

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

TOWARDS A FUTURE WITHOUT MANDATORY DETENTION

A series of dialogues with frontline and local leaders, hosted by the Open Society Foundations and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

17 November
15:00–16:30 CET
09:00–10:30 EST

18 November
15:00–16:30 CET
09:00–10:30 EST

19 November
15:00–17:00 CET
09:00–11:00 EST

#CitiesAreListening

UCLG
United Cities and Local Governments

metropolis ●

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

INTERNATIONAL
CALENDAR

Towards a future without Mandatory Detentions

17 Nov. 2020

19 Nov. 2020

What do the institutionalization of people with disabilities, forced treatment of people who use drugs, immigration detention, and the prison industrial complex have in common? They all sacrifice freedom and human rights in the name of public safety while having questionable positive impact on public safety. And as the pandemic upends societies around the world, officials are privileging punitive approaches to addressing public safety concerns over alternatives that focus more on health and human rights.

Many of the most vulnerable or marginalized people in the world right now are being held in unsafe conditions—in jails, prisons, immigration centers, and institutions where implementing social distancing measures is effectively impossible. However, despite calls from civil society organizations to slow or stop the influx of people into these facilities—and to free the most vulnerable—these practices have largely endured. Mandatory detention entails particularly harsh consequences for women and children, and its harmful effects on human dignity and social inclusion persist after release.

Community-led solutions are key to make sure that justice, dignity, equality, and human rights protection prevail over inefficient and unfair measures. As the closest level of government to people, it is important to call the attention of local and regional governments, as well as national and international institutions, on the impact of mandatory detention in our communities, and explore ways to make structural change happen. Between November 17th and 19th, the Open Society Foundations and United Cities and Local Governments will convene three panels featuring 12 frontline activists who will discuss the rise of mandatory detention, assess the current situation, and explain how a world without mandatory detention would work to everyone's benefit. This collective reflection aims ultimately at rethinking current approaches that have proved inefficient, bringing local, national and international governments and institutions to an open discussion towards a community-led vision for 2045 that puts people, care, and social justice at the center.

- Panel 1: Looking Back: The Origins and Drivers of Mandatory Detention
November 17th , 15:00 - 16:30 CET
- Panel 2: Taking Stock: Mandatory Detention Today
November 18th , 15:00 - 16:30 CET
- Panel 3: Paving the Way Forward: Vision for 2045
November 19th, 15:00 - 17:00 CET

Language interpretation will be provided in English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

This event is part of UN75 Dialogues, an initiative to spark conversations on priorities for the future, obstacles to achieving them, and the role of international cooperation in making progress.