

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/08/25/day-49-hunger-strike/>

Campaign and Advocacy

close

Search

close

close

by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | August 25, 2013

Today is Day 49 of the California prison hunger strike. The hunger strike began on June 8th, and began with the participation of approximately 30,000 prisoners in 24 facilities across the state (as well as out of state facilities holding California prisoners). The number soon dropped to approximately 12,000 three days later when it was officially recognized by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) as a mass hunger strike, or, as CDCR has referred to it, a mass hunger strike disturbance that is nothing more than a gang power play, as CDCR Secretary Jeffrey Beard called it in a [Los Angeles Times](#) editorial.

The most recent participant numbers for the past week are:

CDCR will not state which prisons are still on hunger strike for safety and security reasons.

Hunger strike mediator, [Irene Huerta](#), released a statement on behalf of the mediation team today: Right now, all of our lives are in the hands of CDCR; were all at a standstill. We have to sit around and wait wait for a call to hear that the men have reached their demands and called off their hunger strike or a call thats going to tell you that your loved one has passed due to starvation.

The frustration and worry evident in the statement reflects the particularly brutal response by CDCR to this round of hunger strikes.

Since day three of the strike, hunger strike leaders at Pelican Bay and California State Prison, Corcoran were immediately segregated in other segregation units. Strikers across the state had property taken from their cells, had visitation denials, had sandbags placed at the bottoms of their cell doors, and have widely reported delays or rejections of mail to and from family members. Participants have even reportedly been given extended terms in segregation units of two to three months following disciplinary write-ups for their participation.

A participant at California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi described the process:

I went today and plead not guilty but was still found guilty. Everyone was found guilty. I was prepared and even took two sheets of paper explaining why I was not guilty of that write up. The hearing officer at least heard me out and looked over the evidence I presented but it didnt change his mind. One thing that I was trying to dodge was that part about the hunger strike being ordered by validated gang membersI was talking to the hearing officer about that and he knew why I brought it uphe knows how IGI (Institutional Gang Investigators) worksand he told me that since all races and factions in the system participated they cant use that as any form of gang involvement since everyone was involved, it wasnt a gang thing, it was a prisoner thing.

Several major news developments occurred in the past week.

It was confirmed on Monday that, ten days ago, the hunger strike at Calipatria State Prison came to an end. According to a CDCR spokesperson, The warden at Calipatria informed the inmates that local issues would be discussed only after they ceased their involvement in this disturbance. (Note that case reviews of all associates in the CAL Administrative Segregation Unit had resumed. That may have had an impact on the inmates decisions to stop their participation.)

This confirms in part an earlier [report](#) by activist Kendra Castaneda, wife of a hunger strike participant at Calipatria, that the hunger strikers agreed to end on the condition that they be able to negotiate certain changes, which include installing pull-up bars.

On August 19th, CDCR was granted their request to [refeed](#) hunger strikers without their consent. CDCR sought the order, according to [court documents](#), because of their concerns of coerced participation in the strike or coerced execution of do not resuscitate directives.

Spokesperson Joyce Hayhoe, who represents the medical receivers office, told Solitary Watch that our court order was sought proactively so that we had appropriate protocols in place should the need arise in the future. We have no plans to use the court order at this time. We would only use this order as a guide for an inmate near death. As of Friday, Hayhoe reported that the order had yet to be used. Though she couldnt give direct numbers, she stated that very few hunger strikers ever signed do not resuscitate orders.

A wife of a hunger strike participant from Pelican Bay told Solitary Watch that two days ago she received a postcard from an inmate who was with my husband at Pelican Bay. He said that my husband had been moved. I called around, but no one could tell me to which institution he was moved or why. Finally, Saturday morning, the Inmate Locator was updated and I saw that he had been moved to New

Folsom.

Though she is the emergency contact, she was not notified by the prison about this transfer. Many hunger strike participants have been moved to California State Prison, Sacramento (also known as New Folsom) for medical treatment. For some, this has included being held in the ASU.

In a letter dated August 20th, days before the transfer, her husband wrote her: The last time you saw me, I weighed 216 lbs. I just got out of the I.C.U. (Intensive Care Unit) today and I weigh 162 lbs. Their last visit was on July 7th.

The letter continues: Since last Thursday, I'd been asking to see the doctor. The homies said I went on Friday, but I don't remember that. This morning, they transferred me down to Ad-Seg, cause they say the federal oversight of medical is better. Plus in the SHU, they wasn't giving us no kind of care. Be lucky to get vitamins and 2 tsp. of Gatorade. It's crazy and I'll tell you everything when I see you. They told me today that I was also dehydrated real bad. When they tried to take three vials of blood, they couldn't even take one my blood wouldn't flow and it was like thick syrup. These fools even broke my T.V. said the cart got away. I heard that, right?! You know I'm doing this, Babe for us. I could except my first six years, but another six years, they just holding me for nothing and it's a fight to get out of here. I know in my heart, Babe that I'm doing the right thing for me, for us and for our son. That way he's not so easily caught in this systematic web and gets lost back here.

