

# Guards riot, beat immigrant detainees at “Alligator Alcatraz” concentration camp in Florida Everglades

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**28 August 2025**

On August 28, Noticias 23, the local Spanish-language Univision station in Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, received several frantic phone calls from immigrants detained at the Florida Everglades concentration camp, reporting that guards were assaulting and beating them.

In phone calls recorded by the outlet, immigrants at the facility—dubbed “Alligator Alcatraz” by President Donald Trump and his fascist supporters—said that at least four detainees were injured after guards deployed tear gas and began beating them.

“People started shouting because a relative had died, and they started shouting for freedom. At that moment, a prison team came in and started beating everyone,” said one of the detainees in one of the three phone calls.

He continued, “Right now, it’s unrest, and well, we have the helicopter overhead. Everyone here has been beaten up, many people have bled, brother, tear gas, we are immigrants, we are not criminals, we are not murderers.”

Another detainee told the outlet, “There are helicopters up above and a lot of people are bleeding. They’re beating us, they’re mistreating us.”

In another phone call, an audible alarm screeched in the background as one of the immigrants pleaded through tears, “It’s the emergency alarm, please help us.”

Family members of immigrants at the facility also reported to Noticias 23 that guards were rioting. Univision/Noticias 23 sent a request for comment to the Florida state spokesperson who oversees the concentration camp, but as of this writing there has been no reply.

The riot at the concentration camp comes one week after U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams issued a preliminary injunction barring any further transfers to the facility and ordering it to be shut down within 60 days. Williams’ decision came in response to a lawsuit filed by a coalition of environmental groups and the Miccosukee tribe of Florida, who argued that the facility violated several environmental laws and endangered local species and tribal resources.

The state of Florida and the US federal government have asked Judge Williams to put her order on hold pending an appeal from the state. As of this writing, Williams has not ruled on the stay request. But hundreds of detainees have reportedly been moved to other detention facilities.

It appears the judge’s decision to shut down the camp infuriated the guards, who have sadistically taken out their anger on the remaining immigrants at the facility.

While the camp was initially sold to the public as a cheap alternative to house up to 5,000 immigrants, it appears that at its height just under 1,000 people were imprisoned in the hellish facility. On a tour last week following Judge Williams’ decision, Florida Representative Maxwell Frost (Democrat) estimated that between 300 and 350 people were still being held at the camp.

On August 27, the Associated Press reported that in a message sent to South Florida Rabbi Mario Rojzman on August 22, Florida Division of Emergency Management Executive Director Kevin Guthrie said the camp was closing down operations quickly.

“[W]e are probably going to be down to 0 individuals within a few days,” Guthrie wrote to Rojzman, indicating that the rabbi’s services would not be needed

at the camp.

Questioned by an AP reporter about the email at an event in Orlando, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis did not dispute the account and indicated that the camp was no longer needed because the Department of Homeland Security was increasing the pace of deportations.

“Ultimately, it’s DHS’s decision where they want to process and stage detainees, and it’s their decision about when they want to bring them out,” DeSantis told AP.

The barbaric immigrant detention facility was hastily constructed two months ago in the middle of the Florida Everglades on a defunct airport tarmac. After construction was completed, Trump toured the facility with DeSantis, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, and the fascist White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller.

Trump hailed the camp as a model to be emulated and openly mused that it could be used to imprison and deport US citizens: “But we also have a lot of bad people that have been here for a long time. ... They are not new to our country, they are old to our country. Many of them were born in our country. I think we ought to get them the hell out of here too. You want to know the truth.”

As soon as the concentration camp opened, reports immediately emerged of cruel, inhumane and unlivable conditions. Overflowing toilets, humid tents filled with mosquitos and other insects, inedible food containing worms, and the denial of access to attorneys and medical care are just some of the abuses immigrants held at the facility have suffered.

Disease also appears to be spreading rampantly at the facility. Immigrants and guards have fallen ill from what appears to have been a massive COVID-19 outbreak that nearly killed Luis Manuel Rivas Velásquez, a 38-year-old Venezuelan man. Rivas Velásquez collapsed at the facility earlier this month after being denied medical care.

In addition to being a colossal human rights abuse, the concentration camp is also a tremendous waste of money. The state of Florida signed approximately \$405 million in vendor contracts to build and operate the facility, and by July 2025 had already paid out about \$245 million, according to the AP. Because of the judge’s ruling, the AP estimated the state stands to lose

approximately \$218 million.

Court documents submitted by the Florida Department of Emergency Management and reviewed by WPTV, the local NBC affiliate in West Palm Beach, found that it could cost as much as \$20 million to tear down the camp.



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