A Message from the Co-Directors

Dear Colleagues,

This has been a tremendous year for Detention Watch Network. Our work with members is flourishing, our staff is growing, and our impact is being felt across the country. While xenophobes and their anti-immigrant rhetoric attempt to threaten our efforts, we have not backed down and the resistance continues to grow.

In 2015, Detention Watch Network worked in collaboration with members to release three major reports, which have received widespread attention both nationally and locally. We have seen the End the Quota campaign finally gain some traction in the Senate, and the attention to guaranteed minimums in contracts brought the campaign to the local level. Significant progress has been made in the fight to end family detention due to the amazing organizing, advocacy and litigation efforts of DWN members and allies.

We raised our visibility in the media, both as a Network and working with our members. DWN hosted three member strategy meetings and more member trainings than ever before. We increased staff capacity, moved to a larger space and boosted membership benefits and support to local campaigns.

In 2016, we hope to continue to build on our work this year to expand membership and benefits and work more intensely with members to increase capacity at the local level. Through research and documentation, we will continue to expose the endemic problems within the detention system and demand closure.

Next year we will also be hosting DWN’s 11th National Member Conference in Baltimore, MD. The conference is a unique opportunity to network, share information and strategize with members around the country. Look out for the Save the Date – you will not want to miss it!

Looking at our accomplishments this year, we have many things for which to be thankful. But we are especially thankful for the support from our members, allies and supporters. Thank you!

We look forward to our work together in the New Year.

Best wishes,

Ana K. Carrión
Co-Director

Silky Shah
Co-Director

Our Mission

Through the collective strength and diversity of its members, Detention Watch Network exposes and challenges the injustices of the U.S. immigration detention and deportation system and advocates for profound change that promotes the rights and dignity of all persons.
DWN Steering Committee 2015

Michael Tan  
ACLU Immigrants’ Rights Project, National

Amanda Lugg  
African Services Committee, NY

Elizabeth Hartman  
American Gateways, TX

Christina Fialho  
Christina Mansfield  
Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement, National

Abraham Paulos  
Families for Freedom, NY

PJ Edwards  
Georgia Detention Watch, GA

Bob Libal  
Grassroots Leadership, TX

Fred Tsao  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Chicago, IL

Liz Sweet  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, MD

Quyen Dinh  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, Washington, DC

Romy Lerner  
University of Miami School of Law Immigration Clinic, FL
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Bellingham, WA
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Ana K. Carrión
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Aurea Martinez
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Mary Small
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Carly Perez
Membership and Communications Manager

Carol Wu
Research and Advocacy Associate
DWN Organizational Members

ACLU National Prison Project
ACLU of Arizona
African Services Committee
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Alianza Americas
ACLU Immigrants’ Rights Project
American Friends Service Committee
American Gateways
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Americans for Immigrant Justice
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
Breakthrough
Casa Marianella
Catholic Legal Immigration Network
Center for Constitutional Rights
Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC)
Community to Community Development
Conversations With Friends
Corazon de Tucson
Cornell Law School, Asylum Convention Against Torture Appellate Clinic
El Refugio Ministry
Families For Freedom
First Friends of New York and New Jersey
Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project
Florida Immigrant Coalition, Inc.
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of Adelanto Detainees
Georgia Detention Watch
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
Grassroots Leadership
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Human Rights First
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Defense Project
Immigrant Law Group PC
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Justice Group-Central Baptist Church
Immigration Task Force of Mission Presbytery
Jesuit Social Research Institute/Loyola University
Just Detention International
La Colectiva Legal del Pueblo
Law Offices of Brelje and Associates P.C.
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Lutheran Services of Georgia
Maria Baldini-Potermin & Associates, P.C.
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
OneAmerica
Political Asylum / Immigration Representation Project
Ponce Law Firm, P.C.
Private Corrections Institute
Public Counsel
Queer Detainee Empowerment Project
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Scott D. Pollock & Associates, P.C.
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Southern Poverty Law Center, Immigrant Justice Project
Stanford Law, Immigrants’ Rights Clinic
Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition
Texans United For Families
Torture Abolition and Survivor Support Coalition International
Transgender Law Center
University of Miami School of Law Immigration Clinic
Washington Defender Association Immigration Project
Women’s Refugee Commission
National Advocacy and Organizing

