



# BORDER EXPERIENCE PILGRIMAGE RESOURCE GUIDE



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## A GUIDE FOR LEARNING, REFLECTION & ACTION



## **BORDER EXPERIENCE PILGRIMAGE AT THE US/MEXICO BORDER AT CALEXICO - APRIL 2023**

### **WELCOME & OVERVIEW**

THE BORDER EXPERIENCE PILGRIMAGE (APRIL 26TH-27TH, 2023) IS AN INTERFAITH, SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE PREVENTABLE HUMAN SUFFERING CAUSED BY IMMIGRANT DETENTION AND LACK OF SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS IN CALIFORNIA AND ACROSS THE BORDER IN MEXICALI. THIS PILGRIMAGE IS A PRAYER FOR THE CLOSURE OF THESE IMMIGRANT DETENTION FACILITIES, FOR THE SAFE RELEASES OF THOSE ON THE INSIDE, AND FOR THE TRANSFORMATION AND THRIVING OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN OUR STATE.

THIS RESOURCE GUIDE IS PROVIDED SO INDIVIDUALS, SCHOOL GROUPS, FAITH CONGREGATIONS AND OTHERS CAN JOIN IN ON THE PILGRIMAGE JOURNEY FROM WHEREVER THEY ARE, LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUES THOSE IN THE IMPERIAL VALLEY FACE, LEARN ABOUT IMMIGRANT DETENTION IN CALIFORNIA AND HOW IT CAN BE STOPPED, AND REFLECT AND TAKE ACTION FOR THE BETTER FUTURE THAT IS POSSIBLE.





## **ABOUT INTERFAITH MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN INTEGRITY (IM4HI)**

INTERFAITH MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN INTEGRITY IS A STATEWIDE CALIFORNIA ORGANIZATION THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE OF FAITH AND SPIRITUAL BACKGROUNDS TO THE WORK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. WE WORK TO DEFEND THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS AND INCARCERATED PEOPLE THROUGH ADVOCACY, ORGANIZING AND ACCOMPANIMENT. WE BUILD BELOVED COMMUNITY THAT IS MULTIFAITH, MULTIRACIAL, AND MULTIGENERATIONAL FOR THE LIBERATION OF ALL. ALL PEOPLE ARE SACRED ACROSS BARS AND BORDERS.

## **THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS FOR THIS BORDER EXPERIENCE PILGRIMAGE:**

BORDER COMPASSION, IMPERIAL VALLEY EQUITY & JUSTICE COALITION, METHODIST CHURCH OF CALEXICO, IMPERIAL LIBERATION COLLABORATION, INLAND VALLEY INTERFAITH COUNCIL, EL CENTRO SIKH TEMPLE, COMITÉ CÍVICO DEL VALLE.

## **PILGRIMAGE STOPS**

- VISIT THE POSADA DEL MIGRANTE SHELTER IN MEXICALI, MEXICO TO BEAR WITNESS AND PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM.
- PRAYER SERVICE FOR THE LIBERATION OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE IN FRONT OF IMPERIAL REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY, CALEXICO, CA.
- VISIT THE HOLTVILLE CEMETERY IN HOLTVILLE, CA FOR UNNAMED IMMIGRANTS IN RECOGNITION OF THOSE THAT DID NOT SURVIVE THE CROSSING.

## **FRAMEWORK FOR PILGRIMAGE**

(ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR THIS FRAMEWORK FROM DR. JOANNE DOI, M.M. & REV. DEBORAH LEE - PANA PILGRIMAGES TO MANZANAR AND THE SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA)

PILGRIMAGE IS AN ANCIENT SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN MANY TRADITIONS AND PILGRIMAGES HAVE EVOLVED INTO MODERN JOURNEYS THAT EVOKE LAYERS OF MEANING, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, HEALING AND ONGOING COMMITMENT FOR JUSTICE.



