

Summer 2017 U.S. Immigration Alert!
A Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network
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Anti-Immigrant Racism at Trump Era....Fight Back!

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4/16: ICE immigration arrests of noncriminals double under Trump

Maria Sacchetti – Washington Post

Immigration arrests rose 32.6 percent in the first weeks of the Trump administration, with newly empowered federal agents intensifying their pursuit of not just undocumented immigrants with criminal records, but also thousands of illegal immigrants who have been otherwise law-abiding.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 21,362 immigrants, mostly convicted criminals, from January through mid-March, compared to 16,104 during the same period last year, according to statistics requested by The Washington Post.

Arrests of immigrants with no criminal records more than doubled to 5,441, the clearest sign yet that President Trump has ditched his predecessor's protective stance toward most of the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Advocates for immigrants say the unbridled enforcement has led to a sharp drop in reports from Latinos of sexual assaults and other crimes in Houston and Los Angeles, and terrified immigrant communities across the United States. A prosecutor said the presence of immigration agents in state and local courthouses, which advocates say has increased under the Trump administration, makes it harder to prosecute crime.

“My sense is that ICE is emboldened in a way that I have never seen,” Dan Satterberg, the top prosecutor in Washington state's King County, which includes Seattle, said Thursday. “The federal government, in really just a couple of months, has undone decades of work that we have done to build this trust.”

A spokeswoman for ICE said her agency “remains sensitive” to victims and witnesses and helps them obtain visas or stays of deportation in some cases. But she said anyone in the United States illegally could be deported.

ICE “focuses its enforcement resources on individuals who pose a threat to national security, public safety and border security,” spokeswoman Jennifer Elzea said in a statement. “However, as [Homeland Security] Secretary [John F.] Kelly has made clear, ICE will no longer exempt classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement.”

Nearly three-quarters of the immigrants arrested from Jan. 20 to March 13 had criminal convictions, an increase of 15 percent over the same period last year.

But the biggest spike is the arrest of immigrants with no criminal records, with immigration field offices in New York, Boston and other places doubling or tripling their numbers from last year.

ICE’s Atlanta office arrested the most immigrants who had never committed any crimes, with nearly 700 arrests, up from 137 the prior year. Philadelphia had the biggest percentage increase, with 356 noncriminal arrests, more than six times as many as the year before.

The ICE field offices with the largest total number of arrests — more than 2,000 each — were in Dallas, which covers north Texas and Oklahoma; Atlanta, which includes Georgia and the Carolinas; and Houston, which spans Southeast Texas.

Immigration detainees — voluntary requests from ICE to law enforcement agencies to hold those arrested beyond their normal release so that agents can take them into custody and deport them — also rose, to 22,161. That was a 75 percent jump from the year before. But many were issued in areas that do not necessarily comply with ICE requests.

Overall, deportations are down by 1.2 percent, to 54,741 in January, February and March, compared to the same period last year. Elzea said it can take time to remove someone from the United States, but the number of noncriminals deported is higher this year, while the number of criminals who were deported fell. Despite his pledge to send criminals packing, Trump has struggled to get countries such as China to take their citizens back.

Some say criticism of Trump’s policies seems politically charged, noting that President Barack Obama deported thousands of immigrants without criminal records. And arrests this year are lower than Obama’s first weeks in 2014, when agents arrested 29,238 immigrants, including 7,483 noncriminal ones.

The mayor of Miami-Dade County said in a recent interview that he has fielded more protests over the city’s immigration policies this year than under Obama.

“It’s all got to do with the president,” said Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez, a Republican who said he voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton in the presidential election. “Most of it has to do with politics. It’s sad.”

But Anabel Barron, an immigrant activist in Ohio, said she is facing deportation even though she is a domestic-violence victim who applied for a visa. She said ICE officials have affixed an electronic-tracking device to her ankle.

“I’m scared to go back to Mexico,” she said. “I’m losing hope.”

Others fear ICE is arresting immigrants in retaliation for asserting their rights, such as two dairy worker advocates in Vermont, who have since been released on bond, and a community activist in New York, who is detained.

“I honestly believe that ICE wants to send a message that this is what happens when you speak out,” said Boston immigration lawyer Matt Cameron, who represents the Vermont activists.

ICE said the three immigrants were targeted because they violated immigration laws. The New York man illegally re-entered the United States after he was deported, Elzea said. “ICE does not target individuals based on political beliefs or activism,” she said.

