case]."164

III) Outdated Law Library and Computers

The law library is ill equipped to serve detained immigrants. During an inspection of ACDC in October 2017, Priyanka Bhatt reported seeing approximately five books related to immigration library all of which were dated from 2007 through 2008. Several detained immigrants reported that the law library lacked the books they needed. As one detained immigrant from Mozambique noted, "There are no books on asylum. They have religious books. [They] [h]ave computers but no internet." A Cuban detained immigrant stated that the law library is not helpful because there are no books related to immigration proceedings for Cubans. Another detained immigrant noted that the Bible is the only book in the law library that is written in Spanish. 168

In addition to the lack of relevant immigration books, the computers and database in the law library are confusing and not helpful. During the October 2017 inspection, a top official for ICE even admitted that the legal database on the computers is not user friendly for detained immi-

grants. ¹⁶⁹ One detained immigrant, Zakaria Taoufik said the "[1]aw library doesn't help," and described the law library technology as follows: "They have ready-made doc[uments]. No internet. No law dictionary. Can't print." A male detained immigrant, Steve Orlando McPherson, noted that there is only one computer available in the law library that is shared between three detained people at a time, while staff tries to rush them out within the hour. ¹⁷¹ He also stated that the printer was not working at the time of the interview and had not been working for four months. ¹⁷² He missed the deadline for his appeal because he was not able to print for these four months. ¹⁷³ Mr. McPherson also stated that detained immigrants call Washington D.C. and the American Bar Association (ABA) to make complaints about how awful the law library and legal access is at ACDC. ¹⁷⁴ Discussing the amount of time he spends in the library per week, he noted: "I am lucky if I get one whole hour a week." A detained immigrant from Ghana who has not been to the law library has talked to others who go regularly and stated: "Here, everyone says there is nothing in [the] law library and [they] can only go for 30 minutes." ¹⁷⁵

In addition to the law library, an ICE official stated that each pod has a computer and that detained immigrants are informed that the computers provide access to LexisNexis, and are allowed to access both the Computer Room and LexisNexis whenever they want. ¹⁷⁶ Our interviews show that this is not true. Detained immigrants reported that units 5NE¹⁷⁷ and 7SE¹⁷⁸ do not have computers.

. Issues with Deportation Officers

When a detained immigrant arrives at ACDC, they are assigned a Deportation Officer (DO) from ICE. According to the ICE website, DOs, "manage all aspects of the immigration enforcement process, including the identification and arrest, transportation, detention, case management and removal." Additionally, DOs "conduct legal research to support decisions on removal cases and assist attorneys in representing the government in court actions." They also "work with other federal law enforcement officials to identify, locate and arrest aliens and are responsible for ensuring the physical removal of aliens from the United States."

A majority of detained immigrants stated that they were dissatisfied with their DO. They noted problems accessing their DO, complained that their DO did not have any information on their case, that the DO was rude and/or racist and more.

Five detained immigrants reported seeing their DO only once at the time of their interviews.¹⁷⁹ One of these detained immigrants, a male from Cuba, stated at the time of his interview that he had been detained for six months and had only seen his Deportation Officer once.¹⁸⁰ Another detained immigrant stated, "Deportations Officers [are] supposed to [meet with us] once every week, but they don't. I then put in request for them to come, but it's often weeks before they do actually come."¹⁸¹ Another detained immigrant reiterated this point when he said, "They're supposed to come once a week to answer everyone's questions. But they come in to talk to a particular person and then don't want to talk to others. Sometimes they come, sometimes they don't."¹⁸² This detained immigrant also added that DOs tend to visit ACDC when

detained immigrants are in lockdown and cannot meet with them. 183

ICE officials are aware of this problem. During an inspection of ACDC, a detained immigrant approached two ICE officials and a member of Georgia Detention Watch stating that he "[had not] seen [his] Deportation Officer in over 3 weeks," despite his name being listed twice on the schedule during that time period.¹⁸⁴

Several detained immigrants also complained about their DOs being switched frequently. ¹⁸⁵ A detained man from Mexico expressed frustration with having his DO changed once his previous DO had already become familiar with his case. ¹⁸⁶ He noted that it was "not fair" to reassign his case to a new DO who "doesn't know what's going on." ¹⁸⁷

When they actually do see their DO, most detained immigrants also reported that their DOs are not helpful and do not provide answers to their questions. As one detained immigrant, Steve Orlando McPherson noted: "[DOs] are not interested in helping you. They only parrot the same things back." A male detained immigrant from Jamaica expressed the same sentiment when stating that, "[Deportation Officer]s are not helpful. Their whole job is to get rid of you." Four other detained immigrants reported delays in DOs returning their missed calls, while two detained immigrants reported that there are only three DOs for the entire detained immigrant population at ACDC.

DOs were also noted to be rude, aggressive and vulgar. A male detained immigrant from Senegal stated his deportation officer told him "I don't care about you or your kids. I'm going to deport you. We don't want you here." This detained immigrant also reported that his DO used vulgar language against him. One detained immigrant, Oussama Aziz, stated that his DO is "aggressive and disrespectful." He recalled a time when this DO told another detained immigrant, "Why are you in my country? I'm not here to help your ass, I'm here to deport your ass." here to deport



Families Belong Together Rally on June, 2018 where thousands of individuals marched against the Trump administration's policy of separating families at the border. Pictues by: Priyanka Bhatt



Admissions

A. Legal Standards

ICE's 2000 NDS requires that all detained immigrants be given a detainee handbook upon admission to a facility. ¹⁹⁶ The Officer in Charge at each facility is responsible for developing "a site-specific detainee handbook to serve as an overview of, and guide to, the detention policies, rules, and procedures in effect at the facility." ¹⁹⁷

The NDS also requires that detained immigrants be provided a medical screening upon arrival. The Atlanta Department of Corrections' (ADC) policies also state that "[e]ach inmate will be given a comprehensive health appraisal . . . within [14] days after admission to the facility." This is further enforced by international law. The Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas (PPDL) provides that "[a]ll persons deprived of liberty shall be entitled to an impartial and confidential medical or psychological examination, carried out by idoneous medical personnel immediately following their admission to the place of imprisonment or commitment . . ." Further, the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment states that detained immigrants be given "[a] proper medical examination . . . as promptly as possible after his [or her] admission to the place of detention or imprisonment, and thereafter medical care and treatment shall be provided whenever necessary." 200

The NDS, ACDC policies, and international law all provide guidelines for clothing and hygienic needs of detained immigrants. The NDS requires all facilities housing detained immigrants to "provide clean clothing, bedding, linens, and towels to every INS detainee upon arrival," as well as "regular exchanges of clothing, linens, and towels for as long as they remain in detention." The clothes and bedding given to detained immigrants must be provided "in quantities and weights appropriate for the facility environment and local weather conditions." The NDS further provides that "[s]ocks and undergarments will be exchanged daily, outer garments at least twice weekly and sheets, towels, and pillowcases at least weekly." Hygienic supplies for both men and women are to be replenished as needed.

ACDC policies require that "[u]niforms, bedding and linen will be exchanged weekly and blankets will be exchanged monthly," and hygienic products be made available to all detained immigrants. Moreover, detained immigrants should have the following items "in their possession at all times":

- "a. One sheet, one mattress cover
- b. One towel, one wash cloth
- c. One pillowcase
- d. One blanket . . .
- e. Two uniforms . . . "206

Further, ACDC policies state that "[t]here should be no delay in replacing clothing, bedding

and linen." 207 Additionally, detained immigrants who are "housed for three days or more will be allowed to have their personal undergarments laundered." 208

The PPDL provides that clothing provided to detained immigrants "shall be sufficient and adequate to the climatic conditions . . ." ²⁰⁹ The PPDL also states that detained immigrants "shall have access to clean and sufficient sanitary installations that ensure their privacy and dignity." ²¹⁰ The American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man also provides that everyone "has the right to the preservation of his [or her] health through sanitary . . . measures relating to . . . clothing." ²¹¹

Pertaining specifically to the treatment of asylum seekers in detention, Guideline 8 of the UN-HCR's Detention Guidelines provides that: "Basic necessities such as beds, climate-appropriate bedding, shower facilities, basic toiletries, and clean clothing . . . be provided to asylum-seekers in detention. They should have the right to wear their own clothes, and to enjoy privacy in showers and toilets, consistent with safe management of the facility."²¹²

B. Detainee Handbook & Application of Rules

Ten detained immigrants reported not having received a detainee handbook upon arrival to ACD-C, while one individual stated he received a detainee handbook written in a language he could not understand. One immigrant from Canada reported that he arrived to ACDC with 14 other detained immigrants, none of whom received a handbook upon arrival. When he asked about getting a detainee handbook, an officer at ACDC responded, "I've never heard of it. I'll look into it."

One detained immigrant, William Diaz-Gonzalez, said that he had to sign documents stating that he received the detainee handbook, but had to submit a separate request to actually receive the handbook.²¹⁷

A detained immigrant, Steve Orlando McPherson, who received the detainee handbook upon arrival noted that "[ACDC] follows the policies in the handbook when it is to their advantage."²¹⁸ Several other detained immigrants noted inconsistencies in the application of rules by ACDC officers. One detained immigrant from Ghana who received the detainee handbook upon arrival at ACDC stated that the handbook is obsolete because "each officer has [their] own rules and regulations."²¹⁹ A female detained immigrant from El Salvador, who reported unfair punishments because of the inconsistent application of rules by ACDC officers, provided an example of an arbitrary application of the rules in the detainee handbook:

"Some deputies are okay with detainees leaving cell doors open, others are not. Detainees have been put on lockdown for leaving cell doors open. According to [the] rule book, lockdown is supposed to be one hour, but deputies will extend it to two-and-a-half hours sometimes."²²⁰

C. Medical Screenings Upon Arriving at ACDC

While most detained immigrants reported being given a medical screening upon arriving at ACDC, one male detained immigrant, Robert, stated that he did not receive a medical screening.²²¹ Another male detained immigrant, Zakaria Taoufik, who was transferred from Irwin Detention Center to ACDC, reported not having a medical screening until three weeks after arriving at ACDC.²²²

Several detained immigrants who received screenings upon arrival at ACDC reported that their screenings were inadequate. One detained immigrant, Oussama Aziz, reported that his medical screening consisted solely of his temperature and blood pressure being checked.²²³ Another male detained immigrant from England expressed a similar sentiment, stating that his medical screening solely consisted of his blood pressure being checked and being asked questions about his health,²²⁴ while a man from Mexico stated that he only had to provide an "oral history" to the person treating him during his medical screening.²²⁵

D. Issuance of Clothing

During an inspection of the facility, an ICE official and an ACDC official both stated that detained immigrants are regularly given uniforms and underwear—that they do not need to request these things.²²⁶ Interviews with detained immigrants prove otherwise. Although some detained immigrants reported receiving clean uniforms every week,²²⁷ many detained immigrants stated they had only been given one or two pairs of clothing during their time at ACDC, if given any at all.²²⁸ In addition, detained immigrants reported that they had to make a request to be given more clothing after arriving at ACDC.²²⁹ Thus, many detained immigrants were forced to wear unhygienic and unclean clothing for days, and sometimes weeks straight. Those who have money in their accounts are coerced into buying extra clothing from the commissary by officers who refuse to give them clothing.²³⁰ Others resort to washing the same pair of clothes and undergarments over and over in the shower because of the irregularity of laundry services.²³¹

One male detained immigrant from Liberia stated that he did not receive any boxers or socks when he arrived at ACDC.²³² This man also stated that detained immigrants at ACDC usually only receive two pairs of pants, two short sleeve shirts, and one sweatshirt upon arrival.²³³ Another male detained immigrant from Mexico approached an officer after one month had passed since he put in a request for new underwear, to which the officer replied, "[Y]ou have money in your account to buy [underwear]."²³⁴ Another male detained immigrant from Nigeria stated that he only received one set of clothing upon arrival at ACDC, and has had to buy new sets from the commissary.²³⁵ In addition to complaining about only being provided two uniforms upon arrival at ACDC, a male detained immigrant from India explained that he buys socks and underwear from the commissary because he was only provided with two pairs of each when he arrived.²³⁶ One detained immigrant stated he was never given a towel so he "couldn't shower for 3 days."²³⁷ He said he repeatedly asked the officers but they always denied it.²³⁸

A detained man from Senegal, who only received one t-shirt, one pair of socks, and one pair

of boxers, went three months before making a complaint to ACDC to receive more undergarments.²³⁹ He was told by an officer that he did not receive more clothing because he had the money in his commissary to pay for it.²⁴⁰

When asked by a detained immigrant from Canada about why detained immigrants are not receiving underwear regularly, quoting from the detainee handbook, a Lieutenant at ACDC responded, "I don't know anything about that."²⁴¹

The lack of clothing provided upon arrival at ACDC leads some detained immigrants to handwash the limited clothing they are given. One male detained immigrant from Cuba stated that he washes his undergarments with hand soap.²⁴² Another male detained immigrant from Afghanistan, who only received one pair of socks and boxers when he arrived at ACDC, reported washing his undergarments in the shower.²⁴³ However, the soap at ACDC has caused several detained immigrants to have allergic reactions and develop rashes.²⁴⁴

E. Laundry

Several detained immigrants who choose to do laundry reported inconsistent access.²⁴⁵ Below is a response from a detained immigrant, William Diaz-Gonzalez, who was asked how often laundry is done at ACDC:

"Good question: It's supposed to be weekly, but it takes two weeks sometimes. So I end up spending two and a half weeks wearing the same clothes." ²⁴⁶

A detained man from Canada stated that **laundry is supposed to be done every night, but officers refuse to take clothing and instead tell the detained immigrants to "ask the next shift."**²⁴⁷ An immigrant from Mexico also reported ACDC officers using discretion in allowing detained immigrants to launder their clothing. ²⁴⁸ The formerly incarcerated immigrant stated that he had to resort to washing his clothes in the shower. ²⁴⁹

Having to hand-wash clothes because of inadequate access to laundry services is not uncommon at ACDC. Another male detained immigrant from Mexico stated that he does laundry by hand in the sink because officers are inconsistent in allowing access to the washing machines, mostly only allowing access to detainees "who look like them." This detained immigrant also noted that items tend to get lost when a group of detained immigrants combine their laundry. Similarly, a detained immigrant who has been denied access to laundry services in the past reported resorting to washing his clothing in the sink of his cell after going a month-and-a-half without being able to wash his sweatshirt.

