



Children's Peace Theatre

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Creating a Culture of Peace

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

March 31, 2020

We, Children's Peace Theatre are writing to voice our deep concern and support for the migrants in detention who are currently on hunger strike in the Laval Immigration Detention Centre. We are very concerned about the risk they face from the COVID19 virus. We support their demand for the immediate release of all migrant detainees as a critical public health measure.

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. We find it unconscionable that detainees - many of whom have pre-existing health conditions - have had to resort to a hunger strike which has gone on for over 7 days in order to access the basic protections being recommended to the general public.

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

We are ashamed that the Canadian government so far has failed to take action to prevent the health catastrophe that #COVID19 poses for those held at the Laval Immigration Holding Centre, for other prisons and detention centres across the country, and for the general population by putting preventable strains on the health care system.

For the sake of all public health, we urge you to see to the immediate release of all detainees, and ensure that all detainees receive safe and appropriate housing.

Federal Minister of Public Safety Bill Blair: Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca

Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marco Mendocino: Minister@cic.gc.ca

Federal Minister of Health, Patty Hajdu: Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Emerson', written in a cursive style.

Karen Emerson, Artistic Director Children's Peace Theatre