

**Open letter to Bill Blair, Federal Minister of Public Safety, and Marco Mendocino, Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and Patty Hajdu, federal Minister of Health in support of #HungerStrikeLaval**

I am writing to voice my support for the migrants in detention who are currently on hunger strike in the Laval Immigration Detention Centre in face of risks of COVID19 virus, and to support their demand for the immediate release of all migrant detainees as part of measures related to public health. Human rights and medical organizations have noted that social distancing is not possible for incarcerated populations, including detainees, and that during the COVID19 pandemic, detention poses a catastrophic risk to the health of these populations. It is unconscionable that detainees - many of whom have pre-existing health conditions - have now been on hunger strike for 7 days in order to access the basic protections being recommended to the general public.

[The UN High Commissioner of Human Rights](#) has stated that incarceration is an amplifier of infection and embodying a possibly disastrous spread of the COVID-19 virus. From their website: “The consequences of neglecting [people in detention] are potentially catastrophic,” the High Commissioner said. Governments must work quickly to reduce the number of people in detention, she said, noting that several countries have already taken positive actions.

The Canadian government so far has failed to take action to prevent the health catastrophe that #COVID19 poses for prisoners held at the Laval Immigration Holding Centre and in other prisons and detention centres. We support the immediate release of all detainees, and their safe and appropriate housing, in the name of public health.

**Free all migrant detainees! Listen to the Laval Hunger Strikers and free them now!**

Miigwech,

Ansley Simpson

Anishinaabekwe, Member of Alderville First Nation

Musician, Singer, Songwriter