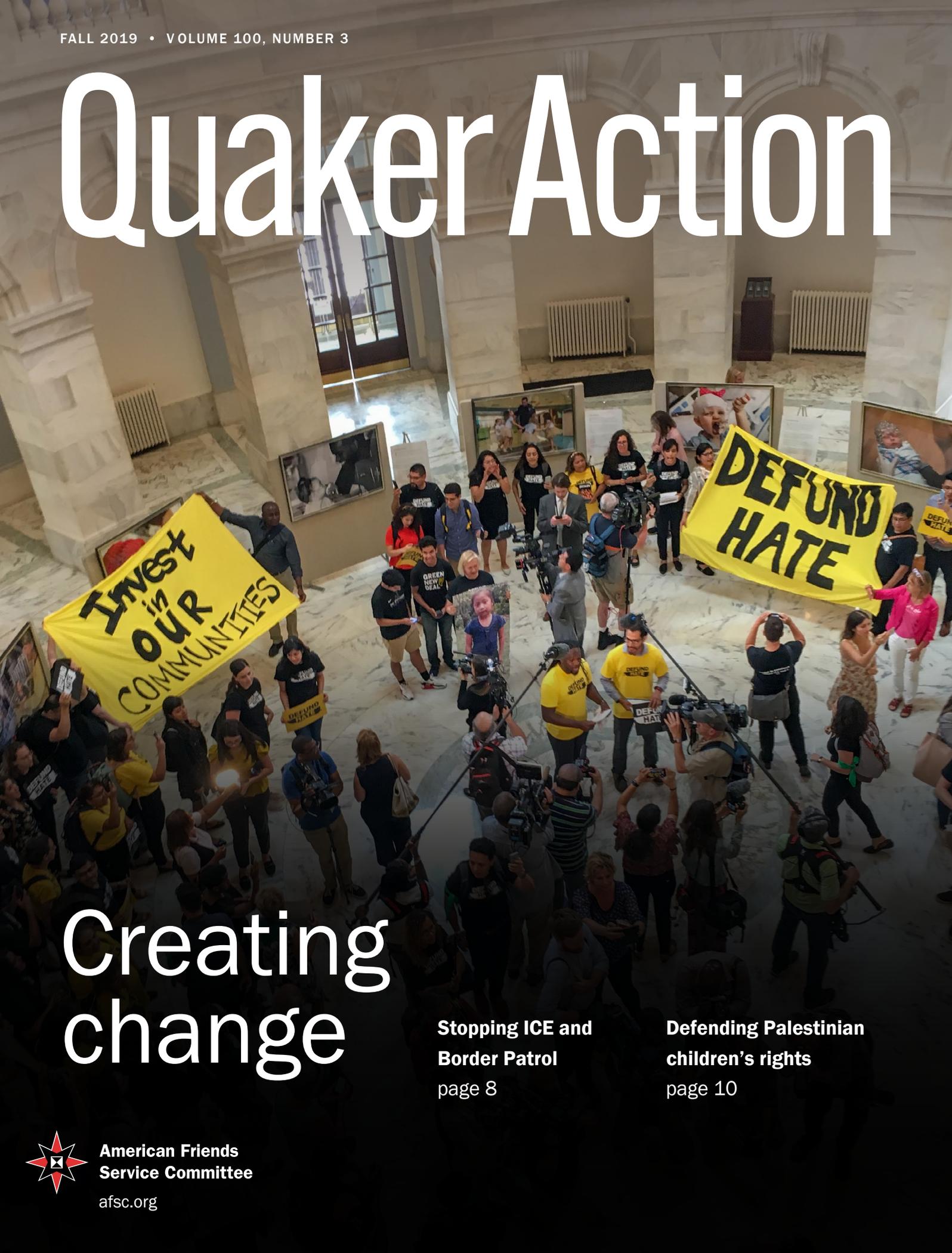


# Quaker Action



## Creating change

Stopping ICE and  
Border Patrol  
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children's rights  
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American Friends  
Service Committee

[afsc.org](http://afsc.org)

# Quaker Action

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afsc.org

## WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

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Defund Hate day of action at the Capitol rotunda in Washington, D.C.

Photo: Carl Roose/AFSC

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"Break the Cages, Fund the People" protest in Philadelphia.  
Photo: Nathaniel Doubleday/AFSC

## Dear friends,

It was total happenstance that I was scheduled to go to Miami and Homestead, Florida—just a day after we received notice that Homestead detention center was no longer holding children. It was an honor to meet the committed, courageous local organizers, who, along with AFSC staff and supporters, spoke truth to power and kept the pressure on the government to treat migrant children humanely. I'll never forget that day (read more about our efforts on page 14).

This issue of Quaker Action shares several victories on the path toward lasting peace with justice. Banks are refusing money to for-profit prison corporations. The campaign for much-needed debt cancellation for Somalia is gaining momentum. A state has set a new precedent in limiting the inhumane use of solitary confinement in prisons. More congresspeople are signing on to a bill to protect Palestinian children's rights.

My AFSC colleagues are change makers, working behind the scenes in each of these successful initiatives. And, behind us all the way, is you.

Thank you so much for supporting these change makers and all they do around the world. I hope this issue makes you proud of the work we are doing together!



