

Strategic Plan
2023-2028

International Detention Coalition (IDC)

About IDC

International Detention Coalition (IDC) is a powerful global network of 400+ organisations, groups, individuals, and representatives of communities impacted by immigration detention, based in over 100 countries. IDC members have a wide range of specialisations related to immigration detention and alternatives to detention, including academia, law, research, policy, direct service provision, advocacy, and community organising.

IDC staff work across the world, nationally and regionally, in Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and at the global level. Staff coordinate with members and partners on advocacy, research, coalition and capacity building, as well as create opportunities for national, regional and global collaboration to end immigration detention and further rights-based alternatives to detention.

Our Vision

A world where immigration detention no longer exists and people who migrate live with rights and dignity.

Our Mission

IDC strategically builds movements and influences law, policy and practice to end immigration detention, as well as implement rights-based ATD. We advocate to secure the human rights of people impacted by and at risk of immigration detention, in partnership with civil society, UN agencies, and multiple levels of government.

Values



Solutions-Focused

We strategically adapt our approaches to context, and develop pragmatic solutions that are grounded in everyday reality and experience



Innovation

We continually innovate our understanding and practices, through curiosity, learning, and exploring new possibilities



Collaboration

We engage in collective thinking and group-centred processes that facilitate an active exchange of ideas and contributions



Respect

We listen closely and with empathy to diverse perspectives, share and accept critique, and treat one another with dignity



Representation

We prioritise diversity, inclusion, and the leadership of people with lived experience of detention, in order to ensure accountability in our work

IDC's Vision

Building a better future for migration

It is in our power to build a fair system for immigration that centres humanity and rights. At IDC, we want to inspire action around the world to end immigration detention.

We are reimagining what a world without immigration detention would look like. Where every person can enjoy human dignity, liberty and fairness, and all are able to assert their rights. Where people have the tools, stability, and respect they deserve to make informed decisions through migration processes.

We are forging a global movement to end immigration detention that will lead to a better future that not only works better for individuals, but also for the communities and societies we live in.

Liberty and rights for people on the move

In the world we envision, the right to liberty sits at the centre of migration systems and processes.

People navigating these processes are free to live their lives within communities, without restrictions, and their basic needs such as healthcare, food, and housing are met.

People have the right to work and access education in order to support and strengthen themselves, their families, and loved ones. People feel settled, and welcomed as a valuable part of their communities.

A fair future

People are given the support they require through their migration experience, and their individual needs, skills and strengths are identified. Timely legal assistance and access to services gives people the agency to navigate migration processes and build the lives they deserve.

People feel safe and know that their fundamental rights are upheld, and their strength is respected. We stand for a system that prioritises health and wellbeing, and understands and responds to people's unique lived experiences with specialist and tailored support.

Processes are fair, clear, accessible, transparent and people know what to expect. They are able to explore all their options to reach a resolution that is right for them.

Everyone involved works collaboratively, and by working together towards just and fair case resolutions, we avoid the harms of detention with a system built on trust, consistency and freedom.

A world without immigration detention

Everyone deserves somewhere safe to live, where they can prosper and thrive. We stand for a system that works with people and recognises their humanity and agency. That is why we are working in solidarity with organisations across the globe to pave the way for a world where immigration detention no longer exists and people who migrate live with rights and dignity.

The Problem of Immigration Detention

Immigration detention is a human rights violation. People and whole communities are systematically deprived of their liberty, often in harmful conditions, for months, years and even indefinitely, while they await resolution of their immigration status or deportation. Immigration detention policies and practices have debilitating physical, mental and emotional impacts on individuals and communities, which affect people in different ways depending on their situation, including women, girls, men, boys, and people of diverse genders, sexualities, age, ability, language, race, immigration status, culture, and religion. Societies as a whole are also impacted by the use of immigration detention, by creating divisions between groups, and disrupting community cohesion and healthy societies.

Despite the restrictions on immigration detention under international law, many governments continue to rely on immigration detention as a central tool for managing migration. Yet evidence shows that immigration detention does not support effective, sustainable or fair migration outcomes and it is vastly more expensive than alternatives.¹ Further, immigration detention [does not deter](#) migration. Community-based and rights-based alternatives to detention achieve better outcomes for individuals, communities, and governments, including improved health and wellbeing, cost effectiveness, and more successful engagement with migration processes.

