

New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice

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**DETENTION CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS
UNDER THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION**
Immigrant Detainees Report From Basile, Louisiana

**IN THE LAST MONTH, OVER 100 IMMIGRANT DETAINEES HAVE
ACTED AS HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORS IN THE PRIVATELY-RUN
IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTER IN BASILE, LOUISIANA.
THEY HAVE REPORTED EGREGIOUS VIOLATIONS TO JAIL
STAFF, IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS, AND ADVOCATES.**

**ON THE DAY THAT THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION DECIDED TO
REJECT A FEDERAL COURT PETITION CALLING FOR LEGALLY
ENFORCEABLE DETENTION STANDARDS, DETAINEES IN
BASILE, LOUISIANA DECLARED A HUNGER STRIKE,
PROTESTING INHUMANE CONDITIONS.**

**THIS REPORT COMPILES THE ACCOUNTS OF DETAINEE
HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORS, REVEALING THAT THE FACILITY
FALLS BELOW ICE'S OWN STANDARDS – AND ALL STANDARDS
OF HUMAN DECENCY.**

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*Compiled by the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice
based on the reports of over 100 detainee human rights monitors.*

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Even though I was showing many symptoms, no one offered me any medical attention. [...] I was so sick that I was delirious, vomiting, had no appetite, a strong head ache, fever, I was very cold, and I had a cold sweat. In my cell there are more than forty people who are sick. As far as I know, no one in my cell has had a blood test or any lab testing done.

-- **EDWIN DUBON GONZALEZ**, detainee human rights monitor reporting on violations of ICE minimum standards governing medical care.

I have been in the custody of immigration for over a month. I still have not been able to speak with my family about where I am.

-- **JORGE GOMEZ**, detainee human rights monitor reporting on violations of ICE minimum standards governing telephone access.

I am in [solitary confinement], under investigation for planning a hunger strike. I believe that they are going to keep me in the hole, [solitary confinement], until after Monday so that we do not have a hunger strike to expose and protest the bad conditions in this jail. When my legal representatives came to see me on Thursday no one notified me and they told them that I had refused to meet with them.

-- **JOAQUIN LOPEZ PENA**, detainee human rights monitor reporting on violations of ICE minimum standards governing disciplinary policy.

There were times that I tried to call my deportation officer [...] up to two times a day but I only reached her voicemail. I have called her hundreds of times. [...] No immigration attorney has come to visit me. I was never given a presentation about my rights and immigration did not give me a pamphlet on my rights and

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responsibilities. I was not given a list of free attorneys. The only phones that I have been told I can use, be it to speak to an attorney or my family, are in the cell and are not private. Yesterday, for the first time, I received a response about my case and I was told that I am going to be transferred to another jail, and I have criminal charges. No one has told me what those charges are or when my next court date is.

-- **FRANCO JOBANY**, detainee human rights monitor reporting on violations of ICE minimum standards governing access to legal materials.

We complained about [detention] conditions for a long time. After the first hunger strike, they turned down the air conditioning for the first time in our dormitory. They also gave twenty pairs of boxers to over seventy detainees in the dormitory. Since our second hunger strike and complaints, they are giving us more soap weekly. We are worried, though, [about] whether these are temporary or permanent changes. We have been complaining for a long time both verbally and in writing, but ICE has ignored us. ICE has also refused to accept written complaints about this because they were written in Spanish. Last Tuesday, after the hunger strike, the jail finally agreed we could submit complaints in English or Spanish. On Thursday though, ICE again rejected complaints that were written in Spanish.

-- **EDGAR ALCANTARA**, detainee human rights monitor reporting on violations of ICE minimum standards governing issuance and exchange of bedding, clothing, and towels.

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DETENTION CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

"I am preparing to die here in detention. I hope my body will provide testimony that the system needs to change."

—Juan Marin Corona, Detainee, human rights monitor, and hunger striker in Basile, Louisiana immigration detention center.

