



## **Protecting Religious Freedom of Immigration Detainees**

### **The Problem: Depriving Detainees of Religious Freedom Rights.**

Under federal law, DHS has to provide the almost 70,000 people in immigration detention with dietary accommodations (such as kosher or halal food), access to clergy, religious services, space for communal religious worship, and access to sacred texts and objects such as prayer rugs, as well as religious headwear.

In essence, people have the right to practice their religion even if they are in a detention facility.

Unfortunately, many detention centers are denying immigrants in detention these basic rights. Violations include:

- The [denial of halal food, prayer mats and Qurans](#) to Muslim detainees
- [Denial of access to clergy](#), including priests to administer ashes to Catholic detainees on Ash Wednesday
- [Access to rosaries, turbans](#), and other sacred objects.

### **In Their Own Words**

A detainee at the Miami Correctional Facility in Indiana stated in a court affidavit:

“Miami also has repeatedly denied me the ability to practice my Muslim faith. They do not offer halal food, just vegetarian or kosher. Kosher is for Jews, vegetarian is for vegetarians. I will get a regular plate of food because it is bigger, but have to give away most of it or try to trade for something I can eat.

They also denied me a prayer carpet. When I came, I asked for a prayer carpet, but they said no one gets that. That is essentially denying me prayer. I need a clean space to pray. The way the bathroom is located, it’s impossible for me to pray unless I’m close to the bathroom. It feels like I’m in a concentration camp. I’ve never seen such an upside-down Place.”



**powered  
by faith**

**What You Can Do:**

- Contact your Member of Congress to say that all people detained in immigration facilities must have guaranteed right to express their religion, including access to clergy, religious materials, food, etc. – including in “short-term” holding facilities.
- Push Members of Congress to use their oversight authority, including visiting facilities and holding DHS accountable to immediately fixing violations.
- If you are clergy, push to minister to immigration detainees in your area.