In peace,

Joyce Ajlouny  
General Secretary

# ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

Get Alumni Network updates  
and join our Facebook group!

[afsc.org/alumni](http://afsc.org/alumni)



Marc Mauer. Photo: Arnie Alpert/AFSC

**Marc Mauer** began his work in criminal justice in 1975 as AFSC's National Justice communications coordinator and now serves as executive director of The Sentencing Project. Earlier this year, he appeared on "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" to discuss his book, "The Meaning of Life: The Case for Abolishing Life Sentences."



Photo: Ed Hedemann

On Aug. 27, longtime peace activist **Frances Crowe** passed away at the age of 100. She ran AFSC's Western Massachusetts office in the basement of her home for 32 years before retiring in 2006.

**Hoda Katebi**, former co-trainer with AFSC's Communities Against Islamophobia project, is launching a fashion production co-op for immigrant and refugee women called Blue Tin Production Co-Op.

**Malcolm Crooks**, who led an international team of Quakers in Algeria with AFSC from 1963 to 1965, died on May 25. He was 96.

From 2001 to 2008, **James and Wuna Reilly** served as AFSC's East Asia representatives in China. Today they live in Sydney, Australia, where James is an associate professor in Northeast Asian Politics at the University of Sydney, and Wuna is a visiting fellow at the Australian Centre on China in the World.

Before becoming a world-renowned apple breeder, **Roger Way** spent more than two years in rural China doing relief work with AFSC. He passed away in June at the age of 100.

**Pamela Phan** directed AFSC's Portland office for seven years. Today she is the organizing director of Community Alliance of Tenants, a statewide grassroots tenant-controlled tenant-rights organization.

Do you have news to share? **Email us at [alumni@afsc.org](mailto:alumni@afsc.org)!**



## Share your AFSC story on Facebook!

In November, we're asking AFSC alumni to share their stories on Facebook as we approach the holiday season—and to encourage their family and friends to support our work for social change.

To sign up for a reminder email to share your story, visit [afsc.org/alumni](http://afsc.org/alumni).

## Thinking about giving a year-end gift from your donor-advised fund?

AFSC's new website tool makes your giving very simple.

Visit [www.afsc.org/give](http://www.afsc.org/give) and use our donor-advised fund tool on the top of the page to start your gift.

# News from around AFSC



AFSC's Charley Flint, Ojore Lutalo, and Bonnie Kerness at an AFSC exhibit on ending solitary confinement. Photo: Don Davis/AFSC

## New Jersey will limit solitary confinement

In July, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy signed a new law that will reduce the use of solitary confinement in the state's prisons, jails, and immigrant detention centers. The law sets a new precedent for other states and is considered one of the most progressive in the nation. It comes after years of advocacy by AFSC and partners in the New Jersey Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement, a coalition of religious, family, and community groups.

Solitary confinement is a pervasive practice in New Jersey and most jails and prisons throughout the U.S. People are imprisoned in cages about the size of a typical household bathroom (about 50 square feet) for an average of 23 hours a day for days, weeks, months, often years. The psychological effects have been well documented—leaving victims with lifetime mental health injuries.

Under New Jersey's new law, no person can be isolated for more than 20 days in a row. The bill also outlines protections for certain groups—including those with mental illness or serious medical conditions, people age 21 and younger, and LGBTQ individuals—and improves oversight by medical professionals.

For decades, AFSC has been at the forefront of efforts to end long-term isolation nationally—and the New Jersey law is a step in the right direction. "In partnership with people across the country, we will continue to push for an environment that does no further damage to people who are incarcerated—and carry on our call to abolish solitary confinement completely," says Bonnie Kerness, director of AFSC's Prison Watch Program.

—SERGES DEMEFACK,

COORDINATOR, AFSC'S DETENTION AND DEPORTATION PROJECT, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

## The ground is shaking under the prison and detention industry

In a remarkable development, almost all major U.S. banks have announced this year they would stop financing companies that run private prisons and immigration detention centers, particularly the two companies that dominate this industry, CoreCivic and GEO Group. The first banks to do so were JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo in March, followed by Bank of America in June. In July and August, SunTrust, BNP Paribas, Fifth Third Bancorp, Barclays, U.S. Bank, and PNC made similar declarations.

GEO Group admitted to its shareholders that these bank decisions, as well as "increased public resistance" to private prisons, are bad for its business—an example of how people can successfully influence corporations through economic activism.

"This is a major victory, which marks a hard-won new standard of behavior in the financial industry," says Dalit Baum, who directs AFSC's Economic Activism Program. "Both CoreCivic and Geo Group cannot expand their business without bank credit, so these actions offer a way to curb the growth of the prison industry."

Attention has shifted to other financial institutions that have yet to withdraw from this harmful industry, including Citizens Bank and Regions Bank.

You can help keep these banks accountable. As an investor or client—either individual or institutional—reach out to them and other financial institutions and ask them to withdraw from the prison and immigration detention industries. Your voice—together with others—can make a difference.

