

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mullin:

We write to express our concerns over the serious civil rights violations that Muslim detainees have suffered while detained at a Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) detention facilities, particularly as it pertains to religious accommodations, such as access to the Quran, hijabs, prayer mats, and the failure to have designated prayer spaces and halal meals. Under ICE’s own detention standards, ICE must provide detainees with “reasonable and equitable opportunities to participate in the practices of their respective faiths.”¹ The alarming actions by ICE in denying individuals their civil rights continues a disturbing practice by your agency in violating DHS’s own policies, in addition to the law, that must be immediately rectified.

The Free Exercise Clause of the Constitution prohibits the government from denying an individual’s right to exercise their religion.² This right protects not only the ability to have a particular religious belief, but also the acts involved in practicing one’s religion.³ Federal law also prohibits the government agencies from “substantially burden[ing] a person’s exercise of religion.”⁴ Under this provision, if the government “(1) compel[s] the[individual] to perform acts undeniably at odds with fundamental tenets of their religious beliefs, (2) put[s] substantial pressure on them to modify their behavior and to violate their beliefs, or (3) bears direct, primary, and fundamental responsibility for rendering a religious exercise effectively impracticable,” then the government will have violated this right.⁵ Because immigrant detainees are treated the same as civil detainees, they are afforded “more constitutional protection, more considerate treatment, and conditions of confinement than criminals whose conditions of confinement are designed to punish.”⁶ Consequently, the treatment they should be given while under the care and control of the government must reflect that.

For Muslims, the manner in which individuals practice and exercise their faith may take different forms—including wearing hijabs, keeping halal, using prayer mats, reading or reciting the text in the Quran, just to name a few. This year, Muslim detainees who sought to observe Ramadan—a revered month that is practiced by engaging in reflection, fasting, communal prayer, studying the Quran, and community—and the holidays of Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha were hampered or unable to do so because their ability to practice was impaired by ICE. Take for example, Leqaa Kordia, a Muslim woman from Paterson, New Jersey who spent over a year in detention at the Prairieland Detention Facility in Alvarado, Texas. During this time, she has described how ICE

1 U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t., Performance-Based National Detention Standards 2011, § 5.5(v) (rev. 2016), www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-standards/2011/pbnds2011r2016.pdf.

2 U.S. Const. Amend. 1.

3 See *Holt v. Hobbs*, 574 U.S. 352 (2014).

4 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb-1(a).

5 *Soc’y of Divine Word v. U.S. Citizenship & Immigr. Servs.*, 129 F.4th 437, 450 (7th Cir. 2025).

6 *Mehmood v. Guerra*, 783 F. App’x 938, 941 (11th Cir. 2019).

systematically delayed or outright denied her ability to practice her Muslim faith, including by not providing her with a prayer mat, the Quran, or halal food.⁷ But Leqaa's experience is not isolated—it is just one example in a pattern of behavior by DHS in violating detainees' constitutional rights. At Delaney Hall in New Jersey, reports detail how detainees have been denied access to the Quran.⁸ At the Northwest ICE Processing Center in Washington, detainees have also reported being blocked from congregating to pray at dedicated times as prescribed by the Quran, or have been denied the ability to pray outright.⁹ These reports, and others indicating disparate treatment in accommodating other religious requests by Muslim detainees, raise grave concerns over ICE infringing on their right to exercise their religion while in detention.

The failure to protect detainees' civil rights for religious accommodations will only become more acute as the administration continues to scale up its mass deportation campaign. Per the agency's own data, ICE currently has over 60,000 individuals in immigration detention¹⁰—a nearly 70% increase compared to the previous administration.¹¹ This is to say nothing of the recently enacted reconciliation package that provides your Department with an additional \$70 Billion for its operations. At the same time, this administration has taken numerous actions to inhibit proper oversight of these facilities. Over the past year and a half, the department has deemed non-essential the Office of Detention Oversight, the component of ICE that inspects detention centers to ensure they meet federal standards of safe and humane treatment of detainees.¹² It has instituted mass firings at the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties¹³ and shut down the Office of Immigration Detention Ombudsman, which was established to provide oversight into immigration detention facilities.¹⁴

Individuals practicing their faith must be given reasonable accommodations—full stop. Accordingly, we are demanding ICE take immediate action to ensure that all Muslim detainees have unimpeded access to their requested religious accommodations, including to the Quran and other religious materials upon intake, guarantee that Muslim women have access to a hijab upon request, establish designated prayer spaces with access to prayer mats, and implement halal meal options as a standard offering. Additionally, we are requesting ICE provide answers to the following questions **no later than August 18, 2026**:

7 Press Release, Amnesty Int'l., One Year Later, Leqaa Kordia's Unlawful Detention Continues with Little Regard to Her Human Rights (Mar. 12, 2026), www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/one-year-later-L-leqaa-kordias-unlawful-detention-continues-with-little-regard-to-her-human-rights/.