Advocates for immigrants say they also criticized Obama as the “deporter in chief” and waged a national campaign to create sanctuary cities to shield immigrants from deportation.

But they said Obama sought to avoid deporting longtime immigrants with roots in their communities and American-born children. He also lobbied Congress to create a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants and granted work permits to more than 700,000 undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children.

And in a November 2014 memo, Homeland Security chief Jeh Johnson restricted immigration arrests mainly to criminals and those who recently crossed the U.S. border, and immigration arrests plunged.

Since the election, Trump and his officials have sent conflicting signals on how much he would intensify immigration enforcement.

On the campaign trail, Trump said anyone in the United States illegally could be deported. After the election, however, he told "60 Minutes" he would focus on criminals and said he would decide later what to do with undocumented immigrants who are "terrific people."

In January, he issued executive orders that made all undocumented immigrants at risk of deportation. In February, Trump's press secretary said the "shackles" were off immigration and border agents, whose unions backed Trump in the election.

"I think the instruction is, 'Go about your business in terms of apprehending immigrants,'" said Joanne Lin, senior legislative counsel with the ACLU. "It's wherever they can find them."

5/13: NYC school boots federal agents seeking child due to no warrant

Ben Chapman, Rich Schapiro - New York Daily News

Federal immigration agents showed up at a Queens elementary school looking for a fourth grader — but were turned away at the door, officials said Saturday.

Officers from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services had no warrant when they arrived at Public School 58 in Maspeth, Queens, officials said.

"All students, regardless of immigration status, are welcome in NYC public schools, and parents should rest assured that we will do everything on our power to protect students, staff and families," said Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

"We're looking into this incident and are providing schools with additional information on our protocol and more trainings."

The incident took place some two months after the city ordered education staffers to bar immigration agents without warrants from entering school buildings.

The policy was put in place even though there had been no cases of federal agents seeking to pluck children out of schools.

In explaining the move, Mayor de Blasio said he wanted to ease the minds of parents worried about the White House's stance on undocumented immigrants.

"We're seeing things that we have not seen before and there's a tremendous amount of fear out there," de Blasio said.

"We have to be ready for anything."

5/31: The Immigrant Crackdown Is a Cash Cow for Private Prisons

Samuel Gilbert –Vice

Detaining immigrants has turned into a very lucrative growth industry

Earlier this month, Daniel Ragsdale, the second-in-command at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE), confirmed he will be leaving his position to work at GEO Group, the nation's second-largest private prison company.

"While you may be losing me as a colleague, please know that I will continue to be a strong advocate for you and your mission," said Ragsdale in a farewell email to his ICE colleagues.

He's certainly not going far—GEO operates immigrant detention centers and will likely compete for a contract to run a new facility that will house up to 9,500 undocumented immigrants. (It was just given renewals on two existing contracts, to the tune of \$664 million.) Ragsdale isn't the first to go from ICE to GEO, but his move underscored the close relationship between the federal agency tasked with detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants and the private prison industry that helps house those detained immigrants. As of last year, more than two-thirds of immigrant detainees were housed in private facilities.

"Daniel Ragsdale's move to GEO is another shameful example of the revolving door that exists between the federal agencies issuing lucrative immigration detention and prison contracts and the private prison companies receiving them," said a statement from Mary Small, policy director of Detention Watch Network, a national coalition of organizations fighting for immigration detention reform.

"This is a standard tactic for both CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) and GEO," said Carl Takei, a lawyer working for the ACLU's Prison Project, referring to two largest private prisons companies in the US. "They both hire from federal and state agencies that they are also seeking contacts with."

Contracts from ICE could be especially important because the US prison population has declined recently as harsh sentences, especially for nonviolent drug offenders, have become unfashionable.

"GEO group and other major companies have understood that criminal justice is not a growth area," said Nazgol Ghandnoosh, a research analyst at the Sentencing Project, a criminal justice reform nonprofit. "Immigration detention is something these companies are focusing on."

GEO began contracting with ICE in the mid 80s, when the immigration detention system was a fraction of the size it is today. Then came the toughening of immigration laws in the mid 1990s, which greatly expanded mandatory detention of noncitizens pending their immigration proceedings. After 9//11, border security and visa screening became a priority for the federal government, resulting in the creation of ICE in 2003. Today the US immigrant detention system holds more than 400,000 people every year, with ICE overseeing an expansive network of more than 250 facilities, according to a report by the Center for American Progress. For the 2017 budget, ICE requested \$2.2 billion to maintain these facilities; the number of people taken into custody by the agency has risen to more than 40,000 people per day.