## **FRAMEWORK FOR PILGRIMAGE (CONT.)**

PILGRIMAGE IS A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE; A PRACTICE OF REMEMBERING AS RESISTANCE, REPARATIONS THROUGH MEMORY, AND EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS FOR COMPASSIONATE ACTION. WE REMEMBER IN ORDER TO HEAL, TO RECOVER MEMORY, TO DECOLONIZE OURSELVES, TO RESTORE OUR DEEPER SOULS. WE JOURNEY TOGETHER, EXPERIENCING TOGETHER MORE THAN WE COULD ALONE.

### **STAGE 1: MOTIVATION AND LONGING**

WHAT IS CALLING YOU TO GO?

WHAT DO YOU SEEK TO LEARN?

WHAT DO YOU SEEK TO HEAL OR TO LOVE?

HOW IS YOUR LIFE STORY CONNECTED?

### **STAGE 2: DEPARTURE**

WE CROSS A THRESHOLD AND ENTER AN UNKNOWN LANDSCAPE, WHERE WE CAN ENCOUNTER THE MEMORY AND SPIRITS HELD IN THE LAND.

WHAT ARE YOU SHEDDING OR LEAVING BEHIND?

WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING? WHO ARE YOU CARRYING WITH YOU?

WHAT OTHER CROSSINGS OR JOURNEYS DOES THIS BRING TO MIND FOR YOU?

## FRAMEWORK FOR PILGRIMAGE (CONT.)

### STAGE 3: THE JOURNEY- THE WAY - ENCOUNTER

OPEN ALL YOUR SENSES? WHAT DO YOU HEAR, SEE, FEEL, SMELL, TOUCH?

WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AND NOTICE IN THE LANDSCAPE?

HOW DO WE COMMUNE WITH THE LAND, THE ANCESTORS, FIRST PEOPLES, AND PEOPLE FROM OTHER NATIONS? WHAT IS SEPARATING OUR COMMUNION?

WHAT STORIES DO YOU HEAR?

WHAT IMPACTS AND CONSEQUENCES DO YOU WITNESS?

### STAGE 4: RETURN AND PROMISE

WE ARE CHANGED.

WHAT WAS AWAKENED WITHIN YOU? HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE BEEN ENHANCED?

WHAT NEW COMMITMENTS OR PROMISES DO WE MAKE SO THAT THIS EXPERIENCE LIVES ON?

WHAT DO YOU BRING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY?



## **QUICK FACTS ABOUT IMPERIAL VALLEY REGION**

**TRIBAL LANDS:** KUMEYAAY

**ECONOMY AND COMMERCE IN IMPERIAL VALLEY:** THE IMPERIAL VALLEY IS KNOWN FOR PRODUCING RENEWABLE ENERGY, GEOTHERMAL ENERGY PRODUCTION, AND IS AN AGRICULTURAL HUB THAT SUPPLIES  $\frac{2}{3}$  OF THE ENTIRE NATION'S VEGETABLES DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

**CHALLENGES THE IMPERIAL VALLEY FACES:** RESIDENTS WITHIN THE IMPERIAL VALLEY FACE CHRONICALLY HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND FEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE FARM FIELDS. UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE RURAL COUNTY HOVERS AT 18%, WHICH IS ABOUT TWICE THE STATE AVERAGE.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES:** THE IMPERIAL VALLEY ALREADY IS PERENNIALY RANKED AT THE TOP OF CALIFORNIA'S MOST POLLUTED PLACES. WATER AND AIR CONTAMINATION ARE SERIOUS ISSUES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE IMPERIAL VALLEY. IMPERIAL COUNTY'S CHILDREN VISIT EMERGENCY ROOMS AND ARE HOSPITALIZED FOR ASTHMA AT DOUBLE THE RATE OF THE STATE AVERAGE, AS WELL AS DOUBLE THE STATE RATE OF ACTIVE ASTHMA AMONG ADULTS OLDER THAN 65.



