



DETENTION
WATCH NETWORK



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Community Organizations Celebrate the Temporary Shutdown of the Everglades Concentration Camp

FLORIDA — Yesterday, in a landmark victory for the Miccosukee tribe, environmental and immigrant rights groups, a federal judge ordered the dismantling of the Everglades Concentration Camp. Judge Kathleen M. Williams found that the state and federal governments had violated federal law, which requires an environmental review before any major federal construction project. Judge Williams ordered that transfers to the Everglades Concentration Camp stop and that the state and federal governments have 60 days to tear down the hastily constructed infrastructure. As expected, the DeSantis Administration is fighting back and seeking an appeal.

The ruling highlights what community organizations already knew: in their haste to build the nation's first state-run detention facility, the DeSantis Administration refused to consider the environmental impacts of the camp on sacred indigenous land. This win comes at a time when the DeSantis Administration seeks to open a second detention facility inside the abandoned Baker Correctional Institution. While we celebrate Judge Williams' decision, we hope that the state will abide by her ruling until the Court of Appeals issues its judgment. The DeSantis Administration's ability to go rogue is well-established, as evidenced by the Court finding Attorney General James Uthmeier in contempt.

Yesterday, in a case brought by the City of South Miami, the State also admitted that cities are not required to join 287g Agreements, which serve to terrorize our communities. Immigrant leaders had been

pushing cities to resist threats from the governor and Attorney General and to protect their local decision-making power. DeSantis's overzealous approach to immigration enforcement has trampled on due process and human rights. We will continue to push for the permanent closure of the Everglades Concentration Camp and denounce any new detention centers.

Deputy Director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition, Renata Bozzetto, said, “The courts got this right! The Everglades Detention Camp wasn’t just a human rights crisis — it was a huge environmental threat. Housing hundreds, even thousands, of men in tents in the middle of the fragile Everglades puts immense strain on delicate wetlands, pollutes sacred ecosystems, and endangers marshlands that serve as a crucial source of fresh water. There was never any kind of environmental review; how could there be, after rushing to slap together poles, tents, chainlink fencing, and porta-johns to masquerade this as a site fit for human life!

“This camp violated human rights at every level. Simply put, it was a disaster waiting to happen. It caged people under unsafe tarps in a hurricane-prone geography, denied them basic medical care, and subjected them to systemic abuse. This detention camp brought to the surface the cruel reality of Florida’s immigrant detention sites — they are about punishment and dehumanization. The only viable solution is to shut them down!”

Yareliz Mendez-Zamora, Policy Coordinator with American Friends Service Committee, said, “This was a place where human cruelty was on full display, and the only just thing to do is to shut it down. Men were held in dangerous conditions, and sacred indigenous land was being defiled every single day. DeSantis was willing to cause irreparable harm to the Everglades, so long as he could continue his anti-immigrant crusade. We understand that this is not the end, and we will continue to fight for human dignity.”

Organizing Director of Florida Student Power, Michidael Ceard, says, “This ruling is a powerful victory for young people across Florida who are organizing for a future rooted in dignity, freedom, and justice. The Everglades Concentration Camp was built without consent, environmental review, or regard for Indigenous land and immigrant lives. This decision confirms what youth, tribal nations, and communities have said all along: the state acted unlawfully and in direct violation of our rights. Florida youth are not waiting for permission to lead. We are organizing, building power, and fighting back against systems that cage our people and destroy our land. This win belongs to every student, every young organizer, and every community member who refused to stay silent. We will keep pushing until every detention center is shut down and every community is free.

Nery Lopez, Senior Organizer and Florida resident of Detention Watch Network, said: “The temporary shutdown of the Everglades Concentration Camp is a testament to power of the massive outcry against the inherently inhumane detention system and a rebuke of Trump’s cruel mass detention and deportation agenda. Led by Indigenous communities, people across Florida and the country united to denounce the makeshift facility where abuse, neglect, and cruelty are running rampant. The Everglades Concentration Camp, located in one of the most fragile ecosystems, is an alarming model where state

governors are proactively offering active and shuttered state prisons or state-run detention camps for immigration detention. Today's victory once again illuminates the strength of communities across the country who have long fought ICE's attempts to expand the targeting and detention of people, and in the face of this administration's unrelenting expansion of immigration detention, are demanding to shut down detention centers and halt detention expansion."

Oliver Torres, Chief of Staff at Sanctuary of the South, said: "This is sacred land. Not a bargaining chip. Not a construction site for human suffering. DeSantis trampled on environmental protections, Indigenous sovereignty, and immigrant dignity. We stand with the Miccosukee people, with every family targeted by ICE, and with every Floridian demanding liberation over detention."

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