F. Toiletries

Although detained immigrants overall reported being given basic hygiene supplies, many complained that they do not receive shampoo.²⁵³ Several also noted that the soap provided to them by ACDC irritated their skin;²⁵⁴ three individuals reported suffering allergic reactions caused by the soap.²⁵⁵ One female detained immigrant from El Salvador stated that she now takes medication to treat her allergic reaction to the soap given to her at ACDC.²⁵⁶



Housing and Recreation

A. Legal Standards

The PPDL specifies that detained immigrants are entitled to "adequate floor space...appropriate ventilation and heating, according to the climatic conditions of their place of deprivation of liberty..., "257 as well as appropriate "water for bathing or shower, according to the climatic conditions..." This principle is supported by the American Declaration guarantee that "every person has the right to the preservation of his health through sanitary...measures relating to...housing." Together, these international standards mandate that detained immigrants are required to be housed in an area that is clean, well-lit, and has comfortable temperatures. ACDC policy also specifies that "one mattress and one pillow will remain in place on each bunk in each cell at all times." Additionally, both the PPDL261 and the NDS262 state that detained immigrants are to be guaranteed access to natural light or sunlight. The UNHCR guidelines also require that detained immigrants have "the opportunity to conduct some form of physical exercise through daily indoor and outdoor recreational activities...as well as access to suitable outside space, including fresh air and natural light." 263

B. Cold Temperatures

Despite these standards, 21 detained immigrants reported that the temperature in the unit was unbearably cold.²⁶⁴ Common adjectives used to describe the temperature include "very cold" and "freezing." One detained immigrant stated, "People are shivering, but [the guards] won't turn [the temperature] up."²⁶⁵ Five detained immigrants explained that they attempt to cover or close their vents, sometimes using toilet paper or a mixture of tissue and toothpaste.²⁶⁶ However, three of those detained immigrants reported that guards remove these makeshift vent coverings when checking their cells.²⁶⁷ One detained immigrant even stated that he knows of someone who was put on lockdown for eight hours because he had covered the vent in his cell.²⁶⁸ When several detained immigrants requested to have the temperature increased, the guards refused, claiming that the cold is "good for germs,"²⁶⁹ or stating that the immigrants would just have to adapt to the environment, as the air conditioning services the entire facility.²⁷⁰ One detained immigrant described that he has "been sick 3 or 4 times because of the cold shower and cold air,"²⁷¹ and another reported that the cold air and the fumes from the cleaning supplies make it hard for him to breathe.²⁷²

C. Cell Units

Detained immigrants at the Atlanta City Detention Center reported that they are housed in a small cell that includes a bunk, toilet, and sink in the same space. When asked to describe the cell, two detained immigrants specifically expressed frustration at the lack of privacy when using the toilet.²⁷³ **One detained immigrant described that ACDC is an old jail with "nasty room[s],"**²⁷⁴ and another detained immigrant reported that the toilet in the 6SE unit does not work.²⁷⁵

Another detained immigrant relayed multiple accounts regarding unhygienic conditions within the 5NE unit.²⁷⁶ He reported that the toilet in his cell often clogs and overflows, and that two weeks prior to the interview, an officer refused to move the immigrants in his cell when the toilet overflowed.²⁷⁷ Instead, the officer insisted that the detained men clean up the mess.²⁷⁸ He described the situation saying, "It was not sanitary, it smelled."²⁷⁹ The officer refused to call the supervisor for help, and forced the detained men to clean up the cell, but even after doing their best, the cell still smelled.²⁸⁰ Afterwards, ACDC staff placed new incoming immigrants in that same cell.²⁸¹ He also reported that for the four days prior to the interview, the water fountain in his unit was broken.²⁸² Though ACDC staff brought coolers of water to the unit, the water would run out within a few hours, leaving them without water for extended periods of time.²⁸³ He stated, "5NE needs to be shut down."²⁸⁴

At the time of the interview, one detained immigrant, Abdusalam Hussein, reported that the sink in his cell had been broken for two months, and only had hot water.²⁸⁵ At ACDC, detained immigrants report that they are responsible for cleaning their own cells, but two detained immigrants state that they are not able to access cleaning materials every day.²⁸⁶ Mr. Hussein also explained that the guards stipulate what time they are allowed to clean, and that some of the guards do not allow them to clean at all.²⁸⁷ Some guards have even told detained immigrants that they are only allowed to clean at 4:30 am.²⁸⁸

Four detained immigrants reported that the mattress in the cell is thin and uncomfortable.²⁸⁹ One stated that the mattress is "cold rubber," old, hard, and makes him feel as though he is sleeping on cold steel.²⁹⁰ Another man expressed that he is experiencing neck and back pain from sleeping on the thin mattress, particularly because he does not even have a pillow in his cell.²⁹¹ When he requested a pillow, the guards simply told him to use his blanket as a substitute.²⁹²

When talking about the conditions within ACDC, one detained immigrant, William Diaz-Gonzalez stated, "I would rather be in prison. I have limited access to everything [at ACDC]."²⁹³ Another detained immigrant, Robert, expressed that he feels stifled in his cell because he is unable to sing or pray out loud, since he does not know if other detained immigrants would be okay with it.²⁹⁴

D. Showers

The showers at ACDC are unsanitary and are often either too cold or too hot, making them unbearable to use. Additionally, detained immigrants are only allowed to shower during particular days and times. Detained immigrants also reported that there are only 6 or 7 showers in units containing anywhere from 40^{295} to 52 people.²⁹⁶

In one unit, only 4 of the 6 showers are functional, and the showers flood, creating an unsanitary pool on the shower floor.²⁹⁷ One detained immigrant reported that it took a month of protests to get the showers cleaned,²⁹⁸ and another reported that the showers were bleached but are still covered in fungus.²⁹⁹

Ten detained immigrants reported having an issue with the water temperature in the shower.³⁰⁰

Only one detained immigrant explicitly stated that the showers work well.³⁰¹ He explained that this is only the case because the detained immigrants in his pod were moved to another floor after complaining numerous times and going on hunger strike as a unit.³⁰²

Six detained immigrants reported that the water in the showers was consistently too cold.³⁰³ One on the 6th floor reported that the guards at ACDC claim that the water is cold because it is hard to get hot water to his level of the building.³⁰⁴ Four other detained immigrants reported that the water is consistently too hot for their skin.³⁰⁵ Some detained immigrants reported that the water is so hot that they are unable to use it because it burns their skin,³⁰⁶ and that their skin appears red, almost burnt, when they come out of the boiling hot shower.³⁰⁷

E. Lack of Natural Sunlight

Though according to international law and ICE standards, detained immigrants are supposed to be given access to natural light or sunlight,³⁰⁸ reports from immigrants locked within ACDC demonstrate this is not available to them. Five detained immigrants described the window in their cell as letting in a poor amount of sunlight or no natural light at all.³⁰⁹ **One detained immigrant reported that he did not remember the last time he saw the sun since being detained.**³¹⁰ Another person reported that since sunlight does not come through the window in his cell, **the last time he saw sunlight was two months prior during his last immigration hearing.**³¹¹ One detained immigrant who was transferred to ACDC stated that he had not been outside for one and a half years.³¹²

F. Recreation Area

Even the recreation area at ACDC is indoors. Five detained immigrants described the area as so small that it is hard to actually exercise.³¹³ One detained immigrant explained that because of the recreation area's small size, only a limited number of people can use it at a time.³¹⁴ He also reported seeing a cockroach in the recreation area.³¹⁵ Another detained immigrant, James, described the **recreation area as having a concrete floor and nets at the top, stating, "It's like a cage."**³¹⁶

When asked to describe the types of recreation available at ACDC, detained immigrants commonly only reported that there is a basketball hoop and a soccer ball.³¹⁷ One detained immigrant stated he used to be able to play soccer, but now they don't give them a soccer ball.³¹⁸ He also stated they couldn't play basketball anymore either because the ball was flat.³¹⁹

Four detained immigrants also reported playing cards or games such as chess, dominos, and scrabble during their recreation time.³²⁰ Several individuals also reported that they are denied access to recreation when it is raining heavily or when there are protests outside of ACDC,³²¹ despite the fact that the recreation area is completely indoors. One detained immigrant, Adeniyi Ade-Oyegbola, reported that they are denied recreation access during demonstrations because the staff does not want detained immigrants to hear the protestors.³²²



Medical and Mental Health Care

A. Legal Standards

ICE's 2000 NDS requires that detained immigrants "have access to medical services that promote detainee health and general well-being," including primary care, emergency care, and mental health care. 323 ACDC standards state that it is the "policy of the City of Atlanta Department of Corrections to provide all detainees with timely medical services,"324 and even detail cleaning procedures specific to health services areas.³²⁵ ICE also requires that facilities have scheduled "sick call" services, where medical staff can visit detained immigrants who put in medical requests.³²⁶ For facilities that incarcerate 50 to 200 detainees, sick call is mandated to be at least 3 days per week, and for facilities that incarcerate over 200 detainees, sick call is required at least 5 days per week. 327 According to an ICE official, if detained immigrants bring in prescription medication, they will be granted access to them.³²⁸ Specifically, ACDC policy mandates that medications will be distributed and "accomplished in a timely manner and according to physician orders."329 ACDC also allows for some detained immigrants who want to self-medicate to do so, specifically noting this policy can be in the best interest of people with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. 330 For detained immigrants who have HIV/AIDS, ACDC policy also states that antiretroviral medications will be distributed as ordered, specifically "due to the sensitivity and timeliness of antiretroviral medications and to prevent lapses in health care...."331

ACDC has specific policies mandating that mental health services are provided to detained immigrants, including referral to outpatient mental health services and "admission to licensed mental health facilities for inmates whose psychiatric needs exceed the treatment capability of the facility."³³² ACDC policy also requires that detained immigrants be referred to the Grady Mental Health Unit when they "present signs of being suicidal." ³³³ Additionally, in line with ACDC policies, ACDC Mental Health Professions are required to "make rounds in the general population and special housing units to address inmate mental health requests, court orders, and follow-ups."334

Article 5(e)(iv) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) also provides that everyone is guaranteed "...without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin...The right to public health, medical care, social security and social services."335 The Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas (Inter-American Principles) elaborates that detained immigrants' right to health includes experiencing the "highest possible level of physical, mental, and social well-being, including...adequate medical, psychiatric, and dental care."336 The United Nations High Commissions for Refugees Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention (UNHCR Guidelines) also specifies that medical treatment for asylum seekers includes having access to psychological counseling, and that asylum seekers who have or develop medical or mental health issues while in detention should undergo "consideration for release." 337 B. Medical Care

The staff at ACDC consistently fail to meet their own standards of medical care as well as ICE standards and international law governing the treatment of detained immigrants. While detained immigrants reported knowing how to access general medical treatment at ACDC, out of the 38 detained immigrants interviewed, only 5 reported that they were satisfied with the medical care they received, and 33 detained immigrants reported various experiences of inadequate medical and mental health services. One detained immigrant stated, "Being sick is the worst part of being here. We haven't committed any crimes...we want protection and to be healthy."³³⁸

I) Lack of Access to Medication

In direct conflict with claims from ICE officers and ACDC staff, 339 detained immigrants and their lawyers commonly reported that immigrants struggle to access prescription medication that they brought with them to the detention center. A female detained immigrant, Alma Valle, reported that the staff did not allow her to access her birth control medication.³⁴⁰ Another detained immigrant, Axel Antonio Vasquez, explained that he had been waiting one month at the time of the interview to gain access to the prescription medication he brought with him to treat a fungus.³⁴¹ One detained immigrant with diabetes stated that he rarely receives insulin, and that the facility employees only check his blood sugar about twice a week.³⁴² Five detained immigrants reported not receiving medication for medical issues such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, and an ear infection for time periods between two days and one and a half months. 343 One lawyer who represents detained immigrants stated that one of his clients told staff at ACDC that he was HIV positive and brought his medication with him, yet was still forced to undergo a month of medical tests before he was given his medication.³⁴⁴ Another detained immigrant, Juan Manuel Venegas Alfaro, had his doctor call the detention center to let them know about his prescription for hydrocodone. 345 Despite his severe back pain and the doctor's call, the medical staff refuse to provide him with his medicine and instead only give him Motrin. 346



since he injured his knee and he no longer has pain, medical staff continue to wake him up three times a day to force him to take Tylenol.³⁴⁸ At the time of the interview, he still had not been able to see a doctor about his knee.³⁴⁹

Center for two months. Robert was 25 years old when he was detained, and had been taking medication for HIV prior to being detained. While taking his medication, Robert had a nearly undetectable viral load and a healthy CD4 count for the three years prior to being detained.

