



Shut Down Adelanto

Conditions and Updates Report

October 2022

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Acknowledgements

This report was put together by The Shut Down Adelanto Coalition, a coalition of organizations ranging from legal service providers, grassroots organizations, and directly impacted individuals focused on shifting the narrative about detained immigrants, advocating for the safety and release of all immigrants, and advocating for the Just Closure of the Adelanto ICE Processing Center (“Adelanto”) & Desert View Modified Correctional Facility (“Desert View”).

Methodology

This report presents information gathered and obtained from community advocates, legal service providers, government reports, and most importantly, the voices of those currently detained at Adelanto and Desert View. Their stories can be found in the appendix alongside information about their cases or their interviews. Additionally, many of the sections in this report provide information about the facilities, which was based on the ongoing communication and contact among those detained.

Stories Collected by SDA Members can be found here:

<https://files.acluwest.org/s/9zDraNySqQ93rXF>

I. Introduction

The United States operates the world's largest immigration detention system with a network of over 200 detention centers across the country. The system, run by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), continues to be cruel, inhumane and deadly as shown by an [extensive and well documented history of abuse and neglect](#). People in detention, their loved ones and communities as well as local and national organizations have been fighting for the shut down of detention centers across the country. As a pandemic shut down several countries, the detention centers remained open and operating under unsafe conditions adding an additional 245,000 COVID-19 cases to the already alarming rates.

The Adelanto Detention Center is the largest ICE detention center in the west coast with 2,690 beds. The Desert View Annex, which opened in late 2020, increased the detention capacity in Southern California by adding an additional 750 beds right next to the Adelanto Detention Center. This is of ever increasing concern for the Shut Down Adelanto Coalition because the current detention capacity for all of Southern California stands at 3,440 beds and [if you build it, ICE will fill it](#).

In our previous [quarterly report](#) we exposed concerns about abuses and violations as well as the lack of proper care for COVID-19 prevention. We also shared testimonies from directly impacted individuals who experienced first-hand the horrors of this detention center. In this report, we will highlight the reproductive injustices, unsafe water conditions, and labor rights violations happening inside the Adelanto Detention Center.

II. Reproductive Injustice

Since our last Shut Down Adelanto Quarterly Report published in May, communities across the country have been horrified and dismayed by this summer's ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and dismantle such a core legal protection in the movement for reproductive justice. This devastating development has led many of us on the inside and outside to reflect on what embodies real reproductive justice, which has been defined as [“the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”](#)

Reproductive injustice in the ICE detention system has been well-documented. The U.S. Government Accountability Office itself has published a [report on the mistreatment of pregnant people across ICE facilities](#), finding that between 2016 and 2018, more than 4,600 pregnant individuals were detained for nearly 50,300 aggregate days. Approximately two

years ago, a shocking complaint filed by Project South, Georgia Detention Watch, the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, and the South Georgia Immigrant Support Network brought to light that [women in ICE detention had been subjected to forced or coercive hysterectomies](#). A comprehensive report from the ACLU of California has detailed other barriers to reproductive justice in ICE detention such as [access to menstruation-related hygiene products](#).

If all of the deadly medical negligence, denial of critical supplies, and eugenic procedures were not enough, the [toxic chemicals that ICE rampantly and recklessly exposes those in detention have also been linked to long-term damages to reproductive health](#). Specifically, scientists have found that heavy exposure to the quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs) in these chemical disinfectants [worsen cellular damage and disrupt cellular processes crucial to fetal development](#). Concerningly, even though the misuse of toxic chemicals at Adelanto and Desert View Annex became so notorious as to spark an [investigation, report and warning notice by the Environmental Protection Agency](#) last year, the most recent California Attorney General's report issued in July 2022 found that [QACs are still in use at both facilities](#).

