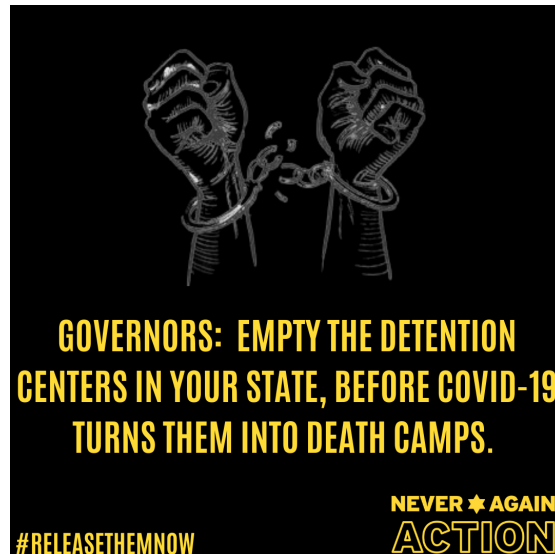


NEVER ★ AGAIN ACTION

#ReleaseThemNow

COVID-19 Action Toolkit

Updated: 3.19.2020



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Directions and use:

To use this action toolkit for local organizing, make a copy (File→"Make a Copy") and use the brainstorm boxes to start planning your actions.

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1. Our Principles

What are principles? Principles are the basic agreements that everyone acting as Never Again Action agrees to. They hold a movement together, protect us from threats, and guide our people through action.

1. **Never Again Action is a Jewish-led mobilization against the persecution, detention, and deportation of immigrants in the United States.** We take direct action to raise the alarm about the current system and disrupt its operation, and to catalyze a popular movement for permanent protection for all undocumented people.
2. **Our Jewish ancestors call us and sustain us.** We see what is happening to immigrant communities in the US today, and we are called to act as we would have wanted others to act for our families. We are differently affiliated, unaffiliated, and allied, but together we draw from a rich well of Jewish traditions to unify and sustain our action.
3. **We take action proportional to the moment.** We take direct action that targets the system, demonstrates the stakes to the public, and inspires them to join us. We are committed to nonviolent action: our role is to expose and disrupt the daily violence of the system, and adding to it weakens our authority and endangers our allies.
4. **We're empowering the public, not making compromises with the powerful.** We don't negotiate with candidates, politicians, or companies—but we welcome them to move to the right side of history. We act to change the common sense among the American public, to create the political conditions that politicians will have no choice but to follow.
5. **We know that everyone has skills and experiences to contribute to the movement.** We need people to organize, to plan, to hold us together, and to simply show up. We welcome all Jews and allies, regardless of age, ability, or background. We believe working toward justice isn't an extra task that only some people can do — it's an obligation all of us can uphold in our own way.
6. **We trust each other to lead.** We engage each other in good faith, trusting that we are all committed to our collective cause. If we're going to win, we need people empowered to take action everywhere: to try new things, to make mistakes, to seek support, and to grow. We remember that we share the same goal, especially when we have different ideas about how to achieve it.
7. **We learn how to build power together.** We are new to an immigrant rights movement that directly-affected people have been leading and living for decades. We know that those affected by the daily violence of the immigration system know most about how to fight it—and that we can effectively contribute to that fight only when we build in real relationship with them. Our community has privilege and resources to support this fight: we know we have to learn from undocumented communities how best to do so.

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8. **We commit and we grow.** We are committed to showing up even when it's messy. We approach difficult conversations with humility in order to build trust across differences in privilege and oppression. We root ourselves in the Jewish practice of tshuva, our capacity to seek forgiveness and return to relationships when we cause harm.
9. **We aren't leaving anyone behind.** The persecution of immigrants won't end when the camps close, or when DREAMers alone gain permanent status. We don't settle for compromises that benefit some people at the expense of the many. We join the tradition of those fighting to seek fundamental change for all undocumented people.
10. **When we show up in the collective struggle against white nationalism and white supremacy, we show up for others—and for ourselves.** We see how today's antisemitism, anti-immigrant hatred, and other forms of bigotry uphold one another--and that our safety lies in solidarity. When we fight for ourselves as Jews, and for our allies in the immigrant community, we recognize that we are all in this together. Never again means never again for anyone.

