

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of more than 40 inmates of the Richwood Correctional Center, Monroe, Louisiana. We are prisoners with terms of imprisonment from 45 to 75 days, mainly from Russia and the CIS countries.

We decided to write this letter to point out individual facts of violations in the system and total discrimination on the part of ICE.

Regrettably, we wish to point out that there are serious problems and shortcomings in the detention system, the correction of which would contribute to greater humanity towards people who have come to seek asylum. On the other hand, we are convinced that the adoption of measures suggested will significantly reduce the level of stress for both migrants and officers and workers in the system.

We also want to note that individually, each of these pain points may not be significant, but these problems combined, may turn the detention system into torture. That is, people fleeing persecution and torture in their homeland end up facing the same thing - injustice, torture conditions, terrible stress, misunderstanding and negligence. But all this is now happening in the country in which they hope to find refuge in the first place.

We ask you to consider our suggestions, comments and feedback and take appropriate actions.

With our partners, we will also try to share this document with the media and media resources, legal associations and associations in order to give this issue maximum publicity and to contribute to the improvement of the system both for ourselves and for many others who have yet to face it.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

COMMENTS ON AREAS:

ICE

1. Unfair and illogical system of releasing people:

In the first three weeks, people are released in large groups (10-20 people at a time) without any obligations and pledges. Among these people, there are our fellow citizens who did not even have sponsors, or were not personally acquainted with their sponsors, as well as people who had illnesses and demonstrated mental imbalance during their stay in prison. So many of those who were not chosen to get released from the prison in first batches just wondered what was wrong with them in the first place to stay longer than others. In search of justice, we all came to a country with a great history of democracy and a judicial system, but the first thing we encountered was the selection of "victims of the system" on the basis of random selection.

If you ask why the majority released in first two weeks and the rest sits for three months officers in green shirts with "ICE" sign verbally and through kiosks will answer like this:

"All cases are considered individually, sometimes it takes more time"

"Your case is under consideration",

"You have just to wait"

If you ask if there is a problem with my case or if you need anything additional from the sponsor, they would answer that there are no problems. Some of the officers would say that you should not interfere and write to the officers, and the other on the contrary recommends writing them no matter what. This leads to an absolute lack of understanding by the prisoners and their sponsors of how it is best to act.

Those who have been detained here for one, two or three months know this absolutely chaotic system of releasing people, despite the efforts of officers to prevent the sharing of information in the Richwood Correctional Center.

By the end of the first month, every sane person notices some kind of "established" release system. We called this system "80% to 20%" or the Pareto rule - 20% of the remaining prisoners suffer for the remaining 80%, who were immediately released without any additional obligations.

Those 80% are the lucky ones who may be with or without sponsors, with or without real cases. 20% are the cursed remnants, which are mixed later with the other cursed leftover groups/ These people will eventually end up going to the courts or wait long period of time for the court hearings to take place, since they can be canceled and postponed many times and for different periods (from 2 to 30 days). Almost all the cursed ones get released on bond and after a long period of time reaching at least 60-90 days.

After the release of the bulk, the "cursed" remnants are scattered in different units and dorms. Over the next 4-5 weeks, only 5-8 people get released! And all of these people mostly get out through the bond, as if they're more dangerous and present some special flight risk than the rest of the inmates who were released almost immediately after quarantine. Surprisingly among the cursed and very "dangerous" ones you can meet people with doctoral degrees, those who belong to small and friendly Christian communities, and those who have families and kids to support emotionally.

It also does not matter whether the prisoner has a paid or free lawyer or if he is without a lawyer altogether. In any case, the cursed ones will receive a bond of approximately \$ 10,000 and sometimes even an additional GPS tracker bracelet on top of it all. This contradicts the officer's assurances that all cases are considered individually and have their own nuances. Practice shows that the individuality of cases is a myth and deception.

It is worth noting that, all newcomers are released according to exactly the same scheme. And so the one who detained for 65 day already shockingly watches how huge batches of "fresh meat" get out on the very 12th day of their stay while he continues his stay. A group of 20 damned people see about 60 people from their original group get out in front of them in 3 weeks, and they get stuck. They will also later be told about the individuality of the cases, patience, and also about the fact that they are sitting here for the reason that they crossed the border illegally - as if those who were released crossed the border somehow different and in a more legally fashion.

2. Lies from the ice. In the first month of the tenure, ICE officers respond that everyone gets out from facility within one month. In the second month, they answer that on average everyone comes out in two months. And recently it was rumored that this number is three months now. We pray to God that the officers were not mistaken this time since we obviously witness arithmetical progression in their estimations.

