

## **CALL FOR SOLIDARITY WITH HUNGER AND THIRST STRIKERS IN DETENTION CENTERS IN THE NETHERLANDS**

*public indictment against the system of repression we call Fortress Europe.*

About 60 asylum seekers in detention center in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, have been in hunger strike for four days now. 18 of them also stopped drinking since Wednesday 6th of May. They are protesting against the asylum policy that criminalizes refugees: they get thrown out on the streets without money or shelter and they get detained in prisons for up to 18 months. The refugees on hunger strike demand not to be treated as criminals anymore. They clearly stated they want freedom and protection.

### **Wave of hunger strike**

Wednesday May 1st, twenty refugees in detention center Schiphol went on hunger strike. While the guards brutally broke down the strike in Schiphol, by putting the hunger strikers in isolation cells, about 80 refugees in detention center Rotterdam started a hunger strike on Monday 6th of May. One day later, fifty women in detention center Brugge (Belgium) also went on hunger strike.

A thirst strike is even more dangerous than a hunger strike: the latter can last for 40 days before people get in a critical situation, whereas a person who does not drink will be dead after one week.

### **Government arrogance**

The Dutch government has shown an unbelievable arrogance in this matter. At first, they did not respond to the demands of the refugees at all. One parliament member of the ruling party People's Party of the Freedom and Democracy (VVD) even went as far as to say the refugees "were taking the government hostage" by going on hunger strike. Then, as late as Thursday 9th May, they "provided" a worthless "offer". In return for the end of the hunger strike, the government "offered" to shorten the usual 17 hours a day detainees are locked inside their cell with a few hours. The hunger and thirst strikers of course rejected this ridiculous proposal and they will continue with their protest.

But things are getting very serious right now. As of Friday the third day without water begins for the refugees who have no other means of getting their voice out than to go on a hunger or thirst strike. Refugees searching for a better life get thrown into a Kafkaesk bureaucracy of having to provide proof that doesn't exist in order to get their permit to stay. Once rejected, undocumented refugees get thrown out on the streets and get denied basic human rights, such as food, shelter, work and health care. Racist police hunt them down and jail them. In detention, refugees are stripped from their dignity, their autonomy, their lives and their future. Once deported, no one ever hears from them again. Right now, refugees in detention center Rotterdam are directly and unmistakably demanding their rights and their freedom. The government will have to respond very quickly and adequately, if they don't want to be held responsible for dozens of deaths.

### **Call for solidarity**

We are strongly calling for solidarity from our friends throughout Europe. Solidarity with the hunger and thirst strikers in special; and with refugees in general. The state is aimed at excluding everyone who is not directly exploitable by capital. Make it known how this insane migration policy of repression destroys the lives of hundreds of thousands of refugees. Show your solidarity by spreading this message.

**Print this letter and glue it everywhere, preferably to walls that symbolize exclusion by Fortress Europe: parliament buildings, embassies, deportation offices, immigration offices, etc.**

**Letter removed? Glue it again. Everywhere.**

**TOGETHER WE CAN FIGHT FORTRESS EUROPE!**