

**SUBMISSION OF AMERICANS FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE
4TH CYCLE OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
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Americans for Immigrant Justice, a nonprofit law firm, fights for justice for immigrants through direct representation, impact litigation, advocacy, and outreach. In the state of Florida and on a national level in the United States, it champions the rights of unaccompanied immigrant children; advocates for survivors of trafficking and domestic violence; serves as a watchdog on immigration detention practices and policies; fights to keep families informed, empowered, and together; and pursues redress on behalf of immigrant groups with particular and compelling claims to justice.

Americans for Immigrant Justice has documented the experiences of immigrants at the Krome North Service Processing Center in Miami (hereinafter “Krome” or “the Krome Center”) over the past two months. This report cites their direct testimonies as well as media reports and other secondary sources. The declarations of detained individuals, included in the Annex, omit their names to prevent retaliation against them.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review compiled evidence of abuses in treatment of immigrants by the United States, particularly separation of children from their families and detention conditions in violation of human rights law. Recent months have brought equally concerning inhuman treatment of immigrants. Authorities have detained large numbers of individuals to implement the “shock and awe” deportation policy devised by President Donald Trump’s “Border Czar.”¹

2. The new policy instituted torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detained persons at the now-notorious Krome Center. This submission and the Annex detail violations of fundamental principles of international law, which have occurred since January 2025 at the Center. They include:

- Shackling and confining of detained people for long periods on buses that lack minimal sanitary equipment.
- Gross overcrowding of detained people in lockdowns, often using rooms neither designed nor equipped for detention.
- Requiring people to sleep on floors without sufficient space or coverings in extreme cold.
- Disgusting sanitary conditions in hold areas and deprivation of bathing facilities.
- Inmate deaths and refusal of medical care.
- Isolation from contact with family and legal counsel, intended in part to coerce persons into foregoing legal proceedings and accepting deportation.

3. In short, the United States has adopted a policy of widespread, inhuman immigration enforcement. In 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights declared herself “appalled” by circumstances in which the United States held children and adults who had entered the country.² The detention conditions exposed in this submission and Annex compel the same conclusion.

II. CONDITIONS INFLICTED UPON DETAINED PERSONS AT THE KROME CENTER CONSTITUTE CRUEL AND INHUMAN TREATMENT

4. For decades, the Krome Center has been denounced for cruel and inhuman conditions.³ Since late January 2025, however, the situation there has greatly worsened. For many detained individuals, their mistreatment begins with transportation to Krome and then continues throughout their detention at the facility. Both the declarations of such individuals and media coverage based on interviews with them document this appalling treatment.

A. Shacked on Odor-Filled Buses for Long Periods Without Adequate Bathroom Facilities

5. Beginning in late January 2025, large numbers of people in Florida, including many who had lived and worked in their communities for decades, were unexpectedly arrested and immediately taken from their homes or work.⁴ They were herded onto buses for transport to the Krome Center. Guards bound them at their waists, wrists, and ankles.⁵ As a major Miami newspaper reported, detained persons were “left on the bus in shackles and chains for as long as 16 hours without water or food.”⁶ Some were forced to sleep overnight on the buses in those restraints.⁷

6. Sanitation on buses rapidly deteriorated. Some detained persons had no access to bathrooms. In one situation, only a single bus in a group of vans and buses had a toilet.⁸

7. “Some women had to relieve themselves in their seats and sat in their urine.”⁹ Guards told others “to urinate or defecate on the floor.”¹⁰

8. The atmosphere on buses quickly became intolerable. A confined person remembered that “[t]he whole bus started to stink.”¹¹ One man described the situation as it deteriorated over 17 hours:

The bus became disgusting. It contained a single toilet that did not really flush. It was the type of toilet in which normally people only urinate. But because we were on the bus for so long, and we were not permitted to leave it, others defecated in the toilet. Because of this, the whole bus smelled strongly of feces.¹²

B. Confined “Like Animals”: Use of Overcrowded Rooms Neither Designed Nor Equipped for Incarceration

9. Within the first 50 days of the Trump administration, guards at Krome forced individuals into extremely overcrowded rooms. Thirty to forty people were packed into one room designed for six people.¹³ Around eighty persons were jammed into a room that displayed a sign establishing a maximum occupancy of 25.¹⁴ An individual was sent into a “cell [that] was grossly overcrowded and intended only for short-term use.”¹⁵

10. The Krome administration quickly repurposed rooms designed for far different uses. Small visitor rooms and prayer rooms became holding areas.¹⁶ A video, parts of which were shown on Miami television, documents the cramped

conditions in one room in which detained men and women were held “like animals”¹⁷: <https://www.tiktok.com/@osiriss982/video/7482860026164563246>.¹⁸

