

For Immediate Release

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Activist Goes on Hunger Strike Outside the Northwest Detention Center
Maru Mora Villalpando Joins the Tacoma 12 and Adelanto 9 in Calling for an End to Human Rights Abuses in Immigrant Detention

Tacoma, WA - On Monday, June 19th, Maru Mora Villalpando, member of the NWDC Resistance, will begin a hunger strike to call attention to the plight of up to 1,600 immigrants held in detention suffering human rights abuses at the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC). On June 15, 2017, at least a dozen detainees went on hunger strike to call attention to inhumane detention conditions, refusing to eat for multiple days. By June 18, NWDC Resistance organizers received reports that more than 25 hunger strikers are calling on GEO Group to provide edible, nutritious food, on ICE to provide fair and timely hearings, and on civil society to step up and take action for the injustices in our communities. In response, Maru Mora Villalpando is going on hunger strike, and is joined by other members of civil society who are stepping up their solidarity.

As hunger strikers on the inside are discussing ceasing their strike on the inside, Maru will keep the hunger strike continuous by holding space on the outside. A female hunger striker in detention said: "I feel more deteriorated every day, more bad, more worse, because of what we are living through and what we are seeing inside. What we are suffering is horrible, horrible. Here they don't care what conditions we are living in... they don't care about anything." To listen to her story, go to: <http://bit.ly/2slyXzZ>

GEO Group's human rights abuses are not a case of "bad apples." Just this week, GEO employees have refused to complete basic maintenance, such as repairing a broken air conditioner when projected temperatures are expected to reach 78 degrees. Likewise, people in detention have noted repeated problems with incorrect medications resulting in hospital visits, suicide attempts, and inadequate access to medical treatment -- even in diagnosed cases of malignant cancers.

There are also 9 asylum seekers on hunger strike at the GEO-owned Adelanto Detention Facility in Southern California. Rather than releasing asylum seekers pending their hearing, they were subjected to further trauma -- pepper spray, beating and solitary confinement. The #Adelanto9 continue on hunger strike to call attention to these blatant human rights abuses, meaning that people inside and outside detention centers are on hunger strike throughout the West Coast.

Call to Action: Hunger strikers and solidarity supporters are holding down a 24-7 encampment outside the Northwest Detention Center. Please join them to show people held in detention that they are not alone, and the state of Washington will no longer tolerate human rights abuses!

For live updates on the #Tacoma12 and solidarity hunger strikes, visit <https://www.facebook.com/NWDCResistance/>.

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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. NWDC Resistance is 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.

#Tacoma12 #Adelanto9 #Not1More #NoEstánSolos