2. Why we need to act now

COVID-19 is going to cause significant harm to those living freely in society--and it poses severe danger to people who are locked in institutions like immigration prisons. These places are unprepared to meet basic health and hygiene needs during normal times, nevermind to combat a new and deadly virus. **There is an immediate need to free all people as soon as possible--and we know it is possible, given the right pressure.** Leaders from Iran to Ohio have already made the decision to start [releasing](#) people: we can push to save lives now and prove the farce of immigrant imprisonment in the long term.

3. Our Strategy

We believe that our best strategy is to pursue state and local campaigns to get people out of immigration detention right now. ICE and the Trump administration have proven their incompetence and unwillingness to do what is needed and right: they are not the most viable target for pressure in this moment. Meanwhile, governors and mayors are stepping in to fill the leadership void and are acting as the coordinators of local public health responses. Governors and mayors have explicit emergency powers they can invoke--they are also currently implicitly the most powerful actors and can take unprecedented action if they choose to. **We need to take action to make it clear that it is their responsibility for the safety of everyone in and outside of immigration prisons in their state to free people now.**

Strategy resources for emerging demands & changes already in your area:

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- The Appeal's Coronavirus Response [Tracker](#)
- Detention Watch Network's ["Free Them All" toolkit](#)

TARGETS

Every action or campaign you plan should have a **target**: a person who we are making a demand of. Examples of good local targets include:

- Governors
 - Governors are the primary leaders coordinating the public health response right now
 - Governors can invoke formal emergency powers (research by state) and other powers every day
 - They are important public messengers that can push other powerholders
 - E.g. sheriffs, other local officials, congress, president
- Mayors
 - Mayors also are key players in coordinating public health response right now
 - Mayors have power over city police departments and city jails
 - They are important public messengers that can push other powerholders
- Sheriffs
 - Sheriffs have power over county jails, which may have ICE agreements and hold immigrant detainees

LOCAL TARGETS BRAINSTORM BOX

DEMANDS

Every action or campaign should have a clear demand. We have a unified top-line demand, and encourage you to adapt this demand to your local context.

Top-line demand:

- **Free all people in immigration detention now.** We call on governors to invoke their powers and responsibility to free people from the danger and inhumanity of being locked in a prison without adequate medical care.

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Example demands to be made to a governor (from DWN [action toolkit](#))

Demands:

- Initiate an inquiry into ICE's response for people detained
- Demand all people in ICE custody be released, pressure local sheriffs who are holding people for ICE to release them
- Pressure sheriffs and other elected officials to stop cooperating with ICE to funnel people into detention, especially on the basis of prioritizing resources for public health
- Make a public statement demanding ICE protect people detained by releasing those in custody

Q: Should our demand be about immigration prisons or all prisons and jails?

A: We encourage you to do what makes sense for your local context. We think the most strategic demand for us to make right now as a larger movement is to free all people detained for immigration status, regardless of their age/vulnerability/etc. Other demands in the criminal justice space right now often focus on releasing a subpopulation of people (above a certain age; other health conditions, etc.) or overall reduction in jail use. If those make sense in your context, you may choose to add those or different demands.

DEMANDS BRAINSTORM BOX

TACTICS

We think in-person actions now could have extraordinary power--and these actions should only be taken in ways that are, and viewed to be, in line with appropriate public health practice. Any non-digital actions should be designed around appropriate social distancing (6 feet) and include plans for cleaning, sanitizing, and hygiene.

Digital and distance tactics ideas:

- Post public demand through a **petition**, (virtual) Facebook event, social media
- Create and distribute a **call script** to call [POWERHOLDER] to issue demand
- Start a **video/photo campaign** for individuals to promote the demand on their own social media accounts and tagging the target
- **Occupy/swarm e-town halls/calls** of elected officials' with our demand.

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Action tactics ideas:

- **1-by-1 actions:** Designate a target location and art/action idea and distribute safety guidelines (e.g. the state house; a selfie w/ sign that says Governor, time is running out #FreeThemAll) so that participants can individually show up and participate.
- **Single-file protests or human chains:** Coordinate as many participants as possible to create a spaced-out line that circles or picket-lines a target location. Film/livestream and post on social media.
- **Car protest & noise making:** Use cars to drive by, circle, or obstruct in ways that promote the campaign. ****CLICK [HERE](#) TO SEE OUR COVID-SAFE CAR RALLY TOOLKIT****
- **Signposting:** Create some sort of easy-to-make-at-home sign people can put up wherever they are.