8 Press Release, Council on American-Islamic Relations, CAIR-NJ Calls On Delaney Hall ICE Detention Facility to Make Ramadan Accommodations (Feb. 11, 2026), www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-nj-calls-on-delaney-hall-ice-detention-facility-to-make-ramadan-accommodations/.

9 *ICE Jails Have Repeatedly Denied Muslims the Right to Fully Observe Ramadan*, Truthout (Mar. 18, 2026) [/truthout.org/articles/ice-jails-have-repeatedly-denied-muslims-the-right-to-fully-observe-ramadan/](https://truthout.org/articles/ice-jails-have-repeatedly-denied-muslims-the-right-to-fully-observe-ramadan/).

10 Immigr. & Custom Enforc., *Detention Statistics FY 2026*, Detention Management (last visited Apr. 20, 2026), www.ice.gov/detain/detention-management.

11 *Deaths of Migrants in ICE Custody Hit Record High Under Trump*, NPR (Apr. 17, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/04/17/nx-sl-5789092/deaths-of-migrants-in-ice-custody-hit-record-high-under-trump>.

12 *ICE Closes Detention Oversight Group in Shutdown Despite Surge in Detainees*, Wash. Post (Oct. 7, 2025), www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/10/07/ice-detention-centers-oversight-shutdown/.

13 *Trump's Shuttering of DHS Oversight Arm Freezes 600 Cases, Imperils Human Rights*, ProPublica (Apr. 8, 2025) <https://www.propublica.org/article/homeland-security-crcl-civil-rights-immigration-border-patrol-trump-kristi-noem>

14 *Independent Agency Overseeing Misconduct in Immigration Detention Facilities Shut Down*, ABC News (May 6, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/independent-agency-overseeing-misconduct-immigration-detention-facilities-shut-story?id=132726415>

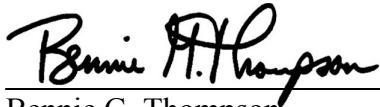
- 1) Since January 20, 2025, how many Muslim-identifying individuals have been, or are currently in, ICE detention?
- 2) Does ICE or its contractors have on-staff Muslim chaplains at each facility that provide services in their detention facilities?
 - a) If no, please provide the name and location of each detention facility that does not have or provide a Muslim chaplain and provide an explanation for failing to provide Muslim chaplains.
- 3) Does ICE keep track of religious accommodation requests?
 - a) If no, please provide an explanation for failing to maintain a record of such requests.
 - b) If yes, please provide for each immigration detention facility since January 20, 2025, the total number of Muslim religious accommodation requests, including:
 - (1) Requests that have been granted, and whether they were granted as requested or were modified and the scope of such modification;
 - (2) Requests that have been denied and the justification for denying such request; and
 - (3) Requests have gone unanswered and the length of time since each request was submitted;
- 4) Has ICE denied any imams or other Muslim faith leaders from entering detention facilities whose purpose is/was to provide religious counsel and guidance to detainees?
- 5) Do detention facilities provide accommodations for Muslim detainees to observe Ramadan, Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha?
 - a) If no, please provide an explanation for failing to provide religious accommodations.
 - b) If yes, please provide details regarding accommodations that were made.
- 6) Please detail your internal policies for accommodating a religious fast, such that individuals may still be able to access food and consume their daily allotment of nutrition in compliance with their religious fasting hours?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your prompt response.

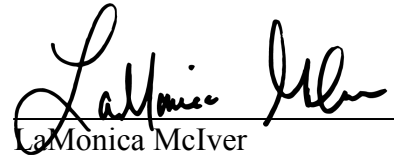
Sincerely,



Nellie Pou
Member of Congress



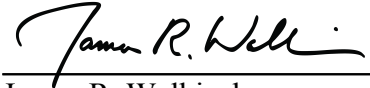
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



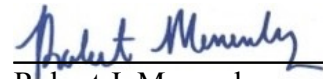
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



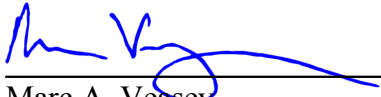
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



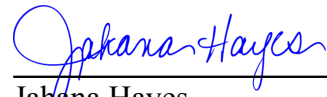
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



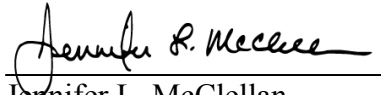
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



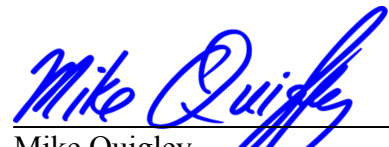
Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress