



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

FEB 22 2010

Ms. Alison Parker
Deputy Director, U.S. Program
Human Rights Watch
100 Bush Street, Suite 1812
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Ms. Parker:

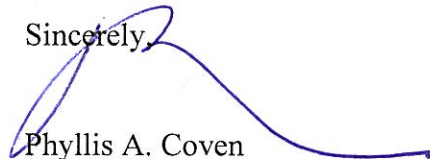
Thank you for your November 4, 2009 letter to John Morton, Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in which you shared information related to the transfer of detainees. ICE understands the on-going concerns the non-governmental organization (NGO) community has regarding the negative effects of detainee transfers and we appreciate Human Rights Watch's (HRW) meaningful participation in our detention reform efforts to date.

On Friday, January 29, 2010, ICE hosted the Assistant Secretary's Advisory Group on Detention. During that meeting, we informed the advisory group members, including HRW, that ICE is conducting a comprehensive review of our detainee transfer policy. Your letter indicated your organization would be publishing a report in December 2009 related to issues concerning detainee transfers. ICE's review of its detainee transfer policy is guided in part by the findings expressed in this report and similar concerns shared by other stakeholders.

As part of our detention reform initiative, ICE intends to minimize the number of detainee transfers to the greatest extent possible. While some transfers are necessary for medical or other operational reasons, we acknowledge HRW's concerns regarding the impact a change of jurisdiction has on the detainee's ability to prepare a defense, produce witnesses and evidence, as well as the unique problems a transfer imposes on the families of detainees. As we stated during the advisory group meeting, ICE is continuously striving to improve our processes and minimize such negative impacts.

Thank you again for sharing your findings on this important issue. As ICE moves forward with its detention reform efforts, we acknowledge and appreciate the involvement of the NGO community. We look forward to further discussion with HRW on these vital matters of mutual interest.

Sincerely,


Phyllis A. Coven
Acting Director