



Grace Meng
Congress of the United States
Sixth District, New York

August 19, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

I write today to express my shock and outrage after reading reports on the treatment of Muslim detainees at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) detention facility, Krome Service Processing Center (“Krome”), in Miami, Florida.¹ According to a recent letter from Muslim Advocates, a national civil rights and legal advocacy organization, and Americans for Immigrant Justice, ICE officers at Krome repeatedly served pork or pork-based products to Muslim detainees during this COVID-19 pandemic as the religiously compliant or halal meals served were rotten and expired.² I am calling for an investigation into this matter, and an immediate halt to feeding detainees foods that violate their religious beliefs.

ICE’s agency-wide policy on *National Detention Standards* states all facilities are required to provide detainees requesting a religious diet reasonable and equitable opportunity to observe their religious dietary practice within the constraints of the security and orderly operations of the facility.³ However, reports indicate that during this COVID-19 pandemic, Krome is regularly serving Muslim detainees pre-plated pork sausage, pork ribs, and other pork-based ingredients at least two to three times a week.⁴ Thus, consequently, two to three times a week, Muslim detainees at Krome are forced to choose between faith and food.⁵ There is no reason that Muslim detainees cannot receive unexpired, unspoiled halal meals, or, at the very least, pre-plated meals that do not require them to consume pork.

With that said, please provide me answers to the following questions:

- 1) What protocol is in place to ensure that religious and dietary restrictions of detained individuals are met at Krome and other ICE detention facilities?
- 2) What protocol is in place to ensure that meals for detainees with religious and dietary restrictions are edible, not expired, and not rotten?

¹ Andrea Torres, “Attorneys report alleged violation of Krome detainees’ religious rights,” August 19, 2020, <https://www.local10.com/news/local/2020/08/19/attorneys-report-alleged-violation-of-krome-detainees-religious-rights-safety/>

² <https://muslimadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020.08.18-Krome-Letter-FINAL.pdf>

³ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, *National Detention Standards*, 2019, <https://www.ice.gov/detention-standards/2019>

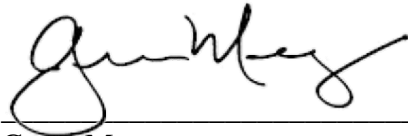
⁴ <https://muslimadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020.08.18-Krome-Letter-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

- 3) What actions, and how soon, will DHS be taking to ensure religious and dietary restrictions of detained individuals are met at Krome and other ICE detention facilities?

As a member of the House Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee, I have called on the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) to investigate last year’s reported treatment of a Muslim detainee who was fed pork meals by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”).⁶ Furthermore, in FY 2020 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, DHS is directed to assess CBP and ICE policies and practices for meeting religious and medical dietary restriction requirements of CBP and ICE detainees. I eagerly await your prompt action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace Meng', written over a horizontal line.

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

⁶ <https://meng.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/meng-demands-investigation-and-justice-for-adnan-asif-parveen>