Physical Fences and Digital Divides:
A GDP Investigation into the Role of Social Media in the Context of Migration Control

Presentation by Tom Rollins & Michael Flynn
The Global Detention Project (GDP) is a non-profit organisation based in Geneva that promotes the human rights of people who have been detained for reasons related to their non-citizen status. Our mission is:

- To **promote the human rights** of detained migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
- To **ensure transparency** in the treatment of immigration detainees
- To **reinforce advocacy** aimed at reforming detention systems
- To **nurture policy-relevant scholarship** on the causes and consequences of migration control policies
GDP Map of Detention Sites
GDP DATABASE: The Global Immigration Detention Observatory

NETHERLANDS

COUNTRY SUMMARY

- TOTAL CENTRES: 14
- LAST UPDATE: Mar 2017

NETHERLANDS IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Despite a strict interpretation of European regulations, the Netherlands has dramatically reduced its own immigration detention capacity as a result of increasing numbers of immigration detentions. Observers report that those detentions are part due to the lack of effective enforcement of immigration law. The government has made efforts to reduce immigration detention numbers since the adoption of the EU Returns Directive. On the other hand, detention numbers remain high in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

INTRODUCTION

The number of immigration detainees in the Netherlands has dropped significantly in recent years from 6,204 in 2011 to 2,176 in 2017. According to some sources, this is due in part to the fact that the government has tried to provide alternatives to those detained. The Dutch Criminal Justice Act (Wet van 24 augustus 2000, 2000/101) introduced a Council of State to review cases, which in recent years has resulted in a decrease in immigration detention numbers. The Council of State, chaired by a judge, decides on cases related to detention, and it has been effective in reducing the number of detainees.

Other recent reforms have included a reduction in the number of detainees at all levels. The Council of State has been active in the Netherlands. Since 2000, it has reviewed thousands of cases, and it has been successful in reducing the number of detainees. The Council of State's decisions have been based on a combination of legal and humanitarian considerations. The Council of State has also been active in reviewing cases related to the detention of foreign nationals, and it has been successful in reducing the number of detainees.

Detailed asylum seekers (2016): 261
Detained minors (2016): 402
Persons released (2016): 8,626
International migrants (2016): 1,975,500
New asylum applications (2016): 21,411

globaldetentionproject.org
Border crisis in Latvia?

Despite having only a very small number of unauthorized entries, Latvia calls the situation at its borders with Russia and Belarus "alarming" and has begun constructing a multi-million Euro border fence.

See detention profile.
SAUDI ARABIA
ISSUES RELATED TO IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Joint Submission to the Universal Periodic Review
of the Human Rights Council
31st session, November 2018
Submitted in March 2018

HARM REDUCTION IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DETENTION CENTRES IN FRANCE,
GERMANY, NORWAY, SWEDEN, AND SWITZERLAND
October 2018
Commissioned by the Norwegian Red Cross

globaldetentionproject.org
PHYSICAL FENCES AND DIGITAL DIVIDES
A GLOBAL DETENTION PROJECT INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION CONTROL

PART I: EXPOSING THE "CRISIS"

May 2018
Part III of “Physical Fences and Digital Divides” (Dec 2018)

- How to use social media and other online resources to reduce hard in migration journeys, and in particular in the context of detention and migration control?

- GDP experience with Facebook and online database of detention centres

- Other recent initiatives: TechFugues, AppCID (Eve Lester/New South Wales Aliens Hub for Technology and Innovation)
Behrouz Boochani wins Anna Politkovskaya award for Manus Island writing

Iranian Kurdish refugee recognised for documenting Australia’s offshore detention
TECHFUGEES Guiding Principles

1. Start with displaced people (#HumanCenteredDesign)

2. From refugees to Techfugees (#Empowerment)

3. Don’t collect data for data’s sake! (#DataGovernance & #Transparency)

4. Sharing is caring (#OpenSource)

5. Because we are all in this together (#InclusiveTech)

6. Good intentions are great to start with but sustainability is the key to real impact (#Sustainability)

7. Integration isn’t just a refugee issue, but a political problem too (#HumanRightsBasedApproach)

8. Remember: Tech is just a tool (#NoSolutionism)
PHYSICAL FENCES AND DIGITAL DIVIDES

We, the trapped people of Karmouz jail in Alexandria, Egypt for over 150 days, and due to suffering from the lack of care by international organisations and human rights foundations, announce an open hunger strike as an attempt to draw world attention to our plight which is a part of Syrian and Palestinian Syrian refugees' tragedy. The harsh conditions and hell of war in Syria have forced us to flee to Europe by sea seeking for a place in Europe that provides human conditions of a decent life. However, we were victimised and used by the mafia of illegal immigration. We were forced by army to land down the Egyptian coast to be treated as prisoners within conditions that are far from human life which led to aggravation of the crisis and the spread of physiological and psychological diseases among us. Due to the deterioration of our situation we have found no reason rather than this peaceful way to express our demand of instant coordination between the concerned parties to provide us access to European countries as our families’ members are available there.

Please deliver our call to all concerned parties:
1. UNHCR headed by the high commissioner Antonio Guterres
2. UNRWA commissioner-general Pierre Krahenbuhl
3. International Committee of the Red Cross
4. Amnesty International
5. Human Rights Watch
6. UNICEF
7. Embassies of European Union

Karmouz Refugees
لاجئي كرموز
An app developed by Hungarian volunteers at the height of the "refugee crisis," it provides news reports focused on migratory/border developments in Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Slovenia. Updates tended to rely on the https://news@thatmoves.org/ website (no longer active). Clearly, because of its historical/geographical focus, the app is now very outdated and doesn't appear to have been updated for some time. A 22 March 2017 Facebook post stated that the app was being "rehauling" and would hopefully be back in "new and improved form" soon (no date specified).

An Android/iOS app actually designed by the German government for newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants to help navigate the arrival, asylum, and integration process. It is available in Arabic, English, Farsi, French, and German, and does not require an internet connection. The app developers have said Ankommen will be regularly updated, although this has sometimes resulted in a top-down (rather than human-centred design) approach, such as when the social customs section was updated with information about gender equality in the wake of the Cologne attacks on New Year’s Eve 2016.

Born out of a range of European/Euro-Mediterranean activist networks before 2015, Alarmphone is ostensibly a 24-hour phone-line for migrants in distress at sea to call—an alarm, not a rescue line, as the site is keen to stress. Staff maintain shifts to monitor developments at sea, and field calls from migrants in distress. Alarmphone’s network includes refugees and migrants either as staff, key informants, or shift workers. It also uses physical (print) awareness-raising on top of an online presence that, for example through Facebook, publishes audio/visual materials in various languages including French, Arabic, West African, and Horn of Africa languages.

Created by refugee Mojahed al-Alk, Arabic-language app and site Gherbna (meaning "our exile") targets Syrians in Turkey with information on everything from news from within Syria, job offers, registration requirements for Syrian students in local universities, or regulations regarding residency documents. Designed by and for refugees, Gherbna provides some memorable lessons about the importance of human-centred design in the refugee/tech world as opposed to the string of outdated or since defunct open-source websites developed top-down since the advent of the "refugee crisis."
Factors that vary use of social media, ICTs and other technologies during migration:

- Age
- Nationality
- Literacy/education rate
- Socio-economic/class dynamics in origin country
- Internet and ICT penetration rates in origin country
- Pre-existing awareness of migratory risks on given route
- Smuggling modus operandi on a given route
- Distance
- Individual vs. collective migratory aspirations