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Abuse Claims at Federal Detention Facilities in South Florida Raise Oversight Concerns

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A new report has brought to light disturbing allegations of inhumane treatment within multiple federal detention facilities in South Florida. The findings have sparked renewed concern over oversight, standards of care, and the conditions inside government-run holding centers.

The investigation, conducted by multiple civil rights and oversight organizations, highlights serious incidents at three major facilities in the Miami and Pompano Beach areas. Among the most troubling accounts were reports of detainees being shackled and forced to kneel

while eating meals from the floor. Others claimed they were held in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions with little access to medical care or basic hygiene.

One particularly harrowing account from a federal detention center in downtown Miami described individuals being denied food for extended periods while confined in holding cells. Detainees also alleged being forced to sleep on concrete floors without proper bedding or warm clothing in frigid intake rooms nicknamed “the ice box.”

At another facility in Miami, female detainees reportedly lacked privacy when using restrooms and were provided inadequate food, hygiene supplies, and medical attention. Overcrowding further exacerbated conditions, with some individuals confined on transport buses for more than 24 hours amid overflowing toilets and foul air.

The Broward Transitional Center in Pompano Beach was also cited in the report, following the death of a 44-year-old woman earlier this year. Detainees there described being denied urgent medical and psychological assistance, with one account alleging that surveillance cameras were turned off before an incident involving the use of force by facility staff. Several individuals were reportedly injured during the confrontation, including one who sustained a broken finger.

All three facilities were found to be operating over capacity, which watchdogs say has led to deteriorating living standards and potential violations of constitutional protections. Some detainees reported being held for up to 12 days in intake rooms under extreme temperatures with no bedding.

The broader context includes a federal plan to expand detention infrastructure, including a proposed 5,000-bed facility in the Everglades. While enforcement of laws is a legitimate government function, civil liberties groups argue that basic standards of care must be upheld regardless of the nature of detention.

As of now, the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees these facilities, has not issued a public response to the report. However, the findings are likely to fuel growing bipartisan calls for greater transparency, reform, and accountability in how federally-run facilities are managed.

Regardless of political affiliation, there is a shared American expectation that government institutions operate within the bounds of law, dignity, and oversight. Upholding those values

is not only a matter of public trust but a reflection of the nation's broader commitment to fairness and due process.