On Monday, July 27, 2009, the Obama Administration refused to acknowledge the national call for legally enforceable standards for immigration detention. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rejected a federal court petition by former detainees and their families, deciding instead to embrace the Bush-era systems of inspection and monitoring. DHS officials claimed that the current systems, which rely largely on private contractors, "provide adequately for both quality control and accountability." The same day, over 60 immigrant detainees launched a hunger strike in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Basile, Louisiana. This was the fifth hunger strike in four weeks at this privately-run detention center. Detainees were protesting humiliating treatment and indecent conditions. They had something to say about "quality control and accountability" at the detention center – and they wanted the Obama Administration to listen.

Buried deep in the rural South, four hours away from New Orleans, the South Louisiana Corrections Center is a privately run jail that won a contract with ICE to run a detention center. The facility is notorious for its history of prisoner abuse, including the sexual abuse of female prisoners. Immigrant detainees have turned it into a national flashpoint for the debate on detention standards and human rights.

During July 2009, over a hundred detainees acted as human rights monitors inside the jail. Over the course of a month, detainee human rights monitors recorded complaints, attempted to lodge hundreds of grievances, and communicated with advocates about jail conditions.

This report compiles the reports of detainee human rights monitors, and shows that the ICE facility fails all standards of human decency – and ICE's own standards for detention. In testimony after testimony, human rights monitors report egregious violations:

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“I have been in the custody of immigration over one month. I still have not been able to speak with my family about where I am.”

“When my legal representatives came to see me on Thursday no one notified me. And [jail staff] told them that I had refused to meet with them.”

“We were given two pairs of underwear. They were too small and were made of nylon. To other detainees and me, they appeared to be women’s underwear.”

In general, detainees monitoring human rights conditions reported serious concerns regarding extreme scarcity and deplorable conditions, lack of access to fundamental information, severe isolation, and an utterly non-transparent and interminable system of deportation. The investigation also revealed an ongoing lack of responsible oversight by ICE.

Again and again, detainees make it clear that these conditions have pushed them to the limits of their physical and mental wellbeing.

The detainees’ testimonies also demonstrate the risks detainees take when they decide to complain about human rights conditions and detention standards. Jail staff and ICE responded to the monitoring with hostility. They refused to speak with detainees, offered no interpretation services, and rejected and discarded written complaints. “They said, we can’t read complaints in Spanish,” reported one monitor. “They said, ‘don’t waste our time with this.’”

When ICE refused to consider complaints, the detainees launched hunger strikes. They then faced aggressive disciplinary retaliation, including solitary confinement.

I am in the hole, under investigation for planning a hunger strike. I believe that they are going to keep me in the hole until after Monday so that we do not have a hunger strike to expose and protest the bad conditions in this jail.

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As the detainees' fight for human rights in Basile, Louisiana has gained momentum, national advocates are demanding that DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano immediately allow a national leadership delegation of civil and human rights advocates to visit detainees who have monitored human rights conditions and conducted hunger strikes. Signatories on a national letter sent to Napolitano on Wednesday, July 29 included the Center for Constitution Rights, the ACLU, and the National Immigration Law Center. Detainees continue to monitor human rights conditions, and want Napolitano to shut down the Basile, Louisiana detention facility. "We demand that Napolitano stop doing business with private jails that profit from our extended detention in inhumane conditions," said Joaquin Ruiz, a detainee who served as a human rights monitor in the ICE detention facility. "Napolitano says there is quality and accountability in ICE jails. She should spend a week in Basile, Louisiana."