When Robert was detained, he attempted to bring an envelope with three months of prescription HIV medication into the Atlanta City Detention Center. At the detention center, the medical staff took the medication away from him without explanation. Robert expressed that if he had known where they were going, he would have insisted they give him back his medication. The next day, Robert went to the medical staff to ask for his medication, but they simply gave him back the empty envelope and stated that they would give him new medicine. Robert describes his experience in his own words, below.

"The first six months I took the [HIV] medicine in Nigeria it didn't work, but for the past three years with treatment my viral load was undetectable and my CD4 count was healthy. I spent one week here without medicine. In the second week, the lab drew blood and said my CD4 had dropped to 400 and my viral load was up. In the third week, the doctor asked questions about my medical history. In the fourth week, the lab did another blood test, but they didn't answer anything I asked them, and I still had no medicine...A lot of people here are very sick and they still won't take them to the hospital...I'm scared of what can happen to me...I've seen people die."

Without his medication, Robert fell sick, with pains, fever, diarrhea, and headaches. When the nurse finally took him to a hospital for treatment, his legs and arms were shackled. He described the process of going to the hospital as "humiliating," and stated: "I've never experienced this in my country...you're better off in detention, at least [there] you're not in chains. Even after Robert left the hospital, the staff at the Atlanta City Detention Center first refused to give him his medication, or caused Robert to miss doses by giving him medication on the wrong schedule. *9350

Detained immigrants also struggle to see medical staff on a timely basis. One detained immigrant, HM, reported that on various occasions, he was forced to wait all night for medical care while he was short of breath, or when he was unable to sleep because of pain.³⁵¹ Silvio Condomina-Palenzuela, a detained immigrant with hip problems reported that he had to write nine medical requests and wait 21 days before being seen by a doctor, who recommended surgery.³⁵² Another detained immigrant, Steve Orlando McPherson, stated that he requested

medical care for approximately two months without a response, but his ability to access care improved recently, after he went to the medical request kiosk and typed "I will report you to ICE if you don't see me." 353 Adeniyi Ade-Oyegbola, a detained immigrant with an ear infection had to wait five days before seeing a doctor, and another five days to receive the prescription to treat the infection. A female detained immigrant reported: "They don't care about women who are pregnant," explaining that pregnant women are not given the particular medical care they need at ACDC. Another detained immigrant reported that his gum was swollen and submitted a medical request a month before his interview and still had not received a response. One detained immigrant said that, even though he became ill 3-4 times because of the cold shower and cold air in his unit, he did not attempt to seek medical care. He stated that he has put in so many detainee and medical requests without a response that he has given up putting in a request when he is sick.

III) Inadequate Treatment

Even when detained immigrants are able to see medical staff, several report issues with the quality of medical treatment. One detained immigrant reported that even after three incidents where he began trembling, indicating his blood sugar was too low, a nurse denied that he has diabetes and hypoglycemia and claimed that his blood sugar results were normal. On another occasion, a facility nurse could not find a detained immigrant's vein while drawing blood. He was left with a bruise the size of his hand and a significant amount of blood loss. He noted, We worked in medicine. They said this is normal here, but it's not normal.

Miguel Cabrera Mendoza reported that he has been diabetic for 9 years, and was in federal prison before he was sent to ACDC.³⁶² His medical records specifically state that regular insulin should be taken out of his treatment plan as it causes him to have a hypoallergenic reaction.³⁶³ Despite this explicit notice, when Mr. Mendoza arrived at ACDC, the doctor at ACDC only provided him regular insulin.³⁶⁴ Mr. Mendoza refused to take the insulin, and after 2 days, staff took him to Grady because his "kidneys were poisoning [him]." After Mr. Mendoza returned from the hospital with a prescription, the doctor at ACDC cut his prescription in half without explanation.³⁶⁶ The doctor regularly changes Mr. Mendoza's medication, and for the two weeks prior to his interview had given him the type of insulin he has to inject in himself four times a day.³⁶⁷ As a result of the medication at ACDC, Mr. Mendoza's sight has diminished, he has constipation and bleeding hemorrhoids, and has complained of a rash in his genital area which he attributes to increased frequency of urination.³⁶⁸ He is particularly concerned that the side effects will become permanent, as he stated: "Pilots [are] trained to see when vision is diminished...If it becomes permanent, I can't fly again."369 He also reported that his body sometime shakes because the lack of medication "bottoms [him] out", and that he lost between 10 and 12 pounds the first two weeks he was at ACDC. ³⁷⁰ Additionally, staff at ACDC are denying Mr. Mendoza access to the test results that come from his three finger pricks every day.³⁷¹ When Mr. Mendoza attempted to talk to the doctor about his medication, the doctor retorted "I have no time to see you, you don't know what you're talking about" and kicked him out of the office.³⁷² Mr. Mendoza stated, "Sometimes I've doubted this guy is a medical doctor. Doctors usually hear you, listen to you."373

One detained immigrant, Zakaria Taoufik, described the medical unit as dirty, as if no one ever cleans it.³⁷⁴ He stated that there are people in the medical unit with "poop bags and other injuries and no one helps them when they need help getting up or anything."375 Mr. Taoufik reported that he felt unsafe in the medical unit, as the officers there are working overtime and when he asked for help, one officer retorted: "Don't ask me for shit." Another detained immigrant, Abdusalam Hussein, reports that the medical staff are mean and have threatened him with segregation for apparently "not cooperating." Mr. Taoufik also stated that after he broke his foot one day, he was screaming at an officer for twenty minutes before the officer took any action.³⁷⁸ He explained that they transported him to Grady Memorial Hospital, he was treated "badly." ³⁷⁹ He said they "threw me like [a] k-9 in [the] back of a van. No one helped."380 Additionally, one detained immigrant explained that his friend is diabetic and his medical sheet states that he needs 14 units of insulin. Despite this prescription, an officer at ACDC told the detained immigrant that, "you're only get[ting] 8 [units] because this is jail and that's how it is." 381 Silvio Condomina-Palenzuela, a detained immigrant with hip problems reported that most of the nurses are rude. He reported that one of nurses made fun of him, stated that he has no right to see a doctor, and even took pictures and video of another detained immigrant with her personal cell phone.382

One detained immigrant Esmerita Martinez Herrera, reported that she slipped and fell on the floor but the nurse only gave her pain medication and ice to treat her neck and ankle.³⁸³ **Ms.**Herrera promptly requested medical attention from a doctor, but in response the nurse simply doubled her dosage of pain medication.³⁸⁴ Following her medical request, officers photographed Ms. Herrera's foot; then coerced her into signing papers written in English without translation assistance, even though she does not speak the language.³⁸⁵ She reported that the officer repeatedly told her to sign the papers, even though she was unable to understand what she was signing.³⁸⁶ One month later, Ms. Herrera requested to see the doctor again.³⁸⁷ When she was finally able to see the doctor, an x-ray was performed on her ankle, but not on her neck or head where she still had pain.³⁸⁸ The doctor informed her that she did not have a fracture on her ankle, and soon after, her pain medication was taken away.³⁸⁹ More than 3 months after she fell, Ms. Herrera still wakes up 3-4 times a week with a headache, memory loss, and sweat on the back of her neck.³⁹⁰ She explained, "I have not gotten assistance for my head because all they've done is just give me pain medicine that doesn't work."³⁹¹

One male detained immigrant from Mexico with issues from diabetes and a past surgical infection stated that he had to wait 20 days to see the nurses.³⁹² When he was finally able to access medical care, the nurses laughed at him and told him nothing was wrong.³⁹³ He eventually had to be transported to Grady Hospital for surgery, where his hands and feet were chained during his entire visit.³⁹⁴ After he returned from the hospital, he was unable to walk and was using a wheelchair.³⁹⁵ In July 2016, the handle in the accessible shower in his unit at ACDC broke while he was transferring himself out of the wheelchair onto the shower bench.³⁹⁶ As a result, he fell, hit his head and knee, and re-opened his surgical injury.³⁹⁷ Despite his screams of pain, no guards came to his aid, and he had to wait approximately three hours for the supervisor to return before he was taken back to the hospital.³⁹⁸ The staff took away his wheelchair in September 2016, and he began using crutches.³⁹⁹ However, in October 2016,

the medical supervisor took the crutches away from him despite his repeated presentation of a Referral for Treatment form from Grady Hospital to the City of Atlanta Department of Corrections that stated his need for crutches. He reports that he was never given physical therapy, that his hands constantly feel as though they are asleep and swollen, and that his body feels like it is paralyzed—all symptoms that he did not have before he was detained. He stated that he used to play basketball with the other immigrants, but now he has difficulty even walking without crutches. He

C. Mental Health

I) Lack of Proper Mental Health Care

Detained immigrants' experiences attempting to access mental healthcare further demonstrate how the staff at ACDC violate the Inter-American Principles and the UNHCR Guidelines provisions for psychological and psychiatric care. 403

The mental health staff at ACDC includes one psychologist, two psychiatrists, and one physician assistant who is able to prescribe medication. However, several detained immigrants reported not knowing how to access mental health care in the facility. Those who did know stated that detained immigrants "don't find them helpful." Some reported that a psychologist comes around and talks to people. Another detained immigrant stated, "They just ask questions like do you feel like you're going to kill yourself, while another detained immigrant stated: "They give you books."

In addition, several detained immigrants complained that there was no access to therapy at AC-DC. This was verified when a family member of a detained immigrant, Perin Herve Tognia, corresponded with ACDC staff who stated that they do not have official psychologists and do not provide any form of therapy to detained immigrants. This provides a severe obstacle to those with mental health problems. Mr. Tognia stated, "I really want to be okay. I meditate, try to control my [emotions]...I need a therapist...I need to decrease medication...I know they [the medication] will kill me...I cannot be punished more, I have been punished enough."

ACDC not only does not provide therapy to detained immigrants, but also refuses access to pro bono therapists who want to help detained immigrants. ⁴¹³ ACDC staff rejected a pro bono therapist's request to see Mr. Tognia despite multiple requests from him, advocates close to him, and members of his family. ACDC staff told the family member of Mr. Tognia that **because they do not offer therapy within the facility, they cannot support visits from an external therapist.** ⁴¹⁴ In contrast, when a member of Georgia Detention Watch called ACDC Mental Health unit to try and get a pro bono therapist access to a visit, he was told "ACDC has 'in house' mental health services; there should be no need for a volunteer therapist. ⁴¹⁵ **Thus, staff at ACDC have effectively barred Mr. Tognia and other detained immigrants from obtaining appropriate mental health care.**

II). Delay in Receiving Medicine

Detained immigrants who require psychiatric medication at ACDC often experience delays in treatment. One detained immigrant, **Zakaria Taoufik**, **stated that he did not receive his psychiatric medication for three weeks after he was transferred to ACDC.** ⁴¹⁶ He also reported that the staff at **ACDC changed his prescription**, as they did not have the medication he was receiving at the Irwin Detention Center. ⁴¹⁷ He stated that the medication he was receiving at Irwin was working for him, and with **the new medication he experiences mood shifts and "feels dark and so sad"**. ⁴¹⁸

Another detained immigrant had to wait about three days to receive his psychiatric medication and began hearing voices as a result of the delay. He has repeatedly placed complaints about his prescriptions not working, and requested to speak with a therapist multiple times. Despite vocalizing his fear that he could hurt himself or someone else if he does not get the help he needs, he has not been able to access adequate mental health care. One detained immigrant expressed that he thought the "medical staff is torturing [another detained immigrant] because they make him wait hours after his scheduled medication time.

III) Reports of Overmedication

Detained immigrants with mental health issues also report being overmedicated. One detained immigrant reports that those "who are on mental health drugs are walking around like zombies." A detained immigrant, Perin Tognia, who started taking 20mg of a mental health medication prior to being detained, stated that the medical staff at ACDC increased his dosage to 100mg, then increased again to 150mg. He stated that the dosage is too high for him, and that all the medication does is make him sleep and lose his memory. Tognia expressed that he needs therapy, but feels that all the detention center wants to do is to medicate him. Referencing ACDC staff, Mr. Tognia reported, "they don't help me heal... they just give me medication. The medication is strong... the only thing that helps me is talking to my wife." Additionally, his medical records falsely state that the side effects of his medication were discussed, and alternative medication options were provided to him. One of his family members also stated that he had no idea about the long-term side effects or physical damage that his prescription could cause, and was never presented with alternatives.

IV) Fear of Disclosing Mental Health Issues

One detained immigrant stated that it is an agreed upon attitude amongst detained immigrants not to disclose mental health issues to the guards because they fear the consequences for doing so. 430 For one detained immigrant, after requesting mental health care three times, the staff person blamed him for having mental health issues, and only offered him medication as treatment. 431 As reported by eight detained immigrants, people who report mental health issues are moved and placed into segregation. 432 One detained immigrant stated, "They lock you up in the hole if you have mental issues." 433 Another detained immigrant reported that a French detainee who did not speak English was sent to segregation for approximately four days because he did not answer the mental health questions. 434

Segregation



A. Legal Standards

In accordance with the American Declaration, all people, including detained immigrants at the Atlanta City Detention Center have "the right to life, liberty, and the security of his person." This principle is supplemented by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantees that no person "shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law." The American Declaration also guarantees that while in custody, people have "...the right to humane treatment," and the UNHCR guidelines mandate that "Conditions of detention must be humane and dignified." The Inter-American Principles further declares that "All persons subject to the jurisdiction of any Member State of the Organization of American States shall be treated humanely, with unconditional respect for their... fundamental rights and guarantees, and strictly in accordance with international human rights instruments." International strictly in accordance with international human rights instruments.

