

PRISONERS IN GEORGIA, OHIO, AND CALIFORNIA ARE TAKING THE LEAD... NEW YORK COULD BE NEXT!

On July 1, Prisoners in California's Pelican Bay State Prison began a hunger strike to protest the torturous conditions inside the Security Housing Unit (SHU), calling for broad support of their 5 core demands. The strike quickly expanded to include at least 6,600 prisoners refusing food in 13 prisons across California; with calls of support, petition signatures and solidarity actions from thousands of people across the continent. After 3 weeks without food and a vicious misinformation campaign to isolate the strikers by the California Department of Corrections, Pelican Bay strike leaders have begun eating again, but support for the 5 core demands is still urgently needed!

This struggle is not limited to California – victory for the five demands in Pelican Bay advances the struggle against mass incarceration and torture in U.S. prisons from Attica to Bedford Hills... to Guantanamo Bay.

1. END GROUP PUNISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ABUSE;

New York State Department of Correctional Services guidelines state that a prisoner can be confined within the Special Housing Unit (SHU) for any reason, with approval from the Deputy Commissioner. Prisoners in NYS have been arbitrarily placed under punitive isolation for violations as minor as smoking and "horseplaying".

2. ABOLISH THE DEBRIEFING POLICY, AND MODIFY ACTIVE/INACTIVE GANG STATUS CRITERIA;

Through a "behavior modification" system known as PIMS, Progressive Inmate Movement System, prisoners in NYS SHU are encouraged to snitch on fellow prisoners to prison staff or the Disciplinary Review Committee to earn privileges and their return to general population.

3. COMPLY WITH THE U.S. COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND ABUSE IN AMERICA'S PRISONS 2006 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING AN END TO LONG-TERM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT;

Approximately 5000 people are confined in SHU for 23-24 hours a day in NYS prisons – nearly equal to that of California, but far exceeding the national average for solitary confinement. Nearly 1 in 5 people confined in SHU suffers from serious mental illness, and between 1998-2001 over half the NYS system's 48 suicides occurred in SHU.

4. PROVIDE ADEQUATE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD;

Numerous prisoners in SHU report concerns of Correctional Officers tampering with or "poisoning" their food.

Though the American Correctional Association prohibits using food as punishment, prisoners in NYS SHU are punished with a restricted diet known as "the loaf". The loaf is a dense and tasteless one-pound loaf of bread containing flour, potatoes and carrots, along with a side portion of raw cabbage. The loaf additionally fails to meet federally mandated nutritional standards.

5. EXPAND AND PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMING AND PRIVILEGES FOR INDEFINITE SHU STATUS INMATES.

NYS prisons deny opportunities for self-advancement within 23-hour lockdown, and actively discourage education by prohibiting motivated individuals in SHU to participate in Adult Basic Education (ABE) or take their GED exam.

**BUILD A MOVEMENT AGAINST MASS INCARCERATION AND TORTURE
IN NEW YORK BY SUPPORTING THE STRUGGLES OF PRISONERS EVERYWHERE!**

nysprisonerjustice.org • prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com

5 EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT THE 5 DEMANDS **TAKE ACTION!**

- Write everyone you know in prison to tell them about the hunger strike, the 5 demands, and the many ways that thousands of people inside and out are supporting the action. Be clever and careful not to use explicit references to a “hunger strike”, to avoid placing the person at risk.
Tell friends and family. Spread the word and build support within your place of worship or community organization, or national member organizations like the NAACP and Color of Change.
- Tell the media! Better yet – Become the media! Amplify your voice by writing an article or op-ed piece for your local community newspaper, blog or tweet about it, tell your favorite DJ to give a shout out to the striking prisoners in California and loved ones in New York.
- Keep yourself informed – visit:
prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com
- Stand in solidarity and join the *National Day of Action* on August 23, 2011
- Call and write local and state elected officials in California and New York to voice your support for the Pelican Bay strikers’ 5 core demands and that you won’t tolerate torture and abuse in U.S. prisons in California, New York or anywhere.

Take a minute to call California Governor Jerry Brown, and urge him to honor the prisoners’ 5 core demands:
(916) 445-2841



“They have become aware that their only hope lies in resistance. They have learned that resistance is actually possible. The holds are beginning to slip away.”

– George Jackson, Soledad Brother (1970)