—NOAM PERRY

AFSC'S ECONOMIC ACTIVISM PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Find out if your investments are supporting for-profit prison corporations:

 [afsc.org/investigate](https://afsc.org/investigate)



Illustration: Aija Suuta/AFSC

## A resource for people facing deportation

Immigrants who have spent years—sometimes most of their lives—in the U.S. are increasingly faced with the prospect of returning to the countries of their birth, whether through deportation or because there are no other options for their families to live safely in the U.S. To help people make the process as simple and safe as possible, AFSC recently published a new online guide: “Crossing South: Resources for people returning to Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.”

The guide draws from AFSC’s decade-plus experience navigating the detention and deportation system in Colorado and other states; our community-based programs in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador; and additional research conducted by staff and volunteers with AFSC’s ally program Coloradans for Immigrant Rights (CFIR), including Harriet Mullaney, who spent more than a year on the project.

The idea for Crossing South came from the Not1More Table, an immigrant-led community group supported by AFSC. “As the Trump administration ramped up attacks on immigrant communities, several Not1More members faced the risk of a family member being deported and expressed a need for this resource to prepare in case they needed to move their whole family to a country where some of them have never been,” says AFSC’s Gabriela Flora, who co-coordinates the Not1More Table with immigrant leaders.

The guide offers information on getting affairs in order before leaving the U.S., safety tips upon arriving in a country, and a list of local organizations that can help.

—RONNA BOLANTE



**GET CROSSING SOUTH:** [afsc.org/xs](https://afsc.org/xs)

## AFSC in the media

### On the “Remain in Mexico” policy

“These roadblocks in the asylum process—along with U.S. pressure on Mexico to crack down on Central American migrants—are intentionally designed to deter people from exercising their internationally protected right to seek asylum. The U.S. is turning its back on its legal obligation to protect people fleeing persecution. Instead, it’s sending vulnerable people back to some of the world’s most dangerous cities to wait indefinitely.”

—Karen Romero, AFSC migration consultant in Tijuana, in Truthout

### On the resignation of Arizona’s corrections director

“This moment provides a crucial opportunity to correct the serious, systemic issues in (the corrections system) and heal the wounds in our community. We look to Gov. Ducey to ensure that the next director is someone who will lead the department with integrity and take us in a bold new direction in which Corrections actually lives up to its name.”

—Statement by AFSC’s Arizona Program published in the Arizona Republic

### On North Korea

“In order to truly transform the U.S.-North Korea relationship, we will need to untangle issues of individual security from issues of arms control and international norms. Reuniting families (living and deceased), then, offers a viable way to help heal the wounds of war while, at the same time, cultivating the environment necessary to effectively discuss high level concerns of the U.S. and North Korea.”

—Dan Jasper, Public Education and Advocacy Coordinator for AFSC’s Asia Program, in The Hill

# Q + A

## Luis Paiz Bekker



Photo: Don Davis/AFSC

In July, Luis Paiz Bekker joined AFSC as Latin American and Caribbean regional director after working for the past 25 years at organizations including Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam, primarily in Latin America.

**Q:** *What drew you to AFSC?*

**A:** I've had the privilege of working with indigenous peoples in several countries. When I was studying to become a physician, I struggled with the western approach that often views these communities as the problem instead of recognizing their strengths and skills and learning from them. I recognized early on the need to decolonize our thinking.

When I read AFSC's mission, it was the first time I saw an organization write about a decolonizing approach to its work. People are seen as equals. We're not in a powerful position and helping those who need our support. At AFSC, you put your faith into action and must be humble enough to be ready to be transformed yourself.

AFSC sees the light in every human being, which is especially important now as we face this civilization crisis. And we are facing a civilization crisis, not just a political social problem. AFSC's vision of shared security means that we are all in the same boat and we must work together for the good of all.

**Q:** *What are some of the challenges that people face in the Latin America and Caribbean region that compel many to leave their native countries?*

**A:** You will find a huge amount of reasons people migrate—different aspirations and dreams. Basically, it's people trying to survive and find a better life.

The threat of physical violence—from gangs or in domestic situations—is a very common reason. Climate change, which is a global issue, has contributed to the destruction of crops for many farmers, making it hard to support themselves.

But the underlying cause is structural violence. What I mean by that is people have no opportunity whatsoever. In countries that expel large numbers of people, you often find different expressions of the neoliberal system that have been manipulated to benefit a few—not the majority.

Most people do not have their basic needs met, hospitals don't have enough resources, there's no education or opportunities for young people—this is all structural violence.

Migration has been happening for 500 years in the region, but not at the levels we're seeing now because of the unprecedented concentration of wealth and power.

**Q:** *At the same time, the Trump administration has implemented anti-immigrant policies like criminalizing people entering the U.S. or forcing people to remain in Mexico while applying for asylum.*

**A:** Yes, and these policies are failing because they're designed to keep people from entering—not addressing the roots causes of why they migrate. We have to provide these people with asylum and basic resources. If people have the resources they need, they have more opportunities to

actively engage in society, no matter where they are.

**Q:** *What are some ways that AFSC works to address root causes of migration?*

**A:** We've provided humanitarian aid and human rights monitoring to migrant caravans to help ensure their protection as they travel north. We also bring together organizations and networks working on migration issues.

We're lobbying governments in capital cities, helping to bring the voices and stories of migrants to policymakers. And we're in communities, working directly with young people to see alternatives to violence. We help them develop leadership skills and express themselves through art and planning projects to help their communities.

