



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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DHS OIG Inspections Find Violations of Detention Standards at Pulaski County Jail in Ullin, IL and La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ

Two new reports from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) identify violations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention standards that threatened the health, safety, and rights of detainees. These reports are based on unannounced inspections of Pulaski County Jail in Ullin, Illinois and La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, Arizona. Because the coronavirus pandemic prevented OIG inspectors from visiting Pulaski and La Palma in person, they developed a novel remote inspection protocol that led them to discover multiple violations of standards at both facilities.

Between November 2020 and January 2021, DHS OIG inspectors conducted an unannounced remote inspection of the Pulaski County Jail to determine whether Pulaski complied with ICE's 2011 *Performance-Based National Detention Standards* (PBNDS). Pulaski did not meet standards for classification, medical care, segregation, or detainee communication. Inspectors also found that the facility was not consistently providing required oversight for detainees in segregation by conducting routine wellness checks.

The inspectors also conducted a limited review of the facility's COVID-19 pandemic preparedness measures and its response to outbreaks of COVID-19 across the detainee population. OIG inspectors found Pulaski did not consistently enforce precautions including use of facial coverings and social distancing, which may have contributed to repeated COVID-19 transmissions at the facility.

Similarly, between August and November 2020, OIG inspectors evaluated ICE's compliance with the 2011 PBNDS as well as applicable COVID-19 guidelines at the La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, Arizona. During the inspection they found:

- Detainees alleged excessive use of force in response to detainees' peaceful protests about concerns over COVID-19 precautions. While the 2011 standards do not specify whether non-lethal force can be used to end protests, DHS OIG confirmed that the facility used chemical agents to

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end the protests and in response to 11 of 27 other events. OIG inspectors also confirmed instances of verbal abuse against detainees.

- La Palma provided limited PPE and did not enforce facial coverings or social distance among detainees.
- The facility medical unit was critically understaffed leading to delayed sick call responses and medication administration.
- Segregation records raised concerns about detainee care and treatment.
- La Palma showed deficient detainee communication practices.

DHS OIG's report on violations at the La Palma Correctional Center was featured in the New York Times, Federal News Radio, Cronkite News, and the Washington Post.

Read DHS OIG's full reports here:

- *Violations of ICE Detention Standards at Pulaski County Jail* (OIG-21-32, April 2021)
- *Violations of Detention Standards amid COVID-19 Outbreak at La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ* (OIG-21-30, March 2021)