3. Negligence of ICE officers and their associates, because of which some prisoners are imprisoned for a long time for no reason. For example, prisoner Roman Aliyev sat for 44 days without any papers and documents or notices to the court, until his lawyer found out that his release document was simply negligently lost. Such a story can repeat itself with every prisoner, and that is one of the reasons we try to be active and proactive and search for reliable information.

4. Total inaccessibility of ICE officers. From Richwood, it is absolutely impossible to reach the ICE office by phone. We've tried to do this hundreds of times, we've taken turns calling for days, but to no avail. Most likely, calls from prison are basically unavailable and technically blocked, because we haven't been able to get through even once in all that time.

COURTS

1. The remnants go to the courts and wait for their hearings which may be postponed 3-4 times on average. A separate article can be written about the feelings of an immigrant who ran away from his country for the sake of the justice and got into such a situation, but we are here to give our sincere and humble suggestions for improving the detention processes since the United States of America (God bless America) cannot be a country where injustice prevails.

2. Some prisoners do not receive Notice to Appear and other important files in the case (Parviz, Karjun). This adds to the complete uncertainty about what is happening to them. People have nowhere to get information, despite the phone numbers hung up in the prison.

3. Notice to Appear and CBP Report sometimes come with unreliable data and when asked to change this data, the officers forward to each other and no one wants to change anything in the file. For example, one of the prisoners has two daughters in the record and in reality he does not have any children and never had (example of Islam). Another example, Hachatur, whose parents were shown incorrectly in the record.

MEDICINE

1) Sick Call is too early. At about 6 a.m. The call is very quiet, basically everyone sleeps at this time, especially sick

people. It seems that this is done intentionally, so that no one complains about their health and everyone tolerates their misery.

2) Doctors do not deal with serious health problems. Basically, painkillers are prescribed - ibuprofen, or antidepressants.

3) Nurses promise that they will take you to the dentist, X-rays and so on, but they do not take you anywhere and do not solve the problems in any way. Specific example: Malik (a lot of health problems), Parviz, Khachatur (Tooth), Dmitry, Temur and many others.

4) Doctors do not pay attention to chronic diseases. (Anton and Sasha as an example) - chronic sore throat and inflammation of the lymph nodes, Pavel - hypertonia, chronic consequences of meningitis. Doctors often throw up their hands and say that they can not help. The Hippocratic Oath is canceled when it comes to Richwood Correctional Center.

5) If first and urgent aid is needed, such as a headache or high blood pressure, or a heart problem, one will face many excuses and hurdles to get medical aid. For example, one will be advised to sign up in a Sick Call tomorrow morning. Only after that they will call you and prescribe pills. That is, if you have a headache, you will receive help no earlier than the next day. Sometimes you need to go to Sick Call several times and wait for help for more than a week, since doctors do not come every day.

5) People get sick and sneeze, but when the staff come to check the temperature, the temperature surprisingly turn out to be normal for everyone. This means that either the thermometer does not work and everyone is told "normal temperature", or this procedure is carried out just for the sake of it.

6) There is no dental care at all. People have to wait for weeks or even months with toothache or oral infections. Nurses constantly promise or just lie that there will be an appointment soon, but doctors at the same time admit that the dentist is visiting only once every six months.

THREATS TO PRISONERS

1) For the activity and complaints of prisoners there were threats from the deputy chief of the facility (in pink polo, a bright man, presumably Jordan). In general, prisoners are constantly being threatened through influence to their cases and are forced to tolerate inhumane treatment and keep the mouth shut.

2) During the hunger strike, one of the prisoners (Islam) was threatened with freezing of his cases, he was said that they would change the level of danger (the color of clothing is red) and transferred to another prison;" After the deterioration of his health condition during the hunger strike, they threatened to send him to the hospital for treatment at his own expense and return him back to facility. There were also threats of deportation back to Russia.

NUTRITION

1) Breakfast is served extremely early, at 3-4 am. At the same time, every day at a different time. On one day it can be at 3 am, on another day at 4 and so on. That contradicts the rules of the facility indicated in the brochure for prisoners, where it is noted that breakfast should be at 6-30 in the morning. As a result, many prisoners skip breakfast and are malnourished.

2) The time of meals varies greatly, although in the brochure the time is fixed.

3) The menu is written on the wall, but rarely matches with the actual menu.

4) Dry food. Some detainees have digestive problems, constipation, hemorrhoids, and some have do not eat or are malnourished because of such meal:

5) Little time for meals. Many times you are hurried up to finish your meal.

TECHNICAL PART

1) Microwave and kettle. The dorm has only one microwave and one kettle for 70 people, even though other dorms, such as dorm D, had two kettles and two microwaves.

