

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2011/07/17/update-pelican-bay-prisoners-reject-state-proposal-continue-hunger-strike/>

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | July 17, 2011

The [Pelican Bay Hunger Strike Solidarity](#) coalition yesterday provided the following information, based on reports from the mediation team chosen by the prisoners:

This afternoon leaders of the Pelican Bay hunger strike unanimously rejected a proposal from the CDCR to end the strike. In response to the prisoners five, straightforward demands, the CDCR distributed a vaguely worded document stating that it would effect a comprehensive assessment of its existing policy and procedure about the secure housing units (SHUs). The document gave no indication if any changes would be made at all.

While the CDCR has claimed that there is no medical crisis, mediators report that the principal hunger strikers have lost 25-35 pounds each and have underlying medical conditions of concern. Despite the promises from the federal Receiver overseeing the CDCR, no one has received salt tablets or vitamins.

The hunger strike is now in its third week and shows no signs of weakening. In fact, the settlement document distributed last night to all hunger strikers at Pelican Bay prison, resulted in some people who have gone off the strike to resume refusing food. Hundreds of prisoners at Pelican Bay remain on strike, with thousands more participating throughout the CAs 33 prisons. Advocates and strike leaders dismiss the false claims that the strike is being orchestrated by prison gangs

According to mediation team [member] Laura Magnani, From day one, the CDCR has demonstrated its inability to resolve this situation. We call on Gov. Brown to step in and negotiate in good faith to bring this situation to a just resolution. Strike supporters plan to flood the Governors office with phone calls and emails, echoing the strikers demands.

Given how basic the strikers demands are, it is immoral that the CDCR would insult these men with such poor faith proposal, states mediator Dorsey Nunn.

According to the [San Francisco Bay View](#):

Dorsey Nunn, executive director of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, and a member of the prisoner-selected mediation team, says that leaders are determined to keep up their strike. But he worries about the CDCRs willingness to move negotiations forward.

Both parties are dug in, says Nunn. The CDCR is not offering anything substantial, and the strikers arent receiving anything substantial. So theyll keep going. And we dont know how long itll be before people start dying

Nunn says the team will continue to urge the CDCR to negotiate in good faith: The strikers demands are so minimal, they want to have hope like anyone else. The CDCR could end the strike by providing even a little bit of hope for these prisoners.

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James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, Blood in the Face. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

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