

Tuesday, December 13th 2016

To: Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary Ted Dallas

We are a group of mothers asking for your help to obtain our FREEDOM. We have been unjustly incarcerated merely for having asked for refuge in this country. We never imagined that the United States would receive us with such a gigantic blow that is to deprive our children of FREEDOM. There are mothers amongst us who, with children of between two and fifteen years old, have been detained for more than 450 days. Many of us are sick and are not receiving any treatment.

We are desperate because this will be the second Christmas that our children have to spend here. This is in addition to all the other special dates, such as the birthdays of our children and our own, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc, that we have had to spend in this jail, including the 4th of July on which this country celebrates FREEDOM. There are many of us who, while these celebrations take place, are suffering unjustly without being criminals, without having committed any crime.

All that we ask for is that you reach into your heart and that you give us the FREEDOM that we so long for for our children and for ourselves. We know you have the power in the State of Pennsylvania and that in a matter of minutes you can order that we all be freed.

We ask you, 17 desperate mothers, to give the biggest gift to our children of being able to spend Christmas among family.

As Berks mothers, we bid farewell to you,

Madres Berks

December 13, 2016

To: Governor Tom Wolf
Secretary Ted Dallas

I am writing this letter to beg you the opportunity to release us from prison. I am one of the 17 mothers who have been imprisoned for a prolonged amount of time at the Berks Detention Center.

My son and I arrived to United States on October 21, 2015, when he was 22 months old. He will be 3 years of age on December 16 this year. It breaks my heart to realize that my child has spent almost half of his life incarcerated. According to the Flores' Law, he should be liberated long time ago. It is an act of inhumanity to deprive a little child from his freedom and treated as criminal.

We already spent 416 days in detention, per words of the Secretary of National Security, J. Johnson, and "a child should not be imprisoned for more than 20 days"

My baby and I have spent many special days and holidays in jail. This will be his second Christmas in Berks. I am begging you to listen with your hearts in this Christmas time, and to release us from this prison- you have the power to do it and our Lord will give you his blessing for giving to my child the best Christmas gift he can get, our FREEDOM.

It is not fair that we have spent so much time in jail when we came fleeing the terrifying conditions of our country, Honduras. Like any human we are just searching for shelter and protection.

God Bless you,

Sincerely, W.O.

My name is Maribel. I am from Guatemala.

I came to escape with my three children who are 8, 9 and 2 years old. I entered the United States on November 28th, 2015 and I was sent to the "Freezer," which is a place that is as cold as a freezer. From there I was sent to Dilley and I was there for 21 days, then I was transported to Berks Center on December 21st where I am still being detained with my children.

We have been here for 390 days and while here we have gotten sick, the kids don't want to eat the food, they want to go to an adequate school and we have already spent a Christmas being locked away.

We don't want to spend another Christmas here, which is why I ask the governor to please reach into your heart and give us the gift that we most wish for.

Merry Christmas

Sincerely, Maribel

Tuesday, December 13th, 2016

To: Tom Wolf and Ted Dallas

I write these lines to you so that you may help us and find a solution to our problem.

I have been imprisoned at the Berks Family Residential Center for 13 months. I arrived in this country on August 29th, 2015, which means that in total I have been detained for more than 450 days. I am also here with my son who is only 6 years old.

We need help to get out of here and we reach out to you because we know that you can do something to solve our problem. It is very sad to know that many people are getting prepared to spend this holiday among family, and are sharing all of the good things that happened to them this 2016, and that meanwhile this will sadly be our second Christmas here and we can't celebrate as others do. Our family has seats on their table for us and these have been awaiting us for 450 days, along with beds, clothing, shoes, food, love and care, all of which is turning to dust while waiting for us, and that we sadly do not know when the moment we long for, when we are warmly, strongly and sincerely embraced by the arms that have been wide open for us, awaiting us for more for than a year.

These days have been very difficult because we long to be with our loved ones but we also have suffered too much, as have our children, because they are desperate, sad, anxious, and many of them depressed because they know that during this second Christmas here they will continue to be incarcerated.

I pray to God that he continues to strengthen us, that he softens the hearts of people who are not letting us out and who I know will help us and will support us so that we can make true the most desired dream of our children: obtaining their freedom!