Recently I was in Haiti in an extremely poor area called Cite du Soleil, where I met young people who were creating a library. Other organizations joined the effort, and the municipality gave them a space where they could meet, talk, and dance.

The young people told me it's a place where they could find joy in their own identities and make decisions about their own futures. That joy spreads to their parents, their neighbors, their community. You see the very powerful effect on people when they not only avoid violence but find ways to transcend it. ■



Defund Hate day of action in Washington, D.C. Photo: Carl Roose/AFSC

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# It's time to defund hate

With support from AFSC, in Washington, D.C. and cities across the U.S., people are calling on Congress to stop funding cruelty against immigrants.

**BY RONNA BOLANTE**

Children ripped from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. People crowded in cages without adequate food or sanitation. Hundreds of workers arrested in immigration raids.

Since President Trump took office, acts of cruelty against immigrants perpetrated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)—part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—have made headlines. But human rights abuses by these agencies aren't new. Since the creation of DHS in 2003, ICE and CBP have separated countless families, caused the deaths of migrants seeking refuge, and terrorized our communities.

"Every day, we see the consequences of the administration's policies of violence and racism against our immigrant community members, and we know that the infrastructure to inflict this terrible harm has been built over many decades—in our name and with our taxpayer money," says Maggie Fogarty, co-director of AFSC's New Hampshire Program.

Since 2003, more than 180 people have died in ICE custody, and since 2010, at least 90 have died after interactions with CBP. Those detained by ICE and CBP face horrific conditions—all too often they are denied health care, given rotten food, and sexually and physically abused by guards.

Yet ICE and CBP have remained unaccountable to the

courts, to our communities, and to Congress, which has repeatedly urged the agencies to improve detention standards.

In fact, despite their history of human rights violations, ICE and CBP have larger budgets now than ever before—more than doubling from 2003 to over \$20 billion today. And the Trump administration continues to push for more funding for DHS to lock more people up, hire more ICE and CBP agents, and further militarize border communities with walls and surveillance technology.

## Communities organize to defund ICE and CBP

It's long past time to stop ICE and CBP's abuses. And one of the most effective ways we can do that is by demanding Congress stop the flow of money to these agencies.

"As an organization, AFSC is committed to demilitarizing our border communities and abolishing ICE in order to stop the detention and deportation of all people," says Kathryn Johnson, AFSC policy advocacy coordinator. "Defunding ICE and CBP is a key step as we work toward those goals."

That's why AFSC has joined with more than 30 organizations in the Defund Hate coalition, calling on Congress to significantly cut the budget for this abusive immigration enforcement system. The coalition represents people directly affected by ICE and CBP, faith leaders, and civil rights and immigrant rights advocates.

"Together, we're working to influence the appropriations process—lobbying Congress to steer funding away from ICE and CBP and toward programs our communities actually need to thrive, including education, housing, and health care," Kathryn says. "We've organized actions on Capitol Hill and in multiple

U.S. cities, advocated in the media, and generated hundreds of thousands of letters, petition signatures, and phone calls to legislators.”

Our efforts are having an impact. Since 2017, the Defund Hate Coalition has helped stop more than \$7 billion in funding to ICE and CBP.

## Immigrant leadership

For people like Lupe Lopez in Denver, Colorado, the call to defund hate is one more way she can protect her community. Lupe is a leader with the Not1More Table, an immigrant-led group supported by AFSC that brings immigrant families together to share information and help stop deportations. Since 2012, Lupe and her husband, who are undocumented, have struggled to remain in the United States—with their five U.S. citizen children—where they belong.

This summer, Lupe and two other Not1More members traveled with AFSC staff to Washington, D.C. for a Defund Hate training and strategy session on advocacy, speaking to the media, and engaging people in their own communities.



Immigrant rights leader Lupe Lopez.  
Photo: Carl Roose/AFSC

The gathering “inspired me to continue in this fight and gives me hope to know that we are not alone,” Lupe says.

“For me, it is important that Congress cuts the funds because the detention and deportation machine only causes harm to our community.”

Through Defund Hate, more communities across the U.S. are getting involved in the struggle to stop ICE and CBP. In August, dozens of people attended AFSC’s quarterly vigil outside the privately run GEO detention center in Aurora, Colorado.

“It was an opportunity for us to talk about how Congress is funding this inhumane treatment of immigrants in our own community—not just at the border,” says Gabriela Flora, a program director for AFSC’s Colorado Program and co-coordinator of the Not1More Table. “We were able to connect what was happening in D.C.—which can seem far away—to what was happening inside the detention center behind us, where community members have family members inside. And it becomes clearer why we all need to be urging Congress to defund hate.”