ICE has also increasingly outsourced detention to private companies. In 2005, 25 percent of immigrants in ICE custody were in facilities operated by private prison companies. By 2009, that number was 49 percent, and today it is 73 percent, according to a report by the Detention Watch Network. And GEO Group holds more immigrant detainees than any other private prison company.

A 2016 Justice Department report found that private prisons were more likely to have rule violations than government-run facilities, confirming what advocates have long said about private prisons being cruel and inhumane.

"Private prisons are a recipe for abuse and neglect," said Carl Takei. "We have seen over and over again in terms of incidences of violence, understaffing, and medical neglect."

Adrian Hernandez Garay, who spent 35 months at the Big Spring Correctional Institution, a GEO facility in Texas, told me that he was fed beans and rice seven days a week, a symptom of routine mistreatment.

"The conditions inside were very bad. The facilities were old. The guards were poorly trained. If you got sick all they would just give you Tylenol and tell you to get back to your cell," said Garay, who spoke with me through a translator from his home in Juarez, Mexico.

Garay previously served time at multiple detention centers for illegal re-entry into the US and described the conditions at the GEO facility as "far worse" than the other detentions centers he had been inside. (I reached out to Big Spring for comment and was referred to the GEO press office, who did not respond to my questions about the facility.)

The kinds of abuses described by Garay are not isolated. A recent report by the Southern Poverty Law Center foundwidespread abuse and neglect in immigrant detention centers in six southern states.

But the Trump administration so far has shown no desire to reform this system, and instead will likely expand it.

GEO's hiring of Daniel Ragsdale is, according to Takei, a simple attempt to attain more lucrative contracts. "ICE is a cash cow for these businesses," said Takei.

"They take the expertise they have working for the ICE and use that to lobby for even greater increases in their share of this system of mass detention," said Bethany Carson, an immigration policy researcher at Grassroots Leadership, an organization working to abolish for-profit private prisons, jails, and detention centers.

GEO routinely seeks to influence the federal government via lobbyists like Brian Ballard, who fundraised for Trump, and a pair of former aides to Jeff Sessions, now the attorney general. (Sessions recently rescinded the Obama administration directive to phase out private contacts in the federal prisons system.) GEO also allegedly gave \$225,000 to a pro-Trump group, which would have been illegal since federal contractors aren't permitted to make political contributions.

GEO maintains that it does not lobby directly to effect policy. "As a matter of longstanding policy our company does not advocate for or against specific criminal justice, sentencing or immigration policies" said Pablo Paez, a company spokesperson, in an emailed statement. However the company has clearly allied itself with Trump, whose draconian policies

on crime and illegal immigration seem designed to increase the prison population. (Private prison company stocks skyrocketed after the election.) GEO and CoreCivic also support individual policies that would keep more bodies behind bars; a GEO lobbyist recently wrote a bill in Texas that would make it easier to keep detained immigrant children in the same facilities as their parents.

Crucially, these lobbying efforts help keep in place the the controversial immigrant detention bed quota, which requires ICE to maintain and pay for at least 31,000 beds at all times The arbitrary quota has been described by the the Center for Constitutional Rights as a primary driver of an immigrant detention—it also improves assures private prison companies that there will always be a need for their facilities.

This is the result of such a close relationship between private prison companies and the government that hires them—are policies like the bed quota just cynically designed to make these businesses money?

"When you have a situation where there is a mandate whose only benefit is the bottom line of specific companies you have to ask the question," said Florida Democratic Congressman Ted Deutch, who has fought to end the detention bed mandate.

"We have a policy that requires that tens of thousand of people being rounded up every day," he added. "It does not make the country any safer. It does exactly the opposite, in the most inhumane way, and it only benefits one group."

5/18: Feds use anti-terror tool to hunt the undocumented

Matthew Haag – New York Times

One day after Muhammad Ali Jr. spoke with members of Congress about being detained at a Florida airport last month, he was briefly stopped again before boarding a flight on Friday afternoon, his lawyer said.

When Mr. Ali, whose father died last year, arrived at Reagan National Airport in Washington on Friday for a flight to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., he gave his Illinois identification card to a JetBlue agent to get his boarding pass, said his lawyer, Chris Mancini, who was traveling with him and witnessed the episode. Almost immediately, Mr. Ali was told that there was a problem and that the agent needed to call the Department of Homeland Security, Mr. Mancini said.

