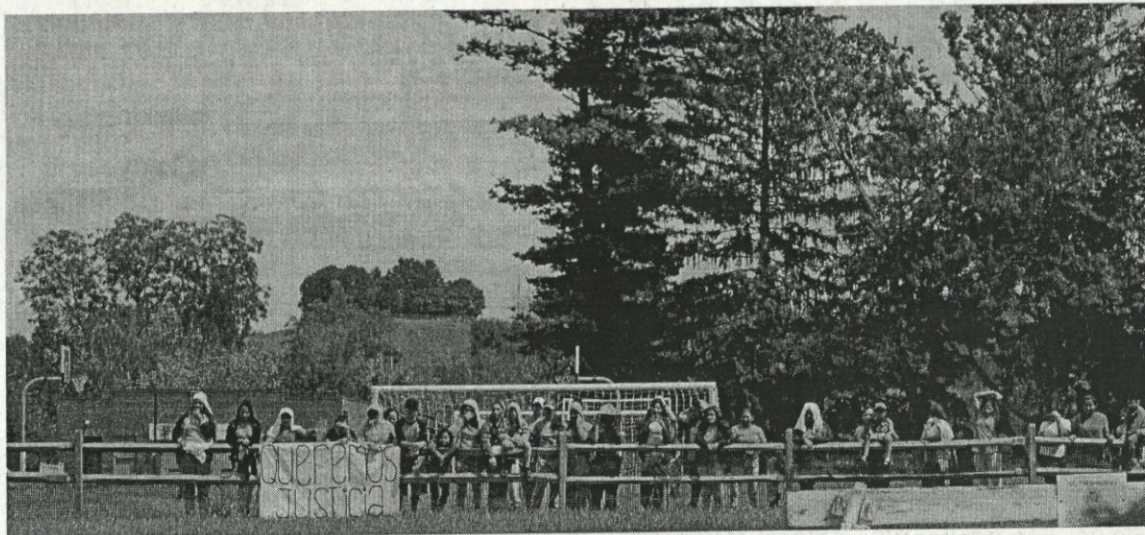


Statement from the Moms on Hunger Striker inside Berks Family Detention Center

September 1, 2016

Español abajo...



As everyone knows, on Tuesday August 23 Madres Berks halted our hunger strike due to countless intimidations by the supervising immigration official Thomas Decker, giving 7 days to the government to take action on our matter and to commemorate the one-year anniversary of four mothers and their children in this prison.

As a result of the silence and lack of action by the federal government, yesterday we resumed the strike. Again, we are a total of 22 mothers in this hunger strike. Some of us are part of the federal case and some are not.

Although the court ruled against us, we have decided to appeal this ruling and consequently, continue to demand our freedom. This appeal will take some time. While our appeal is pending, we demand to wait for the final decision in freedom and with our families.

Those of us who are part of the federal case have no fear of deportation because our stay of deportation remains valid through our appeal process. This country gives the opportunity for people to fight for their rights until the end, without fear that we will be deported to countries where the lives of our children are in danger. But not all of our compañeras in the strike have this protection, even though they face the same injustices and intimidations.

During this strike we will not receive any food, but we will keep hydrated to preserve enough energy and health to keep fighting for our freedom and care for our children. We also want to make clear that our children are not part of this strike.

We continue trusting GOD, because he has the final say on our entire situation. Our faith keeps us firm in this tireless struggle for our freedom, and to uncover all the injustices that are occurring in this place.

They are retaliating against one of our compañeras. Immigration wants to transfer her to Karnes, TX just because she has let everyone know what is really happening in this place. What immigration does not understand is that we are all together and we will not allow ourselves to be divided or separated.

We call on Congress people, Governors, legal representatives, the media, presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, and even the President, Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, who claim to have compassion for those who seek asylum and refuge, and to all the people who have the power to help: take immediate action to get us out of here and end this nightmare.

We appreciate the support of the community and ask that you continue lifting our voices out of this confinement.

Como todos saben el pasado martes 23 de Agosto las Madres de Berks paramos la huelga de hambre por innumerables intimidaciones por parte del official superior de inmigración Thomas Decker, dando como plazo 7 días para que el gobierno tomara cartas en el asunto y para conmemorar los aniversarios de un año de 4 madres y sus hijos en esta prisión.

A consecuencia del silencio y la falta de acción del gobierno federal, desde ayer reanudamos la huelga. De nuevo somos un total de 22 madres en esta huelga de hambre. Algunas de nosotras somos parte del caso federal y otras no.

A pesar de que la corte falló en contra de nosotras, hemos tomado la decisión de apelar este fallo y por consecuente, seguir exigiendo nuestra libertad. Esta apelación tardará algún tiempo. Mientras nuestra apelación esté pendiente, exigimos esperar la decisión final en libertad y junto a nuestras familias.

