

Amadeu Casellas: 45 days on hunger strike

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Due to the authorities' continuous refusal to give him a release date and the horrible conditions prisoners in the Quatre Camins prison are subjected to, Amadeu made the decision to go on hunger strike as a way to confront the prison authorities.

After being lied to by the director of the prison during his last hunger strike in April, Amadeu has decided that this hunger strike will be to the ultimate consequences: if the prison authorities don't grant him an open regime (this is equivalent to day work release, where the prisoner signs out and goes to work during the day, returning to the prison in the evening), or a lessening of his sentence, he will continue the hunger strike.

On August 1 there was a protest at the General Direction of Penitentiary Services, which is responsible for giving day work releases, to show that support for Amadeu is growing. If his demands are not met, the demonstrations will continue. People tried to enter the building to have a face to face dialogue, but the guards lowered the gates. Hours later, a pair of comrades, including his lawyer, was able to enter and speak with Mr. Paco de Vicente, the person in charge of classifications. Mr. Paco de Vicente stated that he would visit Amadeu, who was moved to the prison hospital of Terrassa last Thursday. In the conversation, he stated that he would ratify the "agreements" which he will offer to Amadeu: transfer to another prison (Brians II) and revision of his case. Of course, this is only if Amadeu agrees to give up his hunger strike. In Brians II Amadeu could once again, before another Treatment Junta (similar to a U.S. Parole Board), try to obtain the day work release.

This game by the General Direction of Penitentiary Services is clear to us. They want to go on their vacations tranquilly, so they will try to get Amadeu to give up his hunger strike based on paper (false) promises. But of course we cannot believe these lies, so Amadeu has decided to continue his hunger strike until his demands are met. And we support him.

Amadeu has lost more than 25 kilos (50.7 lbs.) and he is being maintained on glucose in water. His sugar levels are down to 50 mg/l, and he is being given Valium.

The conditions at the penitentiary hospital of Terrassa are shameful. In the first place, none of the comrades who tried to visit him have been able to. The prison authorities say they were authorized to visit him at Quatre Camins, not Terrassa. Only his mother and his lawyer have been able to have 30 minute visits with him.

Additionally, Amadeu can only make phone calls using a Telefónica phone card, which could not be found in the entire town of Terrassa, as they are sold only in tobacco shops, all of which were closed in the afternoon. Telefónica has monopolized prisoners' phone calls, and each month these phone cards are harder and harder to find near the prisons.

And the medical doctors don't deserve anything more than an open tomb. They haven't weighed Amadeu since he arrived three days ago. And if this were not enough, the doctors bring him meals three times a day (to tempt him to eat), but these meals cannot be eaten by someone who has been on hunger strike, as they would be impossible to digest.

Amadeu has commented that four people have come to Terrassa from Quatre Camins with food poisoning, and one had to have his gall bladder removed. The prison authorities treat people like shit; they give them shitty food, and people say: They're okay; they're getting three square meals a day.

Although his health is deteriorating, Amadeu has not lost his sense of humor and his morale is high. He asks everyone to pressure the General Direction of Penitentiary Services (DGSP) and the Penal Junta 2 of Manresa.

As an expression of solidarity with Amadeu, we encourage everyone to pressure these two centers with phone calls, faxes, visits, demonstrations, actions--whatever you can do. We must also pressure all representatives of the Spanish state at an international level.

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