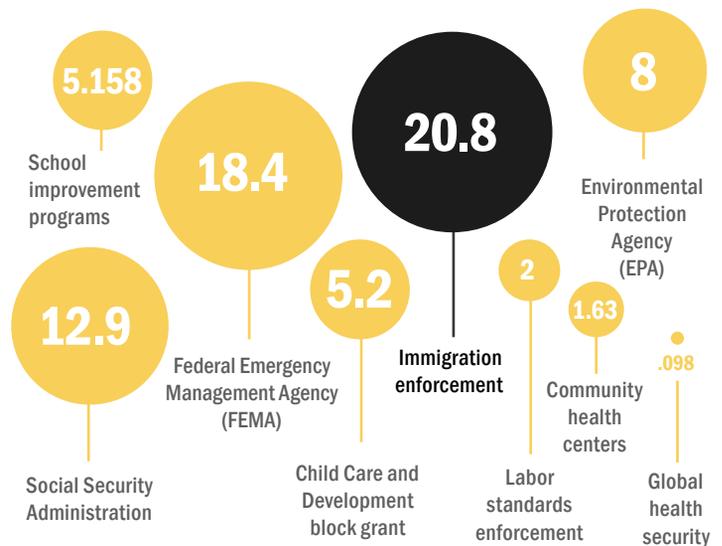
## How can you join the campaign to Defund Hate?

Visit [afsc.org/defund-hate](http://afsc.org/defund-hate) to:

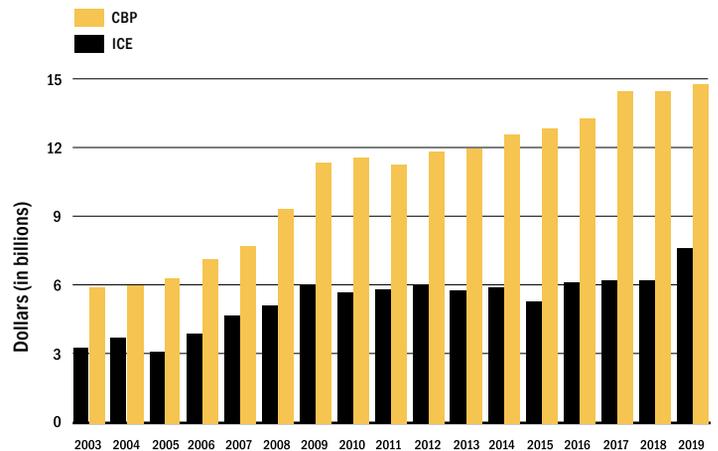
- Send messages to Congress to cut funding to ICE and CBP.
- Get social media graphics and posters for your next action.
- Find tips for questioning political candidates on the campaign trail on whether they support humane immigration policy.

## It's time to defund ICE and CBP and invest in programs that actually strengthen our communities.

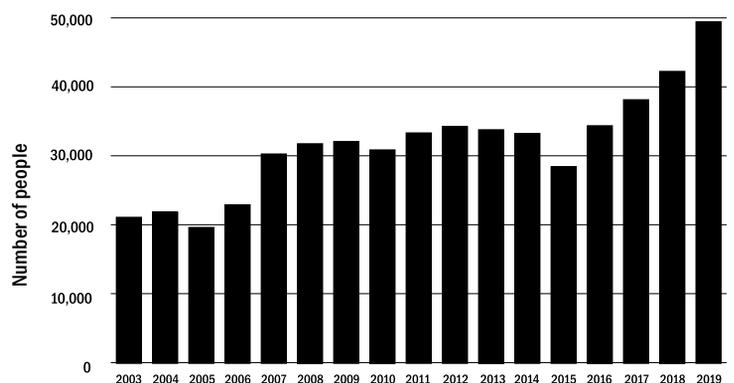
How much the U.S. spends (billions) Funds appropriated in 2018



## Annual ICE and CBP budgets



## Average daily number of people in ICE custody





Arrested at 17, Laith spent a year in Israeli detention without being charged with a crime. Photo: Ahmad Al-Bazz/ DCIP



Fawzi, 16, was assaulted by Israeli soldiers during his arrest and suffered a dislocated shoulder, which took days to be treated. Photo: Wisam Hashlamoun/Flash90

## THOUSANDS OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND PROSECUTED BY THE ISRAELI MILITARY

Here's how congregations and other communities are acting to stop it.

BY RONNA BOLANTE

Early on the morning of Sept. 20, 2017, around 2 a.m., Israeli soldiers entered the home of Laith, a 17-year-old from Kafr Ein village in the West Bank. Laith was bound, blindfolded, and physically assaulted—and was never presented with a warrant or told why he was being arrested.

Over the next 11 hours, Laith was transferred to multiple locations and interrogated about throwing stones, which is considered a “security offense” under Israeli military law. He denied the allegations against him.

Laith would spend 46 weeks—nearly a year—in detention. He would have multiple court appearances, but never be charged with any crime. And on Aug. 16, 2018, he would be released without explanation, having missed his final year of high school.

Laith is just one of the 10,000 Palestinian children in the

West Bank who, since 2000, have been arrested and held in the Israeli military detention system that denies them their basic rights. For the past four years, AFSC and Defense for Children International-Palestine have partnered on the No Way to Treat a Child campaign to expose this widespread and systemic abuse of Palestinian children. It is one part of AFSC's ongoing work to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory.

“All children have the right to a safe and just future,” says Jennifer Bing, AFSC coordinator for the campaign. “But every year, Israel prosecutes between 500 and 700 Palestinian children in military courts. We must put a stop to this inhumane treatment—and the U.S. has a critical role to play in making that happen.”