Key Terms

“People on the move” describes a diversity of people and communities who migrate, and who may be excluded from legal, economic, social, cultural or political systems to varying degrees. Migration may be voluntary, or due to force or coercion, such as migration as a result of armed conflict, persecution, human rights violations, discrimination or climate-related incidents. Commonly, people are on the move due to complex and changing realities.²

¹ Sampson, R., Chew, V., Mitchell, G., and Bowring, L. *There Are Alternatives: A Handbook for Preventing Unnecessary Immigration Detention* (revised), International Detention Coalition, 2015. pp3-5; Various sources, cited in International Detention Coalition, *Gaining Ground: Promising practice to reduce and end immigration detention*, May 2022.

² The Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders’, Human Rights Council 37th session, United National General Assembly, 2018. p 4. [A/HRC/37/51](#)

“Immigration detention” is a practice widely undertaken by States to control people on the move, depriving them of liberty by using a range of measures, settings, conditions, periods of time and types of treatment. Immigration detention can be any measure where a person is unable to leave at will, or risks some form of deprivation of liberty; these range from official detention facilities to house arrest and confined spaces, and may also include curfews, guarded islands, and other measures that deprive people of their liberty.³ Whilst States may refer to some measures as “alternative to detention,” where they deprive liberty, they are in fact *de facto* forms of detention or *alternative forms of detention*.⁴

“Alternatives to detention” (ATD), as used by IDC, is a concept developed to support the agency and empowerment of people on the move to engage with immigration processes without the need for restrictions or deprivation of liberty. IDC defines alternatives to detention as: ‘Any law, policy or practice by which persons are not detained for reasons relating to their migration status.’⁵

IDC Strategic Priorities for 2023-2028

IDC aims to drive long-term transformative change to end immigration detention through solutions-focused and collaborative approaches to reduce and ultimately end immigration detention. We strategically adapt our approaches to specific contexts, and develop innovative solutions that are grounded in everyday realities and evidence. There is no one-size fits all model for ending immigration detention, and the processes of change and the end situations will look different in each context. IDC’s [Theory of Change](#) explains how IDC believes it will work towards ending immigration detention.

³ International Detention Coalition, *Gaining Ground: Promising practice to reduce and end immigration detention*, May 2022.

⁴refer to ATD strategy paper

⁵ Sampson, R., Chew, V., Mitchell, G., and Bowring, L. *There Are Alternatives: A Handbook for Preventing Unnecessary Immigration Detention* (revised), International Detention Coalition, 2015 p II.

IDC's Strategic Priorities for 2023 to 2028 explain the specific issues IDC will focus on in the next 5 years for implementing our theory of change. These priorities are interconnected and the activities within one strategic priority also support the others.

- Strategic Priority 1** Strengthening the movement to end immigration detention and shifting power to grassroots communities
- Strategic Priority 2** Building support and commitment to end immigration detention
- Strategic Priority 3** Building expertise to end immigration detention and advance good practice
- Strategic Priority 4** Strengthening IDC's organisational sustainability

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthening the movement to end immigration detention and shifting power to grassroots communities

The global movement to end immigration detention is an ecosystem made up of many different people and organisations playing important roles, and using a variety of approaches to end immigration detention and fulfil the rights of people who migrate. Within this ecosystem, IDC believes our role as a membership-based organisation is to use our relationships and connections with people and organisations at local, national, regional and global levels to convene and strengthen the movement to end immigration detention. IDC believes that it is paramount that the movement is led by and accountable to the grassroots - local communities and communities impacted by immigration detention - and that we centre their leadership and lived experience within the movement and within our organisation.

What we want to achieve by 2028

1.1 *The movement to end immigration detention is stronger and more cohesive.*

- Connections between members and allies in the movement are stronger, including greater understanding and visibility of shared values and goals, as well as improved coordination and ability to exercise leadership and have influence.

1.2 People with lived experience of detention have more power, influence, leadership and ownership of change making processes in the movement to end immigration detention.

- The movement to end immigration detention centres people and communities with lived experience of immigration detention.
- The movement to end immigration detention ensures that people with lived experience are given opportunities to exercise leadership and influence, including through having more access to resources to strengthen their capacities and build stronger connections and networks, such as relationships with key political actors, and greater access to decision-making forums.
- Communities closest to the issues on the ground lead advocacy strategies and initiatives at local, national, regional and global levels.
- IDC has a culture of accountability and meaningful inclusion that shifts power dynamics towards those most impacted by immigration detention within our organisation, our membership and in external spaces.

