Who we are
The International Detention Coalition (IDC) is a powerful global network of over 300 civil society organisations in 70 countries, working towards a world without unnecessary immigration detention. IDC has recently expanded its global reach with a new US based office - IDC Americas, a 501 (c) 3 approved charity idcoalition.org/americas.

We are the only international organisation to focus on alternatives to the harmful detention of asylum seekers and refugees. Our message is simple: there are alternatives that are more humane, efficient and cost effective than detaining people. Our aims are to:

- End and limit detention, particularly for children
- Develop and promote alternatives to detention
- Improve human rights, conditions and monitoring of places of immigration detention

We provide internationally recognised technical expertise, research, advocacy, and help strengthen civil society to support alternatives and campaign for detainee rights.

We work with government and non-government organisations across the world to bring about changes in policy and practice that prevent the harms associated with immigration detention and promote humane alternatives.

The Issue
Globally, countless millions of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are at risk of immigration detention each year. With migration on the rise, countries are increasingly criminalising migrants and using harsh detention policies to punish or attempt to deter irregular migration. This is despite clear international standards demonstrating that migration is not a crime and immigration detention should only ever be used as a last resort.

States frequently use a one-size fits all approach to immigration assessment, with little consideration of age, gender, medical condition and other vulnerabilities or protection needs.

Too often this lack of due process results in unnecessary detention that can last for months to years. Men, women and children are deprived of their liberty in overcrowded, unsafe and unhygienic conditions for prolonged periods.

The physical and psychological impacts of detention are well documented. Women and children are especially vulnerable to violence and abuse and studies have shown that even short periods of detention can have life-long physical, mental, and developmental impacts.

Our Impact
The IDC has been a key contributor to the shift in the international debate around seeking more humane, sustainable alternatives to detention.

A recent independent evaluation found the IDC’s work to have a significant impact at the UN, regional and national levels. In the last 5 years, the number of countries engaging in alternatives to detention has increased five fold (to 69 countries), 90% of which the IDC has worked with.

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Our Work

Capacity Building
The IDC provides a critical link in building knowledge, capacity and effective cooperation between our local NGO members, national governments, regional and international bodies. Through our Regional Coordinators we are creating spaces for NGOs and government agencies to openly dialogue, share information and create collaborative solutions to complex migration governance issues at the local, national, and regional levels.

Advocacy
The IDC’s advocacy work has been globally recognised for constructively advocating for evidence-based change. We work collectively with—not against—governments, UN agencies and our many civil society members to seek effective solutions to complex challenges, and have worked to reframe the use of immigration detention as a costly and unnecessary policy response that can be better solved through regional cooperation and the exploration of rights-based alternatives to detention.

Research
The IDC has been instrumental in promoting and developing evidence-based research into global immigration detention practices and the use and availability of alternatives to detention. In 2011, our groundbreaking research, ‘There Are Alternatives’ found that globally there are viable, cost effective, and humane community-based alternatives to detention. This research also produced the Community Assessment and Placement (CAP) model, which has been a helpful framework for governments, UN agencies, and civil society organisations to explore, develop, and implement ATD at the national level.

Campaigns and Awareness Raising
The IDC has utilised our expertise in solutions-focused dialogue to raise awareness among governments, UN agencies, and civil society organisations to explore, develop and implement effective alternatives to detention. Through this work, we have established a reputation for providing technical expertise in practical solutions, and the IDC is seen as a ‘go to’ international organisation for finding solutions and addressing unnecessary immigration detention.

The Global Campaign to End Child Detention

Millions of children are impacted by detention around the world. Many are left alone with adult detainees and guards and are vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological abuse and struggle to access legal assistance, adequate medical care and education. Despite the known psychological harm, including impaired cognitive development; the incarceration of children in immigration detention is a little discussed human rights issue internationally.

The Campaign aims to: raise public awareness of the issue; strengthen local community groups’ ability to support children in detention; engage political leaders to change national policies and law and strengthen regional and international cooperation. More than 100 organizations from around the world have formally endorsed the campaign.

Our future
Over the last 5 years, the IDC has had a significant impact on limiting the use of immigration detention across the world. We have achieved this impact with a very small team of dedicated staff and through the generous support of our supporters, including the Planet Wheeler Foundation, Oak Foundation, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and the Open Society Institute. Each year the demand for our expertise is growing as our campaign for change results in more and more countries exploring alternatives to detention. Your support will ensure we continue this important work. Join us in changing the lives of millions refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in immigration detention. For more information about our work and how you can support us, please email info@idcoalition.org.