

July 19, 2011

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

We, the undersigned civil rights, community, and human rights organizations, urge you to intervene with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to respond immediately to conditions that have led to a statewide hunger strike in California prisons. As you know, the hunger strike was initiated by prisoners in the Secure Housing Unit at Pelican Bay State Prison on July 1, 2011 to protest conditions that have been characterized by the United Nations as "inhumane and degrading." The hunger strike spread to a third of the state's prisons and has involved at least 6,600 prisoners from all racial groups. The demands made by these prisoners are relatively modest and in keeping with human rights standards adopted by many other jurisdictions with regard to the treatment of prisoners housed in Secure Housing Units.

As organizations from around the country that are committed to reducing the destructive impact of current criminal justice policies on the lives of individuals, families, and communities in the United States, we are concerned both about the immediate well-being of the hunger strikers and the long-term impact of appalling conditions inside prisons, particularly the use of long-term isolation and practices of racial profiling – under the guise of gang affiliation – that often are used to justify such abuses of human rights.

We join with more than 9,000 individuals that have signed petitions in support of the hunger strikers and with community groups and family members of hunger strikers who have coordinated demonstrations in cities across the U.S. and abroad to voice their support. We join these courageous people inside and outside of prison in demanding that the CDCR fully implement the prisoners' five core demands, which are:

- 1. End Group Punishment & Administrative Abuse**
- 2. Abolish the Debriefing Policy, and Modify Active/Inactive Gang Status Criteria**
- 3. Comply with the US Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons 2006 Recommendations Regarding an End to Long-Term Solitary Confinement**
- 4. Provide Adequate and Nutritious Food**
- 5. Expand and Provide Constructive Programming and Privileges for Indefinite SHU Status Inmates.**

Despite the fact that federal courts, mental health professionals, and international human rights monitors repeatedly have pointed out the devastating impact of isolation on human beings, the State of California continues to consign hundreds of prisoners, sometimes for decades, to torturous conditions that federal judge Thelton E. Henderson concluded “may well hover on the edge of what is humanly tolerable.” Tragically, because they feel their efforts to challenge these conditions through administrative and legal channels have failed, hundreds of prisoners have put their bodies and their lives on the line.

Throughout your political career you have publicly supported progressive human rights issues. We know that you will share our desire to avoid the kind of outcome that resulted from the H Block Hunger Strike in Northern Ireland in 1981. We believe that you will be responsive to the efforts of these prisoners to seek more just and humane conditions of confinement, and we encourage you to treat these prisoners with the respect and consideration they deserve. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to intervene in this matter immediately and to find a just and honorable resolution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signed by:

A Better Way Foundation
A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)
A New Way of Life Reentry Project, Los Angeles, CA
ACLU of California
ACLU of Mississippi
AIDs Foundation Chicago
All of Us or None
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Friends Service Committee
American Gruner: Coalition of Latino Leaders
ANSWER
Arkansas Voice for the Children Left Behind
Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco)
Black Awareness Community Development Organization
Breakout!, New Orleans, LA
Bristol Anarchist Black Cross
Building Locally to Organize for Community Safety (BLOCS) --Atlanta, GA
Cafe Intifada
California Coalition for Women Prisoners
California Prison Focus
California Prison Moratorium Project
Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB)
Campaign to End Prison Slavery (UK)
Campaign to End the Death Penalty
Cante Wanjila Native American Reentry and Support Project, South Dakota