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DETAINEE HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING REPORTS OF CONDITIONS AT THE SOUTH LOUISIANA CORRECTIONAL CENTER, BASILE, LOUISIANA

The following represents a sample of the human rights monitoring reports prepared by detainees at the South Louisiana Correctional Center in Basile Louisiana in the last one month. Detainees' reports expose serious and consistent violations of ICE's 2000 Detention Standards applicable to facilities housing ICE detainees pursuant to Intergovernmental Service Agreements. These facilities are sometimes permitted to adopt, adapt, or establish alternatives to the minimum standards provided they meet or exceed the objective represented by the standard. Reports reveal violations of ICE's own minimum standards in the following areas:

- Medical Care
- Hunger Strikes
- Disciplinary Policy and Administrative and Disciplinary Segregation: Special Management Units
- Access to Legal Materials
- Telephone Access and Correspondence and Other Mail
- Issuance and Exchange of Clothing, Bedding and Towels
- Food Service
- Religious Practices

In general, detainees reported serious concerns regarding extreme scarcity and deplorable conditions, utter lack of access to fundamental information, severe isolation, and a non-transparent and seemingly arbitrary system of deportation. The investigation also revealed an

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ongoing lack of responsible oversight by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These failures have resulted in the deteriorating physical and mental health of the immigrants held there.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards

Governing Medical Care

Human Rights Monitor: Juan Marin Corona

Dome and Cell: Eagle 3

Date: 07/29/09

My name is Juan Marin Corona and I first came to the United States in September 1984. Here in the United States, I have three children, ages fourteen, thirteen, and eleven years. I have serious health problems. By this time, I know my symptoms and my body. I have chronic leukemia, "CML." I was diagnosed in 2001. I had been receiving treatments at the Duke Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina until 2008 when I was detained by Immigration.

The last two months in the hands of immigration have been very difficult. When I first came, I felt a little sick, but now I have severe pain in my bones, and I have small bruises across my body.

When I came to this detention center, no one gave me a medical examination. I informed them that I had leukemia and diabetes, but up to this point, I have not received treatment for my cancer nor my diabetes. I have never had a blood test for my diabetes, and I'm only given a blood sugar test once a month.

This detention center has put my health at risk. I'm going to die quickly if I don't receive my medicine to control the growth of this cancer. If the cancer cells grow out of control, I will die within a few months. This desperation makes me feel crazy.

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It's not just that ICE has a contract with this jail, and we are treated this way. There are too many problems and these problems have put my life at risk. It's not just me, but many of the people here. I believe this justifies that ICE should cancel this contract.

I have committed errors in my life and I have paid for them. But the people who run this jail suffer no consequences for their mistakes. I have never seen an inspector that came to see their errors.

The jail does not want the truth to come to light. When some of us speak out about our human rights, they try to keep us quiet, but we refuse to be silenced. We will continue to speak out however we can.

I am preparing to die here in detention. I hope my body will provide testimony that the system needs to change.

Human Rights Monitor: Edwin Dubon Gonzalez

Dome and Cell: Bearcat #2

Date: 07/21/09

I, Edwin Dubon, got sick for the first time last Thursday, July 16th. Even though I was showing many symptoms, no one offered me any medical attention. I filled out three requests before anyone called me to the infirmary. That happened on Saturday. When they called me they did not give me a medical check-up or ask me any questions, they just gave me some pills. They gave me some more pills on Sunday. I was so sick that I was delirious, vomiting, had no appetite, a strong head ache, fever, I was very cold, and I had a cold sweat. In the beginning the medication didn't help but after a little time it did a little. But now I am just as sick again. In my cell there are more than forty people who are sick. As far as I know, no one in my cell has had a blood test or any lab testing done.

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Inside the cell, it is very cold. Since I am sick, I feel like it is freezing. Even though we are sick, they won't let us cover up with our blanket; they take them away from us. Sometimes, they take us outside at two in the morning to go get our medicine. Yesterday they took us outside even though it was raining.

They have a medical file where they write down what medicine they give us.

In my cell there are a lot of people who are sick, and some who are not. Nothing has been done to prevent the rest from getting sick from the contagious people.

People are allowed to smoke inside of the cell. This worsens the situation, and affects how we breathe.

