

No Detention Centers in Michigan

PRESS RELEASE: Immigrants Launch Multi-Unit Hunger Strike at Baldwin Detention Center, Protesting Dire Conditions and Unconstitutional Captivity

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Baldwin, MI — Citing dangerous conditions, a lack of adequate food and medical care, and cruel legal obstacles that have kept many in captivity with no end in sight, immigrants held at the GEO Group's privately owned North Lake Processing Center announced on Monday that a majority of men imprisoned in multiple units had chosen to go without food.

"We demand competent doctors, better medical care—the food here is absolute garbage—and, above all, an end to the procedural delays we are suffering through inside these walls," **said one immigrant detained at North Lake**, in a translated statement. "We are being held prisoner arbitrarily. The majority of us meet all the requirements to be released, yet judges capriciously deny us bond and the basic rights to which we are entitled. We need to get out of here and to be treated like human beings."

The newly declared hunger strike represents both a response to the intensification of disturbing trends in immigration enforcement across the region and the country—with deaths in ICE detention now at a record high (<https://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/pressroom/releases/2026/alarm-rises-deaths-ice-detention-continue-skyrocket>)—and the continuation of a long history of unrest at this isolated Northern Michigan prison. Immigrant advocates plan to gather in Baldwin this week in support of those held against their will and their efforts to secure their freedom.

Built in 1999 as the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d7ed7f35716948a980cfb450b10a4abb>), North Lake has closed and reopened four times. Its previous incarnation as an immigrant-only federal prison from 2019 to 2022 saw multiple deaths (<https://>

theintercept.com/2020/08/14/coronavirus-immigrant-prison-taft-north-lake-death/) as well as [six separate hunger strikes \(https://nodetentioncentersmi.org/2020/10/22/north-lake-a-year-of-resistance/\)](https://nodetentioncentersmi.org/2020/10/22/north-lake-a-year-of-resistance/), primarily organized by Black men confined in the Restricted Housing Unit, who named similar concerns relating to medical neglect, inadequate food, and abuse from staff.

Since reopening in June 2025 as the largest ICE detention center in the Midwest, North Lake has consistently imprisoned over 1,000 people, including hundreds found by federal judges to have been unlawfully detained. In recent months, immigrants held by ICE and the GEO Group have described both an increasingly unsafe environment—with [countless medical issues going unaddressed \(https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2026/04/13/michigan-north-lake-ice-facility-medical-care-strained-overwhelmed-detainee-surge/89124812007/\)](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2026/04/13/michigan-north-lake-ice-facility-medical-care-strained-overwhelmed-detainee-surge/89124812007/), following the [death of Bulgarian national Nenko Gantchev \(https://abc7chicago.com/post/bulgarian-chicago-business-owner-nenko-gantchev-dies-ice-custody-family-congresswoman-call-immediate-investigation/18301520/\)](https://abc7chicago.com/post/bulgarian-chicago-business-owner-nenko-gantchev-dies-ice-custody-family-congresswoman-call-immediate-investigation/18301520/) last December—and a [steep decline in the judicial approval of bonds \(https://www.michiganpublic.org/criminal-justice-legal-system/2026-04-13/judges-ruled-immigrants-unlawfully-detained-in-michigan-but-many-still-cant-get-out\)](https://www.michiganpublic.org/criminal-justice-legal-system/2026-04-13/judges-ruled-immigrants-unlawfully-detained-in-michigan-but-many-still-cant-get-out) that would allow some to pursue their immigration cases outside of detention. In mid-April, a group of over a dozen women in a separate unit filed a joint habeas corpus petition, recounting their conditions of confinement and constitutional violations. These worsening conditions have led to heightened alarm as ICE seeks to expand its presence in Michigan further with the February purchase of a warehouse in Romulus, in spite of massive community opposition.

“The prevailing feeling is one of deep discontent regarding the injustices faced in immigration courts,” **another person detained at North Lake observed** through a translator. “There are complaints regarding the lack of expediency in case processing, a lack of sound judgment and impartiality in judges’ rulings, the mass denial of cases, and a lack of legal aid. Immigrants are being treated as ‘blank checks’—exploited as a source of revenue for this private detention company. Please help us address the injustices currently taking place here.”

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No Detention Centers in Michigan is a statewide coalition organizing to abolish immigration detention and migrant incarceration in Michigan and beyond.

Uncategorized

BALDWIN



GEO GROUP



HUNGER STRIKE



NORTH LAKE CORRECTIONAL

FACILITY

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