The NDS specifies that segregation for administrative reasons is a "non-punitive form of separation from the general population" that is used when "the continued presence of the detainee in the general population would pose a threat to self, staff, other detainees, property, or the security and orderly operation of the facility."440 ACDC policy only allows for segregation to be used for similar reasons to those in the NDS, but also requires that "the detainee has been classified to [segregation] after receiving an evaluation by a Mental Health professional."441 If detained immigrants are placed in administrative segregation, the NDS provides that they "shall have the opportunity to shower and shave at least three times a week," unless a security hazard is documented and approved by the OIC.442 Detained immigrants in administrative segregation are also required to be given the same access to recreation and the law library as the detained immigrants not in segregation, and are to be given "telephone access similar to that provided to detainees in the general population," with consideration for "special security and safety requirements of detainees in these [segregation] units."443 Staff are mandated to provide a detained immigrant with a written order of segregation approved by a supervisory officer within 24 hours of being placed in segregation, barring safety concerns regarding delivery. 444 ACDC policy also requires that "The status of detainees in [segregation] is reviewed every seven days for the first two months and at least 30 days thereafter by the Classification unit."445

Detained immigrants may be placed in segregation for disciplinary reasons when their "behavior does not comply with facility rules and regulation...only by order of the Institutional Disciplinary Committee, after a hearing in which the detainee has been found to have committed a prohibited act." Staff are required to provide a written order approving the use of disciplinary segregation within 24 hours, signed by the Institutional Disciplinary Committee panel. 447 Even when detained immigrants are placed in segregation for disciplinary reasons, the NDS still requires that barring "undue security hazard[s]," detained immigrants are given "the opportunity to maintain a normal level of personal hygiene" including being able to shower and shave three times a week, minimum. 448 While in disciplinary segregation, detained immigrants are still required to be given access to recreation, and access to legal materials comparable to those not in segregation. 449 ACDC policy also notes that "recreation will only be denied under extreme circumstances" for detained immigrants in disciplinary segregation. 450

The Inter-American Principles mandate that segregation only be used as a last resort "and for a strictly limited time." This limiting principle is especially important in adhering to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment that criminalizes torture, defined to include acts "...by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as...punishing him for an act... when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity." 452

B. Segregation Practices at ACDC

Residents of Atlanta who communicate and visit with detained immigrants at ACDC provided testimony about the atrocious procedures surrounding the Center's use of segregation to the Atlanta Citizens Review Board (ACRB) in October 2017. At the ACRB meeting, Dr. Kevin Simon, a psychiatry resident described the negative psychological impact of being in segregation, as quoted below.⁴⁵³

"Being in solitary confinement, in any normal individual considered without mental illness, can induce a psychiatric disorder when a person becomes hypersensitive to contact. Now you put a person in solitary confinement, you put them there for 12, 24, 45 days and then bring them out of solitary confinement to engage with other individuals, it's going to be a lot harder to do. They can then experience hallucinations, auditory or visual hallucinations, even in that individual who [doesn't] have mental illness. They show signs of cognitive decline, paranoia, and a litany of other physical and mental complications. Inmates who experience solitary confinement are more likely to develop poor control of anger, violent fantasies, trouble sleeping, as well as dizziness and heart palpitations. The evidence shows that suicide rates among inmates is already higher than the general population. Suicide rates among inmates who have experienced and/or are experiencing solitary confinement is seven times higher than general inmates... So, considering the severe mental pains and suffering that solitary confinement can cause, it should be highly regulated, used under only exceptional circumstances, and used for the least amount of time. So again, you don't need to be in solitary confinement for instance, supposedly having a razor or bullying somebody, for 45 days. There seems to be something else that you can possibly do within 45 days, if you are in a detention center, to address behavioral issues."454

Segregation at the Atlanta City Detention Center is consistently imposed in an arbitrary and punitive manner that violates NDS standards and international law. Immigrants are sent to segregation for going on hunger strike, 455 expressing suicidal thoughts, 456 or for no specified reason. 457 Detained immigrants who are sent to segregation are held in isolation for 23 hours every day, and are supposed to be given one hour a day out of their cell. 458 One detained immigrant who was held in disciplinary segregation for two days straight, 24 hours each day stated, "It was so horrible, I almost hurt myself. If I had a blade I would've cut myself."459 As described in Dr. Simon's testimony, being held in solitary confinement can have a severe negative impact

on detained immigrants' mental health, including increasing the risk of suicide.⁴⁶⁰ The use of segregation for detained immigrants with mental health issues in particular clearly violates the Convention Against Torture that prohibits public officials from punishing people by intentionally inflicting mental suffering.⁴⁶¹

Though NDS requires that detained immigrants are given a written order of segregation within 24 hours of being sent to isolation, 462 a female detained immigrant from El Salvador described being held in segregation for one month with no investigation, during which no staff at the detention center told her why she was being held. 463 During this month, she was also denied the use of the hour outside of her cell on five separate occasions. 464 While she was in segregation, she reported hearing other detained immigrants kicking and punching the doors of their cells. She explained that while in segregation she wanted to kill herself. 465

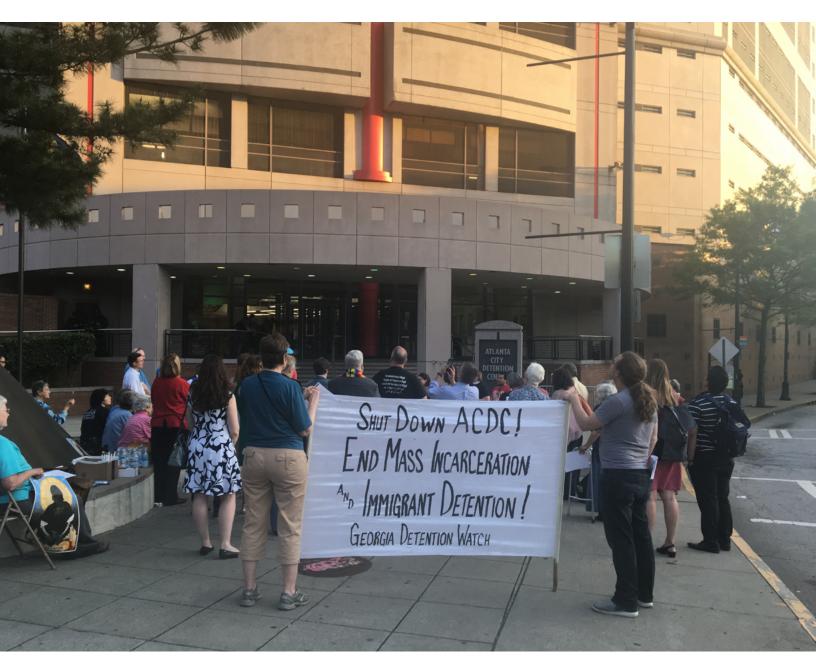
Another detained immigrant, Ayo Oyakhire, was sentenced to segregation on November 25, 2016 because he was supposedly in an argument over the television that raised "concerns about his safety by continuing to be housed" in his pod. 466 Though Mr. Oyakhire immediately expressed concerns about the allegations, his requests to simply be moved to another pod instead of segregation were ignored. 467 After 12 days in isolation, he completed an Inmate Request form on December 8, 2016, requesting to be released from segregation. 468 An officer responded on December 12, 2016 stating that he was not in disciplinary segregation, and that Mr. Oyakhire needed to contact his "classification unit." However, Mr. Oyakhire did not actually receive this response until 25 days later, on January 5, 2017, and was not allowed to leave segregation until January 10, 2017. In total, Mr. Oyakhire spent 46 days in isolation, each day on lockdown for 23 hours a day, with only one hour to shower, exercise, eat, and attempt to call family. For 42 days of his sentence in segregation, Mr. Oyakhire was completely unaware of whether he was under administrative or disciplinary segregation.

Though the NDS claims that administrative segregation is not used for punishment, the conditions of any type of segregation within ACDC are consistently punitive. One detained immigrant compared segregation to "serving time as a hard-core criminal," because while in segregation, "You're locked in there 23 hours a day, [you have] just one hour to take a shower, no access to the phone, that's basically it. You can't move out of your unit when they take you to solitary confinement." Another detained immigrant reports that there is very little difference between being held in medical and being held in segregation. He noted that detained immigrants are held in isolation for discipline in both medical and segregation units. When in segregation, he said he wasn't able to shower and that there was a lot of noise. The was sent to segregation because he went on hunger strike, but he stopped the hunger strike because the segregation unit was so dirty. One detained immigrant reported that while in segregation, he heard the former ICE Atlanta Assistant Field Officer Director say, "I can't stay in the unit; it smells."

Another detained immigrant who was sent to segregation for expressing suicidal thoughts describes that there is "Lots of noise [and] detainees screaming" in the segregation unit, and while in the unit, detainee's legs are shackled.⁴⁷⁹ He stated that if you admit to having suicidal thoughts, the staff take away your clothes and you are denied access to a mattress while in segre-

gation.480

Detained immigrants also report being denied access to the commissary⁴⁸¹ and the law library⁴⁸² while in segregation. Despite these accounts of segregation, when an officer at ACDC was asked about detained immigrant's ability to access the law library and religious services in segregation, he replied, "None of that is ever denied."⁴⁸³ Work



Light in the Darkness Interfaith Vigil 1: Photo Credit Priyanka Bhatt



A. Legal Standards

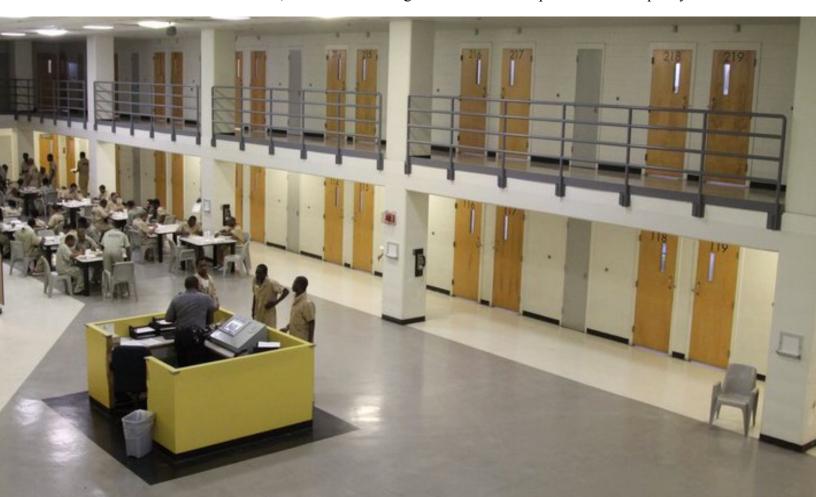
Article 8 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibits slavery and servitude, stating that "[n]o one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour." 484 Moreover, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man provides that "[e]very person who works has the right to receive such remuneration as will, in proportion to his capacity and skill, assure him a standard of living suitable for himself and for his family." 485 ICE's detainee handbook also states that detained immigrants will be compensated for their work.

B. ACDC's Work Program

I) No Monetary Compensation

ACDC's voluntary work program allows detained immigrants to work up to 8 hours a day, working in the kitchen doing things like cooking, washing dishes, and serving trays, cleaning offices for officers, cleaning bathrooms, mopping floors, and more.⁴⁸⁷ Out of the individuals interviewed, only 6 reported ever working⁴⁸⁸ while several others stated they did not know there was a work program.⁴⁸⁹

However, despite the standards mentioned above, detained immigrants do not receive compensation for their labor. Instead, the detained immigrants who work are promised better quality



Inside a pod at ACDC 1: Source: https://www.wabe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/sweep-2-e1495054962321-600x300.jpg

food—food that the officers eat—than those who are not in the work program. 490

Despite compensation solely being food, some detained immigrants in the work program report that they work up to 8 hours and receive little food.⁴⁹¹ This is especially problematic for individuals who have special dietary needs. For example, one detained immigrant in the work program who is vegetarian reports only receiving green beans, corn bread, and salad as his compensation.⁴⁹²

The lack of food for compensation has been the source for a labor protest at ACDC in April 2018. A male detained immigrant noted that kitchen workers protested by not working for a day because they were not receiving enough food.⁴⁹³ He said, "all we ask is for food and you think it's too much—you're supposed to be paying us." After the strike, the Captain gave the kitchen employees "more juice and chips, some cereal and milk and [a] boiled egg."⁴⁹⁴ However, this detained immigrant stated that this was just a temporary fix, since the conditions for the kitchen workers did not improve after the strike.⁴⁹⁵

One detained immigrant, Perin Tognia, reported that sometimes they don't even receive better quality food; they just receive the food that the other detained immigrants receive. 496 He stated it depended on the cook serving the food for that day. 497 Other times, he said, the officers leave out the food for hours before detained immigrants in the kitchen, who often work 8 hours, are able to eat. 498 He explained he just wants a hot meal, but the officers refuse, saying they are "ungrateful."499 He stated:

"[ACDC officers] give us food while working, hours before [detainees are] able to eat. One [detainee working in the kitchen] went to [an] officer, showed [him] grits, asked, "Would you eat this?" [The O]fficer said, "No."; "They treat you like what you're getting is a favor. [ACDC officers g]ave me chicken they served 2 days ago. [I] asked 'What's going on?' They said 'That's what you're getting, eat it or not'... I work hard; what I'm asking [is] to at least get decent food... [They] can't treat me like this." 500

II) Conditions in the Kitchen

Detained immigrants at ACDC who work in the kitchen are regularly forced by corrections officers to ignore safety and sanitary regulations. In doing so, they are potentially exposing themselves, and those who consume ACDC's food, to chemicals and pathogens that could have lasting negative health outcomes.

