

March 31, 2020

Open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau;
Minister of Public Safety, Bill Blair,
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marco Mendocino;
Minister of Health Patty Hajdu

Re: Urgent Release of Migrants in Detention

I am writing to add my voice to the growing support for the migrants in detention who are currently on hunger strike in the Laval Immigration Detention Centre. They, like others currently in detention, face increased risks of exposure to the COVID19 virus.

Many 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.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet recently stated that governments must work quickly to reduce the number of people in detention.

The Canadian government so far has failed to take action to prevent the health catastrophe that COVID19 poses for asylum seeking detainees held at the Laval Immigration Holding Centre and in other prisons and detention centres.

It is unconscionable that detainees - many of whom have pre-existing health conditions - have now been on hunger strike for 8 days in order to access the basic protections being recommended to the general public.

I urge you to immediately release all migrant detainees, and provide for their safe and appropriate housing, in the name of public health.

Sincerely,



Kikélola Roach,

Unifor Chair in Social Justice & Democracy at Ryerson