C. Refusal to Mitigate Exposure to Extremely Cold Temperatures

11. Krome rooms were kept extremely cold.¹⁹ One person’s experience is typical: “I was held, along with approximately 30 other detained men, in a large room that was freezing cold.”²⁰

12. Detained individuals usually arrived at Krome with only the clothing they happened to wear that day—such as shorts and a shirt. Nonetheless, guards refused to provide protection against the cold temperatures in the facility. A man describes the guards’ response:

There was air conditioning blasting in this room at all hours, and it was extremely cold. We weren’t given any sheets or blankets. Many of us pleaded with the guards to give us something to warm ourselves, and on my second day in the room, we were each given a jacket that we could use as a blanket at night. This jacket was not thick enough or large enough to keep me warm.²¹

D. Hold Rooms Lacking Sleeping Facilities or Bedding

13. Many extremely overcrowded rooms were completely unequipped for sleeping. They had no beds; detained persons slept on the cold concrete floor. In some rooms, everyone could not sleep at once: “We had to take turns sleeping, with some men lying down and some standing, because there wasn’t enough room for us to all lie down.”²²

14. At best, detained individuals slept next to each other on the floor. One man described his seven days in the room:

The first week was hellish. I was brought to a room where there were about 60 to 80 other men. The room was extremely crowded, and at night there was barely enough room for everyone to lie down. One man slept sitting on a toilet, and others were sleeping right next to the toilet.²³

15. No bedding was offered. People slept on the floor without sheets or blankets.²⁴

16. Finally, one detained person states that bright lights remained on all night. During the night, guards would wake those sleeping “multiple times” to count the people in the room.²⁵

E. Inadequate and Unsanitary Toilet Conditions

17. Many areas lacked even minimal sanitary facilities. Seventy people were pent up in a room with two toilets and two showers.²⁶ In one instance, guards gave detained persons a bucket in which to relieve themselves in front of each other.²⁷

18. Given such grossly inadequate hygienic facilities, highly offensive odors soon permeated the rooms. This consequence was readily foreseeable: “The room was not large enough for all of the men that it held, and it was very dirty and unhygienic. It contained two toilets, which smelled extremely bad.”²⁸

19. When persons sleeping on the floor needed to use a toilet at night, they had to “wake up everyone around us to clear a path to the toilets.”²⁹ Individuals were forced to sleep next to toilets: “The room smelled really bad, and men were lying down right next to the toilet—even as others did their business right next to their heads. It was disgusting.”³⁰

F. Sporadic Access to Bathing or Clean Clothing

20. Access to bathing was limited and inconsistent. One group could not bathe for five days.³¹ Newspaper reports from interviews with detained persons confirmed the situation: a shower on the fifth day,³² or a 3-minute shower every third or fourth day.³³ Other necessities of basic cleanliness were withheld: “We were... not allowed to perform personal hygienic cleaning, such as regular handwashing, showering, or even brushing our teeth.”³⁴

21. Again, the inevitable consequence of such hygienic deprivations was the infestation of foul odors. “The smell of body odor was overwhelming, as none of us had showered for days.”³⁵

G. Refusal of Medical Care

22. ICE pledges that “[c]omprehensive medical care is provided from the moment individuals arrive and throughout the entirety of their stay.”³⁶ The Krome Center violated that commitment.

23. In January and February 2025, two individuals incarcerated at Krome died.³⁷ Serious medical problems were left unattended. “I witnessed the men I was detained with seeking medical care but not receiving it.”³⁸ Detained persons yelled seeking help for women in great pain, but a guard refused, saying “It’s not my problem.” Intervention occurred only after one of the ill women passed out after

vomiting.³⁹ A man sought medical help for pain, but guards “laughed and said I was faking it.” He later tested positive for tuberculosis.⁴⁰

24. Understandably, many individuals were not carrying their medications with them when ICE snatched them from their daily lives without warning. Days then passed in confinement while they suffered without their much-needed medicine. One person takes medication for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression, but for seven days guards denied his requests for the medication. He endured major headaches, felt like a “knife [was] slashing the back of my head,” and saw flashes of light across his eyes “over and over.”⁴¹

25. Another detained person with asthma requires both medication and an inhaler. His asthma particularly affects him in cold, crowded, and stressful situations like those at the Krome Center. His wife, however, was turned away by Krome staff when she tried to provide his medication because he was not processed immediately.⁴²

26. The overcrowded, cold, and unsanitary conditions allowed flu to spread through the holding areas.⁴³

27. Finally, the Krome facility is not equipped to detain women. Nonetheless, women were now brought to the facility, some of whom were pregnant.⁴⁴ One woman having her period had to wait 12 hours to receive two sanitary napkins.⁴⁵ A guard told another woman seeking medical assistance that she should “pretend I had a seizure and fall down.”⁴⁶

