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## Alexandria Facility Sparks U.S. Human Rights Concerns

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A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility in Louisiana is drawing renewed scrutiny over human rights concerns, as legal advocates and civil rights groups raise alarms about the treatment of detainees and the lack of access to legal counsel.

Located in Alexandria, this ICE staging center is the only facility in the country with a direct airport tarmac, enabling the fast transfer and removal of migrants. Since President Donald Trump returned to office, the center has processed over 20,000 individuals, operating under a system critics say prioritizes speed over basic human rights.

Among the detainees was Georgetown University professor Badar Khan Suri, who was arrested in Virginia and transferred more than 1,000 miles away without his lawyers being informed, according to a report from *The Independent*. Suri was held for three days without access to legal representation before being moved to a detention facility in Texas. His attorneys claim the process violated his rights to legal counsel and humane treatment.

ICE officials have defended the operation, with Acting Director Todd Lyons stating the agency seeks to run its operations with corporate-style efficiency. Lyons was recorded comparing ICE's logistical efforts to those of Amazon and FedEx, remarks he later clarified, saying, "They deal with boxes, we deal with human beings."

Still, rights groups say such comparisons underscore a deeper problem: the dehumanization of detainees in a system that now processes people more like freight than individuals.

The Alexandria facility forms the hub of what has been labelled "deportation alley," a network of privately run detention centers stretching across Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Fourteen of the 20 largest ICE detention sites are in this corridor, where conditions and oversight vary widely. Nearly 7,000 people are currently detained in Louisiana alone, with more than 56,000 held nationwide.

The legal concerns extend beyond detention conditions. Critics have raised alarm over the influence of private contractors in U.S. immigration enforcement. The Alexandria facility is operated by GEO Group, a for-profit prison company. Former ICE officials now hold senior roles in the company, prompting questions over conflicts of interest and accountability.

Rights advocates argue that these practices violate international standards, including the right to due process, humane treatment, and freedom from arbitrary detention, all protected under global human rights norms and, in principle, under the U.S. Constitution.

In June 2025 alone, ICE carried out over 200 deportation flights, the highest since 2020. Under President Trump's second term, nearly 150,000 individuals have been deported in the first six months, with many routed through Alexandria's high-volume facility.

As of now, ICE has not responded to formal inquiries regarding access to legal representation at the Alexandria site. The Biden-era policy of limiting detention capacity has been reversed, with private contractors playing a larger role in removal operations.

Alexandria, a city of 44,000 surrounded by swamp and forest, has become a national flashpoint in the debate over immigration enforcement and human rights in the United States.