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# New report details issues pregnant women face getting medical care in ICE detention

KJZZ | By [Alisa Reznick](#)

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*Customs And Border Protection*

U.S. Border Patrol agents conduct intake of detained migrants at the Central Processing Center in McAllen, Texas on June 17, 2018.

A new report from the Women’s Refugee Commission and the group Physicians for Human Rights details issues pregnant women face getting medical care in ICE detention.

Researchers traveled to health clinics in Honduras last November to speak with medical staff and women who had recently been deported from the U.S.

Report co-author Zain Lakhani, director of migrant rights and justice, says one woman was hospitalized after receiving no medical treatment in ICE custody for a missed miscarriage – when a fetus has died but has not been physically expelled. The condition can be fatal without treatment.

“These women are just not being visible as people who have high risk and potentially life threatening conditions, and are not receiving medical care. And at the same time, we’re seeing a pretty severe crisis of deaths in custody due to medical neglect,” she said.

In response to a request from Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington and other lawmakers, ICE for the first time this week [released](#) data on pregnant immigrants it has arrested. It shows 16 detainees experienced miscarriages in custody between January

Lakhani says the lawmaker request was made in coordination with her organization following the trip to Honduras. Physicians heard from about two dozen deportees, including some who had been separated from children as young as 2 months old in the US.

According to the report, the women said they were not given the opportunity to decide whether to bring their children with them, despite an ICE policy requiring that option.

Lakhani says pregnant and postpartum women also talk about issues like being shackled during exams in detention and not being given sufficient food and water. She says similar issues have been reported to her group's tracking tool, which takes confidential reports about pregnant detainees.

"We know of women who have pre-eclampsia, or one woman with pre-eclampsia, who was being forced to try and meet her nutritional needs from really high sodium foods from the commissary because she wasn't receiving sufficient care," she said.

In its response to lawmakers, ICE says it deported more than 360 pregnant, postpartum or nursing women between January 2025 and February 16th of this year.

It also says there were 86 pregnant women in custody as of February 16th across all ICE facilities. A 2021 agency directive that's still in place says ICE should not detain pregnant, postpartum, or nursing individuals except under very limited circumstances.

The agency did not respond to questions from KJZZ about the report, family separation or pregnancy care in detention.

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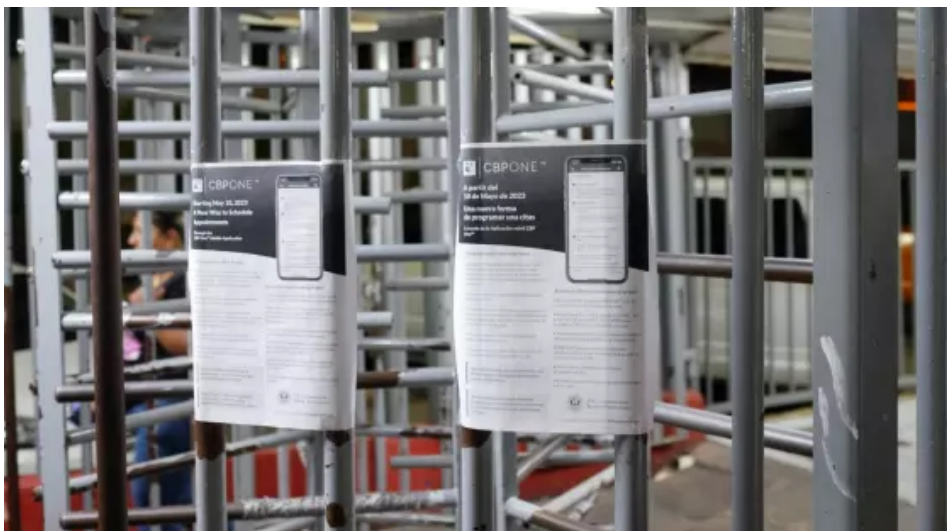
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## Alisa Reznick

Alisa Reznick is a senior field correspondent covering stories across southern Arizona and the borderlands for the Tucson bureau of KJZZ's Fronteras Desk.

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