Las que somos parte del caso federal no tenemos miedo a las deportaciones, porque el amparo que teníamos anteriormente sigue vigente durante nuestro proceso de apelación. Este país le da la oportunidad a las personas de luchar por sus derechos hasta el final, sin temor de que nos vayan a deportar a los países donde las vidas de nuestros hijos corren peligro. Pero no todas nuestras compañeras en huelga tienen este amparo, aunque pasen por las mismas injusticias e intimidaciones.

Durante esta huelga no vamos a recibir ningún alimento, pero sí nos mantendremos hidratadas para preservar suficiente energía y salud para seguir luchando por nuestra libertad y velar por nuestros hijos. Así mismo queremos dejar claro que nuestros hijos no son parte de esta huelga.

Seguimos confiando en DIOS, porque él tiene la última palabra en toda nuestra situación.

Nuestra fe nos mantiene firmes en esta lucha incansable por nuestra libertad, y por dejar al descubierto todas las injusticias que en este lugar se están cometiendo.

Están tomando represalias en contra de una de nuestras compañeras. Inmigración quiere transferirla a Karnes, TX sólo por dejarles saber a ustedes todo lo que esta pasando dentro de este lugar. Lo que inmigración no entiende es que todas estamos juntas y que no vamos a permitir que nos dividan y que nos separen.

Hacemos un llamado a Congresistas, Gobernadores, representantes legales, medios de comunicación, a la candidata presidencial Hillary Clinton e incluso al mismo Presidente Barack Obama y la Primera Dama Michelle Obama, quienes dicen tener compasión por quienes buscamos asilo y refugio, y a todas las personas que tienen el poder de ayudarnos: tomen acción inmediata para sacarnos de aquí y acabar con esta pesadilla.

Agradecemos el apoyo de la comunidad y pedimos que continúen llevando nuestras voces fuera de este encierro.

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

This letter is addressed to all those who have the power to enforce our rights.

We are young people between the ages of 12 and 16 who are stuck at the Berks Family Detention Center in Berks, PA. We are teenagers who are being deprived of our freedom. We are children, we are young with many dreams to fulfill & with many goals to achieve.

It hurts to know that the school year is starting and we are here imprisoned unable to receive a decent education. When one of the reasons we left our home countries was because we could not attend classes because of the threats we would receive while in school. And upon arriving we are met with this trauma we are living and we are still being denied the right to a proper education. We have a hard time concentrating (in school) because of the frustration we feel to be here in jailed as criminals when we are not.

We only come to this country seeking refuge for protection, because in our home countries don't have it because of crime and insecurity. We're tired of the same, we are tired of waking up surrounded by the same four walls, having the same routine every day, having to eat the same food everyday. We no longer want to be in this jail.

It is unjust that for over a year they have taken our right to have a normal life in this country with our families, locking us up in a prison like this. That is why we ask you to give us the opportunity to leave this place, to give us the opportunity to have a new interview with immigration and to continue the process that the government has denied us.

As you know our mothers are on a hunger strike and it pains us see at to what lengths they have had to go to try and be heard and get our freedom. Today marks 29 days since they started their hunger strike and to this day have not received a response.

That is why we support them and announce that if the authorities do not give us freedom in these 9 days that on September 15th, the day of Independence of our Central American countries, we will begin a strike studies in order to be heard for the freedom that we all desire.

We are letting you know that we also have a voice and we also demand to be heard.

Sincerely,

- 7th grade student prisoner, 371 days
- 8th Grade student prisoner, 349 days
- 8th Grade student prisoner, 163 days
- 9th Grade student prisoner, 305 days
- 9th Grade student prisoner, 376 days
- 9th Grade student prisoner, 327 days

11th Grade student prisoner, 376 days

Martes, 6 de Septiembre del 2016

Esta carta está dirigida a todas las personas que tienen el poder de hacer valer nuestros derechos.

Somos jóvenes entre 12 y 16 años que estamos presos en el Centro de Familias en Berks, PA. Somos adolescentes que estamos siendo privados de nuestra libertad. Somos hijos, somos jóvenes con muchos sueños que cumplir, con muchas metas que lograr.

Nos duele saber que en estos días empieza el año escolar y nosotros estamos aquí encarcelados sin poder recibir una educación digna. Cuando una de las razones por las que dejamos nuestros países ha sido por que no podíamos asistir a clases por las amenazas que en las escuelas recibimos. Y al llegar aquí nos encontramos con este trauma que estamos viviendo y nos siguen negando el derecho de tener una educación adecuada. Nos cuesta mucho trabajo concentrarnos por la misma frustración que sentimos al estar aquí en una cárcel como criminales cuando en realidad no lo somos.