H. Isolation from Families and Lawyers to Coerce Acceptance of Deportation

28. Detained people were isolated from their families and legal counsel. Contacting outside individuals was difficult. As one explains:

Since my detention ... I was unable to communicate with my wife or family, as the Krome officers had not yet set up my detention center account as part of the processing into Krome. My wife was unable to deposit any money into my account, and I was not able to make an outgoing call during my time detained at Krome.⁴⁷

Another was similarly denied access to telephones.⁴⁸

29. The ICE strategy was partly designed to coerce detained persons to sign departure documents consenting to their removal from the United States and foregoing further immigration proceedings. Some signed those waivers.⁴⁹ As the

lawyer for one explains, “A lot of people are just signing orders to be removed, because the conditions are so horrible.”⁵⁰

30. Some guards pressured detained people to sign these departure documents:

The guards brought me paperwork to sign to leave. I decided against the option of leaving, and I refused to sign the document. The officers kept pressuring me to sign the paperwork, and I refused to sign any documentation related to my departure.⁵¹

III. TREATMENT AT THE KROME CENTER UNQUESTIONABLY VIOLATED FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST UPHOLD

31. The United States has ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It has also ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). By its ratifications, the United States is responsible for upholding the human rights standards outlined in these treaties.

32. Article 10 of the ICCPR declares: “All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”⁵² Article 13 of the ICCPR codifies the right of detained persons to be heard by submitting reasons and to “a decision reached in accordance with law.”⁵³ Moreover, the United States accepted Third Cycle recommendation 26.327 to “[m]ake efforts in favor of the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.”⁵⁴

33. The treatment of detained individuals at Krome violated these principles. The acts there amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as specified in Articles 1 and 16 of CAT. They constitute inhuman or cruel treatment under Article 7 of the ICCPR and Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and racial discrimination under Article 1 of ICERD. This cruel and inhuman treatment—amounting to torture in instances—regularly denied detained persons their right to counsel.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

34. The United States must cease its cruel and inhuman treatment of detained immigrants and asylum seekers. This treatment is especially concerning because of the current administration’s history of mistreating detainees to discourage their assertion of rights. We recommend that United States officials respect the humanity and fundamental rights of detained persons.

35. The United States has adopted performance-based, national detention standards.⁵⁵ These standards reflect concern for diverse human values such as the right to medical treatment,⁵⁶ adequate food and water,⁵⁷ personal hygiene and clothing,⁵⁸ adequate bathing and toilet facilities,⁵⁹ and recreation.⁶⁰ The Krome Center should follow them.

36. Certain of these standards apply to detention rooms:

- No detained person shall be confined in a hold room for more than 12 hours.⁶¹
- Hold rooms shall not be used as sleeping areas.⁶²
- Detained persons temporarily confined in hold rooms must be safe, comfortable, and secure.⁶³
- Hold rooms must have adequate space for detained persons.⁶⁴

We recommend that the Center follow them.

37. The United States also has adopted standards protecting the civil rights of detained individuals. Those standards ensure that persons are not “disappeared” into detention machinery. Detained persons shall have:

- reasonable and equitable access to telephones.⁶⁵
- telephone access to an attorney, limited only by government’s need for orderly and fair access to telephones.⁶⁶
- the right to send and receive mail, at no cost if indigent.⁶⁷
- the right to receive visits from friends, family, and legal representatives.⁶⁸

The Krome Center has failed to follow these standards. We recommend that the Center follow them.

38. The actions by the United States have gravely breached its international human rights obligations. Building off its previous Recommendation 26.327, the Human Rights Council should recommend a wholesale change in policy and practice regarding immigration enforcement to bring the United States into compliance with these obligations.

¹ 'Shock and awe': What Trump 'border czar' Tom Homan has said he plans to do starting on Day 1.” (Nov. 18, 2024) <https://abcnews.go.com/US/shock-awe-trump-border-czar-tom-homan-plans/story?id=115972346>.

² UN News, “UN rights chief ‘appalled’ by US border detention conditions, says holding migrant children may violate international law.” (July 8, 2019) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/07/1041991>.

³ Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, “Krome’s Invisible Prisoners: Cycles of Abuse and Neglect.” (July 1996) <https://aijustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/KromesInvisiblePrisoners.pdf>.

⁴ *See, e.g.*, Declaration of Christina LaRocca ¶ 9.

⁵ Declaration of RA ¶2.

⁶ Miami Herald, “Inhumane:’ Overcrowding strains Krome detention center amid Trump’s immigrant crackdown.” (Mar. 28, 2025) (hereinafter “Overcrowding strains Krome detention center.”)

⁷ Declaration of Sabrina Surgil ¶2; RA Dec. ¶5.

⁸ Declaration of RA ¶6.