## No Way to Treat a Child

Israel is the only country in the world that automatically prosecutes children in military courts. There, Palestinian children lack fundamental fair trial rights and protections. Children typically arrive to interrogations bound, blindfolded, and sleep-deprived. They often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, and physical and psychological violence. They have no right to legal counsel during interrogation, and Israeli military court judges rarely exclude confessions obtained by coercion or torture.

Our No Way to Treat a Child campaign calls on the United States government to use all available means to pressure Israeli authorities to end the detention and abuse of Palestinian children. First and foremost, that means prohibiting U.S. taxpayer money from funding the military detention of children by any country, including Israel.

Toward this end, AFSC has worked with faith communities, partner organizations, and individuals across the U.S. to engage members of Congress through briefings on Capitol Hill; legislative visits; and emails, petitions, and phone calls from constituents. We offer trainings and webinars, organize speaking tours, and advise faith-based communities and others on ways to make their voices heard.

And our efforts are making a difference. In April of this year, Rep. Betty McCollum introduced new legislation to hold Israel accountable for its continued abuse of Palestinian children in military detention. The “Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act” (H.R. 2407) would ensure that U.S. financial assistance to Israel is not used for the military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children. H.R. 2407 builds from a similar bill introduced by McCollum in 2017, which was the first-ever bill to address Palestinian human rights in Congress. It was signed by 31 representatives.

“The children this legislation seeks to protect are Palestinians who have lived their entire lives under Israeli military occupation,” McCollum said in a statement. “And, it is U.S. tax dollars provided by Congress, the unregulated \$3.8 billion military aid package to Israel, that helps to cover the cost of Israeli soldiers arresting, interrogating, and abusing children, some as young as nine years old, in the name of Israeli security.”

As of this writing, 21 representatives had signed as co-sponsors of H.R. 2407, including several new progressive members of Congress who have responded to grassroots pressure to support Palestinian rights. “We’re seeing more members of Congress who are not afraid to challenge the status quo when it comes to addressing human rights violations that are happening in other countries, including Israel,” Jennifer says.

**700**  
**Palestinian children are arrested and detained by the Israeli military every year**



Participants at an AFSC summit on advocating for justice in Palestine and Israel, which was held in Washington, D.C. this summer. Photo: Matthew Paul D'Agostino

## Congregations step up

Since the launch of the No Way to Treat a Child campaign, several U.S.-based church bodies have passed national resolutions to protect the rights of Palestinian children, including the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, and, most recently, the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

“Jesus said that it would be better to have a millstone hung around the neck and be cast into the sea rather than to cause even one of these little ones to stumble,” says the Rev. Jim Moos, UCC associate general minister for global engagement and operations. “We have a moral obligation to leverage our support of the state of Israel to ensure that the mistreatment of Palestinian children ceases and that justice be accorded to all.”

Other congregations have developed curricula to study the issue, hosted speaking events in their communities, lobbied their members of Congress, and organized visits with families impacted by detention during their own trips to the occupied Palestinian territory.

## Would you like to help us build support for Palestinian rights?

Visit us at [afsc.org/nowayresource](https://afsc.org/nowayresource) to:

- **Email your member of Congress:** Urge them to support legislation to end the detention of Palestinian children.
- **Check out our messaging tips:** We offer best practices to talk to your children, representatives, and others.
- **Commemorate World Children's Day on Nov. 20:** Get some ideas to mark this international day by raising awareness about the treatment of Palestinian children.
- **View our webinar:** Learn more about the No Way to Treat a Child campaign and how you can join our advocacy efforts.

In addition, in the coming year, AFSC is looking for 100 Quaker meetings and other congregations to engage with our No Way to Treat a Child campaign. Will yours be one of them?

Contact **Lucy Duncan**, director of Friends Relations, to learn more: [lduncan@afsc.org](mailto:lduncan@afsc.org)

# Why we must cancel Somalia's debt

Debt cancellation is critical to build peace and alleviate poverty in Somalia.

BY ZAINA KISONGOA



Hussein Abdullahi Mohamed completed an AFSC-sponsored training program to become an electrician and hone his skills to resolve conflicts through nonviolence. *Photo: AFSC/Somalia*

When you think of Somalia, some of the most severe humanitarian challenges in the world may come to mind. The country continues to endure violence, extreme poverty, acute food shortages, political instability, economic underdevelopment, human rights abuses, and recurring natural disasters, such as droughts and floods that lead to famine. But that is not the whole story.

Since 2008, AFSC has worked with local partners in Somalia to help young people develop conflict resolution skills and learn vocations such as carpentry, electrical work, and tailoring. We have seen them identify issues facing their communities and develop strategies to address them—often exercising great courage under difficult conditions. We have rooted for them as they have launched businesses that help them do more than simply survive. And we have seen their potential to transform their communities further.

That includes young people like Hussein Abdullahi Mohamed, who like many his age, had limited job opportunities and had considered joining the militia. After completing an AFSC-sponsored training program in Mogadishu in 2017, Hussein is an electrician—supporting himself, his parents, and siblings while helping his fellow community members resolve conflicts using nonviolent means.