Detained immigrants who work in the kitchen are first required to be approved by the Health Department at ACDC.⁵⁰¹ However, a family member of Perin Tognia, an immigrant who works in the kitchen, reported that, instead of going through the proper channels to replace the detained immigrants for the dinner shift, ACDC officers enlisted other detained immigrants to work in the kitchen without prior Health Department review.⁵⁰²

The family member's notes went on to say, before going into work to the kitchen, each detained

immigrant must fill out a Daily Health Assessment Form that includes questions such as, "Do you have open sores on your hand?" and "Do you have a sore throat?"⁵⁰³ Instead of encouraging detained immigrants to fill these forms out truthfully, the escorting officer often tells detained immigrants to "just sign" the form, and then checks "no" for each question, signifying that the detained immigrants are all healthy.⁵⁰⁴ According to Mr. Tognia, the escorting officer does not actually ask the detained immigrants the questions on the health assessment, and the detained immigrants are never given the opportunity to answer the questions themselves.⁵⁰⁵

Another detained immigrant noted that the supplies given to the detained immigrants in the kitchen are defective. The reported that some of the kitchen workers have suffered rashes from the gloves given to them by ACDC. The another detained immigrant stated that ACDC recently started making detained immigrants who work in the kitchen sign a release acknowledging that they may be exposed to certain chemicals during their work.

III) No Time to Rest

Despite the issues outlined above, many detained immigrants at ACDC sign up to work under terrible conditions without pay for a few glimpses of normalcy. However, many of those who do so report being caught up in a cycle of work with no opportunity to rest or recover.

One detained immigrant stated, "sometimes you don't want to go," but he goes anyway.⁵⁰⁹ When asked why, he explained those who work in the kitchen live in a separate pod.⁵¹⁰ This pod is better because it is less crowded and the detained immigrants all know each other and have formed friendships.⁵¹¹ If he doesn't work for one day, the officers will remove him from that pod.⁵¹²

Again, Mr. Tognia explained, "officers force us to go to work. [They] wake us up at 2am, take off [our] blanket[s]. If you say you don't want to work, you're tired, [they] slam doors."513

Mr. Tognia's family member reported that detained immigrants who work in the kitchen are sleep-deprived and unable to obtain 8 continuous hours of rest.⁵¹⁴ She added that, though these detained immigrants only signed up to work the breakfast shift, they are often assigned to work the dinner shift as well.⁵¹⁵ Between breakfast at 4am, lock-down from 1:30-3:30pm, and dinner at 7pm, these individuals have no time to rest, exercise, or call their families.⁵¹⁶ It was also reported that Mr. Tognia often goes the entire day without sleep, as he needs to access the law library between shifts.⁵¹⁷ Mr. Tognia stated, "We work like slavery."⁵¹⁸

At the time of the interview, Mr. Tognia had been working two shifts a day, 7 days a week for the past three weeks.⁵¹⁹ As a result, for the past several days, multiple detained immigrants refused to work the second shift for dinner.⁵²⁰

Religious Freedom



A) Legal Standards

According to the 2000 NDS, the "Chaplain or designated individual is responsible for managing religious activities in the facility." The 2000 NDS states that "[d]etainees of different religious beliefs will be provided reasonable and equitable opportunities to participate in the practices of their respective faiths." This includes providing detained immigrants who request a religious diet a "reasonable and equitable opportunity to observe their religious dietary practice . . ." ACDC's policies also state that detained immigrants are to be assigned religious diets upon request so long as the Chaplain provides "written authorization." An ICE officer also stated that detained immigrants at ACDC receive religious meals (i.e. halal, kosher)—the officer said it was "required." An ICE officer said it was "required." The same provides are considered in the practice of their responsible for managing religious beliefs will be provided in the practice of the practice of their religious dietary practice of their respective faiths."

This right is also recognized under international law, as the Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas provides that "[p] ersons deprived of liberty" be given nutritious food "with due consideration to their cultural and religious concerns . . ."⁵²⁶

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also provides for freedom of religion, which encompasses the freedom of anyone "to manifest his [or her] religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching." This right can either be exercised "individually or in community with others and in public or private . . ." The American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man also states that all persons have "the right freely to profess a religious faith, and to manifest and practice it both in public and in private." Additionally, the Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas states that clothing be given to detained immigrants " . . . with due consideration of their cultural and religious identity." The protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the American States that clothing be given to detained immigrants " . . . with due consideration of their cultural and religious identity."

B) Denial of Religious Diets

Muslim detained immigrants report that their religious dietary needs are not being accommodated at ACDC. A detained immigrant noted that he and other Muslim detainees have asked for halal meals, but have been told that ACDC does not provide religious meals because it is a "transit" center. ⁵³¹ This detained immigrant also stated that he knows some Muslim immigrants who have been transferred to the Irwin Detention Center for requesting meal accommodations. ⁵³²

Similarly, another detained immigrant stated that Muslims fasting during Ramadan – who were supposed to receive their meals at 8:30 p.m. – received their meals multiple times at approximately 9:15 p.m.⁵³³ Many of the detained Muslim immigrants had to make their own food.⁵³⁴

C) Lack of Access to Imams and Priests

ACDC facilitates outside religious groups and leaders to volunteer their services at ACDC. However, detained immigrants state that religious programs are not provided frequently enough. One female, Christian immigrant from El Salvador stated that a pastor only comes to ACDC

once a month.⁵³⁵ Another detained immigrant stated, "religious groups can be helpful but only come once in a blue moon."⁵³⁶ One detained immigrant stated, "[We] need more religious activity. We really need more."⁵³⁷

Several detained immigrants of the Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Catholic faith stated that the facility did not have any religious programming for them. For example, several Muslim detained immigrants reported that they wanted to see an imam, but that the facility did not have one.⁵³⁸ In addition to lack of access to imams, one Sikh detained immigrant noted that there are no Sikh religious leaders or programs catered to Sikh detained immigrants.⁵³⁹ A Hindu detained immigrant noted that there wasn't any programming related to his religion either.⁵⁴⁰

Other detained immigrants noted difficulty accessing Catholic priests. One detained immigrant said, "while there are priests that come in, it's rare for a Catholic priest to come, and when they do, he's usually busy."⁵⁴¹ Another detained immigrant, William Diaz-Gonzalez, said he is not able to participate in religious services because he is Catholic and the religious leader or group that comes is Protestant. ⁵⁴²

D) Lack of Access to Religious Items and Difficulty Praying

A male Muslim detained immigrant also requested a Muslim rosary, but was instead given a Christian rosary and told to "take out the cross in the middle." He also requested a Quran written in Arabic, but was instead given a Bible. After complaining about this, he was given a Quran written in English. Later, he requested a Muslim head scarf for men. The Chaplain responded by giving him the equivalent of an orange headband that did not even cover his scalp. Another detained immigrant shared this concern, stating he, too, requested religious headwear, but it keeps being denied. He said he was given one at another detention center but not at AC-DC.

A male detained immigrant from India who practices Hinduism reported that he requested a Hindu religious book which ACDC failed to provide him.⁵⁴⁸ He was not provided a reason as to why he could not obtain the book.⁵⁴⁹ ACDC officers have also denied this man's requests to light incense in his room.⁵⁵⁰

Muslim detained immigrants also expressed issues regarding prayer. One Muslim detained immigrant, Oussama Aziz, stated that the guards do not allow Muslims to do their 2:30 p.m. prayer because it coincides with lockdown.⁵⁵¹ A detained immigrant from Ghana noted that Muslims are not permitted to express their religion the same way as Christian detained immigrants.⁵⁵² He stated the following:

"Since [there is] no imam, Muslim detained immigrants want [...] to come together and pray [like the Christian detained immigrants do and are allowed to] but [are not allowed] to do so by officer[s]. [We] [c]an't pray together on Fridays or Muslim holidays even though they allow Christians to do so."553

Visitation and Phone Access



A) Legal Standards

The 2000 NDS provides that facilities holding detained immigrants "permit authorized persons to visit detainees, within security and operational constraints." The 2000 NDS further states that these visits are allowed "[t]o maintain detainee morale and family relationships." The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also emphasizes the importance of familial relationships, stating that "[t]he family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." The Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas also provides for these protections, stating that "[p]ersons deprived of liberty shall have the right to receive and dispatch correspondence. . . and to maintain direct and personal contact through regular visits with members of their family, legal representatives, especially their parents, sons and daughters, and their respective partners . . ."557

The 2000 NDS also provides guidelines regarding visitation by family and friends, as well as legal representatives. The NDS states that family and friends be given at least 30 minutes for visitations, and "encourages more generous limits when possible, especially for family members traveling significant distances to visit." Each facility must also "permit legal visits for a minimum of eight hours per day on regular business days, and a minimum of four hours per day on weekends and holidays." Furthermore, each facility must also "provide at least one telephone for detainee use for every 25 detainees held." ⁵⁶⁰

ACDC policies state that "telephones will be located in each housing unit and within the inmate/booking and transfer area." The telephones in the Intake Area are available at all times. 562

B) Visitation

I) Limited Visitation Slots

At ACDC, one 30-minute visit from a friend or family member is permitted per day on Wednesdays and Sundays only during the hours of: 8:30am-11:30am, 1:00pm-1:30pm, 3:00pm-5:30pm, and 7:00pm-8:30pm. This is a smaller amount of visitation time than is available at most other detention facilities in Georgia, which permit hour-long visits during any day of the week.⁵⁶³ The visitation rooms are small units with a plexiglass separator and phone on either side in order to hear the person speaking. A detained immigrant from Liberia stated that he does not like the visiting room because it upsets him to see his wife through glass in a cell.⁵⁶⁴

Several detained immigrants stated that the amount of time provided for visitation is too short, noting that their visitors have to travel for a significant amount of time to visit them at ACDC. ⁵⁶⁵ One male detained immigrant from Cuba who receives visitors from out-of-state shared his frustration with the ACDC visitation policy:

"The out-of-state visitors are supposed to get an hour instead of the 30 minutes for instate visitors, but you need to notify them a week or two in advance. But you can't really

know when your family members are going to come down that far in advance, so [detainees] end up not being able to get the extra time."566

One detained immigrant, Juan Manuel Venegas Alfaro, stated that he had to tell his sick wife to no longer visit him because he did not want her to travel for two hours to only see him for 30 minutes. ⁵⁶⁷ Others have shared similar concerns about how short the visitation period is; Oussama Aziz stated that his pregnant fiancée has not visited him because he does not want her to travel from Charlotte to Atlanta. ⁵⁶⁸ Silvio Condomina-Palenzuela stated that the facility is too far for his family in Miami to visit him. ⁵⁶⁹

The number of visitation rooms is limited as well. Each floor at ACDC has four units, also known as pods, where individuals are incarcerated. Each pod is connected to two or three visitation booths. According to Kevin Caron, steering committee member with Georgia Detention Watch, at times, ACDC will detain over 50 individuals in a single pod. Using ACDC's data, Mr. Caron created the example below to show that ACDC does not have the capacity to actually provide visits to everyone in their custody, even if everything were to run perfectly:

"Unit 5NE had 53 people detained for ICE on Sunday, July 30th, 2017. Unit 5NE has 3 visitation booths. There were 16, 30-minute visitation slots available during the 8:30AM-8:30PM window. Three visitation booths [multiplied by] 16 slots = 48 total possible visits that day. Therefore, should all of the detained people in 5NE have requested a visit that day, and made every effort to coordinate amongst themselves and their visitors, at least 5 people would not have even been able to schedule a time for their visitor." 572

II) Difficulty Setting up Visitation

In addition to limited visitation, the process for scheduling visitation, itself, is extremely difficult if not impossible for detained immigrants and their family and friends to navigate. Mr. Caron, who visits ACDC frequently to meet with detained immigrants, expressed frustration with visitors being unable to show up at ACDC to visit their loved ones.⁵⁷³ Rather, those interested in visiting a detained immigrant at ACDC must first receive a phone call from a detained immigrant and suggest to the individual a 30-minute time period that both of them would be available on one of the two designated days of the week for visitation.⁵⁷⁴ This means that ACDC policy requires the detained immigrant to have money in their commissary and to pay for phone calls to schedule visits with prospective visitors⁵⁷⁵. Then, the prospective visitor has to wait until the day before the visit, since this is when sign-up sheets are posted in each unit.⁵⁷⁶ After that, the visitor must receive another call from the detained immigrant to confirm whether the detained immigrant was successful in signing-up their visitor for the desired time period, or whether the visit must be moved to another time due to the two or three visitation booths being booked during the desired time by others scheduling their own visitors.⁵⁷⁷

The difficulty in scheduling visits via expensive phone calls poses an additional challenge to indigent detained immigrants. With no money on their accounts, they are unable to engage in the process and therefore, are effectively denied their right to have visitors at ACDC.

