

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I am a father and I want to share my experience. I was arrested in the raids in August in Mississippi. It is my first time and it is very difficult for me because my family and I are suffering so much. When I was arrested, I left my wife who is pregnant and my three year old alone. When I speak with my son over the phone, he starts to cry and asks me to come back home and it breaks my heart. I had never been arrested and the worst is that while being in ICE's hands, I have been physically and morally injured by an ICE officer. Here we are treated like animals. They feed us at 2am for breakfast, at 9am for lunch and at 2pm for dinner. We get fed very little food, its raw or sometimes half cooked. If someone gets sick, the medical attention is the worst. A couple weeks ago I was injured by an ICE agent, and I asked to see the doctor because he actually choked me by the neck with both hands. The pain in my neck and in my head lasted days and while I made a couple of requests, I was never given an appointment.

My wife just gave birth to our baby, our second boy, and I am still here locked up and they are living alone. My wife forgotten, without work and with two small children. That's very difficult for me. Also, I live with so much fear that ICE could retaliate against me because I still see them here in the jail.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson,
November 4, 2019

When the raid in Mississippi happened in Canton on August 7, 2019, I was working in the plant and I was arrested that day. Now I am here detained in Richwood Correctional Center 18 Pine Bayou Circle LA 712020 and I have been 4 months detained.

I still haven't gotten any information about my court date and the immigration officers from the center aren't giving us the medicine we need. They aren't giving us much food either. They don't give us soap to wash our hands nor to wash clothes etc.

We want for you to help us be released from detention. My wife is not working and I have two children. No one is taking care of them economically or taking care of them and that is why I need to be released. I need for you to help me be released. We haven't done any crimes for them to keep us for such a long time. They have us imprisoned for a long time. My family is upset because I have been detained for such a long time. Thank you so much I am very grateful.

My name is Sergio Felix

Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
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H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

[This letter was provided by a group of Cuban asylum-seeking detainees held in the same facility along with 80 of the Mississippi poultry workers detained during the August 7 raid, to testify regarding detention conditions following the raid]

October 19th, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

With the following letter we the Cubans are sharing our testimony to declare the reality and the injustices that we have lived through at the Richwood Correctional Center. The majority have been in this facility since the 24th of April, 2019, where we have been victims of racism, discrimination and psychological mistreatment from the prison guards. We have been witnesses of violence on the part of ICE against immigrants. Our objective from this letter is to describe and build consciousness with other organizations and entities so that they stand in solidarity with the situation we are living in this prison. We are all under heavy psychological stress because we have been detained for so long. The processes are slow and ICE is not following the court decision of the 5th of September of 2019, continuing to deny parole to 100% of people who request for a revision of their case. Notices and official rejections are not delivered and in all this time ICE officials have not interviewed any detainees for parole. We all have sponsors in the community who vouch for us and that will be responsible for our wellbeing during our immigration process. These are people who have status in the country, meaning they are residents and citizens.

We all have a national IDs, our birth certificates and you can see that we have a clean record. Many of us have professional degrees and have the evidence for it. With this evidence, we prove that we are not a flight risk. We are demonstrating that we are ready to be integrated into American society. In this facility our Cuban brother Roylan Hernandez Diaz died tragically in a solitary punishment cell on the 15th of October of 2019. We declare that his death was a product of the stress that ICE inflicted on him by not granting him parole, and detaining all of us for a very long time in this place. Our fallen brother arrived in this prison on June 13, 2019, he submitted his own parole request and it was denied. He had a condition in his colon that many times was obvious and he expressed it to ICE but neither they nor the medical staff of this facility paid any attention. Roylan's death is clear evidence of the grave and sad situation in which we are living due to the incorrect strategies applied by ICE in this place. The day after our beloved Cuban brother died, a Honduran man, Manuel, who happens to be homosexual, attempted to kill himself in solitary confinement. In the lunchroom 20 Cuban detainees protested, writing messages on their shirts demanding prompt release from this place. ICE

officials and guards from the jail attacked the protesters and injured many of them. Also in Bunker A, ICE agent Tunkara choked and injured a migrant from Guatemala who came from the raid in Mississippi because he did not agree to sign the parole advisory notice without consulting with his lawyer. We declare that our situation is provoking an emergency of deep and critical depression and we need your help since there is so much stress that those detained feel this could cause an imminent tragedy. We hope that this letter reaches someone's heart and that you have mercy on us.

