



Guatemala Human Rights Commission / USA

Fact Sheet

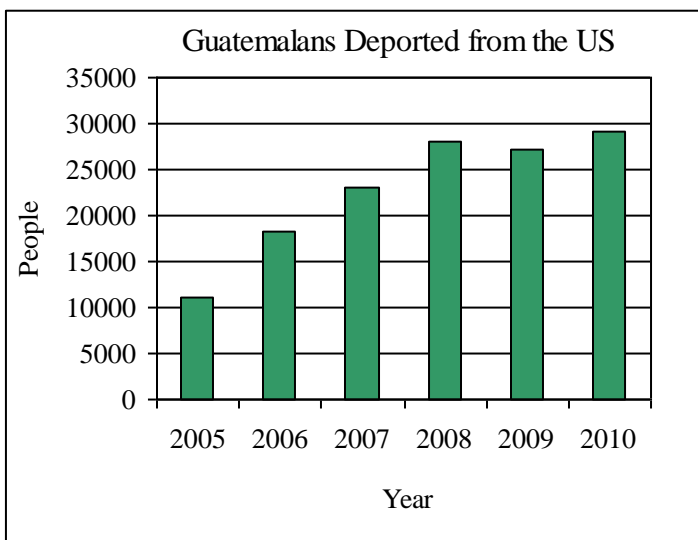
Detention and Deportation

From “Catch and Release” to Privatized Detention:

- ❖ When it was created in 2003, the ICE set a goal for the removal of all deportable persons by 2012. Since there was not enough space to house all of the undocumented immigrants discovered at that time, immigrants were issued orders to appear in court for a deportation hearing and allowed to go free until the trial.
- ❖ The detention system was later put in place as temporary housing to minimize incidents of immigrants not showing up for their deportation hearings.
- ❖ Over half the nation’s immigrant detention centers are now privately owned and operated by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA).

Deportation Population and Costs:

- ❖ For the Fiscal Year 2011, ICE requested \$5.8 billion from Congress. Since 2003, the ICE has been granted almost \$208 billion towards the deportation of immigrants. The number of deportations in 2008 reached 349, 041 persons, almost double the number from 2003.
- ❖ In 2009, more than 380,000 immigrants were detained at detention facilities.
- ❖ During the period from 2003 to January 2011, 118 people died while being detained.
- ❖ The average cost of detaining an immigrant is approximately \$122 per person per day.
- ❖ Alternatives to detention, which generally include a combination of reporting and electronic monitoring, are effective and significantly cheaper, with some programs costing as little as \$12 per day. These alternatives to detention still yield an estimated 93% appearance rate before the immigration courts. Despite less expensive alternatives, the government has still chosen detainment.



Detention Facilities:

- ❖ Detention facilities around the country are plagued with problems, including:
 - Lawsuits due to abysmal living conditions.
 - Reports that detainees have been denied food or medicine as punishment.
 - Lack of sufficient health care, especially for pregnant women and newborns.
 - Slow trial process (up to 1 year for some, despite the ICE time limit of 6 months).
- ❖ Detention facility B-18 in Los Angeles, California, is the subject of an ACLU lawsuit. At that center, detainees have been kept 50 or more to per cell and denied basic due-process rights such as access to an attorney.
- ❖ In some cases, detainees have been kept in the basement of facilities with no water, soap, change of clothes, or showers for weeks.

Raids:

- ❖ During the George W. Bush administration, large workplace raids were common.
- ❖ Under the Obama administration, ICE has continued to carry out raids, but on a smaller scale.
- ❖ The following are just a few examples of recent controversial raids:



- Postville, Iowa, May 12, 2008: At the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant, 389 workers, the majority of them Guatemalan, were taken into custody for “identity theft” (falsified documents and the misuse of Social Security numbers), which is considered a federal crime. The sudden incarceration of more than 10% of the town’s population left half the school’s children at home the next day, as their parents were held in detention centers. Many workers spent between 6 months and 2 years in jail before being deported. Several women with young children were allowed to remain in the US with ankle bracelets to track their movements. The town’s economy and sense of community were left in ruins.
- Laurel, Mississippi, August 28, 2008: At Howard Industries, immigration authorities took 600 people into custody, making it the largest raid in US history. Many non-Hispanic employees of this historically racist town cheered as they watched their colleagues being escorted away. Meanwhile, 300 children under the age of five, and 187 school-age children, were left without caretakers and were not notified that their families wouldn’t be coming home.

Department of Homeland Security: Current Programs and Initiatives:

- ❖ Border Enforcement and Security Taskforce (BEST) brings together local, state and federal law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes along the Border.
- ❖ In a \$5.7 million initiative for 2009, DHS doubled the number of ICE agents assigned to these forces from 95 to 190.
- ❖ The Drug Enforcement Administration has recently removed the cap on the number of ICE agents who can conduct drug investigations. Previously set at 1,475 out of 6,000 ICE agents, the new deal gives the ICE unlimited authority to investigate drug cases in coordination with the DEA.



Reform Movements Supported by the GHRC:

- ❖ An immediate halt to ICE raids and deportations that cause undocumented Guatemalans and their families to live in a state of fear; an end to the separation of undocumented workers and their families.
- ❖ Fair treatment and efficient court procedures for undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, rather than treating them as criminals.
- ❖ Granting Temporary Protected Status for Guatemalan people residing in the United States who cannot return to Guatemala due to reasons of armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions.

Sources: <http://www.migracion.gob.gt>, the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), The Associated Press, the Department of Homeland Security, and <http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org>.