1.3 IDC more effectively engages, collaborates with, and mobilises members.

IDC [Membership Strategy](#) 5-year goals

1. IDC is a connected global movement that prioritises national, regional and cross-regional member engagement to support change on the ground
2. IDC has diverse membership, with increased leadership of people with lived experience of detention, refugee, migrant-led and grassroots groups
3. IDC supports the leadership of members in spaces of influence and members play a key role in shaping our advocacy priorities
4. IDC engages with members in a variety of ways that align with the needs of our members, as well as with our strategic plan
5. IDC has clear membership policies and processes, as well as sustainable membership systems and staff support

1.4 The movement to end immigration detention is gender responsive, reflects intersectional realities and is represented by a diversity of communities, experiences, perspectives, skills and strengths - reinforcing our collective impact.

- More actors within the immigration detention space are aware of the synergies and connected root causes of issues beyond immigration detention, and understand the importance of acting in solidarity with related movements.

- IDC and our members and partners proactively expand our network to a diverse range of actors that represent the intersectional needs of people affected by immigration detention.
- IDC and our members and partners use gender responsive and intersectional approaches that respond to the needs of women, girls, men, boys and gender diverse people affected by detention in the movement to end immigration detention.
- More actors beyond the immigration detention space are aware of the harmful impacts and ineffectiveness of immigration detention, how it connects to their movements, and about promising practices and positive reforms, including the work of IDC, our members, and partners.

How we will do this

IDC will strive to co-create strategies with members, while also supporting collaboration among members and partners. This will include connecting and convening stakeholders working at different levels and in different sectors, expanding communities of practice and facilitating peer learning, enhancing voices of members at regional and global levels, providing technical support and sharing evidence, mobilising resources, supporting strategy development, and collaborating with members.

We will strive to approach our role and proposed solutions with adaptiveness, ensuring that we are informed by impacts on the ground as well as the analysis of our membership in specific contexts. We will use gender responsive and intersectional approaches throughout our work, constantly reflecting on practices and changing and evolving where necessary.

Strategic Priority 2:

Building support and commitment to end immigration detention

IDC believes that to end immigration detention, there must be wider societal recognition of the rights and wellbeing of people who migrate and concern about the harms and ineffectiveness of immigration detention. Simultaneously, there must be greater awareness of effective models for managing migration in the community, without immigration detention and other forms of criminalisation. All key stakeholders must have confidence that alternative models are effective and practical to implement in their specific context based on their first-hand experience, the experiences of trusted peers, or other credible evidence, and be willing to invest time and resources towards initiating and sustaining reforms. Governments must also face political pressure that is strategically appropriate to context to change their laws, policies and practices. This pressure can take many different forms and come from different sources, including the public, civil society, other governments and different areas within governments,

the UN, and regional and international actors. Change depends on local, national and regional contexts, and varies significantly across regions.

What we want to achieve by 2028

2.1 Key actors, including governments, civil society, UN and donors, increase their commitment and investment in strategies to end immigration detention and implement rights-based ATD in target countries.

- There are sustained improvements in the commitment to rights-based ATD, as well as innovation on rights-based ATD, including new legal and policy reform initiatives, new ATD programmes and pilots, increased scope of ATD policies and programmes, and stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- National and regional networks of civil society organisations are stronger, with more aligned strategies and more coordinated advocacy approaches.

2.2 There is stronger evidence for strategies to end immigration detention, and stronger evidence for the effectiveness of rights-based alternatives to detention.

- Stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning processes on the effectiveness of ATD, enable compelling evidence to be collected and disseminated.
- In research and evaluation, lived experience is recognised as a central expertise, and people with lived experience of immigration detention are meaningfully involved in proposing, developing, conducting and utilising research.
- Evidence includes and reflects the experiences and impacts of immigration detention on people with diverse identities and situations.
- IDC's research informs a stronger gender responsive and intersectional approach towards ATD implementation and advocacy.
- IDC members and partners have increased capability to build and generate evidence.

2.3 More governments, civil society actors and other stakeholders become actively engaged in efforts to end immigration detention and implement rights-based ATD.

