



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Ottawa vigil being held evening of August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 on Prisoners' Justice Day to commemorate deaths in custody and demand justice for human rights abuses behind bars**

10 August 2020 (Algonquin Territory | Ottawa, Ontario) – Former Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) prisoners and their loved ones will be speaking at a Prisoners' Justice Day (PJD) vigil taking place tonight starting at 7:30pm at Major's Hill Park (by the Unfinished Sun Dial, near the steps down to the Byward Market). [Prisoners' Justice Day](#) (PJD) emerged as a prisoner-initiated day of non-violent resistance to penal repression in commemoration of the death of Eddie Nalon who died in the segregation unit of Millhaven maximum-security penitentiary on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1974. It was first observed in 1975, and in 1976 the prisoners of Millhaven issued a communication calling for one-day hunger strikes in opposition to the use of solitary confinement and in support of prisoners' rights in memory of Eddie Nalon and Robert Landers, who also died alone in solitary confinement.

Since then, PJD has become an internationally-recognized [day of solidarity and action](#), both inside and outside prison walls, to commemorate deaths in custody and to demand justice for the human rights atrocities that states and their officials authorize and engage in. At the first PJD, people incarcerated at Millhaven produced a list of demands in order to reduce the harms they experienced behind bars. This year, vigil organizers will be sharing the demands of human beings imprisoned at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, who continue to demand change and a society which prioritizes compassion over caging people.

Following a land acknowledgement and brief introduction to PJD, people who have been incarcerated at OCDC, family and community members will speak, while statements from currently incarcerated people and Senator Kim Pate will be read by community members. Together participants will reflect upon the many human rights issues plaguing provincial jails and prisons, as well as federal penitentiaries and immigration detention centres.

Concerned members of the community are encouraged to participate in the vigil. Journalists are also welcome to attend.

### **For comments or to arrange for media interviews with former prisoners, relatives of current prisoners, and their supporters contact:**

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### **Event organizers:**

Criminalization and Punishment Education Project  
Millhaven Lifers' Liaison Group  
Books to Prisoners Ottawa