In our work, we have also seen that there are some obstacles that young people cannot overcome on their own. One major roadblock to building wider-spread peace and security in Somalia is its crushing national debt—which has prevented the government from making necessary investments to meet the needs of its people as well as to build the infrastructure critical to the country's future. After all, history has shown that real security—the kind that fosters peace and prosperity—grows when all people have access to basic resources such as water, food, shelter, and health care—and when governments and institutions invest in policies that promote mutual well-being.

That's why AFSC has joined with many in the international community calling for the full and swift cancellation of Somalia's debt. Here's what you need to know:



## **After years of armed conflict, Somalia remains one of Africa's most troubled and underdeveloped countries.**

**As of June 30, 2018:**

- 3.6 million Somalis are displaced (2.6 million internally and almost one million forced to leave the country).
- Malnutrition rates across Somalia are among the worst in the world, with more than 1.5 million people facing acute food security crisis—meaning their lives or livelihoods are in immediate danger. More than 900,000 children under age five will be acutely malnourished in 2019.
- 80% of Somalis are illiterate. Only 10% have access to education.

## **The government of Somalia does not have the resources to meet the country's urgent needs and work toward building peace.**

Somalia's 2012 parliamentary and presidential elections led to renewed international recognition of its federal government and its efforts to reengage with the international community. But the country's external debt of \$4.6 billion continues to restrict Somalia from accessing much-needed cash from the international financial community for development. This debt was largely accrued before the collapse of the Somali government in 1991—before most Somalis alive today were even born.

## **The United States can and should lead the way in fully and swiftly cancelling Somalia's debt.**

The United States is Somalia's largest creditor. Much of that \$1 billion debt to the U.S. is owed to the Pentagon, because funds were used primarily for military purposes—not development—in Somalia in the 1980s.

Today the U.S. has a chance to make a much better investment than it did then—by cancelling Somalia's debt to help its government address humanitarian crises, prevent violence, and build shared security both within and outside of the country. Debt cancellation will allow Somalia to unlock new financial resources for reconstruction, development, and peacebuilding efforts. It will also position the U.S. as a leader in facilitating greater political stability—a critical step for the young Somalis working to build a brighter future for their communities—and ultimately, for us all.

## **The international community has come together to support debt cancellation—but much more can be done.**

AFSC is part of a diverse group of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that work in Somalia and are supporting its bid for expeditious and full debt cancellation. Known as the Somalia Debt Cancellation Working Group (part of the Somalia NGO consortium), we have successfully lobbied the African Union—made up of 54 member states—to support canceling Somalia's debt.

We are also asking the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to take major steps to provide debt relief to Somalia, which would help the country access more credit to invest in infrastructure, schools, and employment opportunities for young people. The World Bank has committed to eradicate poverty and support countries that are overburdened by conflict. Somalia fits that description and deserves all the help that the World Bank can provide.

Similarly, the IMF has signaled that it will put Somalia through its Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative, a program designed to ensure that the poorest countries in the world are not overwhelmed by unmanageable debt burdens. As part of the debt relief process, the IMF monitors progress made by the Somali government and noted in February that over the past two years, “growth has rebounded, inflation has slowed, and the trade deficit has narrowed.” That makes now a good time to implement debt cancellation.

## **People in the U.S. can make their voices heard on this issue.**

You can take action to support debt cancellation—and we hope you will invite your congregation or community group to join you!

Visit [afsc.org/cancel-somalia-debt](https://afsc.org/cancel-somalia-debt) to contact your members of Congress and urge them to call on the Trump administration to cancel Somalia's debt and urge other creditors—such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund—to do the same.

*Zaina Kisongoa is country representative for AFSC's Somalia Program.*

# We **SHUT DOWN** HOMESTEAD DETENTION CENTER!



AFSC staff and Florida partners and community members at a rally in Homestead.  
Photo: Nathaniel Doubleday/AFSC

Now we must keep it from reopening—  
and end child detention once and for all. **BY KRISTIN KUMPF**

Last spring, we set an ambitious goal: to shut down the largest migrant detention center for youth in the country in time for the children to attend school in the fall.

On Saturday, Aug. 3, it happened: The last of more than 3,000 children were taken out of the Homestead detention center in Florida—a significant win in our ongoing work to end child detention. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reported that most of the children had been united with sponsors or family members, while others were transferred to smaller, state-licensed facilities.

As an “emergency influx center,” the Homestead detention center was exempt from many basic standards of care and oversight, essentially operating as a child prison, with a for-profit corporation—Caliburn International—profiting to the tune of \$1 million taxpayer dollars a day.

While our call remains for all children to be united with family members or sponsors, seeing children moved from a private prison-operated facility with little to no accountability to state-licensed facilities with greater oversight was a critical short-term step.

## **WHY WERE CHILDREN BEING DETAINED IN HOMESTEAD?**

Most of the children in Homestead fled violence and poverty in Central America and arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border seeking asylum—only to be indefinitely detained.

Children slept in military-like dorms with up to 250 kids and were closely monitored by guards. They were not allowed to hug anyone—even their own siblings. To make matters worse, when sponsors for these children came forward, information about them and their family members was shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), sometimes resulting in arrests.

## **HOW COMMUNITIES CAME TOGETHER FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN**

News that Homestead was no longer detaining children came after months of public pressure from people in Florida and across the country. AFSC’s Miami office took a lead role in local organizing while our Washington, D.C. office coordinated a national coalition.

