



Letter Announcing Hunger and Work Strike by Women in U.S. Detention

At least 80 women detained in the Karnes detention camp in southern Texas released a statement Monday, March 30, saying they will refuse food and will launch a work strike starting Tuesday morning.

Here is an English translation of their letter to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as received by UUSC:

In the name of the mothers, residents of the Center for Detentions in Karnes City, we are writing this petition whereby we ask to be set free with our children. There are mothers here who have been locked in this place for as long as 10 months.

We also have mothers, that because they have had a previous deportation, are not granted a bond. They are granting a bond to their children, but they are not allowing an out to the mothers. This is the motive that we have taken the initiative of uniting ourselves and initiating a Hunger Strike, so that you can see and feel our desperation.

We have come to this country, with our children, seeking refugee status and we are being treated like delinquents. We are not delinquents nor do we pose any threat to this country.

During this Hunger Strike, no mother will work in the center of detention or send our children to school. We will not use any of the services provided by this place until we have been heard and our freedom has been approved.

All of the mothers demand that you give us a solution. Included amongst us are mothers whom this is the first time they have been in this country.

Asylum Officials have conducted Creditable Fear Interviews and determined them to be Positive. Even after having a result of positive, we are still detained because we are not able to pay the elevated bond and in some cases we are not given the opportunity to pay the bond.

You should know that this is only the beginning and we will not stop until we achieve our objectives. This strike will continue until every one of us is freed.

The conditions in which our children find themselves are not good. Our children are not eating well and every day they are losing weight. Their health is deteriorating. We know that any mother would do what we are doing for their children.

We deserve to be treated with some dignity and that our rights to the immigration process be respected.

There are some mothers that lost their appeal for Asylum and were forced to sign deportation papers. We believe that this is unjust because they have come to this country asking for Asylum because they are in danger in their country. And now they are being deported back to the place where they could even lose their life.