

## **Hunger strike at the Deportation Centre Kærshovedgård: “Close the camp! We are also humans!”**

*Press release from the Network for Contact Persons for Rejected Asylum Seekers, Trampoline House, Welcome To Denmark, The Bridge Radio, Stay Human-Aalborg, Solidarity Project Aarhus, Black Lives Matter Denmark and Freedom of Movements*

“Close the camp! We are humans, just like you!” is the message from 28 hunger striking refugees, who have protesting since october 11th outside the controversial Deportation Centre Kærshovedgård. The strikers are all rejected asylum seekers who can not be deported because of various reasons. They are forced to live in a limbo-state in what used to be an open prison.

“We are slowly dying” a banner says in Danish. The intention of the Danish government is to make the conditions for these people as unbearable as possible, and there is regularly suicide attempts at the place, which Edward Stanley has accounted for in the newspaper Politiken (<http://politiken.dk/debat/kroniken/art6105458/Vi-udsættes-for-mental-krigsførelse-og-mister-forstanden>).

The strikers are demanding Kærshovedgaard to be closed – and for their cases to be reopened. Demands that are in line with recommendations of a broad range of organisations – amongst them The Danish Helsinki Komitee for Human Rights and Amnesty International. Several experts on European migration politics are also raising criticism of the camp. Amongst others, the sociologist Annika Lindbjerg, explains how there’s no evidence that ‘unbearable conditions’ mean that people leave Denmark. Research from Norway shows that few people leave voluntarily, and that the human and economical expenses of camps like Kærshovedgaard are unproportionable high.

“We’re striking because we don’t know how long we’ll have to stay here. When someone is given a sentence for a crime, they know when they will get out, but we don’t know for how long we’ll have to stay here, and we haven’t even done anything criminal”  
- Hunger striker at Kærshovedgaard”

### **Spokespersons for the hunger strikers:**

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**Experts:**

A lot of experts and researchers of migration and human rights have expressed their sympathy with the hunger strikers.

Annika Lindberg

PhD at Bern University (Schwizerland) – expert in rejected asylum seekers in Scandinavia

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Martin Bak Jørgen og Susi Meret (CoMID, Aalborg University)

“The hunger strike is the last and only choice for autonomy...”

“The hunger strikers at Kærshovedgaard is not criminal, but humans who’ve had their asylum application rejected, and are now living under conditions a lot worse than those of people who have been convicted for crimes.”

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Martin Lemberg (Professor at Global Refugee Studies - Aalborg University Copenhagen)

“[Centres like Kærshovedgaard] represent a fundamental morally problem for the liberal democracy, because the logic behind them is to end dissuasive signal by worsening living conditions for some people.”

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**Article links:**

Helsinki Komitee – Kærshovedgaard is worse than a prison:

<http://politiken.dk/indland/art6013614/Kærshovedgaard-er-værrer-end-fængsel>

Law professor Jens Elo Rytter in Politiken: <http://politiken.dk/indland/art5880946/Juraprofessor-sår-tvivl-om-nye-krav-til-tålt-ophold>

Amnesty International’s annual report criticizing Kærshovedgaard:

<https://amnesty.dk/nyhedsliste/2017/kritik-af-danmark-i-amnestys-aarsrapport>

Research on unbearable conditions in camps:

<https://academic.oup.com/rsg/article-abstract/30/2/1/1560000/Failed-Asylum-Seekers-Responses-to-Arrangements?redirectedFrom=fulltext>