Mr. Caron also noted that the visitation policy at ACDC is unclear, stating that "[t]he hours for visitation are often misrepresented by those running the front desk and are not displayed clearly

or consistently at the facility."⁵⁷⁸ Moreover, "[n]othing at the facility is posted in any language other than English and visitation staff do not speak any other languages except English."⁵⁷⁹

III) Issues with the Phones inside Visitation Booths

As mentioned in the due process section of this report, until recent changes were made, the phones in visitation booths contained an automated message stating that the calls were recorded when they, in fact, were not—a policy that undoubtedly chilled free speech.⁵⁸⁰ Detained immigrants also expressed issues communicating with visitors at ACDC. One detained immigrant from Mexico reported that the phones do not work in the visitation rooms located in pods 5NE and 5SW.⁵⁸¹ As a result, detained immigrants who live in those pods and their visitors have to yell at one another in order to communicate.⁵⁸² Silvio Condomina-Palenzuela stated that he had to have a psychological evaluation conducted in a visitation room at ACDC, and reported that it was very difficult for them to hear one another through the glass because the phone was broken.⁵⁸³

C) Phones

I) Too Expensive

Almost all the detained immigrants at ACDC noted that phone calls were expensive, stating that calls within the U.S. cost \$0.18 per minute while international calls cost approximately \$1 per minute.⁵⁸⁴ One detained man from England, Adeniyi Ade-Oyegbola, whose wife lives abroad stated that he only speaks to his wife for three to five minutes a week due to the price of international calls.⁵⁸⁵ Another detained immigrant noted that he does not have money to use for the phones.⁵⁸⁶ And, yet another detained immigrant stated: "It is even expensive to call your family."⁵⁸⁷ A detained immigrant from Africa said it had been an incredibly long time since he spoke to his family in Ghana because he couldn't afford to make the phone calls.⁵⁸⁸

Antonio Martinez Mesa who makes calls every day reported that he and another friend at ACDC both have experienced being charged for calls they didn't make. ⁵⁸⁹ He remembered calling the same local number twice and being charged both the local and international rates, respectively. ⁵⁹⁰ He went on to note that both he and his friend have complained, but are scared of complaining too much for fear of retaliation. ⁵⁹¹

II) Lack of Access to Phones

Several detained immigrants also reported issues with telephone access, stating that there are only four to seven working phones they can use at ACDC.⁵⁹² One detained immigrant stated, "There are not enough phones, there are 58 of us."⁵⁹³ Another individual stated "4 phones [are] not enough."⁵⁹⁴ Due to the lack of phones, one detained immigrant from Mexico recalled a fight that broke out in their pod. Conflict occurred because detained immigrants were saving spots for one another in line in an attempt to manage the long wait for phone access.⁵⁹⁵ A female detained immigrant from El Salvador reported that a detained immigrant's emergency call was cut off by an ACDC officer at curfew time.⁵⁹⁶ She also noted that the detained immigrant was unable to communicate to the ACDC officer that this was an emergency call because the detained immigrant only spoke Spanish and the officer only understood English.⁵⁹⁷

Additionally, while many detained immigrants stated that phone calls from the ACDC were going through, some noted specific problems with the phones themselves. One detained immigrant explained that the "quality of phones are poor" and that she can barely hear the other speaker. Another detained immigrant noted that the phones were down at one point. 599



Families Belong Together Rally on June, 2018 where thousands of individuals marched against the Trump administration's policy of separating families at the border. (Both Pictues by: Priyanka Bhatt)





A) Grievance Procedures

I) ACDC and ICE Policies

According to ACDC's policy labeled 600-02 "Detainee Grievance Procedure," detained immigrants can fill out an Inmate Request form in the Grievance Lock Box. The Inmates Services Staff will then retrieve the forms and "attempt to resolve the matter with the inmate or forward the request to the appropriate unit for resolution." According to the policy, "Inmate Services Staff will retrieve grievance forms daily (excluding weekends and holidays)." According to an ICE official during the October 2017 inspection of ACDC, informal detainee requests receive a response within 72 hours. 600

The ACDC policy states that if the issue cannot be resolved by Inmate Services, it will be forwarded to the correct Watch Commander/Unit Manager who will attempt to resolve the issue. If the Watch Commander/Unit Manager cannot resolve it within 5 business days, he or she will notify the detained immigrant using a "grievance waiver notice."⁶⁰¹

The policy further states that if the Informal Request process does not provide a resolution, the detained immigrant may pursue a formal resolution by completing an Inmate Grievance form and placing it in the Grievance Lock Box within 5 days after receiving the written response to the initial Inmate Request form. According to this policy, a detained immigrant may appeal a grievance by retrieving a "grievance appeal form." According to an officer during the October 2017 inspection of the facility, a "formal grievance takes about 7 days."

ICE 2000 NDS also states a similar grievance procedure. Detained immigrants have the right to "obtain assistance" from other detained immigrants or staff members to prepare a written grievance. After a written grievance is filed, it is given to a first line supervisor who then meets with the detained immigrant and tries to resolve this issue. If it is not resolved, they will mark this on the grievance and send it to the next level supervisor or appropriate department head. That person then has five days to "act on" the complaint through issuing an informal or formal resolution and will provide their reasoning for the decision. If the detained immigrant does not accept the resolution, a "Detainee Grievance Committee" (DGC) will review the grievance. The DGC will then engage in fact finding by calling witnesses, inspecting evidence and allowing the detained immigrant to present his or her case and respond to questions. The DGC will then render an impartial decision. If the detained immigrant does not accept DCG's decision, he or she can appeal to the Warden, whose decision will be final.

II) Application of Policies

Many detained immigrants at ACDC did not know the proper method of submitting a grievance. Several of them stated they were not aware there was a grievance process.⁶⁰⁶ Others had wide ranging answers when asked what the policy was to submit a grievance. Beliefs about the process were varied: some detained immigrants stated that they have to "write it on computers"⁶⁰⁷; others said you have to request the form⁶⁰⁸; some believed they were supposed to write up a complaint and give it to the Captain⁶⁰⁹; another claimed there was a Grievance Box⁶¹⁰; and another stated there is a form available that you "submit to the officers, and it's supposed to come back

within 24 business hours''611; while still others stated they did not know there was a grievance process at all.612

Those who knew that there was a grievance policy stated that they were afraid to make grievances. One detained immigrants said: "People don't want to file grievances because they're afraid it will hurt their case." Another detained immigrant stated that he wanted to make a complaint because they get screamed at and are treated disrespectfully but didn't "for fear of retaliation because it's not really anonymous and [the] officer might see it." A female detained immigrant stated, "we don't make complaints, we're afraid of them." Another detained immigrant recounted that he does not "want any problems," and yet another detained immigrant echoed that rhetoric saying that he did not want to complain because he wants be able to "get out of here... and help [his] kids."

One detained immigrant, Miguel Cabrera Mendoza, reported that staff told him that before he files a grievance he has to write a complaint. After writing a complaint, for the first three weeks he was detained at ACDC, staff repeatedly told him they did not have any grievance forms available. Other detained immigrants stated that they gave up on filing grievances because they made "many, many detainee requests and never receive[d] an answer. His detained immigrant tried to talk to officers, made complaints, filed grievances, did everything he could but nothing changed, he said; "we can't do anything. [the officers] know as well as we know that nothing will change." In this instance, this detained immigrant put in 12 inmate requests to get hot showers because the temperature of the water was frigid in a pod that was already kept at a cold temperature, but he never received a response. At one point, when he appealed to an officer, the officer replied, "it's your right to have a shower, not a right to what temperature it is."

After a disturbing incident with an officer at ACDC, Modou Lamin Secka wanted to file a written grievance. Despite clearly stating, "I don't write English," ACDC placed him on lockdown for six hours and forced him to write the grievance on his own, ACDC placed him on lockdown for six hours and forced him to write the grievance on his own, The officers told Mr. Secka that allows detained immigrants to receive help with a grievance. The officers told Mr. Secka that he was barred from showing the complaint to other detained immigrants. He stated: "They tell me don't tell anyone, don't let anyone in the facility see the complaint. They didn't want to tell anyone." When he requested to call his lawyer, Mr. Secka reported that the supervisor stated: "You don't need a lawyer." The supervisor went on: "We watched the video; [if they] watch the video [they] will see you lying." Mr. Secka has not been allowed to watch the video of the incident. He has submitted his grievance form and one week after the incident he reported that he continues to see the officer at ACDC, but has not received any response yet. He stated, "Nobody has come to talk to me."

Other common responses to the grievance process included: "nothing happens, grievances disappear" "the staff doesn't respond to them" and "never got a response." and "never got a response."

B) Inconsistent Application of Rules

I) Some Detained Immigrants Not Given Handbooks

At ACDC, detained immigrants are supposed to get the national ICE detainee handbook. According to NDS INS 2000 Standards that govern ACDC, "every detainee will receive a copy of this handbook upon admission to the facility." As previously mentioned in the admissions section, not all detained immigrants actually received a copy of the handbook, placing them at a disadvantage because they are unaware of ACDC and ICE rules and expectations.

One detained immigrant said that when he arrived with 14 other detained immigrants at ACDC, no one received the detainee handbook.⁶³⁸ When he asked to get a copy, an officer replied: "I've never heard of it, I'll look into it." ⁶³⁹

II) Language Barrier

In addition, while some of the facility's rules are posted on the walls of the pod, the rules were posted mostly in English—only a few immigrants stated that they were posted in Spanish. This means that all the detained immigrants who did not speak English were unaware of facility rules. Only a few detained immigrants stated that they watched an orientation video that was provided in English and Spanish.

Some officers yell in English at detained immigrants who they know do not speak English, and when they don't respond, that officer will yell more, screaming things like: "don't you speak English?"⁶⁴⁰ One detained immigrant said: "[when] they yell at you, it's intimidating."

III) Officers Don't Follow Rules

In addition to not knowing what the rules are, detained immigrants at ACDC have stated that some officers don't use the policies in the handbook and instead implement rules that are not in the book making it difficult for detained immigrants to actually gauge what the rules are.

One detained immigrant, Alma Valle, explained: "The officers yell at you for not making your bed but that [rule is] not written in handbook." Another detained immigrant stated that there is "inconsistent application of rules. Some deputies are okay with detainees leaving cell doors open, others are not." Another detained immigrant stated: "Each officer has some meticulous rule [that other officers don't] like no shower after 6." A detained immigrant from Canada reiterated this issue, saying "there is no consistency in [application of rules by] staff. Some don't care about certain things, others yell at you and throw you in lockdown for the same thing." Another immigrant stated that a particular "officer has their own rules and regulations" and "the guard[s] don't follow these rules, they follow their own rules."

Other arbitrary rules imposed by certain officers include not being able to talk in the common area in the pod. One detained immigrant stated that officers yell at them when they talk in the common area of the pod and are told to go into the recreation area just to talk.⁶⁴⁷ Another detained immigrant reiterated this sentiment stating, "you're not allowed to express yourself, can't have any noise." He also stated that some officers have told detained immigrants that they aren't allowed to stand [in the pod], that they "can only stand in the room."

In addition to haphazard application of the rules from the handbook, detained immigrants stated that some officers don't follow the handbook at all. For example, one detained immigrant stated:

"they didn't abide [by the policies] – I was supposed to be able to shower and shave right before court, but they didn't let me. The free hours are also shortened all the time, and they never make up for any of it." Another detained immigrant asked an officer why officers don't provide them with clean underwear everyday like the detainee handbook calls for, and the officer stated "I don't know anything about that." Another detained immigrant stated: "The facility does not use the policies outlines in the handbook. 651



Many detained immigrants interviewed stated that they were not treated with respect by officers and that officers regularly yelled at them.⁶⁵² Many of them noted that some officers yell to intimidate them, use vulgar language, use racist language and threaten detained immigrants with lockdowns. This is in violation of international policies. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 7 states: "No one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Additionally, the U.N. Principles of Detention, principle 6 states "No person under any form of detention or imprisonment shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

One detained immigrant stated: "the staff is very disrespectful." A guard once told him to "shut the fuck up." He also noted that some guards deliberately bang on doors and create loud noises knowing that detained immigrants don't like it. 653 Another individual said, "most of [the officers] curse, it's like their second language."654 A detained man with the pseudonym James stated, "They wanna get respect, but they don't give you respect...They treat you like shit."655 Another said, "detained immigrants are not treated like humans because we're immigrant with no legal status."656 Another detained immigrant noted "They call us aliens. I have a name."657 Another detained immigrant stated: "No one has treated me like this before in my life."658

One detained immigrant also noted that officers in the medical overnight unit are often working overtime and seem to take out their frustration on detained immigrants.⁶⁵⁹ **He said one time**

when he was sick and in the medical unit and asked for help at night, the officer yelled at him saying "don't ask me for shit," and told him not to bother him. 660

Many detained immigrants stated that officers also constantly threaten them with lockdown and other forms of intimidation. For example, one detained immigrant stated that officers yell at them, saying things like "how many times do I have to tell you—I'll put you on lock down." Another detained immigrant said, "they want us to do what they want" and recalled a time when an officer threatened him by telling him "I can make you stay [here] another 30 days." 662

The issue appears to worsen for non-English speaking detained people. One detained immigrant said, "[the officers] get frustrated when [they] can't understand people." An immigrant from Venezuela noted that officers talk with a disrespectful tone and will make comments like "this isn't Mexico." 664 Many detained immigrants stated that the officers are always yelling at them. One stated: "guards are generally mean and sometimes raise their voices." This detained immigrant said: "guards are demeaning to Spanish speakers." Others claim ACDC officers play a role in encouraging interracial conflict. Five detained immigrants claimed that, at times, incarcerated people of certain racial backgrounds were treated better than others explaining: "some guards give preferential treatment to detained people who look like them." Another detained immigrant said: "staff treats one group better than others, but it happens on both sides – Latino towards Latino or Black towards Black."

