

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prisoners Stage One-day Hungerstrike and Work Stoppage Within Santa Rita Jail to Protest Filthy Conditions, Price Gouging and Abuse

**PRESS CONFERENCE WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 10:00 AM
AT SANTA RITA JAIL ENTRANCE: 5325 BRODER BOULEVARD, DUBLIN,
CA**

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Prisoners inside Santa Rita Jail in Dublin, CA are staging a one day hunger strike and work stoppage to protest widespread institutional neglect and abuse, including unsanitary living conditions, price gouging, poor medical care, forced labor, and lack of access to legal resources. The self-organized protest began as a sit-in within a single housing unit, but organizers have called for a jailwide action on Wednesday, October 30th in response to poor jail conditions and indefinite lockdowns.

Conditions inside Santa Rita are at a “crisis point,” according to a statement released by strike organizers today. “Detainees are only provided cleaning supplies once a week...[and] are contracting lice, bed bugs, and flesh-eating staph infections from the MRSA virus,” organizers write, adding that jail staff routinely neglects medical and mental health emergencies. Many prisoners have self-harmed and are left with untreated wounds; individuals suffering from addiction withdrawal are not sent to the infirmary, and instead endure painful and dangerous symptoms in their dorms.

Attorney Yolanda Huang confirmed that “Santa Rita is one of the worst jails in the Bay Area. They are extremely disorganized and the facility is dirty despite the fact that they received \$430 million a year.” Nine people have died in custody in 2019. Because inmate deaths that occur in local hospitals are not recorded as in-custody deaths, the actual number of deaths due to the jail is much higher. There are multiple active lawsuits against the facility and its personnel for wrongful deaths, abuse of pregnant women, guard-orchestrated assaults, and other forms of systematic abuse and neglect.

The Kincade Fire has recently exacerbated short-staffing conditions and lockdowns at Santa Rita. Huang explained that because Sheriff Ahern leads emergency responses for Alameda County, Santa Rita staff have also been redirected to the Kincade Fire, which began on October 23 in Sonoma County. As a result, prisoners are simply locked down in their cells with little access to scheduled visits, telephones, or medical care. Huang adds that two prisoners were hospitalized this past weekend.

In addition to facing inhumane conditions inside, strike participants are being threatened and intimidated by Santa Rita guards. One organizer has been transferred out to a more distant jail already, and others were threatened with 30 additional days of jail time. Advocates are calling on the community to contact the Sheriff’s Office and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to ask that detainees not be punished for engaging in peaceful protest.

Demands of the strike include:

- Better and more nutritious food, that is not spoiled nor served in unsanitary ways
- An end to price-gouging for commissary, phone calls, and video visitation
- More changes of clothing and laundry access
- Cleaning supplies
- Access to lawyers and legal library
- Daily exercise and recreation time

For more information, please contact:

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