We are here to share the injustices we face in this place:

Roger Martinez Gonzalez – [REDACTED]

Yoanki Oviedo Pousa – [REDACTED]

Javier Olivera Fiffe – [REDACTED]

Yuniel Oduardo Machado – [REDACTED]

Edel Maceo Almaques – [REDACTED]

Howard Port Mena – [REDACTED]

Leandro Santiesteban Castellanos – [REDACTED]

Alfredo J. Osorio Vargas – [REDACTED]

Manuel A Perez Boza – [REDACTED]

Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
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Washington, D.C. 20515

November 4, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I am Ismael Miranda Rosario from Guatemala. I was apprehended by ICE with my wife who is detained in Jena LA. We have lost everything because there is no one to help us get out. I have no communication with my wife. I am detained in Richwood Correctional Facility. I don't know how she is doing, if she is well or not. They don't give us medicine here - I have put in requests but they don't respond and when we ask for toilet paper they yell at us. Toothbrushes too. I beg that you can help me and my wife to get us out of this place.

Ismael Miranda Rosario
Canton, MS
Detained in Richwood, Louisiana

Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I am detained in Richwood Correctional Center and I was detained in the Mississippi raids. Here in the jail, we feel sad because we are not being treated well. We are treated like animals. We don't get soap to bathe, we don't get to go to the doctor.

We don't even have a schedule for food. They take us at 2am to eat breakfast. And sometimes the food has bugs, maggots, and hair in it. We can get sick this way.

We are worried about our families, who are facing eviction and don't have food to eat. And we don't know how to get out of here - some of us don't have court until January 7th. We are in here and our children don't have anyone to care for them. We ask for you to help us be released from this place. We aren't criminals, we came to build a life here in this country with our families.

Thank you

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

Today, on the third of November, I have been detained for three months. I was among those arrested in the Mississippi raid. The reason I am writing to you is to let you know about the terrible conditions that we are living in. There is an excessive number of detainees in the unit, and the food supplied is awful. Because of that we have to buy food from the prison commissary but there is only one microwave oven for a hundred of us. It's like that with everything- you can't get prompt medical attention if you're sick, and our court dates are far off in the future. For that reason people here fall into deep depression.

Due to the above I would like to respectfully want to bring your attention to this situation and proceed to improve the situation in this correctional facility. We have family waiting for us: wives, children, parents, single mothers. We are not criminals. The only thing we were doing was working for a better quality of life.

Thank you very much,

Miguel Cisneros

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 2, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I have been detained for three months now. In each one of the detentions, I have witnessed the mistreatment of the detainees and bad conditions that we are exposed to.

I was detained in the raids in Mississippi. I had been living in the United States for 11 years. I arrived in the Richwood Correctional Center on August 28. Ever since I arrived to this place, I have seen mistreatment and racism by the majority of the guards. We are faced with bad nutrition and bad hygiene, and this had evidently affected us. We are suffering from physical and emotional exhaustion, and the medical attention offered is deficient.

This brings about situations that affect the rest of us, such as the suicide of one of the detainees. There have also been various other suicide attempts due to the constant stress that we are exposed to daily. Nobody does anything, and nobody seems to care about our circumstances. They fumigate us as if we were animals and as animals they treat us.

It is my hope that this complaint reaches to someone who is willing to help us to leave from this never ending hell that ICE has subjected us to, without having committed any federal crime. Our hope is to have our basic human rights respected. We sincerely hope that you can help us.

Signed this 2nd day of November, 2019

Lorenzo Arizmendi

U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

Due to violence, I was forced to leave my country. I have been working in the United States for over ten years. I was detained in the raid of August 7 of this year. I am waiting for my court date and the miracle to get my freedom. I have my wife who is not working and my 5-year-old son who needs my care. His pediatrician and this teacher told us that he needs a psychologist due to the fact that he cannot speak.

The mistreatment we receive here does not worry me, what worries me is my family. I was the provider and the one who took my son to the therapies he needs. There is no one to take him to therapy in my absence.

This is all. Thank you

ABEL REA CORONA

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

My name is Martin Alarcon. I have already been in this detention center for three months. I requested medical services three times here and still have not been seen. I am still sick. My throat hurts. Toilet paper is not available, nor is soap or shampoo. If we request for some of these items, they get angry. We only have one microwave for more than 100 people. We really need to get out of here. I am the head of the family. I have children here and my wife does not work. She needs to pay the rent and the bills, but she does not have the money for food, and I was detained in the raid in Mississippi.

I want for you to do something about this situation so that we can leave this place as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for helping us.

Signed on November 3, 2019

MARTIN ALARCON

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

My name is Alverto and I am detained in Richwood, Monroe, LA 71202

I am depressed because of the separation from my children and my family, that is, my wife and my grandchildren, who love me. I am desperate because of the mistreatment, the raw food – sometimes with hair in it- and the medicine that I take for my diabetes. The medicine is not at the right time: sometimes it is too early, sometimes too late, they do not have a fixed schedule. Sometimes they do not let us out in the yard; there is just one microwave for 100 people that are here, that is not enough. The beds in the dormitory are very rusted, as well as the drawers where we put our lunch in the commissary, they are very rusty. That is why I respectfully ask you to take action on this matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alverto [last name withheld due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

11/3/2019

Richwood Center Louisiana. "A"

Subject: What is happening to us here in jail.

