

Immigrant women who accused ICE doctor of forced sterilization deported from the United States

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The Trump administration has deported multiple women who complained they were forcibly sterilized by a Georgia gynecologist while held at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention camp.

Already six former patients who alleged mistreatment by Dr. Mahendra Amin have been forced out of the country. Amin is accused of operating on immigrant women without their consent and performing medically unnecessary procedures which resulted in some women unable to have children. Another seven women from the Irwin Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia who spoke out also face deportation according to their lawyers.

One of the women who spoke to federal investigators was told only hours later by ICE that the hold on her deportation had been removed and that her removal was “imminent.” Another woman described being taken to a rural Georgia airport and made to sign deportation papers, only to be brought back to the jail as her lawyers file a lawsuit in federal court.

All of the women described operations by Amin that worsened their pain without their being given any non-surgical alternative. The Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security’s inspector general have opened investigations.

While Amin is no longer treating women at the Irwin County Detention Center, his lawyer, Scott Grubman denied any wrongdoing on the doctor’s part saying he was a “highly respected physician who has dedicated his adult life to treating a high-risk, underserved population in rural Georgia.”

Immigrant advocates have warned that the deportations of the women, often to unsafe countries, will hamper the investigation into not only Amin but

also ICE. Elora Mukherjee, a Columbia University law professor who is defending several of the women told the Associated Press (AP), “ICE [is] destroying the evidence needed for this investigation.”

In a statement, ICE denied that the deportations had anything to do with the investigations of Amin, while the Justice Department refused to comment. Grubman also did not say whether Amin was talking to investigators.

One of the women, Mbeti Ndonga, 37, was taken to Amin last year after she complained of abdominal pain and excessive vaginal bleeding. Instead of being given a treatment that was ordered by her previous doctor, Amin insisted that they operate.

Ndonga told AP, “He was adamant and said I must have surgery.” After the procedure, she was told she would never be able to have children and still suffers bleeding and pain.

She spoke twice to government investigators saying, “I told them that I was abused, tortured, dehumanized.” Hours after her interview last week, Ndonga was told that ICE had lifted the hold on her deportation and she could be sent back to Kenya at any time.

Her lawyer, Mukherjee said, “Mbeti’s fear in answering the investigators’ questions was that it would make her immigration case worse. And within hours of the interview, her worst fears were realized.”

Another woman who asked to be identified only by first name Yanira, because she fears being targeted by criminal gangs if she is deported to Mexico, was also abused by Amin. She said that in February he requested estrogen patches to treat hot flashes, following a hysterectomy by another doctor in 2014.

Amin told her he would perform a vaginal ultrasound

and a Pap smear, a test for cancer. The procedures caused her intense pain and were performed with no lubrication causing Yanira to have trouble sitting for a week.

She told AP, “We are humans. We are women. We have feelings. Just because we are detained doesn’t mean we should be treated like animals.”

Yanira’s attorneys said that she wanted to talk to government investigators last Thursday about Amin. On Monday, she was taken to an airport to be deported only to be stopped by another ICE agent who said she was no longer being deported because her lawyers had intervened.

The Irwin County Detention Center is run by the private company, LaSalle Correction. News of the medical malpractice spread after a whistleblower complaint was filed on behalf of nurse Dawn Wooten who worked at the jail until July.

Wooten had dubbed the physician “the uterus collector” because of the multiple surgeries he performed on female detainees. The doctor was later identified as Amin, who had previously been taken to court for filing false Medicaid claims. Amin was accused by the government of charging for obstetric ultrasounds that were not necessary. The case was ultimately settled out of court for over half a million dollars without Amin admitting culpability.

Many of the women interviewed by AP and The Intercept spoke of their fear of Amin who was known for his “rough treatment” and feared losing their reproductive systems if they were seen by him. Amin was accused of performing unnecessary surgeries without women’s consent and would get angry if they asked questions. No interpreters were ever present and they were “unclear about the necessity or purpose of the proposed treatment.”

Amin’s case recalls the infamous Dr. Joseph Mengele of the Nazi death camp, Auschwitz. Mengele performed sadistic experiments on live prisoners and eventually escaped capture at the end of the war to live comfortably in South America thanks to the clandestine “rat lines” set up by the CIA and the Catholic Church to help ex-Nazis escape justice.

The revelations of forced sterilizations of immigrants in ICE custody should serve as a stark reminder that fascist violence is alive and well in the detention camps set up by the Obama administration and handed over to

the Trump administration all across America.



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