

# END DETENTION IN YOUR DISTRICT

**STATE:** Florida

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:** 17

**FACILITIES:** Glades County Detention Center

**CAPACITY:** 546 (approx.)

## Glades County Detention Center

### Facility and Contract Overview

Glades County Detention Center (Glades) is owned and operated by the Glades County Sheriff Office. The facility is [financed](#) and developed by the non-profit Glades Correctional Development Corporation (GCDC), which issues bonds backed by the projected revenue of providing detention space for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In 2018, the Vera Institute for Peace [reported](#) that since opening the jail in 2007 GCDC was unable to make payments to bondholders, and in 2015 the organization entered into a forbearance agreement to delay facility foreclosure. GCDC finances all operations at the facility, yet most of the revenue generated from the Glades facility goes to paying bondholders, with under half of the money routed toward detention staff expenses and about a fifth spent on medical care and food for detained people. Per the Vera report, the IRS informed GCDC that the bonds should not have been tax exempted in 2016. For this reason, Glades is considered a private facility for tax purposes. According to GCDC's [corporate records](#), its board is made up of local business owners, elected county officials, and a former county sheriff Stuart Whiddon. According to the Miami Herald, in 2012 Former Sheriff Whiddon was in the executive committee of a task force found to have [misspent money](#) seized in drug investigations.

In May 2007, Glades County entered into an Intergovernmental Service Agreement ([IGSA](#)) with ICE. The facility detains both men and women. In addition to detaining people held in ICE custody, Glades also holds people detained by the county and the US Marshals Service (USMS). According to ICE [data](#), there were an average of 413 individuals detained in ICE custody in Fiscal Year 2020. However, a 2016 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) [audit](#) noted that the facility's total capacity is 546. Per the 2007 IGSA, ICE pays a per diem of \$80.64, with no known adjustments since its initiation. The IGSA doesn't have an expiration date, but can be severed by either party with a 60-day notice in writing. Per the IGSA, Glades was subject to the 2000 National Detention Standards (NDS). However, these standards were [superseded](#) in December 2019 by the 2019 National Detention Standards for Non-Dedicated Facilities. Per a 2019 Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Americans for Immigrant Justice (AIJ) [report](#), Armor Correctional Health Services provides medical and mental healthcare at Glades.



*Credit: US Immigration and Customs Enforcement*

### Key Areas of Concern

- Unsanitary food and facility conditions
- Medical and mental health care neglect
- Verbal and racial abuse
- Sexual and physical violence
- Retaliatory use of solitary confinement
- Use of force and pepper spray
- Failure to observe proper public health protocols
- Use of toxic chemicals

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## Deaths in Detention

There have been two documented deaths at Glades. In July 2020 ICE [announced](#) that Onoval Perez-Montufar died at a Palm Beach County hospital of complications from COVID-19 while in ICE custody. Prior to his transfer to the Palm Beach hospital, Perez-Montufar had been detained at Glades since June 2020. While in detention, he tested positive for COVID-19.

According to ICE's official statement following Perez-Montufar's death, Perez-Montufar was a 51-year-old man of Mexican origin who had entered ICE custody upon completion of a prison sentence and release from federal prison in Massachusetts. At the time of his death he was awaiting deportation to Mexico. Massachusetts state correctional officials and ICE facilitated this transfer despite Perez-Montufar's age, clear risk of medical complications and death due to COVID-19, and calls from advocates and public health officials to suspend all transfers and deportations during the pandemic.

In June 2008, Joseph Valery, a 23-year old man who had lived in the United States since he was a boy and who was originally from Haiti, [died](#) at the facility after a seizure. According to a 2009 [report](#) by AIJ, Joseph Valery had preexisting medical and mental health conditions. Per the AIJ report, Valery suffered multiple seizures while at the facility, including an incident when he had to be taken to a hospital for outside care. Mr. Valery requested that he be detained in the medical area for his own safety, yet he was repeatedly denied the request. The report also notes inconsistencies in the anti-seizure medications administered to Valery, which according to a neurologist cited in the AIJ report, may have led to the seizure that took his life. According to Mr. Valery's family, his health deteriorated after being transferred to Glades County Detention Facility. AIJ further stated that they continued to face challenges to obtain information about the facility's records relating to the facility's medical and mental health policies, confinement and use-of-force policies, medical staffing and job descriptions.

## Unsanitary Conditions

The previously referenced SPLC and AIJ details a thorough investigation of detention facilities in Southern Florida, including Glades. Per the report, Glades had the worst conditions out of all South Florida facilities. Detained individuals reported unsanitary conditions, medical and mental health neglect, racial discrimination, and excessive use of force, including overuse of retaliatory solitary confinement.

The 2019 report also details instances of unsanitary conditions at the facility, including complaints of mold and mildew on the walls and ceilings, yellow and odorous water, discolored shower curtains from mold buildup, inadequate mattresses to sleep on, and inadequate cleaning products used. The report noted complaints of exacerbated health and respiratory conditions as a result of the unsanitary conditions and mold buildup, to which there is often no medical treatment offered.