Infinite blessings, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2017,

Tuesday, December 13th, 2016

I am a mother with a 6-year-old daughter who has been detained for 460 days. It has not been easy to spend all of this time incarcerated with my daughter, suffering from illnesses such as diarrhea since last December. At the beginning, they would not provide good care but now they have done exams and sent her to stomach specialists and all that comes up is lactose intolerance. She has to eat the same food everyday due to her lactose intolerance and we have had to spend two of our birthdays incarcerated. All that my daughter asks for everyday is that I take her out of this place. Last Christmas we spent it here and now another Christmas is coming and she cries because she does not want to spend another Christmas incarcerated.

We came running away from crime and violence in my country, searching for protection and a better future for our children and the only thing we have found here is psychological and emotional abuse. It isn't fair that as a result of looking for a little bit of protection for my daughter we are treated as criminals. We are not a danger to this country. To whomever is reading this letter, I ask that you gain consciousness of all this and that you do not deny my daughter her right to be free and that she can celebrate Christmas with our family and live a normal life as any child deserves. Thank you very much! God Bless You,

Sincerely,

A desperate mother with more than one year detained in the Berks Center

My name is Carmen. I am from Honduras. I came with my son who is only four years old because I feared for my life. I was threatened in my country and I could not find another solution, I came to this country on October 24th of last year and I was in the “freezer” for two days and then I was sent to Karnes and I was there for 22 days, and then I was transferred to here to the Berks Center where I arrived on November 18th.

Since then I have been in detention with my son and I have been for 14 months already. It is very sad because we can't go wherever we want and my son is always bored, sick and the food that they give us is not good and my son does not like it but the works here only care about one taking the food even if one doesn't eat it. My son looks through the window of the room and always says to me “I want to leave” and he says “mommy, let's go to the park”, “mommy, why can't we leave this place?”. It is very difficult to answer this question to my son. He has spent his birthdays here, Christmas here, 14 months without our families being able to see us because we are in jail.

It is not fair that my child, who is so little, must live without his freedom. Being here has caused me to gain weight due to the stress, insomnia and to many headaches. We can't bear being locked away any longer. How much I would love to spend this Christmas with my family who since last year have been waiting for me.

This is why I ask that you please help me, I ask you Mr. Governor, to President Obama, and to all the people who have the power to give us our freedom, please free me from here. We are not bad people, my son is a poor innocent boy here.

I only seek protection for my son and for me. I would like to ask a question: If you won't give us our freedom this year, when will you do so? Or do you intend to have us locked away for years here?

We need to get out, my family is waiting for us.

Sincerely,

Carmen & 4-year-old son

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

My name is Celina. I am Salvadorean and I have with me my son who is 7 years old.

I came to the United States on November 10th 2015, running away from the crime that batters our country. When I arrived here they put me in the “freezer” and one day in the “dog kennel”, which are places where the temperature is kept very cold. After that, I was taken to a detention center in Dilley, Texas, where I was kept for 18 days.

After that, I was transported to another detention center, the Berks Detention Center in Pennsylvania, where I am still kept already for more than a year. The situation here has been very difficult for me and for my son. We never imagined that all of this would happen to us because here all kinds of things have happened to us. We have been sick, we have been very mistreated, the people who work here mistreat my son and tell him he is a problem because they don't want him to make any noise, they don't let him play but he is a child and being locked away makes him behave this way. Additionally, the food that they give people here is really bad. My son does not like it, he has a very low weight and I feel pity that all of this is happening to my son. We need to be let free, to be able to spend Christmas with our families. We are not bad and we are not criminals to be incarcerated already for 13 months. This is an injustice what they are doing to us and to our children.

I have diabetes and it is very difficult to manage it due to being locked away. I ask them to let me get out due to how sick I am but they do not want to do so.

Please, I ask the people reading this letter to please listen to your heart and help us get out of this place. This place is not a place for a 7-year-old. It is his dream to be with his family, to be able to go to school in an adequate school.

I wish you a very happy day and thank you for listening to us.

Sincerely,

A mother asking for freedom for her and for her child.

December 12, 2016

Mr. Governor Tom Wolf and Ted Dallas,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. I am writing to you to ask you help us, 17 mothers along with our children, because many of us have been detained 13 months and others of us have been detained 15 months. We have committed no crime that would merit continuing to keep us in this place any longer.