Human Rights Monitor: Fausto Gonzalez

Dome and Cell: Tiger 2

Date: 7/29/2009

My name is Fausto Gonzalez. I have been in the Basile jail since June 24, 2009. First I was in a detention center in New York, then in Pennsylvania, and then three days in El Paso, Texas. From there I went to New Mexico and finally to Basile. In my experience, the only jail that complied with the requirements was El Paso. Many of the others were private jails, just private businesses.

This institution should have been prepared for us before we were brought here. It's not fit for a human being.

I arrived here in bad health. I have health problems because of high blood pressure, food allergies, asthma, and claustrophobia. The most serious is a problem with my spine.

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When I arrived at the Basile jail, they never gave me a medical exam, even though I have a file with my medical conditions. I had to make a request to get a copy of the file, and after that, they only gave me a partial copy of what I had asked for. Eventually, they gave me pills for my allergies, but they didn't work. They also gave me pain pills, but nothing for my asthma.

I am fighting my case. But they make it impossible for you here. Even if you want to fight your case, you cannot. Each time I want to go to the law library, I have to fill out a request and there are only two people allowed in the library. There aren't books in Spanish. I've only been able to go one time—only for one hour and I couldn't finish my work. There are three computers without internet, and only one has the immigration documents. Otherwise there aren't materials. You have to make a specific request if you want to print them, and you have to bring a USB drive from the office where they read your request, and after three days or a week they bring it to you. If you want to make copies, there is a high cost and that is against the rules.

My deportation officer doesn't have access to my case file because it is in the second circuit in New York. My lawyer is in New York, and I have to speak to him by phone in the cell with all the other detainees listening, and I have to pay very high prices to make the call. Here, whenever you talk to your lawyer, everybody in the world knows, because there is no privacy.

The physical conditions of this facility are bad and getting worse. The dormitory has beds that are very small and dangerous and don't comply with basic standards. Inside the dormitory, everything is dirty. There are rats, mosquitoes, flies, and spiders inside the cell and inside the dorm. The ventilation is terrible. For people like me who have allergies and asthma, it affects us very much.

We have tried to complain about all of these problems, and we haven't gotten anywhere. They tell us, "It's a jail. This is how it is."

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That is why we went on a hunger strike.

In our cell, we began a hunger strike because we spoke out, and spoke out, and spoke out – and the authorities did nothing to improve the conditions. Thirty-four people in our cell refused food yesterday. Many of us were ready to face intimidation, and jail staff provoked us to have an excuse to send us to the hole. Our protest was totally peaceful – we only asked that they respond to us. Still, guards were ready to attack us with force, dressed in black riot uniforms.

Two of the men who went on hunger strike are now in the hole.

This jail ought to be closed immediately. All of the ICE detainees ought to be transferred because here they are not meeting the standards that they ought to and no one is doing anything about it.

Whoever is responsible for ICE signing a contract with this inhumane jail ought to be investigated, fired, and sanctioned, and the detainees who have suffered in this jail ought to be compensated in some manner.

We are not animals, and don't deserve to be treated like animals. We are human beings.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards

Governing Hunger Strikes

Human Rights Monitor: Wilber Guerrero Ayala

Dome and Cell: Bearcat 2

Date: 7/19/09

My name is Wilber Guerrero Ayala. I have been in this jail for two months. Three months in total in the custody of Immigration. I was one of the detainees who took part in the hunger strike last week. At the end of the day, two ICE officials came and demanded to know who the leaders of the hunger strike were.

All of us who were participating identified ourselves. We said we did not have a leader. Each person had decided to participate. Most of us had also held a hunger strike the prior week. In response, ICE had agreed to turn down the air conditioning in our dorm. They also distributed twenty pairs of boxers for seventy-two people. The ICE officials brought a detainee from another cell to use as an interpreter.

They did not bring a doctor, a nurse, or other medical staff. They did not bring a social worker, counselor, or psychologist. They did not run any medical tests or do anything to assess our health.