## **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMPERIAL REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY IN CALEXICO, CA**

- THE CONTRACT BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING CORPORATION (MTC) AND IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE) BEGAN IN 2014. THE FACILITY IS OWNED BY THE IMPERIAL VALLEY GATEWAY CENTER, LLC, WHICH TIMOTHY KELLEY RUNS; HIS COUSIN, RYAN KELLEY, IS ON THE IMPERIAL COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.
- IN DECEMBER 2020, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ISSUED A REPORT IDENTIFYING VIOLATIONS OF ICE DETENTION STANDARDS AT IMPERIAL, INCLUDING PEOPLE BEING “HELD IN ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION FOR PROLONGED PERIODS OF 22 TO 23 HOURS A DAY, INCLUDING TWO DETAINEES WHO HAD BEEN HELD IN ISOLATION FOR MORE THAN 300 DAYS.”
- IN JANUARY 2021, THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ISSUED A REPORT ON IMMIGRATION DETENTION THAT CRITICIZED MTC FOR IMPOSING “EXTREMELY RESTRICTIVE” CONDITIONS ON PEOPLE IN ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION AND LACKING ADEQUATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT IMPERIAL.

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMPERIAL REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY IN CALEXICO, CA (CONT.)**

- IN OCTOBER 2021, FOLLOWING CALIFORNIA'S PASSAGE OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY IN DETENTION ACT, MTC WAS THE FIRST PRIVATE PRISON COMPANY TO BE SUED FOR DAMAGES IN THE STATE. CARLOS MURILLO, WHO GREW UP IN IMPERIAL COUNTY, WAS HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AT IMPERIAL FOR MORE THAN A YEAR.
- IN JANUARY 2022, NINE ORGANIZERS INSIDE IMPERIAL FILED A CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT REGARDING THE ONGOING AND HAZARDOUS AIR, DUST, MOLD, AND DRINKING WATER CONTAMINATION. SINCE THEN, OVER 200 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED A PETITION DRAFTED BY THE DETAINED ORGANIZERS CALLING FOR AN END TO TOXIC CAGING AT IMPERIAL.
- IN MAY 2022, DOZENS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAME TOGETHER IN AN ACTION OUTSIDE OF IMPERIAL AS PART OF THE STATEWIDE PILGRIMAGE FOR A BETTER FUTURE. RAMON AND DONALD, DETAINED ORGANIZERS, SPOKE TO THE CROWD FROM THE INSIDE; THEY HAVE BOTH SINCE BEEN FREED FROM IMPERIAL.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMPERIAL REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY IN CALEXICO, CA (CONT.)

- IN SEPTEMBER 2022, FIVE INDIVIDUALS AT IMPERIAL FILED ANOTHER FEDERAL COMPLAINT REGARDING MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE AND RETALIATORY USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.
- IN FEBRUARY 2023, A FEDERAL JUDGE ORDERED THAT A FEDERAL TORT CLAIMS ACT LAWSUIT COULD BE FILED AGAINST MTC. THIS UNPRECEDENTED LAWSUIT IS LED BY JUAN CARLOS, AN INDIVIDUAL WHO REMAINS DETAINED AT IMPERIAL.
- AS OF MARCH 2023, THE AVERAGE DAILY ICE POPULATION AT IMPERIAL IS 534 PEOPLE. U.S. TAXPAYERS PAY APPROXIMATELY \$45 MILLION PER YEAR FOR ICE DETENTION AT IMPERIAL, REGARDLESS HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY DETAINED THERE.

Pilgrimage for a Better Future Participants praying outside of Imperial Regional Detention Facility







## **MORE RESOURCES & WAYS TO TAKE ACTION**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US TO END INHUMANE SYSTEMS OF IMMIGRANT DETENTION AND INCARCERATION, AND TO REUNITE FAMILIES! HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN TAKE ACTION.