My name is Lesly and I am depressed. I have a daughter here with me, she is 14 years old and she does not deserve what is going on this place. Youth have come and just as they come they go and this is very frustrating for her. We came here escaping and seeking refuge because in my country there is too much crime and we came here to find this gigantic injustice. We only ask for your help because what is happening to us here is a cruel nightmare to all of the families who are here living through this.

I am very sick and my daughter is sick, as well, and we have not received the healthcare that we deserve, we have not received any treatment that we need, they don't have any consideration for us here. I have a 9-year-old daughter that is waiting for me with arms wide open, she is in Arkansas. We only ask for our freedom so that we can be with our loved ones. Please, I know that it is in your hands to help us and it is only a matter of you wanting to do so. We will be grateful and God, our lord almighty will greatly reward you.

There are children here that arrived here when they were 22 months old, they do not deserve to spend so much time imprisoned. We all have spent our birthdays here, locked away. This is very saddening and frustrating. This Christmas the biggest gift that we could ask for is to be free. It isn't fair to spend another Christmas locked away. It isn't fair for our children. We need to be with our families and to be happy.

God Bless You,

Lesly

Tuesday, December 13th, 2016

Letter to Governor Tom Wolfe,

I hope you are having a good day. I greet you as one of the mothers that is in the Berks Center. I am from El Salvador and I have a son who is 15 years old; we entered the United States on October 15th 2015. We have been incarcerated for 425 days. We came escaping violence, criminal groups, seeking help and protection and what we have received from the United States is the deprivation of our freedom. I am worried about my son, he is depressed because a second Christmas as an incarcerated child is coming; he says that life for him has no reason and it worries me because he feels frustrated to see these four walls and I understand him because he is young and he wants to be free and happy just as other children are.

Please reach into your heart and help us get out of this jail. I know that as a father you will understand why we fight and suffer so that our children will have a good future and that is the reason why I am running away and asking for help in this country, searching for a good future for my son. Because of this I ask you Governor Tom Wolf, and all of the people who have the power to help us, to do help us. Help us obtain our freedom so that we can spend a Christmas with family as all human beings deserve. Remember we are not troublemakers or criminals, we are just mothers looking for protection.

I bid farewell to you as a desperate mother asking for your help. Thank you.

Mi nombre es Maribel. Soy de Guatemala.

Me vine huyendo con mis tres hijos de 8 años, 9 años, y dos años.

Entre a los Estados Unidos el 28 de noviembre de 2015. Me mandaron a la hielera, un lugar tan frío como un freezer; luego me mandaron a Dilley, estuve allí por 21 días; luego me trasladaron al Centro de Berks el 21 de diciembre, donde aún sigo aquí en detención con mis hijos ya tenemos 390 días estando aquí.

Nos hemos enfermado, la comida no quieren comérsela, pasan frustradas, ellas quieren ir a una escuela adecuada y ya pasamos una Navidad encerradas y no queremos pasar otra Navidad aquí.

Por eso le pido al gobernador que por favor se toque el corazón y nos puedan dar el regalo que más deseamos.

Feliz Navidad.

Atentamente,

Maribel

Martes 13 de diciembre de 2016

Para los señores: Tom Wolf y Ted Dallas

El motivo de estas líneas es para que puedan ayudarnos y buscar una solución a nuestro problema.

Estoy recluida en Berks Family Residencial Center hace 13 meses; yo llegué a este país el 29 de agosto de 2015 lo que quiere decir que en total son más de 450 días en detención, también estoy con mi hijo de seis añitos de edad.

Necesitamos ayuda para poder salir de aquí y recurrimos a ustedes porque sabemos que pueden hacer algo para resolver nuestro problema.

Es muy triste saber que muchas personas están haciendo sus preparativos para pasar esta Navidad en familia y compartiendo todas las cosas buenas que les pasaron este año 2016.

Lastimosamente esta sería nuestra segunda Navidad aquí y no podemos celebrar de la misma manera que los demás. Nuestra familia tiene un espacio en la mesa para nosotros que está listo desde hace 450 días; hay camas, ropa, zapatos, comida, amor y afecto que se está empolvando esperando nuestra llegada y que lastimosamente no sabemos cuándo llegará ese tan ansiado momento en el que los brazos que han estado abiertos por más de un año al fin puedan llegar a cerrarse en un infinito, fuerte y sincero abrazo.

