

For Immediate Release
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La Resistencia Statement on Shooting Death of Northwest Detention Center Protestor

Tacoma, WA-- Early this morning, a person who appears to have been engaged in protest against the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) in Tacoma was shot and killed by members of the Tacoma Police Department. Today marks yet another death linked to the detention center, and another death at the hands of the police. Based on available information, including the police scanner recording, Willem Van Spronsen, the protestor killed, appears to have been targeting not the detention center itself, as has been widely reported in the media, but the parking lot across the street from the detention center which houses the NWDC's transportation infrastructure. This infrastructure includes a fleet of buses that transports immigrants to be caged at the detention center, and that transports immigrants from the detention center to the Yakima Airport, from which they are deported.

Mr. Van Spronsen was apparently trying to set the deportation buses on fire when he was shot and killed. His actions sadly reflect the level of desperation people across this country feel about the government's outrageous violence against immigrants, which includes the use of detention centers to cage migrants both currently living in the U.S. and those seeking asylum. This death results from the federal government's unresponsiveness to the anger and despair people feel at the horrors unfolding both at the border and in the interior, and from the inability of officers to de-escalate rather than shooting to kill.

But for the City of Tacoma allowing the GEO Group's facility to be built and expanded in Tacoma, this death, and the death and suffering of those inside the detention center would have been avoided. The NWDC has become a liability not just for the tens of thousands who have been caged there, but for the city of Tacoma itself. It's past time for the city of Tacoma to cancel GEO's business license. It's clear that this "business" is a deadly one, that has only brought pain and suffering to our region.

La Resistencia calls on the City of Tacoma to hold immediate public hearings addressing the Tacoma Police's actions today that resulted in the loss of life at the Detention Center and why the City continues to allow GEO to operate with a city business license.

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La Resistencia (formerly NWDC Resistance) is a grassroots collective led by undocumented immigrants and U.S. citizens based in Tacoma, Washington. It is an unincorporated association founded to confront human rights violations at the Northwest Detention Center and dedicated to ending the detention and deportation of immigrants. www.nwdcresistance.org