Mr. Ali, 44, was asked his date of birth, where he was born and his Social Security number, Mr. Mancini said. After answering the questions, he was told that his Illinois-issued identification card, which expires in 2019 but is not a driver's license, was invalid for flying.

"The same state ID from Illinois that he traveled to Washington on was rejected," Mr. Mancini said in an interview on Friday night. Mr. Ali then produced his United States passport, which was accepted, and went through security and boarded the flight with his mother, Khalilah Camacho-Ali, the second wife of Muhammad Ali, and Mr. Mancini.

Mr. Mancini said that the episode lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. "This whole thing smacks of some sort of retaliation for his testimony," he said.

Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Democrat of Florida, was on the same flight, and posted about the episode on Twitter, saying that Mr. Ali had been "detained again."

In a statement, the Transportation Security Administration disputed that the holdup at the ticket counter lasted long and said that Mr. Ali's jewelry caused a seven-minute delay at the security checkpoint. The agency said that it did not have the authority to detain passengers.

"Upon arriving at the airline check-in counter, a call was made to confirm Mr. Ali's identity with T.S.A. officials," the agency said. "When Mr. Ali arrived at the checkpoint, his large jewelry alarmed the checkpoint scanner. He received a targeted pat-down in the area of his jewelry to clear the alarm and was cleared to catch his flight."

An agency spokesman did not immediately respond to a question about what prompted the additional scrutiny of Mr. Ali's identification.

Mr. Mancini said he was baffled by the agency's statement because Mr. Ali did not complain about his treatment at security, only at check-in. Mr. Mancini said he was helping Ms. Camacho-Ali through the checkpoint and did not notice that Mr. Ali had been stopped for additional scrutiny.

“They are making up stories,” he said. “We have never said anything about anything happening after he left the ticket counter.”

He said he planned to file a complaint with the Department of Homeland Security and was “working toward a lawsuit.”

“People need to start paying attention to what’s happening in our country,” he said. “Our rights are being eroded.”

The dispute between Mr. Ali and the Homeland Security Department, which oversees the T.S.A., follows an episode on Feb. 7 in which he and his mother were stopped for about an hour and a half at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport after returning from Jamaica.

Mr. Mancini said then that Customs and Border Protection officials had asked Mr. Ali, “Where did you get your name from?” and, “Are you Muslim?”

Mr. Ali and his mother recounted their ordeal at a forum with House Democrats on Thursday and both spoke out against President Trump’s new travel restrictions. “I believe they were religiously and racially profiling me,” Mr. Ali said of the officials, according to reports.

When they arrived at the airport on Friday, Mr. Mancini said, he and Mr. Ali joked about whether they would face additional scrutiny because of his comments.

5/25: ACLU Sues to Expose Treatment of Hunger Strikers in ICE Detention

Inga Sarda-Sorensen – ACLU

WASHINGTON — The American Civil Liberties Union today filed a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security in an effort to expose the treatment of hunger strikers in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities.

“ICE has refused to turn over documents related to hunger strikes. Yet, despite the stonewalling, cases have come to light that show hunger strikers being subjected to extraordinarily punitive treatment like force-feeding and solitary confinement. We want to know just how widespread the abuse is,” said Carl Takei, an attorney with the ACLU’s National Prison Project who works on immigration detention issues.

The ACLU is seeking a range of documents related to hunger strikes in ICE detention — from policies to records of specific incidents. The complaint notes that advocates for social change — including Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Cesar Chavez — have long used hunger strikes as a form of nonviolent protest. The modern-day immigrants’ rights movement is no exception. In recent years, hunger strikes have roiled immigration detention facilities in many states, as detainees seek to call attention to lack of access to bond hearings and inhumane conditions of confinement.

In April 2014, for example, the ACLU of Washington sued ICE for putting hunger strikers in solitary confinement at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington. And this month, a federal court authorized officials at the Stewart Detention Center, run by private prison company Corrections Corporation of America/CoreCivic, to restrain and force-feed a hunger-striking immigration detainee. According to reports, the hunger striker is Vitaly Novikov, a refugee from the former Soviet Union who is protesting ICE’s plans to deport him to Ukraine.

In the past few weeks alone, hunger strikes have begun in Georgia, Oregon, and Washington, with more potentially on the way.