TO SUPPORT PEOPLE INSIDE IMPERIAL REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY:

- CONTACT DANIELA (DFLORES@IVEQUITYJUSTICE.ORG) AT THE IMPERIAL VALLEY EQUITY & JUSTICE COALITION IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED IN UPCOMING EFFORTS TO VISIT OR WRITE TO FOLKS DETAINED INSIDE.

## **MORE RESOURCES & WAYS TO TAKE ACTION (CONT.)**

- **TO SUPPORT A SHELTER IN MEXICALI THROUGH BORDER COMPASSION PLEASE CONTACT SISTER SUZANNE SJABRO@CSJLA.ORG OR SISTER LISA BUSCHER LBUSCHER@RSCH.ORG**
- **NO CHILD DETENTION PLEDGE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS ([HTTPS://BIT.LY/NOCHILDDETENTION](https://bit.ly/nochilddetention)) CALIFORNIA ELECTED OFFICIALS MUST LEAD THE WAY AND PROTECT MIGRANT CHILDREN BY PLEDGING TO SUPPORT THE “PLEDGE TO END CHILD DETENTION”**
- **DEFUND HATE**  
([HTTPS://DEFUNDHATENOW.ORG/TAKE-ACTION/](https://defundhatenow.org/take-action/))  
DEFUND IMMIGRANT DETENTION. CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.
- **LEARN MORE ABOUT ENDING IMMIGRANT DETENTION AND JUST CLOSURES:**  
[BIT.LY/DETENTIONRESOURCEGUIDE](https://bit.ly/detentionresourceguide)
- **SUPPORT THE PLAN FOR PRISON CLOSURE IN CALIFORNIA:**  
([HTTPS://CURBPRISONSPENDING.ORG/](https://curbprisonspending.org/))
- **SUPPORT THE HEAL PROPOSAL (MORE INFO NEXT PAGE)**

**The problem:** ICE detention centers continue to operate in California, imprisoning our community members, separating them from their families, and harming the entire state. Aside from the suffering these centers cause to the people held inside them and those who love them, these huge facilities are **environmentally harmful** to the localities they sit in. They use vast amounts of energy and resources, and in return produce only pain and profit for private prison corporations.

California already attempted to address the dangers these facilities pose to the public's welfare by passing AB 32, which would have required the closure of ICE detention facilities in the state. However, a GEO Group lawsuit has blocked AB 32 from going into effect.

While the state cannot order their closure, **local governments still have the power to stop and prevent their operation** by refusing to renew the local use permits that allow these facilities to operate. However, the private actors who operate these detention centers strategically place them in remote and economically disadvantaged areas of the state. When asked to close detention centers, leaders in these localities have expressed concerns about the potential job loss to the region and its economic rippling effects. Approximately 1,800 people are currently employed in ICE detention facilities statewide.

**The solution:** Rather than allow entire economies to revolve around ICE detention and continue harming Californians, the state can help these communities HEAL. California should prioritize long-term workforce development and green infrastructure funding for localities that end their toxic reliance on ICE detention facilities. **An allocation of \$15 million to high roads jobs funding would successfully transition local economies from relying on the harmful immigration detention industry into long-lasting, and environmentally healthy industries, and create 1800 quality jobs.** If a locality declines to renew a permit for a detention center, it should receive support to replace those unsustainable jobs with good jobs that will contribute to the growth of a healthy and robust economy. The sooner localities make this transition, the more funding will be available to them, proportionate to the number of jobs the locality needs to shift course. **Community Benefits Agreements** will ensure these changes truly meet the needs of the people living in these localities, and will keep them permanently detention-free.

#### **HEAL by the numbers:**

- **6** Detention facilities
- **1800** People detained every day in California
- **\$15 Million** to HEAL and create **1800 healthy, sustainable jobs**

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**EVERY HUMAN PERSON IS SACRED ACROSS ALL BORDERS**

**IM4HUMANINTEGRITY.ORG**