

Abu Ghraib in the Everglades

# Amnesty International report details torture, abuse at immigration detention camps in Florida

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6 December 2025

On Thursday, Amnesty International published a report titled “Torture and enforced disappearances in the Sunshine State,” documenting torture carried out by the US immigration Gestapo at detention camps in Florida. The report includes interviews with four immigrants kidnapped and held at the Everglades compound (run by the state in conjunction with the federal government), which Trump has proudly labeled “Alligator Alcatraz,” and at Miami’s notorious Krome detention and processing center, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility with decades of documented abuse and maltreatment.

The report’s most explosive revelations describe torture methods at the Everglades camp that directly mirror the war crimes committed by the US military and intelligence agencies at Abu Ghraib in Iraq and at the Guantánamo Bay prison camp in Cuba beginning in the early 2000s. At those imperialist outposts, the US carried out beatings, forced stress positions, sensory deprivation, sexual humiliation and confinement in boxes and containers, all under the authority of the Pentagon and CIA. The same methods of domination and terror have now been imported wholesale onto US soil and used against immigrant workers.

All four men interviewed by Amnesty International described a torture method employed at “Alligator Alcatraz” called the “box.” They described the “box” as a tiny two-by-two-foot cage-like structure located outside in the yard of the Everglades camp. Individuals placed inside are shackled by their hands and feet to the ground and left for hours or longer with almost no water or protection from the intense sun, humidity, insects and wildlife.

One person interviewed by Amnesty International said that people “ended up in the ‘box’ just for asking the guards for anything. I saw a guy who was put in it for an entire day.”

Another person said he saw two people put into the box for trying to help him lobby the guards to provide him his

medication. “[T]wo people in my cell were calling out to the guards telling them that I needed my medication. Ten guards rushed into the cell and threw them to the ground. They were taken to the ‘box’ and punished just for trying to help me. Any time that anyone demanded that our rights be respected, they were punished.”

A different man confirmed that guards “call it ‘the box’ at Everglades. It’s a box outside, exposed to the South Florida sun and humidity and exposed to mosquitoes, that is used as a punishment.” Another concluded bluntly, “It’s a copy of Guantánamo. The conditions are inhuman.”

The use of small-box confinement has long been part of the repertoire of US imperialist torture. Abu Zubaydah, captured by the US in 2002 and still held at Guantánamo, was subjected to prolonged confinement in dark cramped boxes as part of the CIA’s torture program.

The same methods used against alleged “terrorists” are now being deployed against immigrants and will soon be used against workers and citizens that object to ongoing attacks on their living standards and democratic rights.

The Everglades concentration camp opened in July 2025 with the capacity to detain roughly 3,000 people. It is the first state-owned and operated immigration concentration camp in the United States. Located directly in a hurricane corridor, the facility operates without regard to federal rules even though the Department of Homeland Security recently approved more than \$600 million in grant money to fund and sustain operations.

Because the camp is state-run, it is not integrated with federal databases, including the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Locator. As of this writing, there is no public record of who is detained there or how many. Lawyers report being unable to contact clients for weeks, creating effective incommunicado detention and conditions that meet

the definition of enforced disappearances.

Consequently, not only is there no federal oversight of the facility, but there exists no integration into ICE's systems or databases. The absence of registration or tracking mechanisms for those detained at "Alligator Alcatraz" facilitates incommunicado detention and constitutes enforced disappearances when the whereabouts of a person being detained there is denied to their family, and they are not allowed to contact their lawyer.

In addition to torture, detainees describe inhuman and unsanitary conditions. Toilets overflow with fecal matter that seeps into the areas where people sleep. Access to medical care is limited or nonexistent. Food and water are poor in quality. Insects are constant. Privacy is nonexistent.

Amnesty International concludes that people detained in "Alligator Alcatraz" are held in cages of approximately 1,000 square feet, with 32 people per cage and eight cages per tent. "The lights are like stadium lights; they're always on, they're never turned off or even dimmed. It's very cold, the air-conditioning is very strong. There are a lot of mosquitoes," one man said.

Another described the toilet conditions: "There are three toilets in each cage. There's no privacy; there are cameras above the toilets. The toilets were clogged a lot and shit overflowed from them. I saw a big snake. A friend was bitten by a spider that laid eggs inside of him."

One man reported that someone died while he was held there. "I heard a lot of screaming," he said. "But there's no way to know what actually happened to the person because we're not registered in ICE's system." Although the state of Florida is required to keep records of deaths and major medical incidents, the Florida Division of Emergency Management provided no such documentation to Amnesty International.

Similar overcrowded and cruel conditions were found at the Krome facility in Miami. The for-profit detention and processing center, currently managed by Akima Global Services, LLC, has operated for decades. All four men interviewed by Amnesty International were transferred from the Everglades camp to Krome. All four said they were shackled for hours during transport.

At Krome immigrants faced many of the same cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments. One man said that after a guard punched him in the neck, he was forced into solitary confinement for 24 straight days. "I went nine days without any sort of medical attention," he said. "My neck hurt; I

couldn't move it. My ribs and ear hurt too. I was finally just given a pill. I went outside only once in 24 days. I was basically incommunicado."

Another man described being placed in an overcrowded tent. "There are 126 of us in there. There are only three telephones that we can use for five minutes a day. They count us at least twice a day. When this is happening we have to sit on our cots. The bathrooms are closed during the count which lasts over an hour."

Another detainee said, "People are extremely stressed. They're having a hard time, they're sad, they're anxious. The guards are racist and hostile. It's almost like we disgust them."

The conditions of both facilities are deliberately cruel and deadly. During fiscal year 2025 (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025) at least 25 prisoners have died in ICE custody, more than double the 12 deaths reported in fiscal year 2024. Of these 25 confirmed deaths, six occurred in the state of Florida, including four at Krome: Ramesh Amechand, Genry Ruiz-Guillen, Maksym Chernyak and Isidro Pérez.

The horrors described in the Amnesty International report are not aberrations and not the product of a single administration. The torture, enforced disappearances and inhuman detention conditions at "Alligator Alcatraz" and Krome express a bipartisan policy developed and expanded over decades. The torture methods pioneered under George W. Bush and acknowledged by Obama with his infamous admission, "We tortured some folks," have now been brought onto US soil and turned against immigrant workers.

This has been made possible only because of the criminal complicity of the Democratic Party. Far from opposing Trump's fascistic attacks on immigrants, the Democrats have facilitated them. They joined Republicans to pass the "Laken Riley Act" which expands the mass detention and deportation of immigrants. Senior Democratic figures, including Bernie Sanders, have praised Trump's mass deportation operation and echoed his claims that immigrants pose a threat to the nation and US workers.

As resistance grows towards the raids against immigrants, the conditions in the Everglades and at Krome are a warning to workers and students that the methods of imperialist torture abroad are being brought home for use against the working class.



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