

First People's Tribunal against the Immigration System and The Northwest Detention Center

On February 6, 2016, a tribunal, sitting in the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma Washington, heard testimony pertaining to the detention and deportation process, conditions of the detention center, and treatment of the detainees.

I. INTRODUCTION.

People's Tribunals have a long history of being used anytime legal or political systems do not provide adequate remedy for harm in cases of abuse or injustice. The testimony today demonstrated the importance of using the People's Tribunal, because our systems are clearly failing.

Based upon the testimony of the detainees, the Tribunal submits these written Findings of fact:

II. FINDINGS OF FACT.

General Findings:

- A. The immigration and detention system is a part of a broader dehumanization of migrants.
- B. All migrants are Economic, political, and/or social refugees of some kind.
- C. Trade agreements allow for the free flow of capital and products, but not human beings.
- D. The tribunal finds on all evidence presented before it that GEO group, the United States Immigration and Customs Service and the United States Border Patrol are responsible for gross, widespread, and systematic violations of human dignity and human rights.

As it concerns to the United States Immigration and Customs Service (hereinafter "ICE") and GEO Group:

- A. The two organizations (ICE and The GEO Group) passing the responsibility for inmate safety makes accountability more difficult to achieve;
- B. There are currently inadequate food/calories provided during meals;
- C. The use of retaliatory solitary confinement is a common practice;
- D. The Subcontracting of phone and commissary services is at exorbitant rates for a captive population.

As it Concerns only ICE:

- A. Wages of \$1 a day for "voluntary work" is an ongoing practice.
- B. Toxic Environmental Impacts: the Tacoma Northwest Detention Center is located on a superfund site (abandoned drums) in an industrially polluted zone, where the administrative detainees are drinking the tap water without the knowledge of the long term effects of this exposure. They are also breathing in the toxic fumes of wet paint and floor wax because they cannot move to a different location when those tasks are completed.

As it concerns the United States Customs and Border Protection (hereinafter "CPB")

- A. CBP continues to engage and encourage racial profiling.
- B. CBP depends upon sowing fear in immigrant communities as a community policing strategy.

As it concerns Local Law Enforcement Agencies in Washington State

- A. Many Local Law Enforcement Agencies continue to engage in cooperating with CBP and ICE to provide a constant stream of bodies regardless of individual circumstance to GEO group.
- B. Joint task force raids are conducted in the name of the “war on drugs,” however most of Washington’s drug trade is organized by white supremacist gangs (i.e. 8854) that include prison guards and officers.

III. JUDGMENT/RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRIBUNAL.

Based upon the Testimony taken herein and the Findings of Fact, this Tribunal makes the following recommendations:

- A. To the United States Immigration and Customs Service:**
 - End Immigrant Detention.
 - Cease all private detention contracts.
 - End all bed guarantees.
 - Provide legal representation and interpretation at no cost to people currently facing deportation.

- B. To the GEO Group and the United States Immigration and Customers Service:**
 - Shut down the Northwest Detention facility, and Cease using this facility FOR ANYTHING to do with people.
 - Release detainees immediately.
 - Provide for reparations in the form of medical care, for both physical and emotional needs, for survivors of detention and their families and communities as well as for lost wages, lost homes, etc.

- C. To the Federal Immigration Authorities include ICE and the CBP:**
 - Provide for an immediate moratorium on deportations.

- D. To the City Council of Tacoma and the Mayor of Tacoma:**
 - Take immediate action to rescind any land use permits and do everything in their power to contribute to this facility shutting down.

- E. To the United State Congress:**
 - End bed mandate and reform mandatory detention laws that deny people the opportunity for bond.

We, The Tribunal, indict the capitalist, economic model that incentivizes and privatizes this inhuman facility and others like it.