



## ICE deports witness in sexual assault investigation at Texas center

Biba Adams

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The unidentified woman had told lawyers about a “pattern and practice” of sexual abuse in their El Paso facility.

The detention center in El Paso, Texas where a detained woman alleges she and others held were sexually assaulted and harassed in camera blind spots.

The Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement is under scrutiny for another story of impropriety at one of its facilities.

On Monday, the United States government deported a “crucial” witness into allegations of sexual assault and harassment at a Texas detention center.

ProPublica and *The Texas Tribune* are reporting that the 35-year-old woman had been held at the center for about a year and told lawyers about a “pattern and practice” of sexual abuse at the facility.

The unidentified woman alleged that several guards “forcibly” kissed her and touched her private parts. She also detailed that the guards regularly assault detainees in areas that are not visible to security cameras.

In the original [report](#) on Aug. 14, the woman told ProPublica that she would rather return to Mexico, even though she is in danger there. However, she says she was being targeted at the center for speaking up about the abuse.

“It’s going to get worse now,” she said. “I can’t handle this anymore.”

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center filed for the woman to be released while the investigation was ongoing, citing safety concerns. She could have also qualified for a U visa that protects immigrant victims of crime.

Instead, she has been deported back to Mexico, according to her lawyer, **Linda Corchado**.

The U.S. government “allowed their most powerful witness to be deported,” Corchado said. “How can we possibly take this investigation seriously now or ever pretend that it ever was from the outset?”

In 2018, ICE reported 374 formal accusations of sexual assault. Most assaults are levied against male guards by female detainees, but male detainees have made reports as well.

The El Paso facility is run by Global Precision Systems, a subsidiary of Bering Straits Native Corporation, a private prison company that is contracted by ICE.

According to the Cato Institute, there are over a half million people detained at federal ICE detention centers. More than 70% of those centers are run by private prison companies.