However, all of these reports and investigations do not even begin to capture the inhumanity of actually experiencing reproductive injustice in a cage. Ligaya Jensen is a 46-year-old woman who has been detained at Adelanto Detention Facility since 2018 - nearly four entire years. She is one of the two remaining women left at Adelanto Detention Facility since the *Hernandez-Roman* lawsuit [prohibited ICE from transferring people into the facility](#) due to the deadly conditions.

In September 2022, Ligaya shared:

“I was supposed to be released to my family, be home and in the community back in 2018. My significant other and I had planned for my release. We planned on having a child together. I could have frozen my eggs; my significant other could have carried our baby. But now... that is all off the table. Detention put a strain on our relationship; it slowly faded and dissolved.

A lot of my dreams have been crushed. I wanted to go back to the work I was doing after I graduated from college, save up for my grandchildren and their future. Now I am on the brink of losing my entire family. I have not seen my family, my children, for over three and a half years. In the Philippines, I would not be with my children, with grandchildren, who bring me happiness. I would be all by myself... I would just exist, without life and joy inside me.

The Constitution says that nothing should infringe upon the unity of the family... I have lost my uncle from COVID-19 complications, I never got to say goodbye to him.

I've missed four or five weddings in my family. If I get deported, I will miss my son's wedding, the birth of my first grandchild, and the graduation of my second son from college... He told me that if they deport me, it will crush all of his hopes.

There are times that I just start feeling dizzy; this never happened before I entered this detention facility... I now have multiple cysts in my breasts. There is a lymphoma lump under my right armpit; it has been one year since I detected it and it is growing. Cancer runs in my family, so I feel like a ticking time bomb. All I want to do is go back to my family, and they call me a 'flight risk.'

III. Water Conditions

There have been multiple recorded cases of H. Pylori, a bacteria commonly found in dirty water, inside the Adelanto Detention Center. Common symptoms include burning pain in the stomach, peptic ulcers, nausea, and bloating. Several detained individuals have complained their symptoms lasted more than a few days without proper treatment.

While unconfirmed (as there was no formal testing of the water), we are led to believe there are more cases of H. Pylori that have gone unrecorded by the medical staff in the detention center. Just earlier this year, guards opted to bring gallons of water from outside the facility for consumption rather than drink the tap water available at the detention center and instructed those detained to not drink the water. This raises many red flags about the quality of the water and overall health of immigrants detained that have to consume, clean, and bathe with the water inside.

"I developed cysts inside my pancreas and belly due to the contained water that I was consuming. To this day, I still have them and medical personnel have advised me to be very cautious because it can easily develop into cancer."

- *Miriam Rodriguez, detained in Adelanto for 16 months from March 2019 to August 2020*

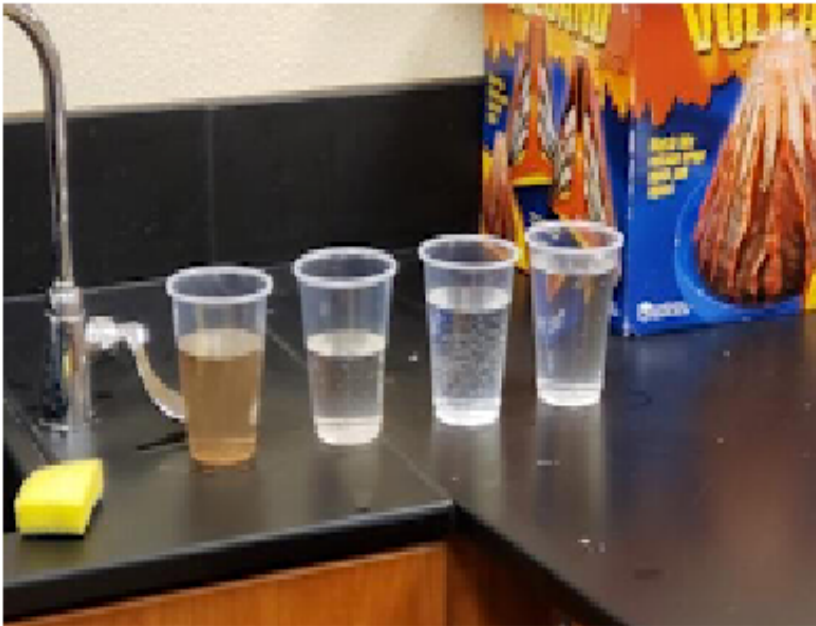
Undeniably, those detained in the Adelanto Detention Center are experiencing health disparities that parallel the experience of those existing in the city of Adelanto.

