

# Center for Constitutional Rights

## Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

**<https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/civil-rights-and-civil-liberties-complaint-15-immigrants-detained-bergen>**

### Policy Issue Resources

On July 13, 2021, the complaint was submitted with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

Freedom for Immigrants: Tania Mattos, Northeast Policy and Monitoring Policy Director; Amanda Diaz, National Hotline Manager  
UnLocal, Inc.: Terry Lawson, Esq., Executive Director

Stevens Guilmeus, Jean Claude Wright, Romeo Konneh, Ernst Francois, Alex Baikay Kamara, and ten other individuals who wish to remain anonymous due to fear of retaliation

Between April and May 2021, Freedom for Immigrants National Immigration Detention Hotline received numerous complaints of incidents of abuse from immigrants detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at Bergen County Jail in Hackensack, New Jersey. These complaints included direct testimony of medical abuse, sexual assault, religious discrimination, deplorable conditions, retaliation for peaceful protest and public reporting, ICE failing to follow court orders and release high-risk individuals suffering from complications related to COVID-19, and use of force and physical abuse at the hands of ICE guards, sergeants, and lieutenants.

Freedom for Immigrants, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and UnLocal, Inc. collected these testimonies to submit a multi-individual Civil Rights and Civil Liberties complaint from 15 immigrants currently and formerly detained at Bergen County Jail, including individuals who wished to remain anonymous due to fear of retaliation and additional abuse after coming forward.

The complaint urges the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) to immediately 1) investigate medical practices, use of force, religious discrimination, sexual assault, deplorable conditions, and denial of release at Bergen County Jail; 2) recommend that ICE terminate the Intergovernmental Services Agreement (IGSA) with Bergen County Jail; and 3) recommend the immediate release to the community of all individuals detained.

ICE detention centers and jails highlight the inhumanity of the vast criminalization and incarceration system in the United States. This filing is situated in the broader movement for a positive vision of mass decarceration. The Center for Constitutional Rights is a member of the Abolish ICE NY-NJ coalition, a formation of immigrant rights organizations and activists across New York and New Jersey organizing to free people from detention, end local ICE contracts, and stop deportations. Immigrants detained in New York and New Jersey ICE jails who have engaged in hunger strikes and spoken out against cruel treatment have been met with retaliation. Despite violent retaliation, detained immigrants continue to fight for their collective freedom.

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