Estos días han sido difíciles porque anhelamos estar con nuestros seres queridos pero también hemos sufrido demasiado al igual que nuestros hijos. Ellos están desesperados, tristes, angustiados y algunos un poco deprimidos por el hecho de saber que en esta segunda navidad estarán nuevamente encarcelados.

Le pido a Dios para que nos siga fortaleciendo y para que ablande el corazón de las personas que no nos dejan salir y asimismo sé que nos ayudarán y apoyarán para cumplir el sueño más anhelado de nuestros hijos: ¡Obtener su Libertad!

Bendiciones infinitas.

Feliz Navidad y Próspero año 2017

Martes 13 de diciembre de 2016

Soy una madre con una niña de seis años de edad con 460 días en detención. No ha sido fácil pasar todo este tiempo presa con mi hija padeciendo(me) de enfermedades como diarrea. Desde diciembre del año pasado, (me) padece de diarrea, al principio no me la atendían bien, pero ahora (me) le han hecho exámenes y (me) la han mandado con especialistas para el estómago y lo único que sale es que es intolerante a la lactosa.

Donde tiene que comer la misma comida todos los días debido a la intolerancia a la lactosa. Donde hemos tenido que pasar dos de nuestro cumpleaños encerradas.

Mi hija lo único que me piden todos los días es que la saque de este lugar. La navidad pasada la pasamos aquí y ahora viene otra navidad y ella llora porque no quiere pasar otra navidad encerrada.

Venimos huyendo de la delincuencia y violencia que hay en mi país, buscando protección y un futuro mejor para nuestros hijos y con lo único con lo que nos hemos encontrado es con puros maltratos psicológicos y emocionales.

No es justo que por buscar un poco de protección para mi hija nos traten como si fuéramos unas criminales. No somos un peligro para este país.

A la persona que lea esta carta le pido que por favor tome conciencia y no le niega mi hija el derecho de ser libre y pueda celebrar la Navidad con nuestra familia y llevar una vida normal como todo niño merece.

¡Muchas gracias! Que Dios lo bendiga.

Atentamente,

Una madre desesperada con más de un año detenida en el Centro de Berks.

Mi nombre es Carmen, soy de Honduras. Me vine con mi hijo de solo cuatro años ya que temí por mi vida. Fui amenazada en mi país y no encontré otra solución.

Llegué a este país el 24 octubre del año pasado y estuve en la hielera 2 días y luego me mandaron a Karnes y estuve 22 días; luego me trasladaron aquí en el Centro de Berks donde llegue el 18 de noviembre y desde entonces estoy en detención con mi hijo.

Ya tengo 14 meses de estar aquí, es muy triste ya que no podemos ir a donde queremos; mi hijo se la pasa muy aburrido, enfermo y más que la comida que hacen no es buena y a mi hijo no le gusta, pero a los trabajadores de aquí sólo les importa que uno agarre la comida aunque él no se la coma. El mira por la ventana del cuarto y siempre dice "yo ya me quiero ir" y él me dice mami vamos al parque mamá, porque no nos vamos de aquí y es muy difícil contestarle a mi hijo esa pregunta. Ha pasado su cumpleaños aquí, la Navidad aquí, 14 meses sin que nuestra familia lo mire porque como estamos en la cárcel no es justo que mi hijo a tan pequeña edad esté sin su libertad.

A mí el estar aquí me ha dado sobrepeso debido al estrés y al insomnio, y muchos dolores de cabeza. Ya no soportamos este encierro y cuánto me gustaría que esta Navidad la pase con mi familia que desde el año pasado me están esperando.

Es por eso que les pido que por favor me ayuden. Al señor Gobernador, el Presidente Obama y a todas las personas que tienen el poder darnos libertad. Ya libérenme de aquí, no somos unas malas personas, mi hijo es un pobre inocente aquí.

Sólo busco protección para mi hijo y para mí y me gustaría hacer una pregunta: si nos dan libertad este año ¿cuándo va a ser? O será que nos piensan tener años aquí.

