

#ShutDownEtowah



Campaign Members



www.adelantealabama.org



Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

www.acj.net



www.aclualabama.org



www.endisolation.org



www.detentionwatch.org



www.familiesforfreedom.org



www.gbm.org



www.nationalimmigrationproject.org



www.southernersonnewground.org

The Shut Down Etowah campaign is made up of individuals and civil, immigrant, and human rights organizations based in Alabama and across the country that are committed to ending the human rights abuses at the Etowah County Detention Center.

Campaign Goals

1. End immigrant detention at the Etowah County Detention Center in Gadsden, AL
2. Secure release of individual Etowah detainees subject to prolonged detention and civil rights abuses



Campaign Tactics

- Organizing tactics:

- Build a network of Alabama residents, social justice organizations, faith communities, and detainees' family members committed to supporting campaign
- Media advocacy (press and social media) to publicize abuses and humanize detainees
- Direct actions at the detention center (vigils, concerts, protests, marches, sit-ins)
- Public campaigns calling for a detainee's release
- Pressure DHS/ICE and county officials to terminate contract through public letters, petitions, and in-person meetings

- Legal tactics:

- Civil rights litigation and administrative complaints
- Habeas corpus petitions for prolonged detainees
- Legal support for direct action and public pressure strategies

About Etowah

- IGSA (Intergovernmental Service Agreement) facility – ICE contracts with Etowah County to house immigrant detainees in county jail
- Currently holds about 300 male detainees – from all over the U.S., many nationalities
- Etowah charges ICE the lowest per diem in the country - \$40 per detainee per day; AL law allows Sheriff to pocket additional savings
- ICE almost terminated contract in 2010, but AL representatives and county officials successfully pressured DHS to keep Etowah open
- Etowah is ICE's warehouse for prolonged detainees – many have been detained for months or years, and may never be deported
- Extremely isolated – hours from nearest major urban center and hundreds or thousands of miles from detainees' families, support networks, and lawyers (if they have one)
- Numerous reports of systemic abuses and violations, facility has promised reform but failed to deliver

Reported Abuses & Violations

Advocates, independent monitors, and detainees have made numerous reports of grave, systemic abuses at Etowah:

- Meager, rotten, and barely edible food
- Denial of essential medical and mental healthcare
- Isolation and deprivation: no outdoor recreation, minimal to no programming, no legal orientation program, and visitation only by video monitor
- Physical and verbal abuse by ICE and county officers
- Excessive and retaliatory use of solitary confinement
- Prolonged detention

Inspections vs. Reality

Etowah County Detention Center, Alabama:

Detention Standards (as of 2012):	2000 NDS
Facility Type:	IGSA
2012 ICE Average Daily Population:	333

2011 ERO		2012 ERO		2012 ODO	
Private Contract Inspector:	MGT	Private Contract Inspector:	Nakamoto	Private Contract Inspector:	Creative Corrections
Rating:	Acceptable	Rating:	Acceptable	Rating:	N/A
Deficient Standards:	0	Deficient Standards:	0	Deficient Standards:	0
Deficient Components:	9	Deficient Components:	0	Deficient Components:	8

Etowah has passed recent DHS inspections with flying colors...

BUT there are glaring inconsistencies between the inspections and the egregious violations reported from the ground by advocates and detainees, as well as between ODO and ERO inspections, and across different years...

Inspections vs. Reality (cont.)

- **Legal Orientation Program rated “Acceptable”**
 - No such program exists; inspectors considered acceptable because the facility has a written policy regarding LOPs
- **Visitation rated “Acceptable”**
 - Visitation is only by video monitor, is limited to one half hour, allows for no privacy, and requires prior approval

Inspections vs. Reality (cont.)

- “[O]utdoor recreation is provided at this facility”
 - The only “outdoor recreation” at Etowah is the “sweat box” in each pod – “a cement room (including a cement ceiling) the size of half a basketball court. Near the top of one or two of the walls, very high up, are relatively small windows with bars that allow outside air to enter the area. It is impossible to see anything out of these windows. In two of the pods this ‘outdoor recreation’ had a basketball hoop; in the third, low-level pod, plumbing made a basketball hoop inaccessible.” (WRC, *Politicized Neglect*); “[D]uring Ramadan, Muslims at Etowah were forced to pray in the “sweatbox” while others were using it for recreation” (DWN, *Expose & Close*)

Inspections vs. Reality (cont.)

- Food Service rated “Acceptable”
 - Detainees “almost universally complained that the food was served in insufficient quantities and that its quality was worse than at other facilities where they had previously been detained. One immigrant who has been in multiple facilities over a 20-month period described the food at Etowah as ‘the worst I’ve seen.’ Another described it as ‘disgusting.’ An immigrant who had been transferred to at least three facilities stated that he had ‘never experienced anything [as] degrading as the treatment here at Etowah’ and remarked that dinner was served around 4:30 pm and breakfast was nearly 12 to 13 hours later, with meager portions. He pointed out that most people detained in the facility couldn’t afford extra food from the commissary and end up going to bed hungry. He also noted that Etowah, unlike other facilities, fails to provide a nightly snack for diabetic immigrants, instead forcing them to take insulin and pills on an empty stomach.” (DWN, *Expose & Close, One Year Later*)

Inspections vs. Reality (cont.)

- Programming rated “Acceptable,” claimed detainees have access to wide range of programs including World Aquaculture Program, Puppies without Borders, and Adventure Programming
 - Detainees reported that “these programs were effectively nonexistent and in reality the facility had a nothing more than a broken fish tank and a rock-climbing wall in a room the size of a cell.”
(NIJC/DWN, *Lives in Peril*)

How can we use the Lives in Peril report and inspections data to support the campaign's goals of shutting down Etowah and securing individual detainees' release?

What sort of organizing, media, and legal strategies can we employ in Alabama (and elsewhere) to hold ICE accountable?

www.shutdownetowah.org



Follow the campaign on social media: [@ShutDownEtowah](https://twitter.com/ShutDownEtowah)