

## **OCDC Hunger Strike - Women's Demands Part II**

I am currently, Saturday 18 July 2020, a prisoner at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) in Ontario, Canada. These are some of our demands to meet the needs of prisoners at OCDC where I'm confined against my will. We are subject to very strict treatment and to torture, which I have been put through by police, courts and prisons for the 20 years I spent in and out of OCDC. Every single day, I'm trying to change to get away and find better ways to deal with it at this facility in Ottawa. These are some of the demands we need to be met at OCDC and other provincial jails:

### **Food:**

1. We need better nutrition
2. Snacks: We need the jail to serve snacks at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 9 p.m.

### **Recreational:**

3. More yard time: We'd like to have more yard time to do yard work, workout, take walks, and/or vape and smoke. We only get 20 minutes of fresh air before they lock us back into a cell.
4. We need to be able to smoke and/or vape: Many of us are addicted to nicotine and smoking calms nerves. We need smoking back.

### **Overcrowding:**

5. We need single cells everywhere in the jail: This can be done by decreasing the population of prisoners at OCDC.

### **Healthcare:**

6. We need a woman doctor: the doctor here is a man. Some of us are hitting menopause and are uncomfortable being touched or talking about our health with a man doctor.

### **Community-based alternatives/supports:**

7. Employment Upon Release: The City of Ottawa and the Ontario Government must make jobs available for when prisoners get released.
8. More bail beds: There are no bail beds for women—not enough!
9. Community service, volunteer work, and housing: They haven't offered me community service, volunteer work, jobs, or housing. I had to get myself out of jail by paying for a hotel room out of pocket to get parole. I need housing, a job, and volunteer work and they haven't provided me any of that.

### **Accountability:**

10. We need more accountability: People in positions of power must be held accountable for the harm they cause us and so are those who are keeping us from having our freedom, being with our family, and working. They never did time in jail and don't understand the consequences of going to jail and what's involved.

### **Understanding and Solidarity:**

11. Understanding, support, and empathy: We need more people to understand and support us. In the midst of COVID-19, more people are understanding our challenges. Some even link the realities of the quarantine to the plight of incarceration. However, it's hard for people who have never been to jail to understand us. More people should support prisoners at OCDC and other jails.

### **Courts:**

12. Timely trials: Trial dates for small charges must be done immediately or give us bail upon arrest. I've never plead guilty during a trial. I don't think I've had very many trial dates. I've just plead guilty to get out of jail so I can work, pay taxes and see my family and have my freedom.

### **COVID-19:**

13. Video visits during COVID-19: We need video conferencing services to talk to our family, friends, legal representatives and other professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.
14. Transparency: There are people on quarantine and others coming in and out of OCDC. We want to know the number of people, including guards, who were/are infected by the virus at OCDC.

### **Abolition:**

15. Abolish prisons: Do we need provincial jails? Do we need jails at all?
16. The police, courts, and prisons must stop targeting poor people: I've done 20 years day for day at OCDC for trespassing, mischief, and causing disturbance charges. They just keep getting me and getting me and getting me. I'm out for two days and the Ottawa police pick me up again. Then I try to get shelter because I'm not allowed to have a place in the winter and it's too cold and I'm getting too old to keep walking. My strength is weakening so I jump cars and houses for heat. I don't break anything, and they say I broke in. The judge said that I do what I do because of socio-economic factors. He still gives me an eight-month jail sentence instead of providing me housing and support.