

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

This letter is for all of the people who have the power to protect our rights.

We are children between ages of 12 and 16 who are imprisoned in the Family Detention Center in Berks, PA. We are teenagers who are being deprived of our liberty. We are sons and daughters, we are kids with dreams to follow, with many goals to achieve.

It pains us to know that the school year is starting and that we are imprisoned here and can't receive a proper education. One of the reasons we left our own countries is because we couldn't go to class due to the threats we received in our schools. Then we arrived here and found a new trauma to live with, and our right to an adequate education continues to be denied.

We can't concentrate because of the frustration that we feel locked up here like criminals when we in reality we are innocent. We only came to this country to seek the refuge and protection that we cannot have in our countries due to crime and insecurity. We are tired of everything being the same, we're tired of waking up to the same four walls, the same routine every day, the same food for every meal. We don't want to be in this prison anymore!

It isn't fair that for over a year we have been denied the right to have a normal life in this country with our families, locking us up in a jail like this. That is why we ask that you give us the opportunity to leave this place, that you give us the opportunity to have new interviews and to go through the government process that has been denied us.

As you know, our mothers are on a hunger strike and it pains us to see what they have to go through to be heard and to fight for our liberty. Today marks the 29th day since they began the hunger strike and to this day they have not received a response. For those reasons we came up with a way to support our mothers, and so we announce that on the 15th day of September, the day that our Central American countries won their independence, we will start a school strike to make ourselves heard and to attain the freedom we long for so much.

Let it be known that we, too, have voices and demand to be heard.

Sincerely,

7th grade student, 371 days in prison
8th grade student, 349 days in prison
8th grade student, 163 days in prison
9th grade student, 305 days in prison
9th grade student, 376 days in prison
9th grade student, 327 days in prison
11th grade student, 376 days in prison