Nosotros solo venimos a este país en busca de refugio en busca de protección, ya que en nuestros países no podemos tenerlo por la delincuencia e inseguridad. Ya estamos cansados de lo mismo, ya estamos cansados de ver al despertar las mismas cuatro paredes, la misma rutina todos los días, la misma comida de siempre. Ya no queremos estar en esta cárcel.

Nos es justo que por más de un año nos han quitado el derecho de poder tener una vida normal en este país con nuestras familias encerrándonos en una cárcel como esta. Por eso mismo pedimos que nos den la oportunidad de poder salir de este lugar, que nos den la oportunidad de poder tener una nueva entrevista y poder seguir el proceso que el gobierno tiene y nos ha negado.

Como ustedes saben nuestras madres se encuentran en una huelga de hambre y nos duele ver hasta el punto que ellas han tenido que llegar por tratar de ser escuchadas y obtener nuestra libertad. Hoy se cumplen 29 días desde que ellas iniciaron la huelga de hambre y hasta el día de hoy no han recibido respuesta.

Por ese motivo nosotros buscamos una manera de apoyarlas por lo que les comunicamos que si en estos 9 días las autoridades no nos dan la libertad el día 15 de Septiembre, día de Independencia de nuestros países Centroamericanos, iniciaremos una huelga de estudios con el fin de ser escuchados para obtener la libertad que tanto anhelamos.

Les hacemos saber a todos que nosotros también tenemos voz y exigimos ser escuchados.

Atentamente,

El estudiante de 7° Grado con 371 días preso

El estudiante de 8° Grado con 349 días preso

La estudiante de 8° Grado con 163 dias presa
La estudiante de 9° Grado con 305 dias presa
La estudiante de 9° Grado con 376 dias presa
El estudiante de 9° Grado con 327 dias preso
La estudiante de 11°Grado con 376 dias presa

Addendum

Redacted Correspondence

Complaint #1

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

My son suffers from a skin disease named [REDACTED] and since we arrived in the United States, it developed itself so much to the point he even has symptoms on his genitals. When scratched it bleeds and they did not give me any medications for it or to calm him down, also his behavior has changed, he cries because he does not want to stay here any longer, it has already been over four months and I am still here.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/2015 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

If your child is experiencing medical issues please make an appointment to see the medical department here at the facility. Your attorney filed a motion in the Eastern District Court of PA which temporarily stays your removal. You may ask your attorney to withdraw that motion. You may accept your removal order and arrangements can be made to your removal from the United States. At this time your custody status remains unchanged.

Complaint #2

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

My son is 6 years old, he is desperate because of such confinement. It worries me a lot that something bad could happen to him here. He's very hyperactive, aggressive, the desperation has made him this way. He cries a lot because of this despair. I am afraid that something bad will happen to him. I need you to help me and to give me the opportunity to take my case out of here.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/15 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

If you are experiencing issues related to your safety/ security or well-being at the shelter please report these incidences to county staff. If you are experiencing other issues related to medical/

psychological, please make an appointment to see the medical staff or to speak with a psychologist. At this time your custody status will remain unchanged.

Complaint #3

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

I need information about my case, we have been here for three months already. My girls do not even want to eat anymore and seeing them like this hurts me. This is why I am asking you to review my case, we want to leave.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/15 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

Your attorney filed a motion to the Eastern District Court of PA requesting a temporary stay of your removal. If you wish to have your attorney withdraw that motion please do so. If that motion is withdrawn arrangement can be made for your removal from the United States. At this time your custody status remains unchanged.

Complaint #4

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

My daughter has been having diarrhea for about three weeks now and we went to see a doctor but they did not give us any medication not even serum. With every passing day her behavior is getting worse and the psychologist just tells me to be patient. I need you to give me adequate medication and that you give me the opportunity to take my case outside of here. I am not a criminal. You gave the opportunity to other persons that have been deported to leave, why did you not give it to me. It has been more than four months that I have been detained.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/15 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

Thank you! You may dissolve [sic] your case at any time and return to your country. Please use the medical department in reference to health related issues.

Complaint #5

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

I am worried my two-year-old son is distressed due to so much detention. We have been detained for almost two months. He does not want to eat, he cries a lot during the night. Please, help us.

I am asking you to give me the opportunity to resolve my case outside of the detention center and I would like to have an update on my case as well.

Thank you

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/15 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

Your attorney has filed a motion in the Eastern District Court of PA requesting a temporary stay of your removal. If you wish to have your attorney withdraw that motion please do so. If the motion is withdrawn arrangements can be made for your removal from the United States. At this time your custody status will remain unchanged.