We do not have a schedule for meals or for medicine. They treat us very badly, they bathe us like dogs, and they take us breakfast at 2 in the morning. Also, they do not wash clothes with soap or bleach. The bathroom is very dirty, they do not give us toilet paper or soap to shower, until they feel like giving it to us. When someone is sick, they do not take him to the doctor. They treat us badly.

I am suffering and my family too. I do not have the money to pay for my families' rent and meals. This raid ruined my life and my families. I want to get out of this place sooner because my family does not have enough to eat. Please, help us.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
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Washington, D.C. 20515

Sunday, November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I am Honduran and have been detained by ICE in the city of Richwood, Louisiana. The reason [for this letter] is because we are not treated well and the jail where we are is in bad condition. I have a family that is worried because I have been detained for 4 months. I am one of the people who was arrested during the raid at the Peco Company in Canton, Mississippi. I think I have been detained too long, since I am not any kind of bad person, and that is why I am concerned. Maybe my family is worried because they haven't heard anything from me, and because I was the only person from my family in the United States. I have a father to support, since I was the one who worked to send money home to my country, and now my family is sad. And I'm sad, too, because some of my friends already went to court and they refused to set a bond, and the courts are making others wait until January 2020 for their hearing. And we haven't committed any crime, and that's why I am asking for your help. It isn't fair for us to be detained this long, since our only crime is being immigrants. This is why we hope that you can help us get set free, or help us with a bond. I want you to hear us, because the time we've had to wait is making me desperate. Also, when we get sick they don't give us the right medicine for the illness, and that's why I hope you will help us.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
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H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

Because of the raids on 8/7/2019, my family members have been left crying.

There are three girls that are now alone and without their father.

Because their father was picked up in Morton Mississippi, they are suffering and don't have money to pay their bills and rent.

I'm suffering here in jail since my daughters are alone, and I have also gotten sick from thinking about them so much. I've gotten sick here, and they won't even give medicine out for headaches. And my daughters are suffering greatly; they all have asthma.

Thank you.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

The motive of this letter is to talk about us here at the detention center in Richwood, Louisiana, as part of those detained in the Mississippi raids. They treat us badly here in the jail. They treat us like animals. They don't provide medical care, or soap for all of us. Also, we don't have set schedules for meals or anything, and sometimes they take us at two in the morning to eat breakfast. The food that they serve us sometimes has insects, flies, and hairs. We can get sick in these conditions. Some other folks come and give us water that has something that causes rashes in the body. We are scared of this illness, and some of us have already contracted it. We are also worried about our families, and their ability to pay for rent, bills, and food. We don't know when we are going to leave this place. They have given some of us a court date on January 7th. That is a long time. We are worried about our families and our children on the outside. We want you to help us to get out of here. We are not criminals or delinquents, we came here to fight for a better life for our families.

Please and thank you.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

My name is Jesus Cobzxin Ambros.

I live in Laurel Mississippi and I was arrested in the raid. All of this that I'm going through is very difficult for me and for my family. I have two children that are suffering because of me not being at their side. Being locked up here is very difficult since I've gone three months without seeing them, and here they treat one as if one is worthless. We're not criminals. I'd give anything to be with my family. My girl is three years old and my boy is one. They depend on me. I'm currently detained in Richwood Correctional Center since August 28. Since I arrived here I've suffered psychologically, the food is awful and the living and hygiene conditions are not favorable, the medical attention is not good. Since I arrived, I've suffered racism from the officers. This has affected me very much since the separation from my children is weighing on me heavily.

Jesus Cobzxin Ambros

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 4, 2019

Held in Detention From Richwood Correctional, Unit A From the Raid on August 7, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

With tears in my eyes I write this testimony. Locked up for three months experiencing the absence of my family that I love so much. My little daughter that was born with Downs syndrome, my wife facing the economic emergency of paying all the bills, and me, living badly, eating badly. When I get sick, they never give me medicine. There is no medical attention. My fellow detainees are trying to take their own lives and some have already taken their own lives. We're in a jail with no hygiene. The beds are dirty, they barely give us toilet paper. Sometimes we want to call but there's no way to do it. We miss our families.

Blessings to all.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
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November 3, 2019

Hello, good evening, my name is Alfredo. I address you with much respect. The purpose of this letter, is to explain my situation, since I was detained in the Mississippi raid. I'm single but they say that being single they say that I don't have the right to be in the United States. I think that they're wrong since I've already spent half my life here in the United States, and I'm used to this country. I have dreams like every person being held here. I don't think that I'm less than the ones that have families, there are many like me but we all have someone to fight for, maybe not here but in our countries, maybe providing for a sick mother or giving them a better life or whatever it is. That's what I think. Here in prison they take away your rights as a person, the situation here is awful to the point that there are people that lose their life and turn to suicide. That's very painful for their families.