Activists and allies, faith communities, and many other partners worked together—holding vigils, marches, and protests; shouting messages of love and encouragement to the young migrants inside; holding press conferences; advocating with elected officials; supporting local children in writing letters to detained youth; and donating to support our work.

Together we also collected and delivered more than 128,000 signatures on a petition demanding that HHS shut down Homestead detention center, stop sharing sponsors’ information with ICE, and unite children with their family members and sponsors.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Of course, the struggle is far from over. More than 50,000 immigrants—children and adults—remain incarcerated across the country. The Trump administration wants to build even more dangerous, inhumane detention centers. And as of this writing, HHS is considering renewing its Homestead contract with Caliburn International in anticipation of more children arriving at the border.

But if our experience has taught us anything, it is that sustained efforts by everyday people really do have the power to make change. Thank you for joining us in working for the day when immigrants’ rights are respected, children are united with their families, and asylum seekers can find the safety and peace that we all deserve.

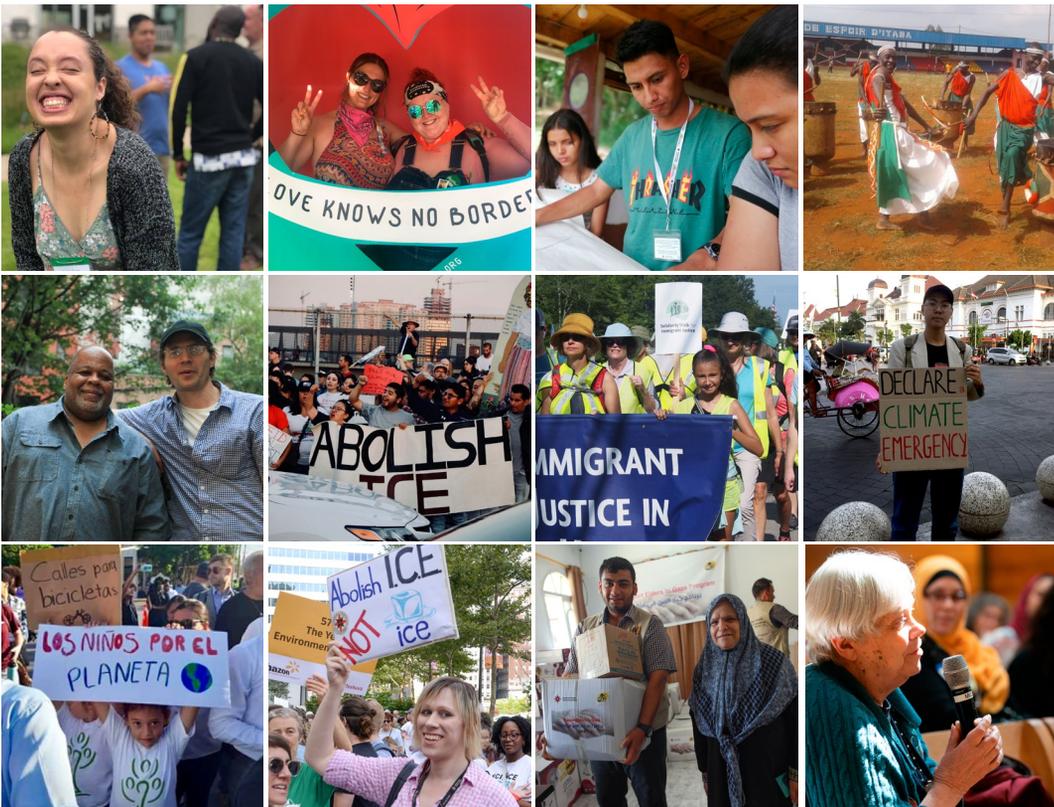
*Kristin Kumpf is director of AFSC’s Human Migration and Mobility Network.*



**SNAPSHOT**

**A look at AFSC around the world**

"Break the Cages, Fund the People" protest and march in Philadelphia.  
 Photo: Nathaniel Doubleday/AFSC



Left to right, top to bottom:

1. Youth in Action; Birmingham, UK
2. AFSC booth at the 2019 Bonnaroo Festival; Manchester, Tennessee
3. Youth of the Micro Peace Platform of the Sol Mayor Collective; El Salvador
4. Youth peacebuilding and cultural activities; Burundi
5. Lewis Webb and Jeremy Robins at Liberation Summer Camp; New York
6. Close the Camps protest; San Ysidro, California
7. Immigrant justice walk; New Hampshire
8. Global Climate Strike; Yogyakarta, Indonesia
9. Global Climate Strike; Mexico
10. Global Climate Strike; Philadelphia
11. Providing aid to elders; Gaza
12. Advocacy for justice in Palestine and Israel summit; Washington, D.C.

Sophia Burns/AFSC, Bryan Vana/AFSC, Omar Ponce/AFSC, CPAJ Partners, AFSC/New York, Pedro Rios/AFSC, Arnie Alpert/AFSC, AFSC/Indonesia, AFSC/Mexico, Nathaniel Doubleday/AFSC, Mohamed Reefi, Matthew Paul D'Agostino



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Photo: Carl Roose/AFSC



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