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LOCAL NEWS

Video shows conditions inside NYC's ICE processing center at 26 Federal Plaza



By **Alice Gainer**, Adi Guajardo

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New video offers a first glimpse inside a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement processing center at New York City's 26 Federal Plaza.

It's an area members of Congress have been trying to access for weeks as they have been hearing complaints that immigrants are allegedly being held there for days under deplorable conditions.

Detainees say they're being treated like animals

Newly released video provided by New York Immigration Coalition and verified by CBS News New York shows conditions on the 10th floor of the building. It's not clear when the video was taken.

The person taking the video is heard saying, "Look how they have us here like dogs."

The video shows a group of men in a room with no furniture. Many appear to be laying or sitting on towels or foil blankets on the floor. There are two toilets behind half walls in the back of the room, but one toilet appears to be covered with a foil blanket.



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"In the video, you see over two dozen men, some sleeping on the floor, all having to share one bathroom," New York Immigration Coalition President and CEO Murad Awawdeh said.

Benjamin Remy, senior staff attorney with New York Legal Assistance Group, said that video was the first time he's seen what the 10th floor of 26 Federal Plaza

looks like.

"What was your initial reaction when you saw that?" CBS News New York's Alice Gainer asked.

"I would like to say it was shock, but it wasn't," Remy said.

Immigration advocates say they're familiar with these stories and these conditions.

"They try to make conditions so terrible that people want to give up," said Ravi Ragbir, with New Sanctuary Coalition.



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One woman told CBS News her husband was detained and spent five or six days on the 10th floor before being transferred.

"He said it was very bad. They treated them like animals, technically," she said.

"They don't give him enough food. Um, his liver is, you know, failing because he's supposed to be on a specific diet and he's supposed to be taking a specific

Watch CBS News medication. But no matter how much times he requested from the officers, they never gave it to him."

DHS denies allegations of poor conditions

Remy said for more than a month, he's been hearing about the conditions from people who have spent anywhere from two to 20 days there.

"Not having an actual safe place to sleep, not receiving adequate medical care and in medical emergencies, being refused that medical care," Remy said. "The food is, first of all, insufficient, and then of incredibly poor quality."

New York Congressman Dan Goldman is one of several representatives who was denied access to the facility, which ICE claims is not subject to congressional oversight because it's not a detention center.

Goldman said the video validated what he and immigration advocates already knew.

"The horrific and inhumane conditions that nonviolent immigrant detainees are facing, even though they're pursuing legal pathways to get into this country," he said.

Attorneys and advocates say people showing up for routine immigration hearings are being detained.

"Why are you detaining them when they're following the process?" Awawdeh said.

"They're being penalized for it by being summarily detained with no transparency," Remy said.

ICE has not responded to CBS News New York's request for comment.

Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin sent CBS News New York a statement reading, in part:

"Any claim that there is overcrowding or subprime conditions at ICE facilities are categorically false. All detainees are provided with proper

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meals, medical treatment, and have opportunities to communicate with their family members and lawyers. As we arrest and remove criminal illegal aliens and public safety threats from the U.S., ICE has worked diligently to obtain greater necessary detention space while avoiding overcrowding. Secretary Noem has called on states and local government to help with bed and detention space capacity.

"Despite a historic number of injunctions, DHS is working rapidly overtime to remove these aliens from detentions centers to their final destination—home."

"We now know from video evidence that it's a flat-out lie," Goldman said.

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Alice Gainer

Alice Gainer joined CBS News New York as a reporter and anchor in January 2013. She covers breaking, feature and general assignment stories.

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