The food is awful, it's not healthy at all, and the medical attention is even worse. They don't have a place that's equipped to care for a person that's seriously ill since they don't have the appropriate training. I'll tell you a case of one of the detainees from the raid. He had never suffered anything like it, now he suffers from attacks because of so much anxiety. Recently he suffered another after knowing that he wasn't getting out soon and that his next court date would be in two months. Too much time, and that's why he suffered the attack. People from this prison didn't know what to do since they're not prepared for this type of situation. As for me, I say that this system is very wrong. Thank you for your attention...

Alfredo [last name withheld due to concerns about retaliation]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 19, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

Petition to the United States Congress – Washington, DC

Dear Representative of Jackson, Mississippi,

With utmost respect I address myself to you in order to inform you that I was detained during the raid that took place on August 7, 2019 in Morton, MS. I am currently being detained in the state of Louisiana at the Richwood Correctional Center, 180 Pine Bayou Circle Richwood, LA 71202.

In this prison, if you have a medical problem they don't even have basic medications to address the problem. If any serious problem were to happen, it would not be of my own doing.

I have been held in this jail, deprived of my liberty, for two months and twelve days to date. I have not yet received any notice of a hearing date in immigration court.

I have a prior asylum case currently in immigration court, after receiving my credible fear determination.

I complied with seven check-ins and three court dates in New Orleans and Perla, MS. I submitted myself to a fingerprint scan for Immigration in Jackson, Mississippi and the results were positive proving I have a clean record.

I also had a check in scheduled on August 8, 2019, which I was not able to attend because I had been detained in the aforementioned raid, even though I informed the immigration agents of the check-in. I would also like to let you know that I have a wife and children who depend on me. I am currently unaware of their situation.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Diego Carrillo Och

[REDACTED]

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 4, 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I was detained the 7 of August in the raid that happened in Morton, Mississippi, and they aren't setting a bond for my release. Also my mother is sick and I don't have much communication with them. I am sad because we don't know when they will free us to be with my mother and father. I'm detained in Richwood Correctional Center, Louisiana. The day I entered here they started treating me badly, because when we have needs here sometimes they take care of us and sometimes they don't. Also they serve us uncooked food and it has made me sick. Thank you for everything you do for us, may God bless you in your efforts.

Jamilton Tema

U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 19, 2019 Richwood Correctional Center

Dear Chairman Thompson,

I write you this letter anonymously as I fear reprisals against me. I am a 22-year-old Cuban. I have been under the custody of I.C.E. for five months, which have been the worst five months of my life. Never, since I left my country had I felt like an animal. Since the first day, I have witnessed situations of violence, discrimination and racism. Little by little this situation has started to affect my self-esteem and mental health. I can't fathom such mistreatment just for arriving here and wanting another opportunity at life. Less than a week ago, a Cuban friend committed suicide. He was undergoing pressure, uncertainty, desperation, negative feelings, all that are pervasive daily in the minds of each and every one of us.

I must stress the fact that many of the people who are here with me have come to the US precisely trying to escape conditions in our countries, and we are again finding here: physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and to be detained without a criminal cause. The conditions in this detention center are the worst. At Richwood Correctional Center, which is also known by the detainees as the "Cemetery of Living Men", we know how we came in, but will not know how we will leave. I have witnessed violence against the detainees by the I.C.E. officers and the personnel that is supposedly taking care of us.

We have no rights, not even to ask for toilet paper. Winter is approaching and temperature is dropping, and we have not received any warm clothing nor blankets. When asked about when we will have access to these items, we are told to go buy them at the commissary. And there are people who don't have any money for a simple telephone call.

Following this process I am in, I have been under the torture of I.C.E., where even complying with all the requirements necessary to be freed, they have denied my freedom twice justifying it by saying that "In Louisiana we don't give parole, because we don't feel like it."

Who has the right to refuse my liberty just because I want an opportunity at life? Who has the right to treat us as dogs in a pound? I.C.E. represents the Nazis of the 21st Century. We are now the Jews locked up in concentration camps waiting for a date, and what for? Who knows? We are tired of having our rights as human beings violated.

We ask and beg for a ray of hope that will help us to be freed from this endless hell. But this inferno is also being experienced by those outside who see how our minds and bodies are being worn out. It will be an indelible image and a trauma that we will never be able to overcome completely. Here we only receive responses such as: "We didn't invite you to our country."

We do have the desire to resist, but we are also exhausted. Nobody knows what is going on, but it is due time for the world to know what it is like in I.C.E. concentration camps.

This is it, from a 22-year-old young man who wants to live.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]