“The Trump administration’s plans to expand detention and strip away existing structures for oversight of detention are likely to produce more protests both inside and outside the walls of detention facilities,” said Takei. “It is critical to expose abusive conditions of confinement in ICE detention, protect the First Amendment rights of people in confinement, and resist the Trump administration’s infringements on civil rights and civil liberties.”

The case, American Civil Liberties Union v. Department of Homeland Security, was filed in the U.S. District Court for D.C. The ACLU is represented by attorney David Sobel, the ACLU National Prison Project, and the ACLU of the District of Columbia.

5/31: Under the Shadow of Trump, Dismantling Obama's Deportation Machine

Communities are fighting back against an immigrant prison in rural Georgia

Sarah Lazare – In These Times

Like immigrant prisons across the country, the Stewart Detention Center in southwestern Georgia is plagued with accusations of human rights abuses, including charges that its authorities routinely deny healthcare, provide substandard food and water and subject people to prolonged segregation. After a 27-year-old Panamanian national committed suicide at the facility on May 15, following a 19-day stint in solitary confinement, a coalition of social justice organizations is demanding that the detention center be shuttered on the grounds that it constitutes a deadly human rights violation zone that cannot be salvaged.

Stewart is not the only Georgia facility that has raised the alarm of the coalition, which includes Project South, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration and Georgia Detention Watch. Earlier this month, the groups protested outside the downtown Atlanta offices of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to demand the closure of centers, including the Atlanta City Detention Center, which was the custodian of Atulkumar Babubhai Patel, a 58-year-old Indian national, when he died this month, reportedly of complications from congestive heart failure.

“We need to shut down these detention centers and end solitary confinement, which does irreversible damage to mental health,” Lovette Thompson, an organizer with the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, told *In These Times*. “It is very important that we end these detention centers altogether. Prisons are the problem with our society and definitely not the solution.”

Thompson is one of countless organizers across the South shining a light on immigrant detention centers, which are often hidden away in rural and remote areas. Many of those on the front lines of these efforts conceive of their work as part of a larger movement to challenge harsh, anti-immigrant policies, as well as the prison-industrial complex in a country that is by far the world's largest jailer. They are organizing to defend black and brown migrants and refugees, disproportionately targeted by President Donald Trump's crackdown, and funneled into the deadly deportation apparatus fortified and expanded by former president Barack Obama.

Resisting the deportation-industrial complex

Like others in this movement, the Georgia coalition finds itself in the crosshairs of a Trump administration hell-bent on implementing the racist, anti-immigrant incitement that shaped its campaign. During the first three months of the Trump administration, immigration arrests spiked 38 percent compared to the same period last year. Despite the increase in arrests, deportations fell 12 percent during this period, according to Thomas Homan, the acting director of ICE. This means that, of the 41,318 people who were arrested by ICE between January 22 and April 29, many find themselves trapped in prison-like facilities, which have been rocked by hunger strikes and protests over abusive and indefinite detention.

But the coalition also faces the challenge of dismantling the deportation machine that was built by Obama before it was handed over to the Trump administration. Between 2009 and 2015, Obama deported more than 2.5 million people, an increase of 23 percent from his predecessor George W. Bush. This number does not take into account those individuals who died seeking entry to the United States, were turned away at the border or self-deported.

Obama's historic deportations were coupled with high levels of incarceration. The Department of Homeland Security reports that, in fiscal year 2016, ICE locked up close to 353,000 people. In 2014, Obama made “family detention centers” a centerpiece of his response to large-scale, violent displacement from Central America, incarcerating mothers with their children in prison-like facilities.

“It is a real disgrace that Obama didn't dismantle family detention before he left office,” Cristina Parker, an organizer with the Texas-based group Grassroots Leadership, told *In These Times*. “He put it into the hands of an extreme administration. Obama really perfected the system with respect to mass deportations.”

History of abuse at Stewart

With a capacity of 1,752 people, Stewart is operated by the private company CoreCivic, formerly the Corrections Corporation of America, under contract with ICE. This private ownership is emblematic of a nationwide trend: In 2015, 62 percent of ICE detention beds were operated by for-profit companies, as compared to 49 percent in 2009.

This month, Project South and Penn State Law released a report on Stewart and the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia. It found that the living conditions at both do not “comply with the international standards of detention.” Due to the remote location of the facilities, those detained are torn away from their families and legal counsel, the report states. In

addition, “the food and water provided in these detention centers are not hygienic. Either the food that is provided is stale or spoiled, or several foreign particles are found in it.”