Others noted that officers get mad at detained immigrants when they ask for something. For example, one detained immigrant stated: "when you ask some officers, they get mad because you are disturbing them." Another detained immigrant noted that officers watch shows and movies in the pod while they are on duty but "when their supervisor comes, they shut it down." She noted: "officers get mad at you when they can't hear their show, so they make us turn down the pod TV to the point where you can't hear it anymore."

Another detained immigrant stated that certain officers will retaliate against detained immigrants who do not support the officer in front of other detained immigrants. ⁶⁷⁰ He explained: "Officer A tries to be nice, but in return he'll want something. For example, he'll expect you to back him up in unpopular decisions in front of detained immigrants. If you don't, he won't let you serve food/trays which allows you to get a second serving food."





Walk for Justice on June, 2018 outside ICE Office in Atlanta. Photo Credit: Priyanka Bhatt - Both Photos Perin Tognia reported that on July 23, 2018, an officer claimed that a bottle of deodorant was missing, and the officer made an accusation that someone in the pod must have stolen it.⁶⁷¹ The officer immediately "cut off privileges" as collective punishment for the pod by taking away soccer balls and the basketball.⁶⁷² Without conducting any type of investigation, the officer on duty immediately called the detained immigrants "thieves."⁶⁷³ In response, the immigrants demanded an investigation, stating that they refused to eat until the officer reviewed evidence.⁶⁷⁴ The officer called in the Captain, who told the detained immigrants that they could not go on a hunger strike and were required to eat.⁶⁷⁵ When the detained immigrants refused to eat, the Captain responded by placing them on lock-down.⁶⁷⁶

Another Captain arrived and removed three detained immigrants, all from Mexico, from their cells and lined them up.⁶⁷⁷ He then ordered the other detained immigrants in the pod to line up opposite these three, and told the pod that they would be punished if they refused to eat.⁶⁷⁸ The officers stated that the three detained immigrants would be placed in segregation if they refused to eat.⁶⁷⁹ A family member of Mr. Tognia reported that the detained immigrants "all said they still would not eat, that it was unfair to call them thieves, and to punish them without first conducting an investigation."⁶⁸⁰ The officers ignored the detained immigrants' comments, and ordered the three detained immigrants from Mexico to go to segregation.⁶⁸¹ One detained immigrant refused, stating that he had done nothing wrong. ⁶⁸² In response, one of the officers used a taser on him, and forced him and another detained immigrant to go to 24-hour segregation.⁶⁸³

Later, an officer who was on duty the day before came into ACDC and reported that he had thrown the deodorant bottle in the trash because it was empty. Despite this knowledge, the two detained immigrants sent to segregation were kept overnight. More than 24 hours after the incident, the detained immigrant who was tased was still reportedly not back in his unit. Speaking about the incident, Mr. Tognia stated, "You [officers] cannot punish us like this... There is] too much abuse, [we] cannot take it."

D. Overuse of Lockdown

Many detained immigrants complained about the overuse of lockdowns. During lockdown, officers lock detained immigrants in their cells for several hours. At ACDC, officers already institute a daily lockdown for all detained immigrants that lasts from 1:30pm to 3:30pm and then 9:30pm to 4:30am.⁶⁸⁸

In addition to these regularly scheduled lockdowns, officers enforce further lockdowns for detained immigrants. One detained immigrant said: "they will lock you down for anything."689 He went on to say that the staff is so quick to lock detained immigrants down in their cells and that he believes their use of "lockdown is an abuse of power." Another detained immigrant said: "there are too many lockdowns. There are two to three lockdowns every day. Sometimes people miss their lawyer appointments because of it."690

Detained immigrants have been put on lockdown as punishment for small or fabricated mistakes.

For example, one detained immigrant stated: "For a little mistake, you get locked up for four hours. I've seen it happen to many people. Like if you're one minute late after getting water, you might get locked up for four hour[s]. Sometimes they lock everyone down."⁶⁹¹

Another detained immigrant stated: "Some deputies are okay with detainees leaving cell doors open, others are not. Detainees have been put on lockdown for leaving cell doors open. According to [the] rule book, lockdown is supposed to be one hour, but deputies will extend it to two and a half hours sometimes." Another detained immigrant stated that one detained immigrant was put on lockdown for eight hours simply for trying to get an officer's attention during another lockdown. Another detained immigrant stated that he was put on lockdown for four hours for trying to clean his vomit. He said that one time the food was so terrible that he felt sick and threw up. He routinely cleans the pod along with other detained immigrants, so he knew where the cleaning supplies were stored and used them to clean up his vomit. An officer saw him and yelled at him for doing so and put him on lockdown for 4 hours.

Another detained immigrant stated that they punish everyone by putting them on lockdown for one person's "mistake." This detained immigrant stated, "If one of us does something wrong, they punish all of us. One time, one of my roommates kept leaving the door open and the officer put us all on lockdown." Detained immigrants also complain that they are put on lockdown when there are demonstrations outside the jail. One detained immigrant stated: "when there are protests outside, they put us on lockdown...Lockdown lasts as long as the protests do. If they go on all day, we are locked down all day. It is not fair that we get lockdown because we did not do anything wrong." 696



Dr. Kevin Simon interviewed by reporters before the Atlanta Citizen Review Board Meeting in October 2017. Photo Credit: Priyanka Bhatt **Hunger Strike**

Hunger Strike



A) Legal Standard

The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." At least twice, the Supreme Court has held that the First Amendment applies to non-citizens within the United States. Although the Supreme Court has not specifically stated that non-citizens are entitled to the right to free speech, plaintiffs have argued as such in cases concerning detained immigrants who have protested conditions by going on hunger strikes. For example, asylum seekers in *Pineda Cruz v. Thompson* argued that the government violated their First Amendment right to freedom of speech by threatening them and locking them in segregation in response to their participation in a hunger strike. The 2000 NDS also specify that detained immigrants who announce or are suspected to be on hunger strike may only be sentenced to segregation after medical recommendation. Additionally, ACDC policy number 100-01 states: "Once staff has been notified of a hunger strike by an ICE detainee, ICE ERO will be notified immediately by a Facility Commander or designee."

B) Hunger Strikes at ACDC

Detained immigrants report that going on a hunger strike is the only way to get a response from ACDC staff or ICE. 703 One detained immigrant reported that his pod went on hunger strike because they did not have access to hot water for showers or a working microwave. 704 He reported that his pod was put on lockdown initially, but then "things got fixed."705 Another detained immigrant reported that after a group of immigrants went on hunger strike to protest the food quality and cold showers, they were moved to another floor with access to hot water. 706

Another detained immigrant, Adeniyi Ade-Oyegbola, expressed that there is an understanding among detained immigrants that if someone goes on a hunger strike, they will be placed into solitary confinement where their ICE officer will visit them, and their deportation process will be sped up. 707 Javier Alberto Rodriguez-Andrade specified that if a detained immigrant does not eat for three days, ICE will check on them and speed up their processing. 708 Another detained immigrant from Senegal reported that going on hunger strike is the "only way to get ICE's attention."709 This detained immigrant had been trying to report his grievances to ACDC officers by writing to them for months on end about the issues at the detention center.⁷¹⁰ He wrote to the officers to ask for more time periods to shower, as they were only being allowed to shower on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9am-12pm and 3pm-7pm, and to complain about the numerous lockdowns that were occurring.⁷¹¹ Yet, no official ever responded to their requests.⁷¹² While describing these experiences, he stated "We should be treated better." A male detained immigrant from Pakistan even planned to go on a hunger strike just so he could draw the attention of ICE and be deported.⁷¹⁴ He had chosen voluntary departure and had all of his travel documents, yet had been stuck in detention for 110 days.⁷¹⁵ When he told a nurse about his plan, the nurse told him that if he went on a hunger strike, he would simply die and be put in a bag. 716

Referring to ICE officials, he stated: "they only care about us after someone dies."717

Another detained immigrant, HM, stated that his unit made a group decision to go on hunger strike to draw attention to the lack of medical attention and general negligence of staff at AC-DC.⁷¹⁸ He reported that while it may not look like the "correct" way to get attention, they went on hunger strike because they lacked any other means to draw a response from ICE.⁷¹⁹

A family member of Perin Tognia noted that Mr. Tognia's pod went on hunger strike after officers took away the group's only soccer ball to punish them for an empty communal bottle of deodorant missing. 720 This family member noted that this was a "huge penalty" for the detained immigrants as they play soccer everyday – it is one of the only sources of recreation available to them. 721

A male detained immigrant who went on hunger strike to get his immigration charges reviewed after one month at ACDC without a court date describes his experience in his own words below.⁷²²

When you go on hunger strike they move you to isolation... solitary confinement, just like any regular high court criminal. You know, you are locked in there 23 hours a day, just one hour to take a shower, no access to the phone. That's basically... you're moved out of your unit, and they take you to solitary confinement [...] Whenever you go on hunger strike, that's what happens. They don't leave you in the unit, they take you there and then they notify your deportation officer and his supervisor and let them know that, you know, there's an inmate here that is on hunger strike for whatever reason. You know, it's just completely... sometimes you feel just hopeless [...] You have these officers, the ICE officers there, they just go about their duty so arrogantly, so cavalier, it's like, what can you do? I mean [...] they have immunity, for whatever they do to you, they have immunity as long as they don't physically assault you. So, it's just, you feel hopeless, so you say, 'OK, what can I do?' And that's it, you go on hunger strike knowing that you're going to be treated in an even worse situation, but you just need something done. In my case, I have a mortgage, I have a family, I was only supposed to be gone for 3 weeks. Then, going on two months and so on and so on, I was like, I could lose everything before these people let me out. And, at the end of the day, it's just for five minutes, to see the judge.⁷²³



FOOD AND WATER



A) Legal Standards

According to the ACDC's policies, ". . . [t]he daily monitoring of food service quality is the responsibility of all staff, regardless of position or assignment." Moreover, it is the responsibility of the Food Service Vendor or Manager to "ensure that food products are delivered fresh and in a condition for optimum food service." The 2000 NDS states that "[i]t is INS policy to provide detainees with nutritious, attractively presented meals, prepared in a sanitary manner while identifying, developing and managing resources to meet the operational needs of the food service program." Both the 2000 NDS and the ACDC's policies further provide that detained immigrants with certain chronic, temporary, medical, dental, or psychological conditions be prescribed "special diets."

The Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty in the Americas also provides that "[p]ersons deprived of liberty" be given nutritious food pursuant to "any special needs or diet determined by medical criteria."⁷²⁸ These principles also state that food "shall be provided at regular intervals, and its suspension or restriction as a disciplinary measure shall be prohibited by law," and that detained immigrants "have access at all times to sufficient drinking water suitable for consumption."⁷²⁹

The U.S. is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which guarantees a right to public health for everyone. The U.S. also has international obligations under the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man ("American Declaration"), which provides that "[e]very person has the right to the preservation of his health through sanitary and social measures relating to food . . . "731 Further, the UNHCR has stated that detained asylum-seekers should be given "[f]ood of nutritional value suitable to age, health, and cultural/religious background "732"

B) Hunger and Lack of Nutritious Meals

Common adjectives used to describe the food served at ACDC include "very bad,"⁷³³ "poor,"⁷³⁴ and "terrible."⁷³⁵ Two detained immigrants reported getting "real chicken" only once a week and processed meats for dinner the other days.⁷³⁶ Common meals reported by detained immigrants include grits, cornbread, bread, rice, beans, processed meats, and meat patties.⁷³⁷ One detained immigrant noted: "I don't know what type of meat it is."⁷³⁸ Other detained immigrants noted: "everything is really watery and they don't use salt."⁷³⁹ Several detained immigrant complained about the lack of fresh of fruit or vegetables. One detained immigrant stated: "there's not too much vegetables or fruit."⁷⁴⁰ A male detained immigrant stated he, "get[s] [an] orange once a week,"⁷⁴¹ while another stated "there is no fruit usually" and that he gets an orange every two weeks.⁷⁴² Several detained immigrants noted that they don't even receive the full broccoli, they are just given "the stem cut up."⁷⁴³

Nearly all detainees reported being hungry even after eating. Meals are usually served at around 4 or 4:30 a.m. (breakfast), 11 a.m. (lunch), and 7 p.m. (dinner). Many detained immigrants

reported only getting 10 to 15 minutes to eat during each of these meals.⁷⁴⁴ Detained immigrants also reported being rushed⁷⁴⁵ or yelled at⁷⁴⁶ by ACDC staff to finish their meals.

One female detained immigrant compared the meat being served at ACDC to "cat or dog food,"⁷⁴⁷ while another detained immigrant stated that he would not even feed the food at ACDC to his dog.⁷⁴⁸ One detained immigrant, James stated: "They don't serve real food even though they have it. I know the kitchen has real food for the staff and people [in] the work program. You only get real food if you work. It's modern day slavery."⁷⁴⁹ Detained immigrants report the food to have no seasoning in it. One detained immigrant requested ketchup from an officer, to which the officer responded: "You shouldn't be getting anything. You're in jail."⁷⁵⁰ This detained immigrant also noted that he is certain there is ketchup in the facility which detained immigrants can request.⁷⁵¹

One detained immigrant recounted that an entire pod participated in a hunger strike because their rice and potatoes were inedible, 752 while another detained immigrant stated that detainees are frequently served uncooked potatoes. Two detained immigrants reported finding hair in their food. Another detained immigrant in the work program reported that he showed the grits he was served to an officer and asked: Would you eat this? The officer told the detained immigrant that he would not eat the grits.