Center for Community Alternatives
Center for Constitutional Rights (National)
Center for New Community (national)
Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights, Providence, RI
Center for Young Women's Development
Certain Days Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar
Chapel Hill Prison Books Collective (NC)
Chicago Anti-Prison Industrial Complex Teaching Collective
Chuco's Justice Center
CLAC Legal Committee
Coalition for Prisoners Rights
COMITÉ DE SOUTIEN DE LA GRÈVE DE LA FAIM / HUNGERSTRIKE SUPPORT
COMMITTEE
Comité pour un Secours rouge canadien
Committee to Stop FBI Repression
Community Justice Network for Youth
Community Restoration Services (Los Angeles)
Courage to Resist
Critical Resistance
CUAV: Community United Against Violence (San Francisco)
Defender Association of Philadelphia
Denver Anarchist Black Cross
Detention Watch Network
East Bay Saturday Dialogues with Dr. Nancy Arvold & April Schlenk
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Fair Chance– Los Angeles Project
Families & Allies of Virginia's Youth
Families to Amend California's Three-Strikes (FACTS)
FedCURE
Florida Immigration Coalition (Miami, FL)
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition
Freedom Archives
Freedom Inc (Madison WI)
Fresno County Brown Berets
Friends Committee of Legislation on California
Frontline Soldiers
Generation 5
Glen Cove Solidarity
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Human Rights Coalition- Fed Up! (Pittsburg)
Immigrant Workers' Center
Immigration Law Clinic of UC Davis Law School
International Action Center

International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal
International Council for Urban Peace, Justice & Empowerment
International Health Workers for Peace Over Profit
Jericho Movement- New York City
Justice for Families
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, New Orleans, LA
Kemba Smith Foundation
Kersplebedeb
L'En-Droit de Laval
La Raza Centro Legal
Labor/Community Strategy Center, Los Angeles, CA
LAGAI-Queer Insurrection.
Law Office of Rebecca Young, East Boston, MA
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Little Lake Learning Center
Lucasville Uprising Freedom Network
Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition
Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute
Merced County Brown Berets
Milk Not Jails, New York
MIM Prisons
Modesto Anarcho Crew
Modesto Copwatch
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Jericho
National Lawyers Guild
National Lawyers Guild University of Pittsburg Chapter
National Policy Partnership for Children of the Incarcerated
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
NC Piece Corps
Needle Exchange Emergency Program
New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter
The New York Campaign Against Torture (NYCAT)
New York City Anarchist Black Cross Federation
New York City Anti-Racist Action
November Coalition
Oakland Community Action Network
Oakland Education Association (OEA) Peace & Justice Caucus
Osiris Coalition
Pathways To Your Future
Parolees for Change (Los Angeles)
Parti communiste révolutionnaire
Peace Over Violence Los Angeles

People's Commission Network
Peter Cicchino Youth Project of the Urban Justice Center (NY)
Prison Activist Resource Center
Prison Health News
Prison Law Office
Prison Policy Institute, Massachusetts
Prison Radio
Prison Radio Show CKUT 90.3 FM Montreal
Prison Watch Network
Prisoner Correspondence Project
Prisoners' Legal Services of New York
Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie
QPIRG Concordia
Real Cost of Prisons Project
Redwood Curtain Copwatch
Registered Society within Association for Probation and Offenders' Assistance, Germany
Republicans for Change
Resurrection After Exoneration, New Orleans, LA
Rethinking Schools
Revolution Newspaper
Revolutionary Athletes Worldwide (R.A.W.)
Revolutionary Hip Hop Report
Riverside Church Prison Ministry
Safe Streets/Strong Communities, New Orleans, LA
San Francisco Women in Black.
SF Pride at Work/HAVOQ
Shabazz Legal Services
Socialist Action
Solidarity Across Borders
Southern California Library
Stanislaus County Radical Mental Health
Stop the Injunctions Coalition
TalkBLACK, Atlanta, GA
Tamms Year Ten, Illinois
Texas Families of Incarcerated Youth
The Mobilization to Free Mumia-Abu Jamal
The New Orleans Loiterers Union
The New York Task Force for Political Prisoners
The Outs
The Termite Collective
The WE Project, Los Angeles
Time for Change Foundation
Toronto Anarchist Black Cross

Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois
Transgender, Gender Variant and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project
UHURU Solidarity Movement
United for Drug Policy Reform (Oakland, CA)
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United National Anti-War Committee
United Panther Movement
Urban Justice Center (New York City)
Vermont Action for Political Prisoners
Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles
Visions to Peace Project, Washington, D.C.
Voice of the Ex-Offender (VOTE)
Voices Unbroken
W. Haywood Burns Institute
WESPAC Foundation (NYC)
Women's Council of the CA Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Pajaro Valley Chapter
Women's Prison Book Project (Minneapolis, MN)
World Can't Wait