- More government actors take positive steps towards reducing and ending immigration detention and are champions for rights-based ATD at national, regional and global levels.
- More government, civil society and other key actors participate in peer learning forums.
- Government actors agree to collaborate with IDC and our members and partners to promote ATD.
- There is greater awareness and understanding among targeted public groups about the impact of immigration detention on migrant communities, increasing solidarity and public action.

How we will do this

In partnership with our members and partners, IDC uses solutions-focused and evidence-based approaches to directly engage with key actors on solutions that do not rely on immigration detention, including governments (at different levels), civil society, UN, regional mechanisms and other actors. IDC aims to influence their priorities, decisions and actions, and support their participation and leadership in key networks at global, regional and national levels. IDC will continue to work with key actors in our target countries to strengthen commitment and investment to end immigration detention, and we will seek to identify emerging opportunities for engagement with key actors in other countries where momentum towards change is increasing.

Together with our members and partners, IDC will conduct, and support others to conduct, research and evaluation to demonstrate the importance of ending immigration detention and the effectiveness of rights-based approaches, including ATD. This will include documenting good practices and lessons learned, collaborating with lived experience leaders and using participatory approaches to research and evaluation, developing research and materials on gender-responsive and intersectional approaches in ATD. IDC will seek to ensure that findings and tools offer practical and targeted guidance to governments and civil society actors which can be applied in their own local, national, regional and global contexts. IDC will act as a knowledge hub, disseminating evidence and tools in accessible ways, and supporting partners and others to use and share resources widely.

IDC will also raise awareness and build motivation among governments and other actors through our key strategy of peer learning. Peer learning is a solutions-focused approach that creates spaces of solidarity, builds communities of practice, and facilitates the sharing of ideas, experiences, knowledge, challenges, as well as encourages governments, civil society, and ATD implementers to champion ATD.

IDC uses strategic communications to enhance our advocacy, including developing public engagement strategies and tools for media and civil society, and localising communications materials to ensure they are culturally, linguistically and contextually relevant. In all our advocacy and communications, IDC will strive to centre lived experience leadership and recognise the diverse impacts of varying experiences of immigration detention.

Strategic Priority 3:

Building expertise to end immigration detention and advance good practice

To end immigration detention in practice and implement alternative models for managing migration, governments and other actors need to have adequate expertise, capacity and resources required to change laws and policies. This includes having access to highly-skilled and well-resourced civil society actors that can support governments to implement these changes, as well as evidence of effective models of ATD to enable governments to expand and replicate existing ATD policies, programmes and initiatives. The degree to which lack of capacity and resources is an impediment to ending immigration detention varies between countries and regions. However, IDC believes that if governments have access to the skills and resources needed to change their laws, policies and practices, then they will be more likely to make those changes when the political climate calls for them to do so.

What we want to achieve by 2028

3.1 Governments, civil society actors and ATD implementers have greater capacity and resources to take steps towards ending immigration detention.

- Governments increasingly use whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to reduce and end immigration detention.
- Governments, civil society advocates and ATD implementers are more involved in peer learning and exchange about good practice to reduce and end immigration detention.
- Local civil society actors have stronger capacity to advocate to and support governments to end immigration detention and implement ATD.
- There are stronger national and regional level networks and platforms engaged in evidence-based detention reform and ATD advocacy.

3.2 Models and programmes of rights-based ATD are improved and expanded.

- ATD implementers, including both civil society and governments, have stronger capacity and resources to implement rights-based ATD in line with promising practice.
- ATD models and programmes are supported by evidence and tools designed to enable replication and expansion.

How we will do this

IDC will provide technical assistance to government actors to reform laws, policies and practices to end immigration detention and implement ATD. A key focus for IDC is building the capacity of governments to design, resource, implement, evaluate, scale and champion ATD policies, programmes and initiatives. IDC builds relationships with government stakeholders at all levels and brings different agencies together to support whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to end immigration detention. IDC partners with people with lived experience to plan and implement government engagement efforts, and advocates for solutions that support people in diverse situations of vulnerability.

IDC provides a wide range of capacity development and support for civil society actors advocating to end immigration detention and implement ATD, including support regarding advocacy strategies, collaboration and networking, and strategic communications.