As a result, detained immigrants report having to buy food at commissary. As one detained immigrant noted: "You're very hungry if you don't have money for commissary."⁷⁵⁷ However, like the food being served, the food provided at the commissary is also not nutritious. As one female detained immigrant pointed out, "There's nothing healthy in commissary and it's expensive."⁷⁵⁸ As another detained immigrant noted: "You buy everything in the commissary, but it's like extortion. Everything is like five times the price."⁷⁵⁹

Nevertheless, detained immigrants at ACDC feel they must rely on the food from commissary. A detained immigrant, Robert noted that "... commissary is too expensive, but if I depend on the food they bring us, I don't know what will happen."⁷⁶⁰ Robert stated that he lost 40 pounds at ACDC from lack of nutrition.⁷⁶¹ He is not alone, as many detained immigrants have reported losing significant weight since they were first detained at ACDC.⁷⁶²

C) Lack of Special Diets

Many detained immigrants at ACDC reported having inadequate diets for their medical needs. One detained immigrant who is diabetic stated he has repeatedly been given the wrong meal or refused a special meal, and staff at ACDC have not provided him with his dietitian's contact information. Similarly, another detained immigrant reported that there is no difference between his food and other detained immigrants' food, even though he has diabetes and requires a special medical diet. One detained immigrant noted: "The food they give the immigrants is all sugar. It is mostly cornbread, almost all the time, and white rice and potatoes."

Another detained immigrant who needs to eat every four to five hours because he has low blood

sugar stated that he was not fed for approximately 12 hours when he first arrived at ACDC.⁷⁶⁶

A male detained immigrant from Liberia who receives a special diet because he is allergic to soy was taken off his diet on two separate occasions.⁷⁶⁷ The first time, he had trouble breathing after eating a meal which a guard told him did not contain soy.⁷⁶⁸ On another occasion, he was given the wrong meal again and when he requested a soy-free meal, he was told by an officer to "shut the fuck up."⁷⁶⁹

Steve Orlando McPherson, who was on a special diet, stated that officers would refuse to call the kitchen if he received the wrong meal and tell him to go to his cell.⁷⁷⁰ If he refused, the guards would tell him that he was "disobeying a direct order" and threatened him with lockdown.⁷⁷¹ Mr. McPherson referred to this as "a no-win situation."⁷⁷²

D) Water

Many detained immigrants also report not having "water suitable for consumption," as is required by The Inter-American Principles and Best Practices on the Protection of Persons Deprived of Liberty. 773 One detained immigrant noted that the water from the machine "tastes weird," while two other detained immigrants complained about the water in their cell. 775

Adeniyi Ade-Oyegbola noted that there was a water boil advisory at ACDC during the time of his interview. The Another detained immigrant described the water as "not good," and noted: "The water one time changed color." Two detained immigrants stated that the water at ACDC "tastes like chlorine," while a female detained immigrant noted that the water had a "bleach flavor."

Another male detained immigrant from Mexico reported at the time of his interview that the water fountain at ACDC had been broken:

"Since Saturday, the water fountain broke so [ACDC] [brought] coolers of water. But they run out within a few hours and then [we] don't have water." 780

Conclusion

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that detention conditions are punitive when they are "excessive relative to their stated purpose." Since immigration detention is civil in nature, the conditions of immigration detention should not amount to punishment. This report reveals that immigration detention at ACDC is punitive in practice leading to medical neglect, hunger, and arbitrary punishment among other things.

In May 2017, Project South's *Imprisoned Justice* report outlined the unacceptable conditions of the Stewart Detention Center and the Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia. Unfortunately, the findings in this report have shown the same concerns that plague both those facilities are also prevalent at ACDC.

Some of the worst offenses include: lack of access to proper medical and mental health care; lack of due process including not providing detained immigrants with accurate Notices to Appear and access to relevant legal material; unsanitary living conditions; unsanitary hygiene policies; lack of edible and nutritious food; prominent use of racist and vulgar language by ACDC officers and ICE deportation officers; the use of exploitative labor without monetary compensation; and rampant use of lockdown and solitary confinement.

In 2012, the United Nations High Commissions for Refugees (UNHCR) issued the Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention. The guidelines require that conditions of detention should be humane and dignified.⁷⁸³ **The conditions at ACDC, as described by the detained immigrants interviewed at ACDC as well as their visitors and attorneys, are nowhere close to humane.**

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations

- Shut down ACDC;
- The City of Atlanta should continue to strive toward becoming a welcoming city to immigrants by ending the Intergovernmental Agreement with the U.S. Marshals Service, used to house detained immigrants at ACDC;
- ICE must ensure that ACDC follows the latest 2011 PBNDS, not the 2000 NDS;
- ICE needs to implement policies that will hold contract facilities accountable for not complying with ICE standards;
- ICE should terminate contracts with facilities that do not meet its standards; and,
- ICE should use the Alternative to Detention Program for immigrants who are eligible.

Due Process

- The list of pro bono services should be up-to-date, actually contain free services, and be distributed to all detained immigrants upon their detention;
- Detained immigrants must be provided with complete, accurate and timely NTAs; that include the date and time of their hearing, the nature of their proceedings, and the charges against them;
- Qualified interpreters must be provided at every step of the deportation process;
- Detained immigrants should not be assigned multiple Deportation Officers during their detention, and Deportation Officers must treat detained immigrants with respect and dignity;
- Deportation Officers should visit detained immigrants at least once a week;
- Detained immigrants should not be forced to sign orders of removal without speak ing with counsel;
- Law libraries should include up-to-date materials in the languages spoken by detained immigrants, as well as more books related to immigration;
- Detained immigrants should have more access to the law library;

- Computers in the law library should have internet at all times;
- One functioning printer and copier should be present in the law library at all times;
- Each unit housing detained immigrants should contain at least one computer;
- Detained immigrants should have access to overnight mailing;
- ACDC or ICE should not censor the legal research detained immigrants do or take away their flash drives;
- Attorneys should be allowed to visit detained immigrants during the pre-representation phase without providing a Form G-28;
- Detained immigrants should not have to pay for calls to counsel;
- Private space should be allocated for detained immigrants' phone calls to counsel and during visitation with counsel;
- Attorneys and detained immigrants must be able to hear one another at all times during visitation;
- Visitation booths for attorneys and detained immigrants must have a slit in the glass in order to pass legal documents; and
- Attorney-client calls and written correspondence must not be monitored or recorded under any circumstances.

Admissions

- Each detained immigrant should receive a detainee handbook upon arriving at ACDC;
- Orientation materials must be provided to detained immigrants in a language they understand;
- Each detained immigrant must be provided a medical screening upon arriving at ACDC;
- Detained immigrants must be provided with adequate clothing throughout their detention;
- Undergarments and other types of clothing must be replaced upon request;
- Detained immigrants must not be coerced into buying clothing from commissary;
- Detained immigrants must not have to hand-wash clothes due to arbitrary access to laundering services; and,
- Toiletries must be replaced upon request.

Living Conditions

- ACDC temperature must remain at a comfortable temperature for all detained immigrants;
- All detained immigrants must be provided a sanitary, spacious, and safe living environment and receive an immediate response when their safety is threatened;
- Amenities and functional shared showers must be ensured in each unit (i.e. toilet, sink);
- The temperature of shower water must be kept within a comfortable range for all detained immigrants;

- Detained immigrants must be provided with adequate and comfortable bedding;
- Meals should be served at reasonable times, and detained immigrants should be afforded adequate time to eat;
- Fresh fruit and vegetables must be served daily;
- Detained immigrants must be provided adequate food portions so they are not forced to spend money on commissary every week;
- Detained immigrants who need special diets due to medical or religious reasons must be accommodated adequately;
- Food quality must be improved and should be inspected by ICE staff regularly to ensure compliance;
- The water quality must be addressed and brought to standard;
- All detained immigrants must be afforded outdoor recreation; and,
- Bilingual guards should be present at every facility during every shift to foster effective communication with detained immigrants.

Medical and Mental Health Care

- ICE must ensure that bilingual medical staff are available at the facility;
- ACDC should provide at least one doctor and one psychiatrist during the week;
- The medical unit must be sanitary at all times;
- A more effective procedure for seeking medical attention should be put in place;
- Serious medical conditions should be addressed immediately and adequately;
- Detained immigrants must be provided with access to their prescription medication;
- Detained immigrants with pre-existing health conditions, especially those living with HIV, should be closely monitored;
- Detained immigrants seeking non-emergency medical care should be seen within 48 hours;
- Detained immigrants who are prescribed mental health drugs must not be over-medicated or medicated despite their will; and,
- Detained immigrants must be provided access to psychologists and mental health therapy.

Segregation

- The practice of solitary confinement, defined as isolation from human contact for 22-24 hours per day, should be abolished;
- Administrative segregation must not be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances;
- Administrative segregation must be carefully and deliberately administered as a last resort, in strict compliance with both national and local policies;
- Detained immigrants in administrative segregation should be permitted to appeal their status within 24 hours;
- Detained immigrants with mental disabilities or who are suicidal should not be put in

- segregation under any circumstances; and
- Detained immigrants placed in segregation should be provided with access to commissary and the law library.

Work Program

- Detained immigrants must not be pressured to work;
- Detained immigrants who work must be provided with adequate monetary compensation;
- Detained immigrants working in the kitchen whose compensation is food must receive good quality and quantity of food;
- Detained immigrants working in the kitchen who require a special diet should be accommodated:
- Warm, timely meals should be provided to voluntary kitchen employees; and,
- Meals provided to voluntary kitchen employees must be nutritious and suitable for consumption.

Religious Freedom

- All detained immigrants must be allowed to freely profess a religious faith;
- All religious diets must be accommodated;
- All Muslim detained immigrants fasting during Ramadan must be provided food in a timely manner;
- Detained immigrants must be provided with religious clothing and materials (e.g. religious books, rosaries) upon request; and,
- Religious services and programs must be provided on an equal basis to all detained immigrants.

Visitation and Phone Access

- All detained immigrants must be provided more visitation time on all days of the week, including contact visits with family and longer visits with attorneys;
- Items sent to or dropped-off for detained immigrants should be relayed in a timely manner;
- A more streamlined system should be instituted to allow detained immigrants to register visitors;
- More visitation rooms should be provided;
- Contact visits should be allowed;
- More than two visitation days throughout the week should be allowed;
- Visitation instructions should be provided to detained immigrants and visitors in languages other than English;
- More telephones should be provided for detained immigrants to make domestic and

international calls;

- Phones in units and in visitation booths should be ensured to be working at all times;
- The cost of both domestic and international calls should be lowered; and,
- Indigent detained immigrants should not have to pay for either domestic or international calls.

Detention Center Staff

- ACDC staff must not create arbitrary rules that have the effect of prohibiting attorneys from being able to visit their clients;
- ACDC staff must follow ICE, Atlanta Department of Corrections, and international law standards and not create arbitrary rules that have the effect of treating detained immigrants unfairly;
- All detained immigrants must be treated with respect and dignity;
- Lockdown should not be used as a means to punish detained immigrants;
- Female attorneys must be treated with the respect and dignity as male attorneys;
- The grievance process must be made accessible to detained immigrants, and detained immigrants must not face retaliation by detention center guards or staff for filing grievances;
- Complaints that are filed must be responded to by the respective office in which they are filed; and,
- ACDC staff must respond to all grievances made by detained immigrants in a timely manner.



Concert for the Incarcerated on April 2017 outside ACDC. Photo credit: Dgmg Sj Da, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1776957292619674&set=pcb.324368644649083&type=3&theater

Endnotes

- 1 Inspection and Tour of Atlanta City Detention Center by Kevin Caron, Priyanka Bhatt and others on October 24, 2017.
- Welcoming Atlanta, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Atlanta Becomes 22nd Welcoming City*, (Oct. 29, 2013), http://www.welcomingatlanta.com/news/atlanta-becomes-22nd-welcoming-city/.
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- 5 Open Records Request received by Project South in July 2017 Invoice.
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- 9 Interviews by Priyanka Bhatt, Melanie Medalle, and Christina Remlin at the Atlanta City Detention Center on October 31, 2017 and November 5, 2017.
- Interviews by Priyanka Bhatt and Michael Tafelski at the Atlanta City Detention Center on September 6, 2017; Interviews by Priyanka Bhatt and Michael Tafelski at the Atlanta City Detention Center on September 6, 2017; Interviews by Priyanka Bhatt, Zack Greenamyre, and Christina Remlin at the Atlanta City Detention Center on October 23, 2017 and October 31, 2017; Interviews by Priyanka Bhatt and Zack Greenamyre at the Atlanta City Detention Center on October 24, 2017; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 28, 2017; Interviews by Olga Gambini, Emma Meyers, Amanda Parris at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 28, 2017; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 7, 2017; Interviews by Sarah Kelsey and Amanda Parris at the Atlanta City Detention Center on March 30, 2017; Interviews by Olga Gambini, Emma Meyers, Amanda Parris at the Atlanta City Detention Center on January 26, 207; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on January 26, 207; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on January 26, 207; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on January 26, 207; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 7, 2017.
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- 14 *Id.*
- 15 *Id.*
- 16 Id.
- 17 Id.
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- 23 Interviews by Priyanka Bhatt and Michael Tafelski at the Atlanta City Detention Center on September 16, 2017.
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- 767 Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 14, 2017.
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- 769 *Id.*

- 770 Interviews by Sarah Kelsey and Amanda Parris at the Atlanta City Detention Center on March 30, 2017.
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- 772 *Id.*
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- Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 7, 2017.
- Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 7, 2017; Interviews by Colin Nisbet and Erika Voreh at the Atlanta City Detention Center on July 19, 2017.
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