The ICE officials were angry and tried to pressure us to eat. They threatened us and said that if we did not agree to eat, they would put us in solitary confinement.

They then directed us to into the hallway where they continued to pressure us.

We were all terrified of what kind of retaliation ICE would take in that moment. ICE also took our identification cards to keep a list of who participated in the strike. At that time, ICE also cut

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the telephone lines. No one in our cell was able to report what was happening and we were not able to contact our legal representatives. I felt like they were trying to isolate us and keep us from exercising our human rights by threatening us.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards Governing Disciplinary Policy and Administrative and Disciplinary Segregation: Special Management Units

Human Rights Monitor: Joaquin Lopez Pena

Dome and Cell: Wolf 3

Date: 7/25/09

I, Joaquin, have been detained here since 6/23/09. I am writing to complain about the unjust punishments and retaliation. Supposedly I am in the hole, under investigation for planning a hunger strike. I believe that they are going to keep me in the hole until after Monday so that we do not have a hunger strike to expose and protest the bad conditions in this jail.

On Thursday, at 10:00 am they called four people from Wolf 3 and they told us that we were under investigation and they put us in the hole. I spent all of Thursday and last night in the hole and in the morning they called me. They took me out to an office in the back with the other three. They put handcuffs on our hands and feet. An ICE agent and an attorney interrogated us on our plans for doing a peaceful hunger strike. After two hours of questioning, they put us in the holding cell for two more hours. My ankles still hurt from the very tight handcuffs. And they put us in the hole again. They have not informed us on when we can leave the hole. I was alone in the hole for the rest of the day. They did not allow us to talk to anyone. Not even on the phone. Today everything has been the same.

In the hole there are two beds, a toilet, a light, and a small table. It is more or less twelve feet by six feet. They have only given me a bar of soap and some shampoo. I only have the little bit of toilet paper that I had with me when they put me in.

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In the hole they only allow you to shower every two to three days. The same with going into the yard, but I know that when they take you out, they have your hands tied up.

They do not allow you to talk on the phone. There are mosquitoes inside. There is no window and you can't see anything or anyplace.

When my legal representatives came to see me on Thursday no one notified me and they told them that I had refused to meet with them.

This is horrible. Imagine. I am already locked up and they take me to a small room alone, without anything, unable to speak to my wife, no one.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards governing Access to Legal Materials

Human Rights Monitor: Franco Jobany

Dome and Cell: Bearcat 2

Date: 7/22/09

There were times that I tried to call my deportation officer, Officer Johnson, up to two times a day but I only reached her voicemail. I have called her hundreds of times. She does not speak Spanish—I had to use another detainee to help me translate. I only made collect calls from the telephones in our cell. One time she went to the jail and when I asked her about my case she did not answer. When she came I only knew it was her because other people told me. She never introduced herself or came to see me.

I tried to talk to other deportation officers, but they gave me different answers and they could never solve my issue. One deportation officer told me I was waiting on the U.S. Marshall, then another told me I was going to get deported, then again that yes I was going to go to the U.S. Marshall. I have been here for five months and twenty days without going to court or knowing anything about my case.

I sent Officer Johnson a letter by mail and she never responded.

A week and a half passed after I had sent in my request and I was sent to the library. There are three computers there but everything is in English and there was no Internet. One detainee is in charge of the library and he is known as the “attorney.”

There is nothing there in Spanish (no books or materials). I did not see a photocopier and supposedly they won't give you copies. You have to fill out a request, and after a week you are

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told “no.” There is no one from the jail or immigration to help translate or write if you are illiterate. Only the detainees help each other.

They rarely let us use the library; I have friends who have filled out several requests and they are not allowed to go. In segregation you are never allowed to go; they only let you talk on the phone once a week. I have never heard of or used a telephone interpretation service.