⁹ Miami Herald, “Overcrowding strains Krome detention center.” *See also* Declaration of Sabrina Surgil ¶4

¹⁰ USA Today, “Immigrant women describe ‘hell on earth’ in ICE detention.” (Mar. 23, 2025) <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/03/23/immigrant-women-hell-on-earth-trump-ice-detention/82029368007/> (hereinafter “Immigrant women describe ‘hell on earth’”).

¹¹ Declaration of RA ¶6.

¹² Declaration of SR ¶18.

¹³ Declaration of Sabrina Surgil ¶7.

¹⁴ Declaration of RA ¶7.

¹⁵ Declaration Christina LaRocca ¶12.

¹⁶ Declaration of Sabrina Surgil ¶¶6, 8.

¹⁷ USA Today, “Immigrant women describe ‘hell on earth.’”

¹⁸ <https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/families-concerned-over-living-conditions-at-krome-detention-center/3573640/>.

¹⁹ Declaration of HP ¶13; Declaration of RA 7.

²⁰ Declaration of SR ¶2.

²¹ Declaration of SR ¶8.

²² Declaration of RA ¶18.

²³ Declaration of DL ¶4.

²⁴ Declaration of DL ¶ 5.

²⁵ Declaration of SR ¶4.

²⁶ Miami Herald, “Overcrowding strains Krome detention center.”

²⁷ Declaration of Christina LaRocca ¶13.

²⁸ Declaration SR ¶6.

²⁹ *Id.* ¶7.

³⁰ Declaration of RA ¶18.

³¹ Declaration of SR ¶5.

³² Miami Herald, Miami Herald, “Overcrowding strains Krome detention center.”

³³ USA Today, “Immigrant women describe ‘hell on earth.’”

³⁴ Declaration of HP ¶14.

³⁵ *Id.*

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- ³⁶ <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ukrainian-national-ice-custody-passes-away-miami-area-hospital>.
- ³⁷ <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/reports/ddr-GenryRuizGuillen.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ukrainian-national-ice-custody-passes-away-miami-area-hospital>.
- ³⁸ Declaration of SR ¶9.
- ³⁹ Miami Herald, “Overcrowding strains Krome detention center.”
- ⁴⁰ Declaration of RA ¶¶8-10.
- ⁴¹ Declaration of DL ¶¶5-6.
- ⁴² Declaration of Christina LaRocca ¶11.
- ⁴³ Declaration of SR ¶9.
- ⁴⁴ Declaration of Sabrina Surgil ¶10.
- ⁴⁵ USA Today, “Immigrant women describe ‘hell on earth.’”
- ⁴⁶ *Id.*
- ⁴⁷ Declaration of HP ¶15.
- ⁴⁸ Declaration of SR ¶3.
- ⁴⁹ *Id.* ¶13.
- ⁵⁰ “Miami’s ICE facility under spotlight for overcrowding, poor conditions claims.” Axios (Mar. 27, 2025) <https://www.axios.com/local/miami/2025/03/27/miami-ice-facility-overcrowding-poor-conditions>.
- ⁵¹ Declaration of HP ¶17.
- ⁵² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.
- ⁵³ *Id.*
- ⁵⁴ <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2015/09/01/addendum-of-the-united-states-of-america-to-the-report-of-the-working-group-on-its-universal-periodic-review/#search>
- ⁵⁵ 2011 Operations Manual, ICE Performance-Based National Detention Standards <https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-management/2011> (hereinafter “ICE Manual”).
- ⁵⁶ ICE Manual, Part 4.3, Medical Care (pgs. 257-81).
- ⁵⁷ *Id.* Part 1.2 Environmental Health and Safety, Expected Outcomes 13, pg. 19; Part 4.1. Food Service (pgs. 228-52).
- ⁵⁸ *Id.* Part 4.5 Personal Hygiene (pgs. 327-30).
- ⁵⁹ *Id.* (pg. 329).
- ⁶⁰ *Id.* Part 5.4, Recreation (pg. 370-74).
- ⁶¹ *Id.* Part 2.6, Hold Rooms in Detention Facilities, Expected Outcomes 2 (pg. 99); V. Expected Practices, B (Unprocessed Detainees) (pg. 101).
- ⁶² *Id.* Expected Practices, Physical Conditions 5 (pg. 100).
- ⁶³ *Id.* Expected Outcomes, 1 (pg. 99).
- ⁶⁴ *Id.* Expected Practices, A. Physical Condition 2 (pg. 100).
- ⁶⁵ *Id.* Part 5.6, Telephone Access, Expected Outcomes 2 (pg 385).
- ⁶⁶ *Id.* F. Legal Calls, 1. Restrictions (pg. 389).
- ⁶⁷ *Id.* Part 5.1, Correspondence and Other Mail (ppg. 359, 362).
- ⁶⁸ *Id.* Part 5.7, Visitation (pg. 392).