



# International Detention Coalition

Human rights for detained refugees,  
asylum seekers and migrants

## Media Release

December 10, 2009, International Human Rights Day

### A call to uphold the human rights of detainees

Governments around the world must uphold the human rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants held in immigration detention globally and work to develop community-based alternatives, the International Detention Coalition (IDC) said today, on International Human Rights Day.

The IDC call follows the first ever United Nations Human Right Council meeting on immigration detention during its 12<sup>th</sup> session, which highlighted the growing detention and criminalization of undocumented migrants and its negative impact on physical and mental wellbeing of individuals'. The meeting also highlighted the need for alternatives to detention to be further explored and expanded around the world.

IDC Director Grant Mitchell said the International Detention Coalition is greatly concerned about the growing numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants being detained in conditions below basic international standards and who are suffering gross human rights violations.

*"We call on governments around the world to stop the use of detention as a migration management tool We call on these governments to adhere to international human rights standards which prohibit arbitrary detention and require detention to be a last resort and for alternatives to detention to be pursued".*

#### **There are alternatives to detention.**

*"There are growing international examples of community-based alternatives to detention which maintain the human rights and dignity of individuals, while also addressing government concerns regarding compliance with immigration decisions", Mr. Mitchell said.*

A recent report by the International Detention Coalition highlighted the positive outcomes of an alternatives to detention program in Australia. Over three years this program maintained a 94% appearance rate from the more than 1000 people involved in the program, and almost 70% of refused cases voluntarily departed. [Click here to download.](#)

The IDC today launched a global survey to highlight the use of alternatives to detention around the world, with a report to be released in 2010. The survey can be accessed by [clicking here.](#)

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**Notes to Editors:** The IDC is a coalition of over 200 non-governmental groups and individuals working in over 50 countries providing legal, social and other services, carrying out research and reporting, and doing advocacy and policy work on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The IDC advocates for the greater respect for the human rights of detainees, including limiting the use of, seeking alternatives to, and using the least restrictive forms of, immigration detention. The IDC Advisory Committee brings together a number of leading international NGOs which share concerns about the treatment of immigration detainees, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, Jesuit Refugee Service, Lawyers for Human Rights, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Oxford University Refugee Studies Centre, Oxfam Australia, Women's Refugee Commission, World Council of Churches, and a number of national NGOs.