No immigration attorney has come to visit me. I was never given a presentation about my rights and immigration did not give me a pamphlet on my rights and responsibilities. I was not given a list of free attorneys. The only phones that I have been told I can use, be it to speak to an attorney or my family, are in the cell and are not private.

Yesterday, for the first time, I received a response about my case and I was told that I am going to be transferred to another jail, and that I have criminal charges. No one has told me what those charges are or when my next court date is.

Psychologically all of this has killed me. I can't tell my family anything. My mother is sick. The fear has affected her health. I don't know what will happen to me, or what I can do. I have been tricked with many lies. My deportation officer and ICE don't care about this at all. My wife and child depend on me. Right now, my son has health problems. I was the one who was supporting him. I don't know when I will be able to return to them. This has also psychologically killed them.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards Governing Issuance and Exchange of Clothing, Bedding and Towels

Human Rights Monitor: Edgar Bojorge Alcantara

Dome and Cell: Bearcat 2

Date: 7/19/09

My name is Edgar Bojorge Alcantara. I have been in this jail for three months, and spent six months in detention in Tennessee. Nine months total. I am writing to complain about inadequate clothing and personal hygiene supplies.

This problem affects me and other detainees.

When I arrived, I was given two uniforms. There was no measurement for size. They were distributed to a group by tossing them to us. We were struggling to obtain a pair that was the right size. Some small people ended up with uniforms that were too large. They could not change. They just try to tie knots in the sides of the pants.

We were given two pairs of underwear. They were too small and were made of nylon. To other detainees and me they appeared to be women's underwear. We felt it was a type of humiliation to give us this underwear. Those who could afford it, immediately bought boxers. Others went without instead of wearing these items.

I was given one pair of socks and one pair of shoes for the shower. I came wearing steel toed boots, and the facility would not permit me to wear them. I had no shoes. I've had to wear my plastic flip flops the entire time. We were not given undershirts.

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In every other immigration facility I have received at least two undershirts, two boxers, two socks, one pair of shoes, and a uniform that fits immediately when I arrived.

After thirty days in this jail I was declared “indigent” by the jail. At that point the jail distributed to me: one pair of shoes, two pairs of normal boxers, twelve envelopes, about fifteen pieces of paper, and one pen.

This treatment was difficult for me. Every man wants to change his clothes every day: t-shirt, boxers, and socks. With the wash schedule, we are not able to do this with the quantities we have.

We are also not given adequate hygiene products. Upon arrival we received toilet paper, soap, shampoo, a toothbrush and toothpaste. We are not provided deodorant. The supplies are supposed to be replenished weekly, but often ten days or two weeks will pass with nothing. We have to borrow soap or toilet paper, the most basic things, from other detainees who recently arrived or have money to buy them. Again, we were humiliated.

For about three weeks in May, the jail ran out of soap and toothpaste – except in the commissary. If you did not have money you had to just bathe with water and no soap.

These unsanitary conditions affect our mental and physical health. I developed a rash on my groin because of the lack of soap. When one person gets sick- a fever or cough – it spreads very quickly. We are not the strong, healthy men we were when we arrived.

Smoking in the dormitories also affects my health. Detainees are permitted to smoke in the dormitories, but we are not segregated, smokers and non-smokers. So I live and sleep amidst smoke all the time even though I am not a smoker.

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We are only asking for basic clothes and hygiene products to stay healthy and live with dignity. We just want to leave as healthy as we arrived.

We complained about these conditions for a long time. After the first hunger strike, they turned down the air conditioning for the first time in our dormitory. They also gave twenty pairs of boxers to over seventy detainees in the dormitory.

Since our second hunger strike and complaints, they are giving us more soap weekly. We are worried though that these are only temporary not permanent changes.

Other detainees and I are asking for a permanent solution to this problem that has occurred for a long time. We have been complaining for a long time both verbally and in writing, but ICE has ignored us. ICE has also refused to accept written complaints about this because they were written in Spanish.

