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REPORT

US brokers secret torture deal with El Salvador: report to UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

JUNE 10, 2025

Receiving Body

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

Report Type

Submission of the Special Rapporteur at the 80th session of the General Assembly

Tags

[Arbitrary Detention](#)[Criminalization](#)[Immigration](#)[Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment](#)[El Salvador](#)[Latin America and the Caribbean](#)[United States](#)[Overview](#)[Documents](#)[Press](#)

In February 2025, El Salvador and the United States secretly finalized an agreement under which El Salvador would accept people transferred from the US to indefinite, incommunicado detention at Salvadoran prisons infamous for widespread human rights violations, including the Terrorism Confinement Center, known as CECOT.

The enforced disappearance and torture of immigrants by a third country at the behest of a deporting country is the latest chilling development in externalization of migration control, whereby border security measures of a migration-receiving country are outsourced to another country.

This submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants documents how El Salvador has imprisoned in CECOT approximately 288 people transferred by the US, including Venezuelan nationals deported under the Alien Enemies Act, an 18th century US law used to remove people without a trial on mere allegations of gang membership.

To date, El Salvador has not provided legal justification for the imprisonment of people transferred from the United States, nor any official confirmation regarding detained peoples' location, condition, or legal status. Testimonies from survivors of confinement at CECOT describe prolonged periods of confinement without access to light, basic hygiene, or food. They also recount being subjected to tear gas, hung by their wrists, and forced to perform punitive exercises by prison guards.

What solutions exist?

This submission recommends that the United Nations take a forceful stance against externalization through secret agreements to disappear and torture immigrants.

It urges the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants to identify and condemn human rights abuses perpetrated by the United States and El Salvador pursuant to their externalization agreement; issue communications to El Salvador and the United States mandating that people detained at CECOT be released and returned to the US or to another country consistent with international human rights obligations and to refrain from transferring and imprisoning more people; and to urge the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to communicate with the states of El Salvador and the United States to uphold their binding commitments to the protection of human rights as contained in the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.



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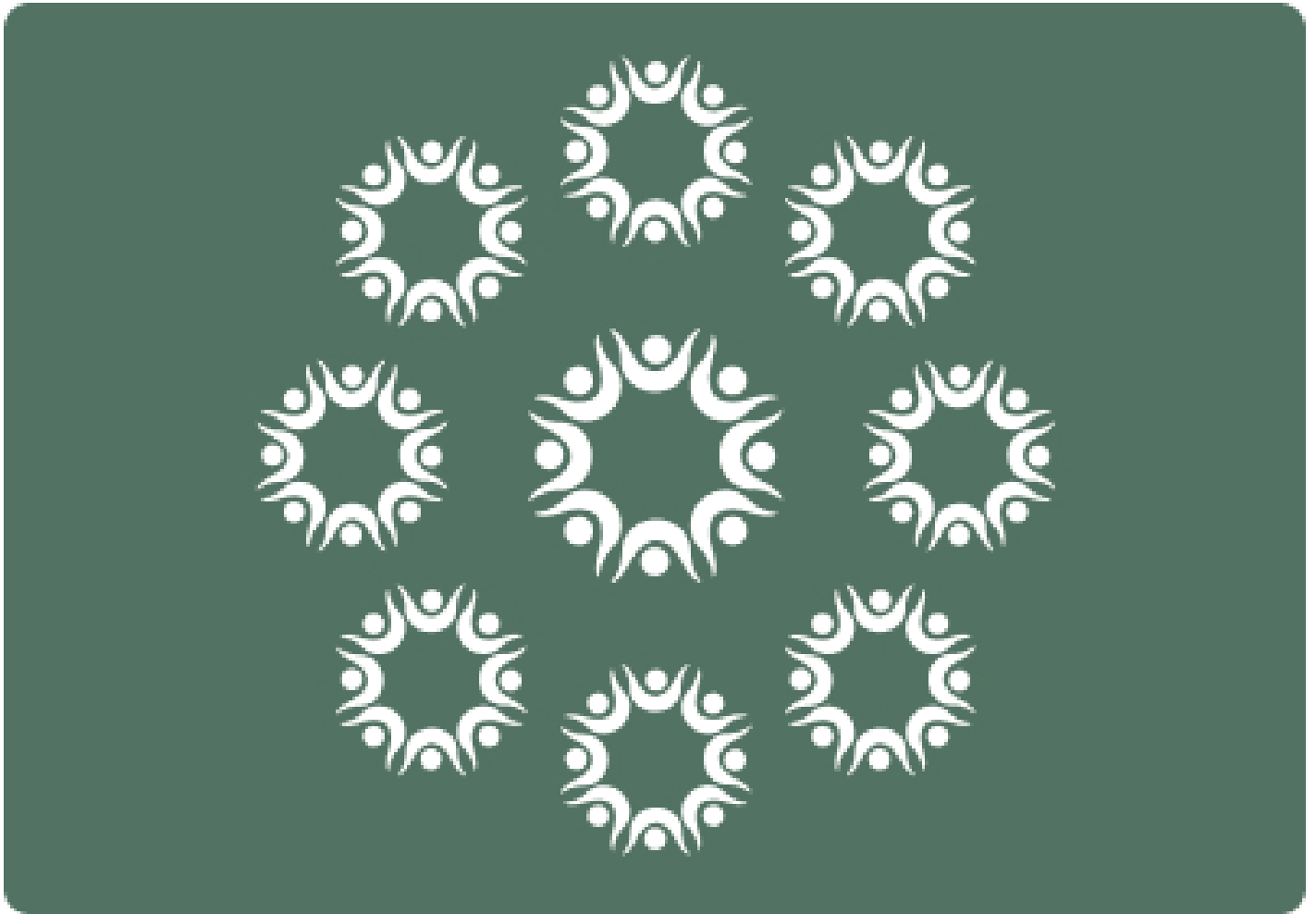
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