



CCR Position on the Recommendations of the Vega Jimenez Inquest

1. The CCR welcomes the recommendations of the jury, which identify numerous important steps that need to be taken to protect the rights and dignity of persons detained under Canada's immigration legislation. The CCR supports most of the recommendations.
2. Liberty is a fundamental right and can only be taken away in limited, legally prescribed circumstances. Detention under immigration legislation should therefore only be used as a last resort and after alternatives to detention have been explored. The CCR continues to be concerned that the right to liberty of non-citizens is being infringed as a result of the broad use of detention. While detention conditions need to be drastically improved, there needs to be less detention and detention for shorter periods of time.
3. The CCR calls for meaningful CBSA follow up on the recommendations, in consultation with NGOs.
4. The CCR calls for the closing of the Vancouver airport detention facility.
5. The CCR strongly endorses the jury recommendations related to:
 - Improving access for detainees to NGOs, services, visits, internet, telephone calls, etc.
 - Improving access for detainees to mental and physical health care.
 - Providing information to detainees (in their own language).
 - Ensuring CBSA gives higher priority to protecting the interests of detainees (notably access to PRRA and scheduling of appointments).
 - Providing a healthy environment in detention (natural light, ventilation, outside access).
 - Reducing to a minimum prison-like features (limiting use of handcuffs and shackles, allowing civilian clothes).
 - Improving training for guards and CBSA officers on mental health and suicide prevention, and diversity and respectful treatment of detainees.
 - Establishing an independent mechanism to receive complaints and investigate incidents.
6. The CCR believes that suicide prevention measures should be guided by respect for human dignity and concern for the individual's mental health. The CCR is concerned about suicide prevention approaches measures that are instead focused solely on physical prevention of suicide, and that lead to punishing and isolating those who may be suicidal (use of isolation rooms) or unnecessarily breaching privacy (e.g. removal of shower curtains, intrusive video surveillance).
7. The CCR does not support holding detention reviews and immigration hearings at the detention centre. Detainees should be brought to the Immigration and Refugee Board for their hearings, but without use of restraints for transportation.