



PRESS RELEASE

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Vigil and Fast as #Freedomgiving Hunger Strike at Etowah Detention Center Enters Fifth Day, Advocates Protest Retaliation and Alleged Medical Abuse Against Immigrants Inside.

Detained asylum seekers at Etowah joined other detainees across the country in a hunger strike starting on Thanksgiving eve to call for an end to detention, improved conditions, and release for asylum seekers

GADSDEN, Alabama — This afternoon, a diverse group of Alabama residents will assemble outside the Etowah County Detention Center to send a message of solidarity and support to the approximately 49 immigrant detainees who are on hunger strike inside. The detainees, many of whom are South Asian asylum seekers, have been refusing food since the evening before Thanksgiving. The strike at Etowah is part of a chain of #freedomgiving hunger strikes at immigrant detention centers across the country in recent weeks. Detainees at additional centers are expected to join the strike this week.

In coordination with detainees at Theo Lacey and Otay Detention Centers, the hunger strikers at Etowah issued a [set of demands](#), including an end to all detention and deportations and the ICE detention [bed quota](#), improved conditions, and an end to indefinite detention, including release on parole or supervision for all asylum seekers held for more than six months.

Advocates have already received reports of medical abuses against hunger strikers at Etowah, and four detainees were thrown in solitary confinement as retaliation for participating in the strike. “The detainees on strike at Etowah hail from countries around the world, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Togo, and Burkina Faso. They have been detained for between seven and twenty-three months, and many of them came to the U.S. fleeing persecution in their countries of origin. Other detainees at Etowah have been held for a staggering five years,” explained **Lisa Moyer** of the [#ShutDownEtowah](#) campaign, a group of individuals, organizations, and faith communities dedicated to exposing and ending the human rights abuses at the center.

“We will be standing vigil today to show our support for the hunger strikers and all detainees,” states **Yazmin Contreras** of Adelante Alabama Worker Center and #ShutDownEtowah. “We want ICE and Etowah County officials to know we are watching them, and we will not stand by while abuses occur.”

What: Vigil and fast in solidarity with detained asylum seekers on hunger strike
When: Monday, November 30, 2:00pm until dark
Where: Etowah County Detention Center, 827 Forrest Ave., Gadsden, AL 35901
Visuals: Community members in black with tape over their mouths, empty plates, posters calling for justice for asylum seekers and release of the 49 hunger strikers

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