



NEWS RELEASE
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U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report on Condition in Immigration Detention Centers and Family Detainees

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights today released its annual report to the President and Congress examining the civil rights and due process conditions at immigration detention facilities, as well as the conditions of family detainees. In the Statutory Enforcement Report: The State of Civil Rights at Immigration Detention Facilities, the Commission found that some detention centers and contracted facilities are not fully complying with detention standards regarding medical care, legal information and other basic standards of treatment. The Commission recommends the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should release all family detainees, reduce the use of detention, ensure humane treatment of detainees, increase the use of alternatives to detention, allow legal and pastoral access to detention facilities, and strengthen due process protections.

“The Commission is pleased to provide this report on the civil rights in immigration detention centers at a time when our nation is struggling with the issue. With the full, historic moral authority of this Commission, we identified many serious conditions at detention centers,” said Martin R. Castro, USCCR Chair. “All people, no matter whether they are immigrants or asylum-seekers, deserve to be treated as humans. The Commission stands strongly behind our recommendation to release unaccompanied minors and families from detention, and encourages DHS to find alternatives to the detention centers. Now, more than ever before, we need to treat fairly and humanely those persons, especially women and children, who are seeking sanctuary from violence and instability in their countries.”

The Commission found the following:

- Certain Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)-operated and contracted detention centers are not complying with 2011 detention standards intended to promote humane treatment of detainees.
- By continuing to detain unaccompanied children and families, DHS is not complying with the District Court decision in California on the *Flores* Settlement Agreement.
- DHS is not respecting the civil rights and due process rights of detainees.
- DHS does not sufficiently protect detainees from sexual assault and abuse and needs to come into full compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

The Commission’s report encompasses the key elements of a briefing and fact-finding visits, as well as additional background research and analysis. On January 30, 2015, the Commission held a day-long briefing of fifteen expert panelists who examined possible civil rights violations at immigration detention facilities. Panels consisted of government officials, academics, attorneys, and advocates. On May 4 and 5, 2015, Commissioners conducted fact-finding visits to the Karnes Immigration Family Detention Center, Karnes City, TX and the Port Isabel Immigration Detention Center, Los Fresnos, TX. On September 16, 2015, the Commission sent a letter to the President, Attorney General Lynch, and Homeland Security Secretary Johnson urging the government comply with the U.S. District Court order in *Flores v. Johnson* concerning the detention of children.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission’s reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.