Throughout 2015, DWN brought the perspectives and expertise of its membership to national advocacy conversations. We addressed issues on:

- Enforcement
- Detention expansion
- National and local detention quotas
- Stakeholder access to detention facilities and inspections
- Family detention
- Release options as true alternatives to punitive custody measures

In meetings with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the White House, our advocacy focused on reducing the overall number of people in detention. We called for greater government accountability and transparency. And we continued to fight for the civil and human rights of those affected by the immigration detention system.

Our national organizing efforts mobilized members and allies to take part in:

- Vigils
- Sign-on letters
- Actions
- Protests
- Call-in days
- National weeks of action.

From California and Washington state to Alabama and Pennsylvania, we have connected to diverse organizations nationwide who share our vision of a world without immigration detention.
DWN’s End the Quota Campaign

This was a big year for the End the Quota campaign with increased attention by members of Congress, the media and advocates nationally.

In April, DWN brought together 60 members and allies for a strategy session on the End the Quota campaign. During the meeting we discussed bringing the national campaign to the local level. In June, DWN in collaboration with Center for Constitutional Rights released Banking on Detention: Local Lockup Quotas and the Immigrant Dragnet.

The report exposes the use of guaranteed minimums in detention centers across the country. Guaranteed minimums are contractual provisions that require ICE to pay for a minimum number of immigration detention beds. Because these guaranteed minimums require payment to private contractors whether beds are filled or not, ICE faces considerable pressure to meet the population guarantees.

Over 250 newspapers picked up the article from the Associated Press, including the Washington Post, Houston Chronicle, Dallas Morning News and San Francisco Chronicle. The Seattle Times and the Austin American-Statesman also published editorials calling for an end to the use of quotas in response to the report.

A significant impact of the report is the attention it received from Members of Congress. Shortly after the report release, Rep. Ted Deutch, Bill Foster (D-IL) and Adam Smith (D-WA) introduced a bill to eliminate the use of guaranteed minimums in detention center contracts.

Today, we have more champions than ever before and we continue to work both in DC and with local campaigns to increase pressure on policymakers to end the quotas.
The Fight to End Family Detention

In 2015, DWN played a convener and coordinating role in the fight to end family detention. We worked closely with members and allies in Pennsylvania and Texas, where family detention centers are located.

Early in the year, DWN hosted a strategy meeting with over 40 members and allies, that led to a flurry of public education and organizing events, petitions and advocacy asks. Advocates began to share critical information and strategy through DWN’s family detention listserv, now with more than 140 subscribers.

We provided organizing and communications support while participating in national advocacy conversations with ICE, DHS and the White House. We helped coordinate national days and weeks of action, protests, petitions, postcard mailings and film presentations. We worked with two detained mothers to tell their story and bear witness to their experiences in detention.

DWN provided organizing, communications and financial support for the Dilley Protest in Texas, which brought out over 600 people to protest the incarceration of women and children at the Dilley detention center, currently the largest immigration detention center in the country. We provided organizing and financial support for actions at the family detention center in Berks, Pennsylvania and a march in Washington, D.C.

We provided communications support to Sister Kathleen Erickson from the Sisters of Mercy, who published an op-ed on her experiences as interim chaplain at the family detention facility in Dilley, Texas. We distributed over 500 posters and 2,500 postcards to raise awareness and promote public engagement on family detention. And we released two infographics and a Voices from Detention video.
Top right: Voices from Detention brings forward the voices of those most impacted by the unjust immigration detention system via audio phone recordings from people inside immigrant detention centers across the country.
**Victories to Celebrate!**

As a result of sustained advocacy and organizing by DWN members and allies, the Obama administration reformed its family detention policy to reduce the amount of time women and children are held.