Last Tuesday, after the hunger strike, the jail finally agreed we could submit complaints in English or Spanish; however on Thursday ICE again rejected complaints that were written in Spanish.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards Governing Telephone Access and Correspondence and Other Mail

Human Rights Monitor: Jorge Dominguez Gomez

Dome and Cell: Wolf 1

Date: 7/19/09

My name is Jorge. I have been in the custody of immigration over one month.

I still have not been able to speak with my family about where I am. I do not have money to buy a phone card.

I had to pass a message about where I am through a friend.

I know my mother is suffering a lot because I cannot talk to her directly-even once- to tell her where I am.

I have \$18.00 in my account but I am worried I will need the money to get a bus if I am deported. It is all the money I have.

Before immigration put me in this jail, I used to talk to my mother and grandmother two to three times a week.

Even when you can buy a phone card it takes a long time to receive it. Some people are moved to a different cell where the card doesn't work before they even receive it.

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I am not aware of any way I can call my family or my any way my family can call me without paying. I am worried that if there is an emergency or death in my family no one will know how to contact me. It is like I have been disappeared.

I do not know how to obtain free paper, envelopes and stamps to write to my family. This facility is about five hours away from the community where I was living. It is too far for anyone to visit. I feel very isolated from my family, community, everyone who cares about me.

There are days I can't sleep. I just lay awake worrying. What is happening to my family? I am sad and depressed. I can't explain how hard it is to not know what is happening. This system is very unjust and does not respect the basic love I have as a son and grandson for my mother and grandmother.

This all seems like a big business where you have to pay for everything. If you have no money, you are denied basic things.

This situation weighs heavily on my heart.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards

Governing Food

Human Rights Monitor: Juan Carlos Solares

Dome and Cell: Bearcat 3

Date: 7/27/09

My name is Juan Carlos Solares and I have been detained in this jail in Basile, LA for three months and the food here is so bad that it makes me sick.

I don't eat much here. I have become ill from the food. Since I arrived here I've lost fifteen pounds.

There is a dish of rice and turkey that gave me diarrhea and stomach pain. The stomach pain is constant.

One week ago after lunch my stomach began to hurt. I went back to my cell and vomited. On that day I ate the rice and turkey dish.

Every Saturday morning they give us a white mush with bits of some meat. It's too salty and this dish also makes people sick, so people don't even eat on Saturdays.

I'm not hungry here but rather in constant stomach pain.

The poor food quality gives me pain which makes it hard for me to sleep. Last night for example my stomach hurt so much I couldn't sleep at all. On a scale of one to ten, the pain is a ten.

If you complain of the stomach pain the guards only give you a pill and ignore you. They don't take you to see a doctor.

Mentally, I am so affected by this food that I can't eat, by the pain in my stomach, and by my lack of sleep from the pain. I feel that the laws are being broken here and that human rights are violated here.

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Violations of the ICE 2000 Minimum Detention Standards Governing Religious Practices

Human Rights Monitor: Manuchar Khalhaturov

Dome and Cell: Tiger 1

Date: 7/29/09

My name is Manuchar Khalhaturov, and I have been in Basile, Louisiana for over two months. Before ICE put me in detention, I was in strong physical shape. I was a karate instructor for kids.

Since I arrived in Basile, I have lost a lot of weight. The food usually makes me sick—I get strong stomachaches.

I am Jewish. When I first got here, I asked for kosher food, but they didn't even know what it was. They still have not given it to me. They give me food and tell me that it is Kosher, but I don't believe them because it is the same food that everyone else is eating.

When I was in the El Paso detention facility they would give us real Kosher food that was pre-packaged and came from New York.

Living conditions here are not fit for a prisoner. There are rats inside the hole—they ate one detainee's personal things.

The owners of this detention center take money and don't follow their responsibilities. People should be transferred and put in better living conditions. We deserve basic dignity and respect.