IDC also facilitates peer-learning among our members to promote sharing and exchange on solutions-based strategies. IDC will continue to expand peer learning activities and communities of practice among a variety of actors at local, national and regional levels, as well as cross-regional and global level platforms. IDC believes that systems change requires stakeholders across all sectors to learn and improve together, and IDC has seen that the greatest learning often takes place within and through consistent and strong relationships.

Strategic Priority 4: Fostering IDC's organisational strength and sustainability

Building IDC's strength, infrastructure and sustainability as an organisation is a critical foundation for ensuring that the IDC Secretariat and IDC members have the capacity and resources to conduct our work effectively, in line with our theory of change. Key internal functions for building organisational strength and sustainability are development and fundraising, strategic communications, membership management, effective governance and policy, strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning, IT, effective human resources management, and financial management. IDC prioritises diversity, inclusion and lived experience leadership in strategic planning, communications, membership, systems, recruitment, finances and procurement.

What we want to achieve by 2028

4.1 IDC diversifies our funding base and has stronger financial sustainability.

- IDC has stronger partnerships with donors and more diverse funding sources.
- IDC works in partnership with others to secure funding that responds to the diverse needs of the organisation.
- IDC operates mostly with full cost recovery budgeting models.
- IDC continuously improves our financial systems.

4.2 IDC is a more inclusive organisation and more effectively puts lived experience at the centre of our work.

- People with lived experience have stronger leadership and influence within IDC's work. *[pull out bubble 1: At least 30% of IAC membership is made up of people with lived experience. pull out bubble 2: At least 3 people with lived experience are appointed to the IDC Committee over the next two years.]*
- IDC's recruitment and other related policies and practices reflect diversity, equality and inclusion.

4.3 IDC operates effectively across different regions

- IDC develops effective operations systems across all regions of operations.
- IDC develops, reviews and implements effective organisational policies.
- IDC has effective governance systems with skilled and diverse membership.
- IDC invests in the wellbeing of team members.

4.4 IDC has enhanced learning processes, knowledge and impact.

- IDC is able to monitor, evaluate, learn about and communicate the impact of our work effectively.
- IDC is able to maintain and enhance the knowledge we need to improve and adapt our strategy and strengthen IDC's position as a global knowledge hub of ATD and other practices towards ending immigration detention.

How we will do this

IDC has a strong team and operational systems that are supported to deliver viable projects in the face of complex and changing work contexts in all regions of operations. IDC will manage our budget efficiently and effectively, through improved policies, procedures and practices, and investment in the financial management capacities of team members. IDC will also invest in the health and wellbeing of team members and increase capacity in key areas where necessary. Additionally, as a global organisation with a globally diverse and multicultural team, IDC aims to foster safe, thoughtful, and inclusive spaces for team members to be their full selves among colleagues.

IDC will clarify and strengthen our strategy for engaging with leaders with lived experience and actively support their agency and leadership and ensure that our organisational systems, processes and structures are equitable, inclusive and prioritise collaboration with lived experience leaders.

IDC thinks outside the box for fundraising purposes by building alliances and working in partnership with other movements and organisations that have shared values. In collaboration with partners, IDC will explore, identify and secure funding opportunities that address shared issues. These issues may be local at a national, regional, or global level. They may also focus on common themes or intersecting needs, such as age, disability, gender, religion, sexuality. Addressing these issues will expand the pool of potential donors and increase opportunities for impact.

IDC will increase and diversify opportunities to secure funds by proactively building relationships with donors at the national, regional and global levels. All IDC teams will play a role in building relationships with potential donors and in identifying funding opportunities. IDC teams will be supported in fundraising efforts and will be encouraged to engage and network potential opportunities.

IDC has invested in dedicated team members to build and oversee monitoring, evaluation and learning systems within the organisation. These systems will ensure that IDC is better able to evidence and articulate our impact despite working in a challenging environment that is complex and constantly changing. IDC will also be able to demonstrate that we are a learning organisation that is able to adapt and improve.

For more information about IDC's strategy and work:

- [Theory of Change](#)
- [Membership Strategy](#)
- [ATD Position Paper](#)

IDC Theory of Change: At IDC, we believe that...

If we use these **core approaches**...

and do the following **key activities**...

then we will contribute to these **change pathways**...

which will lead towards our **ultimate change goal**.

