

Open letter from never-have-been-in-the-USA asylum seekers detained at D Ray James ICE Processing Center, Folkston, Georgia.

To whoever reads this letter – whether you are a journalist, a lawyer, a human rights advocate, a public official, or simply someone who believes in fairness and human dignity.

1. Who We Are

We are those who never set our feet on American soil, yet have long been within its borders. We are those who have been imprisoned for years, yet have never been accused of any crime. We are those who sought asylum in the first country to defend rights and freedoms, yet found themselves deprived of both.

We are 45 men currently held at the immigration detention in Georgia. We come from different countries, races, beliefs, and backgrounds, but we share one thing in common: we came to the United States seeking protection and have been detained since then.

Among us, the longest detention is about 32 months and the shortest is more than 16 months. The average time in detention is 20 months. During this time, some of us have lost family members while being held here. Many of us have been separated from our families – from parents, brothers, sisters, wives, and children. We have missed births, funerals, years of our lives while sitting behind fences without having committed any crime. While we are separated from the rest of the world in a place where every day is the same, the world continues to move forward without us.

We are victims of the “arcane United States immigration system”, which allows the government to indefinitely detain us without any reason (quotation by Honorable Fred Biery, district court judge, Texas).

2. Our Situation

Most of us are still fighting our asylum cases in immigration court. These cases often take up to 12-18 months, and our or government appeals to higher courts each can take another year or more.

For others, deportation orders have been issued, but the government itself has not been able to carry them out.

Many of us have tried every available legal path to seek release from detention: bond requests, parole requests, custody reviews, and habeas petitions in federal court. None of these efforts have succeeded. We are told that because we are classified as “arriving aliens”, the law treats us as if we are still standing outside the gate of the United States asking for permission to entry. Because of this legal classification, the protections normally associated with liberty and due process do not apply to us, at least in Georgia.

In practice, this creates a troubling reality. Innocent people can remain in civil detention for very long periods without any individualized finding that they are dangerous or likely to flee, which are actually the true reasons to detain immigrants.

We understand that temporary detention may sometimes be necessary to verify identity or conduct background checks. But detention lasting one year, two years, or longer without a clear individual justification raises serious questions about fairness and reasonableness.

3. About The Law

The U. S. Constitution states that no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law. The U. S. Supreme Court has repeatedly stated that liberty is supposed to be the norm, and detention with or without trial should be a carefully limited exception.

At the same time, certain legal interpretations regarding people classified as “arriving aliens” allow immigration authorities to detain noncitizens for very long periods while their cases move slowly through the system. Because of this legal framework, the right to request asylum exist in theory while prolonged detention makes it extremely difficult to exercise that right in practice. As in our cases, with such unreasonable periods of detention, the right for asylum becomes a mere formality.

In different parts of the United States, long-term detainees receive hearings from federal courts to review whether continued detention is necessary. In other places, including our place, people remain detained for extended periods without any opportunity for release.

For those of us held here in Georgia, it feels like rights exist only on paper.

4. Detention Conditions

We are detained at the D Ray James ICE Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia. This facility was previously operated as a correctional prison, and reopened as an immigration detention in 2025, retaining its prison infrastructure, rules, and regulations. But this place is even worse than prison in some ways, because now it is designed for short stays. Immigration detention is supposed to be temporary, short, yet many of us have already spent years here.

We experience problems common in prisons: property confiscations during searches, arbitrariness and impunity of guards, occasional failures of air conditioning, plumbing and all other systems, regular collective punishments affecting many detainees because of the actions of one person, poor food, extremely limited medical care, and many others.

Prison is meant to be a punishment for people who have committed crimes. Yet we are just asylum seekers who came asking for protection. We fled political persecution, religious persecution, or violence in our home countries. We came here hoping to find safety. Instead, we found ourselves in prison.

5. What You Can Do

If you are reading this letter, we ask you simply not to ignore it.

You can help by:

- Sharing this story and bringing attention to the issue. #helpaliens
- Speaking about it publicly if you have the ability to do so.
- Offering legal advice or support if you are a lawyer.
- Reaching out if you know organizations that might be able to help.
- Sending letters or messages of support. Address: name, alien number, P.O. Box 548, Folkston, GA 31537.

Attention and awareness matter.

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6. A Short Reminder From History

The history of the United States is a history of expanding rights and freedoms. African Americans were freed in 1865, but really rights were strengthened only many decades later. Women gained the right to vote in 1920. Native Americans received citizenship in 1924. Asians gained the right to naturalize in 1952. People with disabilities received major protections in 1990.