Necesitamos salir, mi familia me espera.

Atentamente,

Carmen e hijo de cuatro años

Feliz Navidad y Año Nuevo

Mi nombre es Celina. Soy salvadoreña y tengo a mi hijo de siete años.

Yo entré a los Estados Unidos el 10 de noviembre de 2015, huyendo de la delincuencia azota a nuestro país. Al llegar aquí me tuvieron dos días en la hielera y un día en la perrera, lugares donde la temperatura es muy fría. Después de eso me trasladaron a un centro de detención en Dilley Texas, donde permanecí ahí por 18 días.

Luego me trasladaron a otro centro de detención, el Centro Berks en Pennsylvania donde todavía permanezco ahí ya por más de un año. La situación aquí ha sido muy difícil para mí y para mi hijo. Nunca nos imaginamos que todo esto iba pasar, pues aquí nos ha pasado de todo; nos hemos enfermado, ne han tratado muy mal a mi hijo, el personal que trabaja aquí donde me dicen que mi hijo es un problema porque no quieren que haga bulla, no lo dejan jugar, mi hijo es muy hiperactivo pero el es un niño y el encierro me lo hace comportarse así.

Además la comida que dan aquí es muy fea, a mi hijo no le gusta, él está bajo de peso y me da lástima que a mi hijo le esté pasando todo eso. Nosotros necesitamos que nos den nuestra libertad, pasar una navidad con nuestra familias, no somos malos ni tampoco criminales para que no tengan aquí encerrados ya por 13 meses.

Es una injusticia lo que están haciendo con nosotros y con nuestros hijos.

Yo tengo la enfermedad de la diabetes donde muy difícil controlarla por este encierro; les pido que me dejen salir por lo mal que me pongo, pero no quieren.

Por favor les pido a las personas que lean esta carta que se ponga la mano en el corazón y nos ayuden a salir de este lugar. Este no es lugar para un niño de siete años que su ilusión es estar con su familia y estudiar en una escuela adecuada.

Les deseo que pasen un feliz día y gracias por escucharnos.

Atentamente:

Madre pidiendo libertad junto a su hijo

Estimado Gobernador Tom Wolff y Secretario Ted

Por este medio quiero pedirles que si está en sus manos poder salir de este lugar sería el mejor regalo de Navidad que nos darían a mí y mi hijo.

Mi hijo y yo que soy su madre venimos huyendo de nuestro país y lamentablemente hemos venido a este país y estamos encerrados con muchas madres que al igual que nosotros han venido buscando protección, pero lamentablemente estamos encerradas en cuatro paredes y no podemos salir. Tengo un niño de 9 años, ya son dos cumpleaños que mi hijo ha pasado encerrado y también serían dos Navidades que pasaríamos en este lugar.

Para mí como madre es frustrante porque no puedo darle a mi hijo lo que él desea en esta Navidad que es el estar juntos con su familia.

Él está bien deprimido porque no puede estar con su familia. Tenemos 14 meses de detención.

No es justo para todos los niños que hay en este lugar. Hay muchos niños de 3 años hasta 16 años.

No somos ningunos delincuentes y ya pagamos todo un año encerrados con nuestros hijos.

Libertad madres

(Berks) somos 17 madres

Mi nombre es Elsa del Salvador. Me vine con mi hijo de cuatro años.

Vine huyendo de mi país, fui amenazada y no me quedó de otra que venirme para acá.

Llegué el 16 de noviembre del año pasado y estuve dos días en la hielera; después me mandaron a la detención de Dilley, Texas y estuve 20 días; y después para este Centro de Berks al que llegue el 8 de diciembre. Desde entonces estoy detenida con mi hijo, ya tengo 13 meses de estar detenida, ya mi hijo no quiere estar aquí, se la pasa aburrido, no come bien, no duerme bien.

Todos los días me dice que se quiere ir, pasa peleando con los demás niños y mi hijo no era así y yo paso muy estresada y me he pasado solo enferma y ya estoy cansada de estar aquí, y por eso le pido de por favor al señor Gobernador y al Presidente Obama y a otras personas que nos liberen de aquí. No somos criminales para estar aquí, mi hijo y yo somos buenas personas.

Sólo busco libertad para mi hijo y yo.

Atentamente

Elsa