Moreover, this past summer a federal court ruling called on the government to release children with their mothers from family detention. Judge Gee’s ruling found the current practice in violation of the Flores Settlement, an agreement that set the standard for the detention and treatment of immigrant children in the U.S. since 1997.

As we gain ground, we do not lose sight of the goal: to end family detention in the U.S. once and for all.
Research to Support Advocacy

In partnership with members, DWN released three reports and one policy brief.

DWN’s policy brief, Ending the Use of Immigration Detention to Deter Migration, which was published in April, examines the inappropriate use of deterrence as a rationale for immigration detention. The brief serves as a resource for advocates to push back against the argument that you can punish people to stop them (and others) from seeking safety, which disregards constitutional protections and the United States’ international obligations.

In June, DWN in collaboration with Center for Constitutional Rights released Banking on Detention: Local Lockup Quotas and the Immigrant Dragnet. The report exposes the use of guaranteed minimums in 15 detention centers across the country, highlighting not only private prisons, but also public ICE facilities that outsource detention operations, such as food, security and transportation.

In collaboration with NIJC, we released the report Lives in Peril: How Ineffective Inspections Make ICE Complicit in Immigration Detention Abuse, in October. The report exposes how the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) inspections process for immigration detention centers obscures and perpetuates widespread abuses of detained immigrants.

And in November, DWN collaborated with CIVIC to release Abuse in Adelanto: An Investigation into a California Town’s Immigration Jail. The report highlights the economic impact of the prison industrial complex in one small town. It also documents the extreme dangers detained immigrants face at the Adelanto Immigration Detention Facility, a jail operated by the GEO Group where medical abuses run rampant and two high profile deaths have occurred.
Our Media Work

In 2015, DWN raised the visibility of immigration detention in national and local media and increased media exposure to call attention to specific demands.

DWN worked with FitzGibbon Media to provide media strategy and placement to members working on family detention, the national and local quotas, and local campaigns against immigration detention centers.

Our efforts to raise awareness of detention issues have had national impact. As of November, DWN and DWN-supported media campaigns have garnered more than 900 media mentions. DWN’s reports received considerable media attention.

Journalists and other media relied on DWN staff as expert and credible sources of information on a range of detention issues, with features on Al Jazeera’s The Stream, CNN en Español and National Public Radio.

In May, the New York Times published an editorial calling for an end to immigration detention and in June, the Seattle Times’ and the Austin American Statesman’s editorial board highlighted DWN’s Banking on Detention report decrying the use of detention quotas.

More and more national and public figures are raising concerns about the detention system. Even presidential candidates are talking about detention. Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O’Malley have all addressed the need for systemic reform.
Building Knowledge and Power

As a national network, DWN brings together a wide range of organizations and individuals to build knowledge and power, enhance our expertise, amplify our work and collaborate on priorities and strategies that impact at both the national and local levels.

In our role as convener, we provided space for critical conversations and creative collaborations to take place:

• In February, the Family Detention strategy meeting brought together 40 members and allies from around the country, which led to successful organizing efforts around a national week of action on family detention in May and increased pressure on the administration.
• In April, the End the Quota strategy meeting with over 60 members and allies galvanized efforts to bring the campaign to the local level by making guaranteed minimums a pressure point for local campaigns.
• In November, DWN’s SE Regional Meeting for Georgia, Alabama and Florida gathered advocates and activists engaged in local campaigns against detention centers to strategize and identify points of collaboration.

DWN also hosted in-person and virtual trainings to build the capacity and skills of our members.

• In April, DWN held a Spokesperson Training with 25 members including several impacted individuals with the support of FitzGibbon Media. The training included interview tips, talking points and one-on-one practice.
• DWN conducted two “Effective Communications” webinars: Op-Eds and LTEs and Event Breakthrough.
• In December, DWN and UNHCR co-hosted a Detention Monitoring Convening focusing on increasing detention facility monitoring skills.
To Our Members, Allies, Supporters and Friends

Your support makes it possible for the Network to advocate at the national level and to support our members working on the frontlines at the regional, state and local levels.

Thank you for your commitment to a more just world where human dignity is valued and the rights of all persons are respected.
Donate today
www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/donate

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