In many cases, rights existed on paper long before they became real in practice.

As the Declaration of Independence (1776) states:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"

The United States has always moved forward by making those rights real.

7. The 45 Men Still Waiting For Freedom

We came to the United States seeking safety and political asylum from persecution in our home countries. Instead, we have spent years in prison. We are not asking for some special treatment – only for the chance to complete our cases in freedom, and those who are awaiting deportation want to wait for it in freedom too, especially those who have been waiting for departure many months, we have already lost too much time here. We hope someone will hear our voices.

Below are not just numbers or case files, they are real people.

Date: 6/15/26

Respectfully,
Idris Makhmudov
Author of this.

No.	Name	Alien number A#	Citizenship	Detained at	Months
1	Idris Makhmudov	243 151 206	Russia	July, 2024	23
2	Abdula Makhmudov	243 151 207	Russia	July, 2024	23
3	Aiub Umarov	243 151 215	Russia	July, 2024	23
4	Iakov Ankundinov	249 317 825	Russia	June, 2024	24
5	Aleksei Kovalko	249 137 710	Russia	May, 2024	25
6	Narek Grigorian	221 076 438	Russia	Nov, 2024	19
7	Tseren Khantaev	249 137 736	Russia	June, 2024	24
8	Nikita Kosnikov	249 373 747	Russia	Mar, 2024	27
9	He Xiong	221 390 086	China	Jan, 2025	17
10	He Xing	221 394 323	China	Feb, 2025	16
11	Liang Sonji	249 147 961	China	Oct, 2023	32
12	Mamdou Sogoba	221 196 452	Mali	Dec, 2024	18
13	Ahmed Emam-Yousof	221 147 412	Sudan	July, 2024	23

14	Yimi Kamtchoua	221 312 666	Cameroon	Jan, 2025	17
15	Shajit Nanthakumaran	221 356 140	Sri Lanka	Jan, 2025	17
16	Madjid Ahmad	221 147 428	Chad	July, 2024	23
17	Arshdeep Singh	221 155 425	India	Aug, 2024	22
18	Gurmeet Singh	221 311 586	India	Dec, 2024	18
19	Aiman Aloshaishi	221 087 901	Yemen	June, 2024	24
20	Amr Bahurmoz	221 148 902	Yemen	Aug, 2024	22
21	Hamed Afsar	221 078 086	Iran	Sep, 2024	21
22	Mujtaba Qeyami	221 394 617	Afganistan	Feb, 2025	16
23	Maroof Kalakani	221 394 831	Afganistan	Feb, 2025	16
24	Abdul Amani	221 197 002	Afganistan	Jan, 2025	17
25	Shahram Nasrat	221 312 483	Afganistan	Jan, 2025	17
26	Khalid Bahar	221 197 003	Afganistan	Jan, 2025	17
27	Ali Hassan	221 307 388	Pakistan	Feb, 2025	16
28	Ali Sufyan	221 307 390	Pakistan	Feb, 2025	16
29	Ali Atif	221 307 389	Pakistan	Feb, 2025	16
30	Faisal Baig	221 393 698	Pakistan	Jan, 2025	17
31	Ahsan Mahmood	221 393 371	Pakistan	Jan, 2025	17
32	Naeem Ahmad	221 394 603	Pakistan	Feb, 2025	16
33	Mussawar Ali	221 394 614	Pakistan	Feb, 2025	16
34	Asad Ali	221 307 060	Pakistan	Jan, 2025	17
35	K C Laxman	221 394 816	Nepal	Feb, 2025	16
36	Narayan Bohara	221 394 419	Nepal	Feb, 2025	16
37	Neule Lotus	221 394 432	Nepal	Feb, 2025	16
38	Oli Narendra	221 394 502	Nepal	Feb, 2025	16
39	K C Bhim	221 393 530	Nepal	Jan, 2025	17
40	Subash Nepali Darji	221 393 443	Nepal	Jan, 2025	17
41	Ldangi Rudra	221 393 699	Nepal	Jan, 2025	17
42	Hemant GC	221 393 619	Nepal	Jan, 2025	17
43	Suraj Lama	221 394 426	Nepal	Feb, 2025	16
44	Talik Budah	221 393 424	Nepal	Jan, 2025	17
45	Mandip Budha Magar	221 394 817	Nepal	Feb, 2025	16