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## **Civil Rights Abuses Persist at Plymouth County Correctional Facility According to a New Complaint to Massachusetts AG Filed on Behalf of Detained Immigrants**

CAMBRIDGE, MA – Advocates serving immigrants detained at the Plymouth County Correctional Facility are renewing their demand for an end to civil rights abuses at the facility.

In a [complaint](#) filed today with the Attorney General’s Office, eight local advocacy organizations—including the Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program, and the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition—documented new and ongoing civil rights violations at Plymouth. The complaint sheds light on the continued communications challenges facing immigrants detained at Plymouth, which advocates previously documented in a [complaint](#) to the Attorney General’s Office last March, 2023. It also highlights a wide range of additional civil rights violations, including the use of solitary confinement, medical neglect, religious discrimination, and retaliation.

Heeding advocates’ concerns, the Attorney General’s Office is currently reviewing conditions at Plymouth. But while Plymouth is under review, advocates say that the civil rights abuses persist, impacting even more detainees since the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency established a new unit at Plymouth, expanding its detention capacity from 240 to 360 immigrants.

Abuses documented by advocates include:

- Prohibitions on phoning into the facility, making it exceedingly difficult for attorneys to reach their clients and for immigrants to prepare their immigration cases.
- Costs of over \$6,000 paid to JurisLink for an asylum case, Plymouth’s videoconferencing system, which is the only mechanism for lawyers to reach clients. Lawyers get charged full fees even when Plymouth fails to bring their client to a scheduled JurisLink meeting.
- Frequent abuse of solitary confinement and restriction of access to counsel during such confinement.
- Lack of language interpretation, including for medical needs, legal matters, or communicating with jail staff, and being punished with solitary confinement because of the language barrier.
- Harassment of LGBTQ immigrants who report being placed in solitary confinement and who fear reporting due to the use of solitary confinement.
- Severely undercooked food, including meat that is essentially raw, and spoiled and rotten food.

- Inadequate heat, forcing some individuals to resort to using towels to stay warm and be punished for doing so.
- Inaccessible facilities and immigrants with disabilities being forced to drag themselves on the floor, rather than use their wheelchair.
- Religious discrimination and restrictions on their religious practice, including being threatened with solitary confinement for requesting a safe space to practice religion.

“The continuation of these abuses at Plymouth is unacceptable, and those responsible must be held accountable,” said Sarang Sekhvat, chief of staff at the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition. “We cannot claim to be a nation of laws while government officials show such callous disregard for those same laws and take away the right of people in their custody to seek justice.”

“By restricting phone access and making other forms of communication prohibitively expensive, Plymouth erects barriers that systematically deprive immigrants of access to counsel and the right to seek immigration relief,” said Tiffany Lieu, clinical instructor with the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program. “Plymouth is depriving immigrants in its custody of the basic human decency to which they are entitled. These abuses must end.”

A 2022 investigation by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties documented similar rights violations including obstruction of legal access, religious accommodations, inadequate food and medical care. Yet, ICE and Plymouth addressed [only three](#) of the [70 priority recommendations](#).

Senator Elizabeth Warren’s office also issued a [letter](#) today inquiring about these and other conditions at Plymouth.

“The mistreatment, inhumane living conditions and medical neglect at Plymouth take a huge toll,” said Annie Gonzalez, who coordinates the detained hotline for the Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network. “The only way to prevent this immoral suffering is to end the contract with Plymouth and release all detained by ICE in Massachusetts, allowing individuals to continue with their cases from their homes.”

The new complaint is available to read in full at:  
[https://harvardimmigrationclinic.org/files/2024/08/MA-AG-Complaint-Summer-2024\\_FINAL.pdf](https://harvardimmigrationclinic.org/files/2024/08/MA-AG-Complaint-Summer-2024_FINAL.pdf).

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