Well, from the tap, no, we can only drink from the jugs. they put it out because the [tap] water is no good.

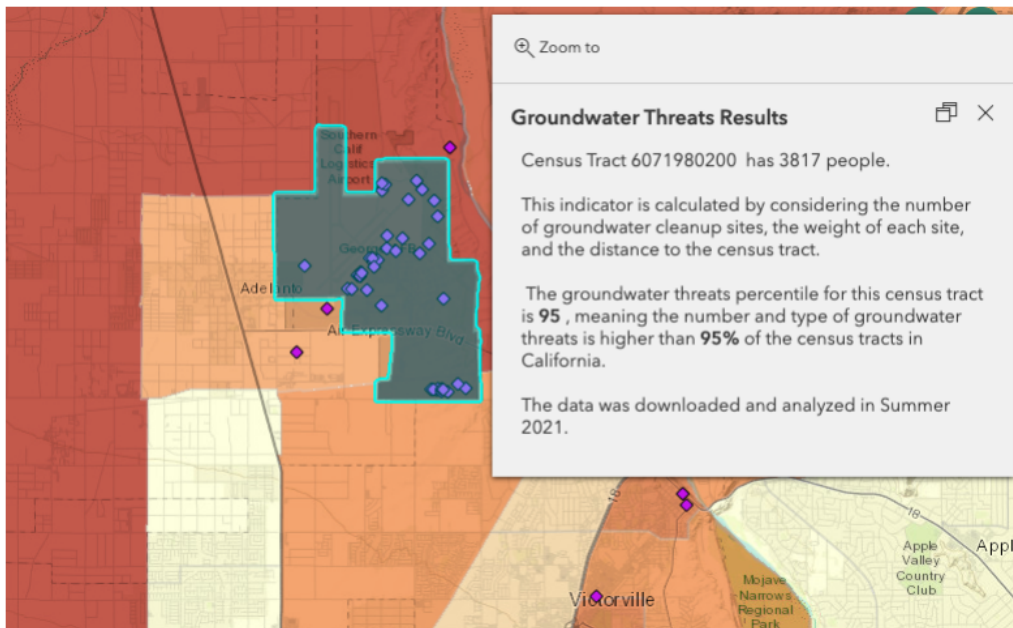
- *Hector Gerardo Avila, detained in Adelanto since July 2020.*

Yet, it is not only those inside the Detention Center that have to face obstacles regarding clean water. All residents, whether incarcerated or not, share the same water source. As such, many Adelanto residents have spoken out regarding the quality of water in their city. Catalina, one vocal resident, stated:

“We hear from everyone that the water here is dirty. I noticed that a lot in my house, the tap water in the bathroom comes out pretty much like sand. It comes out white so the water is clearly dirty. It's like milk.”



The picture here shows the exact problem Catalina mentioned in her testimony. This photo was documented by students and teachers at the Adelanto High School that shows how water became clear by letting it run demonstrated in the samples moving left to right.



The chart on the left highlights the water threats aka contaminants etc... at Adelanto to be 95% higher than the rest of California.

Figure 5: Image of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Indicator Maps, showing the Groundwater Threats percentile for the census tract East of Adelanto.

All these findings and more are all compiled in a community report titled the [Adelanto Water Report](#), led by Pitzer College, the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice, and various residents of Adelanto. We, as the Shut Down Adelanto Coalition, echo the recommendations outlined in the Adelanto Water Report, which are also highlighted at the end of this report.

