

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2020

Mr. Matthew T. Albence
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20536

Mr. Henry Lucero
Executive Associate Director, Enforcement and Removal Operations
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Deputy Director Albence and Mr. Lucero,

The spread of COVID-19 is a national emergency that has led to the death of thousands of individuals, including several in detention. We are deeply concerned about the conditions within migrant detention centers in Arizona, specifically the La Palma, Eloy and Florence centers. We have learned of some alarming accounts from within these facilities and we request your urgent action on this matter.

It has come to our attention that detainees are confined to “pods” at the La Palma center in order to control the spread of COVID-19 and are therefore unable to attend their hearings in person with a judge. It is our understanding that judges can grant a “waiver of personal presence” for a detainee who cannot attend their hearing in person. However, we recently learned that at the La Palma Detention Center, Judge John Davis, has decided not to grant these waivers. As a result, detainees are denied a hearing and denied due process. This is unacceptable.

It is imperative that these hearings continue. We request that you instruct the La Palma staff to allow the detainees to safely move from their pod to the Immigration Judge Hearing Room at La Palma. This can be accomplished while taking the necessary safety precautions to protect detainees and staff. However, if there is any doubt about safely transporting detainees to their hearings, a waiver of personal presence should be immediately granted.

We have also heard alarming accounts about the lack of nutrition, sanitation and medical care within these facilities. Unfortunately, conditions within detention centers have a long history of being severely dangerous. As of May 23rd, 75 positive cases of COVID-19 have been identified at the La Palma Detention Center alone. Additionally, we have received a letter from a group of more than 50 detainees describing their inadequate living conditions at the La Palma center. We have enclosed it here for you to read. The conditions they describe are appalling.

Please note that the situation at La Palma is escalating. In the detainee letter we are told that a hunger strike is taking place in La Palma.

Based on these alarming reports, we have serious concerns that these facilities do not have the ability to keep detainees safe during this pandemic, and they are not adhering to Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

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guidelines. As we understand, current detention conditions do not allow for detainees to practice social distancing guidelines, which increase the risk of transmission of the virus among detainees and staff. Many of us have called on ICE to end the flow of new people into prisons and detention facilities and to release detainees on humanitarian parole for this reason, specifically, vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ individuals, and those with severe illnesses.

It is essential that COVID-19 tests are conducted on staff and detainees, and that these numbers are released to the public periodically. Testing of detainees and staff should be conducted routinely and the results used to determine what safety measures should be taken. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should be transferred to medical facilities immediately and all detainees should be provided with clean masks and gloves daily to prevent further spread of the virus.

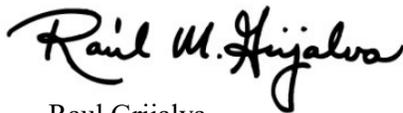
It is inhumane to prevent hearings for possible release while forcing individuals to stay in unsanitary and unsafe conditions during this pandemic. We urge you to implement these recommendations and look forward to hearing from you very soon.

We request an urgent response on this matter.

Sincerely,



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

CC: Attorney General William Barr

**Detainee Delegation
La Palma Correctional Center
5501 N La Palma Road
Eloy Arizona 85131**

Coronavirus Cover Letter 2

To Whom it May Concern,

May, 20 2020

Many detainees here at Las Palmas are uniting to fight against the lack of responsibility that this institution has. We have been lacking several things and we have come to an agreement to practice our rights speaking out on this poor situation which we are facing. As everyone knows this Covid virus could be deadly to some of the population. We would like to inform you that many of us here in Las Palmas: Pod Navajo Alpha, have acquired this Covid virus in this facility. Which is very unusual knowing that only the staff has access to us, they are the only ones who come in and out of this facility, and they all get tested before coming in to work. Unfortunately, the virus has made its way inside an isolated institution, which sadly has not taken the right alternatives in taking care of our physical health.

To begin with we received one disposable mask about two months ago, after some detainees had gotten ill with this virus. We used the same disposable mask every day for well over a month. Then we received two re-usable masks almost two weeks ago. We have also received a gallon of soap so we could wash our hands and a spray bottle of Clorox to disinfect the phones we use to call our loved ones, and we get a temperature check every morning.

Now these are the only measures the staff here in Las Palmas has taken to prevent us from getting sick with this illness, other then verbal warnings. Now notice all this was done once our pod was contaminated with this virus. We have been in Quarantine for almost two months already. Our court dates have been rescheduled one too many times seeing as the two week period of quarantine restarts every time someone new is found to have this virus. These people which are found to have a virus are taken to another pod (Zuni-alpha) where they must wait to see if they will need to go to the hospital or wait and see if their bodies immune system builds antibodies to fight this virus.