Location ideas for actions:

- State government buildings / state houses
 - City & county government buildings
- ICE prisons and other jails where people are being held
 - ICE offices
- Places of high public resonance that may now be empty

TACTICS BRAINSTORM BOX

DIRECT ACTION AGREEMENTS

In this moment of pandemic, we need to shift our understanding of strategic risk and disruption. We are organizing in unprecedented and dangerous times, which means we need to move with extra caution *AND* that this moment of upheaval allows us to act in ways that would not be possible under normal conditions.

- **The goal of your action should NOT be to get arrested.** Entering the criminal justice system right now poses potentially serious health threats both to you and others who are being detained. On the other hand, we are learning that many local law enforcement agencies are taking measures to reduce the number of people in jail right now through [issuing citations rather than making arrests](#), posting bail, and issuing house arrest

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orders, which means that the police may not make arrests right now in situations in which they normally would. Of course, every locality is different so please consult with local legal experts as you are planning your action.

- Many people who continue to be in public right now are workers who are not able or not permitted by their employers to work from home. **Exercise caution when planning disruptive actions that may unnecessarily disrupt the lives of people who are already taking large risks right now.**
- **Your action should still abide by the movement principles**, available above in this document.
- We commit to centering the experiences, voices, and needs of those most impacted by the US immigration system.
- In all moments, we remember why we are here and we will engage in ways that do not detract from the purpose of this action. This means:
 - We will use no violence, verbal or physical, toward any person.
 - We will carry no weapons.
 - We recognize that many people have been harmed by US nationalism and by nationalisms around the world. Moreover, we are trying to unite the Jewish community and our allies, so no flags of any kind please.
 - **We do NOT make plans with or seek the protection of police.** As long as cops carry guns and wear badges, they are the agents of the state and will enact the state's agenda of violence against us and against those with whom we are acting in solidarity.
- We agree to respect the agreed-upon decision-making systems and roles within our action.
- We acknowledge that risk plays out differently for each of us and so we will honor each others' choices within the action parameters.
- We will take responsibility for ourselves, each other and our collective goals. We will exercise personal and collective responsibility to ensure that all participants adhere to these agreements.

4. Comms & Messaging

We have a messaging guide with messages, demands, hashtags, and FAQ [here](#).

Top-line narrative:

The detention centers in our state are going to become death camps for the immigrants locked inside, unless Governor _____ uses his/her emergency powers and influence to release them immediately.

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Demand:

Governors: Empty the detention centers in your state, before COVID-19 turns them into death camps.

Hashtags:

#ReleaseThemNow

#DetentionIsDeadly

#FreeThemAll

Call to Action: www.neveragainaction.com/pledge

Go to the [full guide for more](#).

Comms team

Telling a clear and powerful public narrative is one of the most important parts of any action. The job of the comms team is to ensure that the action is on message and gets as much press coverage as possible. Below are some resources for the Comms team:

- [Comms Lead Role Description & Checklist](#)
- [Example Press Advisory](#)
- [Example Press Release](#)
- Comms coaching is available for the comms lead, and can be accessed through the action coach or by contacting neveragaincoaches@gmail.com.

5. Planning Templates

- 1) [Action Planning worksheet](#)
- 2) [Roles spreadsheet](#)
 - a) [Coordinator Role Description](#)
 - b) [Digital Lead Role Description](#)
 - c) [Lead Logistics Checklist](#)
- 3) [Song/Chant List](#), and a [compiled soundcloud](#) for the Jewish Left
- 4) [How to Make a Really Good Banner](#)

6. Connecting Your Action

If you are planning an action in your area, help us coordinate support and publicity by [logging it here](#).

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7. Sustaining the Movement

We need to act today and we need to sustain this movement for tomorrow, next week, and the coming months. One way to support our organizing is to [donate](#) [and recruit others to donate](#) so that we can continue to plan, build, and grow our power even in these uncertain times.

8. FAQ

Q: How can I ask more questions or get more guidance about how to take action?

A: Join the Never Again Action slack through this [link](#), find your local organizing space through our [Slack guide](#), and see the #questions-and-support channel for anything else.