IV. Labor & Worker Rights

Improper compensation for the labor of detained individuals is an issue of ongoing concern and is a continuation of the exploitative economy of the United States. The program which is often labeled as “voluntary” work is set up as a system inside private ICE Detention to not have to pay those detained a minimum wage and instead compensate them 1 dollar for up to 8 hours of labor. Most of the things that they can afford with those 8 hours of extremely demanding work do not add up. The prices of commissary as of 2019 reflect the following: A shirt ranges from \$ 3.75 to \$ 5.26. The pants are \$ 5.0. Toothpaste is \$ 2.00. A towel is \$1.45. The Bras range from \$3.50 to \$5.50. Food usually ranges depending on the brand and the availability of products. And we have learned that there was a price increase of about 30 percent as of December 2021.

The reality is that in order for people to afford these things, they will have to work multiple days at a time just to afford a shirt or pants, which are a necessity inside these cages. A lot of the people that sign up for the labor program are folks that do not have families in the United States to support them. Even with the help of family members, GEO charges a fee to process commissary funds. It used to be \$6.95, but it drastically increased in November of 2021 to \$7.95. Often, those who are assisting their loved ones with commissary funds are already families who work double shifts to make ends meet.

Throughout the state, various leaders have called out detention centers for this blatant labor exploitation and violation of workers’ rights. Most recently, in Mesa Verde Detention Center and Golden State, Detained Leaders began a labor strike in April of this year that is still happening as we speak. The first labor strike at Mesa Verde was announced on April 26, 2022. Since then, ICE and GEO have [moved individuals to solitary confinement](#), restricted access to programming, and attempted to transfer at least one strike participant to an out-of-state facility. Leaders voice their mistreatment, poor living conditions, and unjust labor conditions. ICE has responded with retaliation. **ICE and GEO staff have a pattern of retaliating against individuals who protest conditions at Mesa Verde, including by using solitary confinement.** Individuals in detention have faced retaliation for asserting their right to decline participation in the “voluntary” work program and for filing formal complaints documenting unjust conditions. GEO staff retaliate against strike participants by not properly investigating the complaints they file. This retaliation renders meaningless one of the only formal mechanisms detained people have available to exercise their right to speak out about detention conditions. This is not an

isolated incident happening only in Mesa Verde or Golden State; this happens in all detention centers, including Adelanto.

V. Transparency and Access to Desert View

The Desert View Annex, originally a facility used to house people in the California Department of Corrections (CDCR), was opened to function as an ICE Detention Center in 2020. This move by ICE to open a new facility occurred as a result of Advocates passing historic legislation that would have ended for-profit detention centers in California - a move that the ICE Administration at the time did not like and did everything possible to ensure their ICE Detention Centers stayed open. In short, the new law was set to take into effect January 1, 2020 but ICE fast-tracked the renewal of contracts by circumventing federal procurement law to ensure that the Trump Administration was able to keep ICE Detention functioning in California. The new contract, which went into effect in September 2020, guarantees the Annex be open until December 2024 when it is up for renewal.

“ICE’s 2019 Adelanto contract with GEO Group added the Desert View Annex, a 750-bed facility. ICE and GEO Group regard Desert View Annex as a separate stand-alone facility notwithstanding ICE’s acquisition of Desert View Annex beds through a single contract with Adelanto and the sharing of certain staff positions across both facilities. ICE had a guaranteed minimum of 120 beds at Desert View Annex in FY 2021. With a 25 percent reduction of the facility’s operating capacity as recommended under the PRR, the number of beds available to ICE was 562 beds. The staffing plan nonetheless stayed at the level required for the detention of 120 individuals based on the contract’s guaranteed minimum provision.” Source California DOJ Report

Since the opening of the Annex, advocates, lawyers, and even congressional representatives have had access to very little information about the facility. The official date of opening is still unknown as ICE published no information about the first date of operation - advocates only found out the Annex was open due to clients contacting their attorneys to tell them they were held at Desert View. Unfortunately, very little information about this place has been made public in the two years the Annex has been open.