On July 8, 2020 [Friends of Miami Dade Detainees \(FOMDD\)](#) reported to Freedom for Immigrants (FFI) that people detained in Glades were striking as a response to poor conditions and being forced to clean the overcrowded housing units in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, according to FOMDD, almost the entire women's unit initiated a week-long commissary boycott in protest of poor conditions.

Updated: August 2020

## Resources

- [Friends of Miami Dade Detainees](#)
- [Florida Immigrant Coalition](#)
- [LGBTQ Freedom Fund](#)
- [Americans for Immigrant Justice](#)
- [Catholic Charities Legal Services of Miami](#)
- [Florida International University College of Law](#)
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
- [United We Dream](#)

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## Sexual Harassment and Abuse

In 2017, FFI filed a [complaint](#) with the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) regarding the sexual abuse and assault at ICE jails and prisons. According to the complaint, between 2012 and 2016, the Glades facility had the 9th highest rate of complaints of sexual and physical assault out of all of the facilities where sexual assault was reported.

## Medical Neglect

The joint SPLC and AIJ report states that there is only one doctor at Glades available four days per week. The report also notes several instances of medical and mental health neglect at the facility, including complaints of lack of timely follow-up and treatment upon diagnosis of severe conditions such as cancer, or urgent dental care needs. Detained individuals with chronic medical conditions reported to SPLC and AIJ wide spread instances of denial of care, and stated that they often would never receive their prescriptions, that requests for appointments, particularly as symptoms worsened, would often go unanswered for weeks, and that prescribed treatments were generally insufficient. According to the SPLC and AIJ report, detained persons also reported substandard mental healthcare including the lack of proper mental health screening and treatment, and cases of inappropriate and racist remarks from the facility workers.

In April 2020, FOMDD shared [reports](#) from detained people regarding shortages of medical supplies. Specifically, detained people reported that the facility was out of antibiotics and all medicine for colds, pain and diabetes. Detained people were told that the shortage would last for at least seven days. Since they began visiting Glades in January 2020, FOMDD has filed 19 CRCL complaints regarding medical neglect, including complaints about regular denials of seizure medication, inhalers, physical therapy, and inadequate pain management. Per FOMDD, one CRCL complaint describes a man with a traumatic brain injury, who is subject to seizures, being placed in solitary for nine days and left unmonitored for at least 10 hours per day. Officers were shutting the one window into the solitary cell, and there was no camera, so it was impossible for anyone to see him. Because of the nature of his traumatic brain injury, he would have needed immediate brain surgery if he had a seizure.

## Excessive Use of Force and Retaliation

Detained individuals interviewed in the 2019 SPLC and AIJ report alleged that the facility staff would employ use of force in many situations, despite guidelines outlining use of force or pepper spray as a last resort. Many that were interviewed complained of overuse of pepper spray to break up fights, instances of beatings, retaliatory use of solitary confinement, and constant verbal abuse, racial slurs, and other demeaning comments.

In June 2020, the Miami Herald [reported](#) on a complaint with CRCL filed by FOMDD naming retaliation against detained individuals who spoke to the media about conditions and medical neglect at the facility. According to FOMDD, Glades staff used pepper spray against detained people, including against an asthmatic person.

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## COVID-19 Related Abuses & Neglect

Glades is especially hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, being the 8th facility with the most total confirmed cases with 137 positive cases reported by ICE as of July 21th, 2020. In March 2020, The Miami New Times [reported](#) that nearly one hundred people detained at Glades started a hunger strike in response to unsanitary conditions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the facility's failure to provide antibacterial soap. In April 2020, the Miami School of Law Immigration Clinic, the Rapid Defense Network, SPLC, Legal Aid Service Of Broward County Inc., and Prada Urizar PLLC filed a [suit](#) seeking the release of detained people in South Florida.

According to the lawsuit, Glades, the Krome Service Processing Center, and the Broward Transitional Center are failing to follow their own guidelines and putting detained people's lives at risk. The same month, a federal judge [ordered](#) ICE to cut their population levels at the aforementioned facilities.

However, in May 2020 The Miami Herald [reported](#) that ICE transferred people out of the area instead of releasing them. In July 2020, the federal judge in the aforementioned April 2020 lawsuit [appointed](#) an independent fact-finder to investigate possible "inhumane conditions, deliberate indifference, and cruel and unusual punishment" at the Southern Florida facilities. However, the judge rescinded this order several hours later, potentially due to a conflict of interest on the part of the appointed investigator. A new fact-finder was [appointed](#) later in July 2020.

## Use of Toxic Chemicals

In May 2020, FOMDD [filed](#) a CRCL complaint regarding the use of toxic disinfectants and unaddressed medical issues exacerbated by these chemicals at Glades. In June 2020 FFI and FOMDD jointly filed a follow up [complaint](#) to ICE's Miami Field Office, CRCL and the Glades County Sheriff's office regarding continued use of toxic chemical disinfectant and associated medical harm at Glades. The CRCL was filed on behalf of a man with COVID-19 and included anonymous testimony of more than a dozen others naming the toxic chemical usage was further impairing their ability to breathe and leading to ailments such as nausea, coughing blood, and shortness of breath. According to reports from people in detention, officials at Glades are spraying chemicals up to three times a day.

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