

Federal office for migration (Office Federal des Migrations)  
Federal Office for Migration  
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14 March 2013

## **Request for Information on Immigration Related Detention**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to request information and documents held by you or stored in archives accessible to you regarding immigration related detention. Specifically, under the [Federal Act on the Principle of Freedom of Information in Public Administration \(2004\)](#), I am requesting the following:

**1) Please provide a complete list of the names and locations of all the facilities that currently are in use for the purpose of confining non-citizens in administrative detention for periods exceeding three days because of immigration-related reasons.<sup>1</sup>**

According to the Foreign Nationals legislation, detention of aliens legislation is ordered by the cantonal authorities (26 Swiss cantons), which are competent to enforce the removal or expulsion order. For this reason the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) doesn't know the exact number of detention facilities suitable for the detention of foreigners under aliens legislation. In this regard we would merely refer to the reply of the Swiss Federal Council to the interpellation 11.4082, which gives an overview of the number of detention **places** per canton:

[http://www.parlament.ch/d/suche/seiten/geschaefte.aspx?gesch\\_id=20114082](http://www.parlament.ch/d/suche/seiten/geschaefte.aspx?gesch_id=20114082)

Possibly also the catalogue of imprisonment institutions, maintained by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and available only in German or French, could be useful for your project:

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/infothek/nomenklaturen/blank/blank/anstalt/01.html>

Regarding reception centres, there are 5 FOM reception and procedure centres in Altstätten, Basel, Chiasso, Kreuzlingen and Vallorbe. Furthermore there is an accommodation in the transit area at the Zurich Airport. The FOM points out that these centres in Switzerland not by any means are detention facilities. Most of the time asylum seekers can move freely during their stay at the reception and procedure centres. Restrictions are adopted only to ensure the implementation of the asylum procedure.

**2) Please provide the total number of people detained for immigration-related reasons during the years 2010, 2011, and 2012.<sup>ii</sup>**

Total number of arrest orders based on the Swiss Federal Act on Foreign Nationals:

**2011:** 7'540 arrest orders

**2012:** 6'806 arrest orders

The totals include **every** arrest order based on the Swiss Federal Act on Foreign Nationals, Articles 75-78. Further information:

<http://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20020232/index.html>

Unfortunately the FOM doesn't keep the statistics before 2011. Only since 2011 the arrest orders are recorded systematically in the centralised migration information system ZEMIS.

**3) Please provide the total number of asylum seekers who were placed in detention during the years 2010, 2011, and 2012.<sup>iii</sup>**

Total number of asylum applications submitted at the reception and procedure centres:

**2010:** 13'704 asylum applications

**2011:** 20'580 asylum applications

**2012:** 25'843 asylum applications

I kindly request you to provide this information and these documents in electronic format if at all possible, to the email addresses [REDACTED]@access-info.org and [REDACTED]@graduateinstitute.ch.

For responses including datasets I would be very grateful if you could send me the requested data in an Excel or other type of spreadsheet format.

If you should require any further information, or a clarification of any part of this request, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



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Access Info Europe  
[REDACTED]@access-info.org

Michael Flynn  
Global Detention Project  
[REDACTED]@graduateinstitute.ch

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<sup>i</sup> The list should include any facility where an individual is prevented from freely leaving the facility at his or her will. In addition to long-term detention facilities used for the purposes of facilitating deportation (including both criminal prisons and specially designed immigration detention centers), this list should include any "reception centers" that prevent asylum seekers from freely exiting the premises; any shelters or juvenile centers that deprive minors, including both accompanied and unaccompanied minors, of their liberty; as well as any transit facilities or border guard stations located in airports or other ports of entry into the country that can hold people for more than three days to prevent entry into the country.

<sup>ii</sup> Please briefly explain who is included in these totals (for example, do they include unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers waiting for decisions on their claims, illegal immigrants in deportation proceedings, and/or non-citizens who have been placed in deportation proceedings after a criminal conviction?).

<sup>iii</sup> Please indicate if this list includes both people who have been detained after filing an asylum request either upon entry as well as those who filed a claim after being apprehended. Also, please indicate if this list includes asylum seekers who have been placed in secure reception centers for periods exceeding three days. If it does not, can you provide separate statistics indicating the numbers of asylum seekers placed in secure reception centers for periods exceeding three days for the years 2010, 2011, and 2012?