

Minister of Public Safety



Ministre de la Sécurité publique

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P8

JAN 10 2017

Mr. Asaf Rashid
handsofnothing@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Rashid:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 26, 2016, concerning the hunger strike by immigration detainees at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario, and the Toronto East Detention Centre in Toronto, Ontario, which concluded this past summer. I apologize for the delay in responding.

I appreciated receiving personal accounts from those involved in the strike about their experiences in custody. Those accounts will help shape policy decisions moving forward.

The Government of Canada is working with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to improve and minimize the use of immigration detention. On August 15, 2016, I announced an investment of up to \$138 million in a new National Immigration Detention Framework to enhance alternatives to detention; significantly improve conditions at immigration holding centres (IHCs), including enhancing medical and mental health services; and reduce reliance on provincial facilities.

A community supervision program will be developed to provide tailored risk management for people who might otherwise be detained, and new infrastructure projects will replace the IHCs in British Columbia and Quebec.

The CBSA recognizes that detention is a serious matter and its officers only detain foreign nationals and permanent residents as a last resort. Detention may occur when there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person is inadmissible to Canada and is a danger to the public; is unlikely to appear for immigration proceedings; is a foreign national who is unable to satisfy the CBSA of his/her identity; or is designated as part of an irregular arrival by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Detention is a tool to support the removal of inadmissible persons from Canada. The CBSA works to ensure that it is exercising its responsibility for detentions to the highest possible standard and is committed to ensuring the physical and mental well-being of detainees. As much as possible, and within the provincial operational limits, the Agency integrates its national detention standards into provincial agreements.

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Detentions under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* are subject to independent reviews by members of the Immigration Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada. An IRB detention review is conducted 48 hours after a person is detained and subsequent reviews are carried out within the following seven days and every 30 days thereafter.

Please be assured that the Government of Canada takes seriously its refugee protection obligations as well as its responsibilities to protect the safety and security of Canadians. Balancing these considerations and ensuring compliance with national standards is a top priority for the Government in carrying out its mandate.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Goodale', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.