2) Drinking water. There is no normal drinking water, two outdated fountains installed in the dorm work very poorly, become clogged and it is impossible to drink from them.

3) Siberian cold is everywhere. It's very cold in the dorm, people start to get sick, the staff does not respond to complaints (exacerbation of diseases from the cold: neck, back, etc.). The floors are as cold as the benches. The only warm place is under the blanket in the bed.

4) Laundry. There is a laundry schedule in dorm, washing should be every day, but in fact things are picked up once every two or three days. After washing, things come yellow and with an unpleasant smell. Sometimes things are returned unwashed.

5) TV. Only one TV set works normally in Dorm A. When it is turned on, it is impossible to comfortably speak by phone, since the sound amplifier of the TV set directs down right to telephone stations.

Also, due to the fact that people speaking different languages, conflicts often occur, since the Spanish-speaking part of the dorm wants to watch channels in Spanish, and the Russian-speaking and English-speaking part of the dorm wants to watch channels in English with English subtitles. Officers do not help in resolving such conflicts but rather gives lengthy advice on the need to respect each other. Unfortunately, not all prisoners understand such advice and the the conflict is flaring up with renewed vigor.

The second TV does not work, although it has been four weeks since the promise to fix it. The second TV can show only one channel in Spanish, where crime programs are shown all the time.

A TV that is connected to the playstation is not working at all. Half of the display does not show the image well.

6) Dictionary. In the facility through which thousands of migrants pass, there is no simple dictionary. People do not understand the meaning of the papers sent to them and cannot communicate with the staff (Russian/English). For a month we have been writing requests and complaints on this issue, but nothing has changed since then.

7) Tablet. You can use the tablet for only 15 minutes, once every three hours. This time is very short to write a letter, or read the news.

There is no way to top up the balance with your own funds, although for example the store accepts its own funds.

Tablets don't work often and for a long time.

Sensor on large tablets doesn't work well.

Sending an e-mail is almost impossible due to the system of account confirmation on the part of the recipient.

8) Mail: approximate time for the letter to be picked up is two or three weeks. To write a letter you need to buy an envelope and a stamp in the commissary which is only once a week and sometimes out of stock. This delays the process of writing a letter for days and weeks.

9) Free lawyers: it is impossible to get through to the free lawyers who are indicated in the documents with the date of the trial. It is also impossible to reach many of the lawyers from the lists that are hung up in the dorm. If you by miracle eventually get through to some of them, it will turn out that they do not work with detained clients. Also, Russian-speaking people have problems with calls to lawyers, since they usually do not provide interpreter except for Spanish. Some numbers are simply not valid, e.g. the largest American Bar Association's dial number 2150# just return Not valid. We made an ICE Request about this, but no one wants to help (Vadim, Parviz).

10) Walk/YARD: there is very little time for the outside walk, from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. Sometimes they don't take to yard, arguing that it's raining outside, however there's no rain. There are no exercise machines to maintain one's physical shape.

11) Theft: there is also a problem of theft in the dorm. There were cases when one group of detainees spied on the password of other detainees and stole calling minutes afterwards. In a specific example, a person whose limit was stolen down to zero minutes turned to many officers, including Major, explaining the situation, albeit he was said that they would find the one who stole the minutes and return the minutes to the victim, but no investigation and recharge took place eventually. There is also continuous theft of personal belongings from boxes. The staff does not take any appropriate action.

12) Noise. Due to the diversity of the contingent and the presence of very young people in the dorm, it is noisy and chatter continues up to 2-3 a.m. in the morning. Officers don't solve the problem.

13) Phones: Out of 5 phones, only 3 phones work in the door. Long queues for phones. Since the phones are located under the main TV, it is impossible to speak on the phone because of the noise.

14) Hygiene: very often dorm is left without soap, because of untimely replacement. People have nothing to wash their hands with. There are only 3 soap devices for 7 sinks. In the shower the situation is similar, for 6 shower beds only 2 soap devices which run too fast as a result.

15) Benches in front of the TV are made of metal and it is very cold and unhealthy to sit on them. If one wants to put pillow or something similar on the bench to sit on the staff reacts negatively and sometimes just takes out "warming layers". As a result detainees frequently get sick (inflammation, hemorrhoids and prostatitis).

16) Bullying: there are interethnic showdowns, the staff listens to both sides, but does not solve the problems in any way. Obvious and witnessed threats to life are not investigated at all, recordings from surveillance cameras installed in the dorm are not watched for proper treatment of such cases.

17) Barbershop does not work according to the schedule. It is not clear how to get a haircut, and the sign up is pretty much accidental.