The San Francisco Bay View has also [published](#) letters from three hunger strikers at Pelican Bay. Randall Ellis reported that, as of August 19th, he had dropped weight from 187 to 160 pounds. There are men here willing to die who can't be silenced by intimidation or cheap psychological gimmicks like this is a gang power play, Ellis writes.

Tracey Miller reported that all participants had received disciplinary write-ups for their participation in the hunger strike. He also wrote that he hadn't heard anything new in regards to talks on the hunger strike. Honestly, with the communication being so bad, you guys probably find out before most of us back here.

Mutope Duguma reported that he had lost 44 pounds. I am weak and fragile, Mary [Ratcliff, SF Bay View editor], but my mental capacity is strong still.

Sal Rodriguez was Solitary Watch's first and most prolific intern. Based in Los Angeles, he served as an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and the Press-Enterprise, and is now the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

ME GUSTARIA DECIR PALABRAS DE ALIENTO A LAS MADRES Y FAMILIARES QUE TIENEN A ALGUIEN EN S.H.U ALGO QUE LES DIERA CONSUELO PERO NO LAS HAY. SOLO PODEMOS DECIR QUE ELLOS ESTAN EN MANOS DE DIOS, Y LA VERDAD ES QUE PIENSO QUE CLASE DE MADRES O FAMILIAS TIENEN LOS GOBERNANTES Y LOS RESPONSABLES DE TANTO ABUSO, Y MALDAD, ESTO QUE HACEN NO SON COSAS DE DIOS,

People treat their dogs better than they treat our prisoners. This is horrible and for the warden to stand on the ground that he holds all the cards and have no compassion for another human is shameful.

True Rose, no one is above the law and if the correction staff have broken any laws then they should be held accountable.

I think they should not only be held accountable, but be punished more severely than others, as they are a. the ones who are responsible for the prisoners, b. upholding the law, c. enforcing the decisions by courts, d. in fact representing us, the People!

And above all, correction officers and staff are as principals and priests, they are people of power, power over others who are subjected to their decisions and judgements!

A priest who abuses a child is punished, shamed and put in jail (if not protected by its superiors of course..), a principal or a teacher at a school is shamed and shunned when he or she abuses a pupil, and in my opinion correction officers are equally to be shamed and shunned when they cross the line of the law!

People are quick to judge prisoners but then you must also judge the correctional staff, the rule makers, and all else! No one is above the law!

Humans are to be treated as such, humanely, and that is just for starters. We are going to be all judged for how we treat one another. No one will escape accountability.

Matthew 25:40

The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

I am really sorry, but quoting the book we know as the bible (the word and practices of god and his so-called followers), is really the last thing fitting!

The bible is one list of cruelty, inhumane practices and actions, and of enforcing suffering of people!

One could almost say that the ones who wrote the book were sadists of the worst kind, and obviously not out for the care and or concern of their fellow men!

or a call that's going to tell you that your loved one has passed due to starvation.

Starvation of their own choosing, not CDCRs, but theirs and theirs alone.

Kendra Castaneda, wife of a hunger strike participant at Calipatria, that the hunger strikers agreed to end on the condition that they be able to negotiate certain changes, which include installing pull-up bars.

The last thing the prisoners need is exercise equipment. Have you seen the size of some of them? They work themselves to the point where it would take 10 guards to subdue them without gunfire, and that is absurd.

In a letter dated August 20th, days before the transfer, her husband wrote her: The last time you saw me, I weighed 216 lbs. I just got out of the I.C.U. (Intensive Care Unit) today and I weigh 162 lbs. Their last visit was on July 7th.

If that was a result of an illness or disuse you contracted while in prison, that would have been shocking and unnerving, however since it was self-inflicted it doesn't merit concern.

These fools even broke my T.V.

That's too bad, but you shouldn't have a T.V. anyway.

Tracey Miller reported that all participants had received disciplinary write-ups for their participation in the hunger strike.

As they should.

He also wrote that he hadn't heard anything new in regards to talks on the hunger strike.

No need for talks, keep food in front of them, it will resolve on its own eventually.

P.O. Box 11374

Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

Solitary Watch

Copyright 2022, Solitary Watch

Read about [rights and permissions](#).



Solitary Watch News