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Nationwide Prison Strike Shows Growing Support for an End to Prison Slavery

The Free Alabama Movement (FAM) put out a call for a nationwide prison strike in January of this year. Both incarcerated people and their supporters have held actions across the nation, demanding an end to prison slavery.

Prisoners across 40-50 prisons in 24 states agreed to the strike. Currently, 11 states have confirmed they're active in the strike. Those states include: Alabama, California, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, South Carolina and Washington.

There have been hunger strikes at the Merced County and John Latorraca Jails in California and the Lucasville Correctional Institute and the Ohio State Penitentiary in Ohio. There have also been reports of work stoppages at Holman Correctional Institute in Alabama and across several facilities in Florida.

Prisoners are asking for the amendment of the 13th amendment, which allows for slavery to continue in prisons. The 13th amendment should have ended slavery, but it did not, and incarcerated people are asking for the 13th amendment to be rewritten to end the last vestiges of slave labor in America.

Incarcerated people are already facing retaliation for their involvement or suspected involvement with the prison work strike, with facilities in some states going on lockdown in advance of any potential actions in support of the work strike.

Reports of retaliation have already begun, in some states even before prisoner-led actions were able to begin, such as in some facilities in California, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina and Virginia. Incarcerated people suspected of organizing strikes have been relocated to other facilities, placed on lockdown, or otherwise faced penalties despite nonviolently organizing for their rights.

Guards at Holman prison, in Alabama, have kept all the FAM-affiliated people in solitary confinement, while releasing others, causing a hostile environment within Holman prison.

The call for organizers and supporters on the outside to continue to agitate for change is amping up. Kinetik Justice, also known as Robert Earl Council, says, "FAM raises the volume of the call: *swarm the county jails and prison throughout the country*. Lift your voices in a shout that the exception clause of the 13th Amendment must be struck down and dismantled once and for all."

Kinetik Justice and FAM have asked everyone that wants to help and support to get in contact with their national outside spokesperson Pastor Kenneth Glasgow, founder of TOPS, The Ordinary People Society.

"We're asking for organizers on the outside to support incarcerated people against retaliation and to help move their demands forward. We ask supporters to continue to rally around this important issue," Pastor Glasgow said.

Glasgow also says that he will be asking in the near future for protests and strikes of the private industries and companies that use free prison labor.

Pastor Glasgow further states that any organization, union or person, should not be capitalizing or benefiting from the work and sacrifice rendered by those incarcerated. This action was led, ran, and organized by those incarcerated in Holman prison as part of the Free Alabama Movement, and have been supported holistically by the organization Mothers and F.A.M.ilies as well.

"We encourage all to step up efforts to highlight the inhumanities of this slave system and expose the administrators that prefer profit over people, as we are people not *ex this or ex that*, just people," said Kinetik Justice.

FAM and TOPS are reaching out with three ways people on the outside can continue to support incarcerated people fighting to abolish the persistence of slavery in prisons, as allowed by the 13th amendment:

1. Focus on state laws -- like those related to life without parole, habitual offenders, and juvenile justice -- that feed prison overcrowding. Advocate for your state to have an innocence inquiry commission that looks at a broad range of convictions, not just death penalty cases.
2. Register people to vote at local jails, and please reach out to Pastor Glasgow if you have any trouble registering people. Folks with misdemeanors, as well as those that have not yet been convicted, are eligible to vote.
3. Send donations (tax deductible) to the Strike Defense Fund, via The Ordinary People's Society (TOPS) via <http://www.theordinarypeoplesociety.org/membershipfee.htm>

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FAM, the Free Alabama Movement is a prisoner-led movement dedicated to fighting for the human rights of all incarcerated people.

TOPS, the Ordinary People's Society is an organization to help currently and formerly incarcerated people to live productive lives -- holistically, mentally, physically and spiritually