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Immigration News Today: Prolonged Detention, Lack of Legal Access at Detention Center

Immigrant rights groups published a report on the largest immigration detention center in the U.S., detailing many allegations of abuse.

The Adelanto Detention Facility (ADF), set in Adelanto, California, has the capacity to house 1,940 men and women. ADF is privately owned, and immigrant advocates have scrutinized its conditions, especially after the deaths of Fernando Dominguez and Raul Ernesto Morales-Ramos.

According to the authors of the report, by Detention Watch Network (DWN) and Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC), hundreds of detainees have been placed on suicide watch, many have attempted suicide, and abuses have been reported.

During a six-month period in 2015, CIVIC identified three top complaints at ADF: lack of access to legal representation, medical abuse and neglect and prolonged detention. There were reportedly other cases of maltreatment noted in CIVIC and DWN's report, "Abuse in Adelanto: An Investigation Into A California Town's Immigration Jail," including 27.5 percent of monitored detainees stating at ADF for over six months -- while one man has been in detention for five and a half years, detainees with disabilities were denied medical requests and access, less than 13 percent have legal representation and there were cases of religious freedom violations, particularly among Muslim detainees.

"Many of the allegations included in this report are not corroborated due to the closed nature of detention facilities and a pervasive lack of transparency by [Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)] and [The GEO Group]; however, the sheer number and consistency of complaints of rights violations point to a crisis within the facility that warrants immediate action," noted the report.

CIVIC and DWN issued three priority recommendations to address the ADF's "hostile" environment. The two organizations called for the city of Adelanto to cease its contracts with ICE and GEO and have its City Council pass a moratorium on the creation and/or expansion of additional jails or detention centers in the city.

The second set of recommendations was for the consideration of ICE, an agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. DWN and CIVIC also recommend ICE to terminate Adelanto's contract to detain immigrants, further transparency with the release of investigation findings into the death of Morales-Ramos and provide a pro bono telephone extension at ADF for civil and human rights groups.

The final set of recommendations was addressed to Congress, calling for an in-depth investigation into GEO's management of immigration detention centers and enact legislation prohibiting ICE from contracting with private prison companies.

Some congressional lawmakers have introduced legislation to cease private prisons and eliminate bed quotas of immigrants held in detention. In the Senate, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., introduced the "[Justice is Not For Sale Act of 2015](#)" in September. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., also introduced a complementary House

bill in September. The bills would also improve monitoring and inspections of detention facilities by either the DHS secretary or an independent and third party auditor.

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