When we covered COVID-19 response and outbreaks in the last report, we mentioned the various cases and litigation against ICE for their failure to protect people in their custody. One such case that helped reveal procedures, policies, and operations was the *Hernandez-Roman* litigation. As a result of said case, ACLU SoCal was able to permanently ban the new intake of individuals into Adelanto. However, when the organization made the claims to try to include Desert View Annex in the relief and intake bans, the Courts

disagreed and left it out. Fortunately, the California Department of Justice just recently released a report on their review of ICE Detention in the state and it shed light into the Annex Below are some snippets of the findings from the report:

Regarding Surface Sanitation:

As the annex to Adelanto, Desert View Annex has a nearly identical sanitation regimen and training requirement for detainees to use cleaning chemicals. Housing unit staff are required to sanitize the units five times a day, which amounts to once during every count. Interviews with detainees confirmed this sanitation practice was happening at the time of Cal DOJ's visit in December 2021. The cleaning chemicals used at this facility include Halt as described above and another chemical, which is not a disinfectant, called XCelentae.

COVID 19 Screening, Testing and Vaccination

Testing. *As of December 14, 2021, new intakes and transfers were all screened and tested for COVID-19. The nurse conducted a rapid antigen test; if the result was positive the patient was escorted directly to medical for assessment or isolated housing. However, our medical expert's medical chart review revealed delays beyond 24 hours for results of PCR tests or in conducting rapid tests.*

Quarantine. Detainees who tested negative were taken to an intake quarantine pod and assigned to dispersed bunk beds in a dorm setting for 14 days before they were released to the general population. During this time, there was no systematic retesting.

What we do know is that with the current intake ban on Adelanto East and West and the continued collaboration between prisons and jails, Desert View Annex will continue to add more people to fill up its 750-bed capacity. It is important that we not only continue to push for its closure, but also for transparency and accountability about how the Annex is operating and treating the people inside.

VI. Call to Action

We demand the immediate closure of Adelanto and Desert View Annex, as a first step towards the abolition of the inherently cruel and unjust immigration detention system. The Adelanto ICE Processing Center exemplifies the egregiously poor conditions and culture of violence that plague the entirety of ICE detention resulting in system-wide abuses, including death. ICE has been jailing immigrants at Adelanto for ten years now. During that time, ICE and the GEO Group have capitalized on the city's economic instability to

expand the hazardous detention center to one of the largest in the country. However, ICE's immigration detention system does not need to exist, and communities across the country are organizing to end it and build a better future.

Below are some actions Members of Congress can take:

1. Publicly declare the Adelanto ICE Processing Center and Desert View Annex an environmental nuisance and work with the US Environmental Protection Agency to enforce environmental laws that mitigate the harm the facility poses to the health, safety, and general welfare of immigrants confined inside and the community surrounding the facilities.
2. Send letter of support for Hugo Gomez & Ligaya Jensen's release, both of which have been outspoken advocates and organizers on the inside highlight the horrible abuses inside detention.
3. Support the following bills that seek to reduce the impact of detention and deportation in the United States :
 - a. H.R.536 - New Way Forward Act
 - b. S.1186 - Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act of 2021
 - c. HR 8433: Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929

The Shut Down Adelanto Coalition

The Shut Down Adelanto Coalition consists of Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles, Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice, Detention Watch Network, Freedom for Immigrants, Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, Nikkei Progressives and Earthjustice, among others.

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Inland Coalition for
Immigrant Justice



**FREEDOM
FOR IMMIGRANTS**

TOGETHER WE WILL END IMMIGRATION DETENTION



**DETENTION
WATCH NETWORK**



CHIRLA
Coalition for Humane
Immigrant Rights



**INTERFAITH
MOVEMENT
FOR HUMAN INTEGRITY**



Esperanza
Immigrant Rights Project