According to the report, one unnamed man from Somalia, detained at Stewart, said that he was placed in segregation in retaliation for participating in a hunger strike. “There were about twenty other Somali detainees in segregation for the hunger strike,” he told researchers, without providing a precise date. “In segregation, I could not see outside and did not know if it was day or night. I could see the other detainees through a small window.”

Such practices are confirmed by recent reporting. Citing documents obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, The Verge reported in February, “Beginning last April, and picking up in the weeks following the November election, dozens of detainees at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in rural Georgia [Stewart] went on hunger strike in protest of their detention.” According to journalist Spencer Woodman, “staff began immediately locking them in solitary confinement for their participation in the non-violent protest.”

As recently as this month, a federal judge ruled that Stewart can force-feed Vitaly Novikov, a 61-year-old detained Ukrainian man, who had been waging a hunger strike. The forced feeding of people incarcerated in Guantanamo Bay was condemned as torture by the United Nations’ human rights office in 2013.

Also this month, Stewart was named as one of the facilities in an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawsuit seeking information about abuse and retaliation targeting hunger strikers in ICE facilities, including forced feeding and solitary confinement. “ICE has refused to turn over documents related to hunger strikes,” Carl Takei, an attorney with the ACLU’s National Prison Project, said in a press statement about the suit, adding: “We want to know just how widespread the abuse is.”

Fighting to save lives

Despite support from the outside, some people do not survive their ordeals. Jean Jimenez-Joseph, the 27-year-old Panamanian national who committed suicide at Stewart, died after nearly three weeks of solitary confinement. El Refugio, an organization close to Stewart that supports separated families, reports that, the day before Jimenez-Joseph took his life, a volunteer tried to visit him but was “turned away because of the conditions of his segregation (solitary confinement).”

Bryan Cox, a spokesman for ICE, confirmed to In These Times that Jimenez-Joseph was in “disciplinary segregation” for 19 days preceding his death, adding that his “treatment was in full accordance with agency’s detention policy.” He said he did not know how many people at Stewart are subjected to prolonged solitary confinement.

Investigations are underway in the recent deaths in ICE custody in Georgia, Cox claimed. CoreCivic and the warden’s office at Stewart did not immediately return requests for comment.

However, studies suggest that ICE cannot be trusted to investigate itself. A 2016 report released by the ACLU, Detention Watch Network and the National Immigrant Justice Center found that ICE’s violation of its own medical care standards contributed to at least eight in-custody deaths between 2010 and 2012. Instead of instating policies that could review deaths in the future, ICE failed to properly inspect such deaths and its own violations, the report found.

Meanwhile, those targeted by multiple systems of oppression pay the greatest price.

“We know that black immigrants are more likely to be in prison and detained by immigration because of this,” said Thompson. “We see it with people of color experiencing mass incarceration and criminalization on a grand scale. We definitely want to uplift and call for there to be some sort of change or reform in how our system is. Incarcerating more people is not the solution.”

Thompson’s assertions are confirmed by a recent report, which notes that black people in the United State are far more likely to be arrested and imprisoned, meaning they are also more likely to be targeted by immigration enforcement.

Thanks to long-term organizing led by communities on the front lines of such oppression, movement infrastructure for resistance already exists. Throughout the Obama years, community organizations and family members mobilized outside immigrant detention centers across the country, staging vigils, protests and public pressure campaigns to support those on the inside. In December, protesters shut down an intersection in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to demand the closure of the Berks County Family Detention Center and call attention to mothers forced to spend the holidays incarcerated with their children.

Such direct support efforts take place in cities and rural areas alongside a revitalized push to expand sanctuary nationwide, to include safety from police as well as ICE, and to mobilize communities to participate in direct defense against deportations.

“We do visitation, we amplify their stories with press statements, and we base our demands on what people inside detention centers are asking,” Azadeh Shahshahani, legal and advocacy director at Project South, told In These Times. “The only way you can really address the issue at a fundamental level is to shut [immigrant detention centers] down. We definitely feel that we’re part of larger movements to end mass incarceration and the targeting of black and brown people.”

This article is part of the Resister’s Digest series, aimed at amplifying the stories of front-line communities organizing in the era of Trump.

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NISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community. Please visit our website: <http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

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