Some detainees have already went to the hospital and returned yet again to the same pod where we are all in quarantine. Our biggest concern is that we are all cycling this virus, and nothing seems to change. There has been a few people that have mentioned to me that they felt they had this virus but did not say anything to the Detention officers. They have mentioned they've had chest pains, bone aches, migraines, etc. Yet they don't mention this because they know they'll be taken to Zuni-Alpha along with all the other ill detainees where they will be completely isolated until they are better or taken to the hospital. As I mentioned earlier, we are only getting a temperature check every morning to know if anybody else has gotten the corona virus. We do not get swab tested.

We have made many complaints, yet only little changes. Not to mention all the unnecessary comments from the staff, poor medical attention since we arrived, unnecessary long lock down periods, and now the lack of nutrition.

We have been receiving food box service for two weeks now, the food box's contain two slices of bread, two slices of some type of bologna, a small pack of Austin orange crackers 0.93oz, a pack of Grahams crackers with two crackers 0.49oz. Alongside with the hot meal, which is 1 small hotdog, 1 small chicken patty, two boiled eggs, or 1 small burrito. Also sometimes they give us a fruit such as apple or orange. This is the regular breakfast, lunch, and dinner we have been receiving for about two weeks. Although it sounds like a lot, it really isn't much. Alot of the detainees including myself have made complaints and nothing has changed. The Pod next to us Navajo Bravo, has started a hunger strike. We have been alright so far because we have united and have been helping each other as a

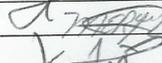
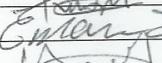
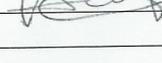
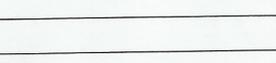
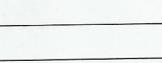
group, we all pitch the detainees without commissary soups and such to keep them from being hungry.

We have also started to get locked down for an excessive amount of time in the ten a.m. count. Because we have the regular count followed by the porters cleaning scheduled and finally the new feeding process. Which is remaining in the cells until the whole pod is fed.

We will also be providing the typed and signed statements of some of the detainees that have left the pod sick with the virus and have come back to quarantine.

respectfully,

Name	Jason J Rana	A# 094299128	Signature	J.R.R.	2/5/20	Date
Julio C. Tornero Zamudio	203714930			Julio C. Tornero Z		
JOSE PALAFOX	078047493					
Arturo Reyna Meraz	205-895-650					5-21-20
Arturo Reyna Meraz	206087739					5-21-20
Cruz matyck, Carlos Rene	213358479					21.5.20
Yuniel Machin Rojas	201565491					21-5-2020
Puebla Montequido Livan	213352635					21/5/2020
Contra Costa Leonardo	213372265			Leonardo		21/5/20
Wilber Valdez Ramos	213352241					21/5/2020
Ciribauil Francisco Ferrer	2036692179					21/5/2020
Leonardo Carter	204368081					5/21/2020
Jorge Guaman Paguay	201907365					5-21-2020
Fernando Perez Escobal	205496182					5-21-2020
Carlos Sut Sisimit	213369716					5-21-2020
Jorge Badden	09630868					5-21-2020
Jesús Armenta	095-129-585					5-21-2020
Juan Rivera	202064726					5-21-2020
Nelson Castrol	213352110					5-21-2020
Donald SOSQ Mojera	21588656					5-21-2020
José Orellana A						5-21-2020
Jesús Rosas	21447287					5-21-2020
RENE-PINA-TERRAZAS	206466702			PINA		5-21-20
José Gutiérrez Rivas	213353215					5-21-20
Alfredo Langrali	204458577			Alfredo Langrali		5-21-20
Issack Ibrahim	212-286489					5-21-20
Choc Tuc	203714748					5-21-20
Melnyk Aleksandr	217-166-434					5-21-20
Kopylov Mikhail	215-880-198					5-21-2020
Reginaldo Monteiro	209119035					5-21-2020
Eleguie Castañh	217067827					5-21-2020
Victor Alfonso Ramirez Salazar	209342486					5-21-2020
OSVALDO	203714839					5-21-2020
Hassan Fernandez Rodriguez	213352305					5-21-2020
Bernardo Noronha	203714879					5-21-2020
Vadya Poludin	097338739					5-21-20
Kellen Carrón	042525628					5-21-20
Adan Pexico Lopez	213372283					5-21-20
ALFONSO MIRAN BARRIOS	213372300					5/21/20
OSCAR LARA Durco	206548195					5/21/20

Name	A#	Signature	Date
LUGO CHAVEZ	092444338		5-21-2020
FRANQUIZ GONZALEZ	213352125		5-21-2020
Miguel Exposito Rodriguez	713352027		5-21-2020
Kevin Javier Duran	200276441		5-21-2020
EMILY JANKINZ	072337166		5-21-2020
Hector Perez Hernandez	705577891		5-21-2020