

For Immediate Release

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**Immigrants held at Northwest Detention Center Launch Hunger Strike
to Protest their Conditions**
Supporters Rally Outside Facility as Over 100 Immigrants Begin Refusing Meals

Tacoma, WA - At noon today over 100 immigrants incarcerated at the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) refused their lunch, launching a hunger strike to protest their treatment inside the immigration prison. The Tacoma, Washington facility, located on a superfund site, is the largest immigrant detention center on the West Coast, caging over 1500 immigrants who are facing civil deportation proceedings. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) contracts with the GEO Group, a multinational private prison corporations, to run the facility, and hunger strikers aimed their demands at both the federal government and the private contractor. The NWDC has been a frequent target of immigrant activists since a March 2014 hunger strike involving 1200 detainees first brought international notoriety to the immigration prison.

A demand letter that circulated around the facility prior to the launch of the strike echoed many of the concerns raised in the 2014 strike, and includes demands for more expedited hearings, improved quality of food, improved access to medical care, and lowering of exorbitant commissary prices (strikers note that already over-inflated prices on commissary items have recently doubled). Additionally, hunger strikers are asking for an increase in the \$1 a day they currently receive for running all of the prison's basic services. Some have even been denied the \$1/day payment, and have been given a bag of chips in exchange for several nights of waxing the prison's floors.

Community members, including members of Northwest Detention Center Resistance, a group that has supported those held at the NWDC since the 2014 hunger strike, planned to rally at the facility beginning at noon, seeking to bring public attention to the activists striking inside the facility. "Detention conditions were already terrible under Obama, and from what we're hearing, they've gotten even worse since Trump's election. We know from past hunger strikes that ICE and GEO are quick to retaliate, and we want the hunger strikers to know that they are not alone."

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NWDC Resistance is a volunteer community group that emerged to fight deportations in 2014 at the now-infamous Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, WA as part of the #Not1more campaign, and supported people detained who organized hunger strikes asking for a halt to all deportations and better treatment and conditions.