Complaint #6

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

My case is that my children are desperate and do not want to eat anymore. Just cry and get depressed. I don't know what to do anymore because they want to be with their father. Their father is in Austin and they tell me they want to be with him. Please help me, please give me the opportunity to defend my case out of detention. Please because I want to help my children. Please help me.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/15 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

Your attorney filed a request for reconsideration with the Newark Asylum office. That request is still pending. You may ask your attorney to withdraw that request, if you wish to do so. If that request is withdrawn arrangements can be made for your removal from the United States. At this time your custody status will remain unchanged.

Complaint #7

Name: [REDACTED] A#: [REDACTED]

Date: December 7, 2015

My problem is that I don't sleep and I have headaches because I think a lot about my case and my family. My son cries a lot because he does not want to be here. We have been detained for a long time; three months, and we do not want to stay here, I feel badly for my son.

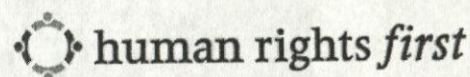
My problem would be solved if you could let me go to be with my family here and if you could review my case because it has been a long time.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Response

Date: 12/8/15 Staff Member: [REDACTED]

If you are experiencing medical issues please see the medical staff here at the facility. Your attorney filed a motion in the Eastern District Court of PA requesting a temporary stay of your removal. If you wish to have your attorney withdraw that motion please do so. If the motion is withdrawn, arrangements can be made for your removal from the United States. At this time your custody status will remain unchanged.



American ideals. Universal values.

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humanrightsfirst.org

My name is Alma Lopez. I'm from Mexico and I live in North Philadelphia. I am a leader of Juntos. Today I am here to tell you about the my family's experience after my husband Javier was detained. May 5th 2015, is a day that we do not want to remember. On this day, my husband was taken into custody by immigration. My children were present and saw the moment when their father was arrested, and they did not understand why. The day after they took him my children cried all day and night, and I did not know what to say or how to comfort them. He spend 16 months in detention and during this time our lives changed forever. I became the sole supporter of my family and we struggled not only financially, but also emotionally. When we first went to visit the detention center they asked my husband when were going to let him out, so he could come home.

It was very difficult to see that they wanted to hug their father and for more than a year could not even touch him. There are not enough words to explain the pain you feel when see your family torn apart in the cruelest way. My youngest son took his first steps and said his first words without his father being there to watch him grow. For me the saddest part was them being so small become depressed to the point that did not want to eat or play.

My family is one of thousands who are being brutally separated and terrorized by the immigration system. My children did not only suffered during the many months that their father was detained but also continue to suffer now that he has been released from detention. My 7 year old son never wants to be separated from his father, not even to go to school because he is afraid that if he leaves him for one minute, when he returns his father will not be there. Every time he sees a police car he begins to panic and starts thinking that they'll take his father away. He was recently diagnosed with PTSD. Despite the trauma and pain that my family's was put through, my husband's case is still pending. We live with the fear that at any moment he might be

deported and is unjust that our family and other families have to live in constant terror.

That's why I'm here, how is it possible that the United States of America is supposed to be the land of freedom, but at the same time it is the number one country in imprisoning human beings. How is it possible that just an hour away from here we have mothers and children detained for months, just like my husband was, when they are here to seek a better life.

In the Statue of Liberty these words are engraved, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free to breathe free." But those words are not true. In this country the system criminalizes and discriminates against all people of color and on top of that people in power take advantage and make profit by incarcerating our communities.

This is why I'm here today, to ask the United Nations to interfere and put an end to arbitrary detentions. We as human beings deserve to be with our families and be treated with dignity and respect.

Hola mi nombre es Carmen Lobo
estoy aqui con mi hijo Angel David Martinez
Soy de Honduras
tengo 10- meses de estar encarselada aqui en
el Centro de berks

Para mi y para mi hijo a sido muy traumatico
muy dificil estar aqui enserrados sin poder gozar
de nuestra libertad el 4 de septiembre es el
Cumpleaños de mi hijo Angel a sido tan dificil pasar
aqui tantas fechas especiales aqui enserrados
quiero pedirle al gobierno - presidente de los estados
unidos que nos ayude tengo miedo de regresar a mi
pais tambien quiero pedirle a Hilary Clinton que me
ayude que le pido al presidente que me de la oportunidad
de quedarme aqui en este pais yo se ella tiene autoridad
de hacerlo que su politica nos ayude
an sido 10 meses de dolor, lagrimas, angustia
y desesperación aqui mi hijo ya no quiere estar
aqui espero me ayuden ya que mi hijo
a sufrido sicologicamente para por salir de aqui

"Ayuda por favor"

Carmen Lobo y Angel Martinez

Berks Pensilvania 09/09/16

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Mi nombre es Angel tengo 4 años Soy de Honduras
y quiero darle las gracias por las cosas
que nos mandaron que Dios les bendiga
a todas las personas que nos apoyan
desde afuera

Gracias Qué Dios Les bendiga

