

**FOR A WORLD
WITH NO PRISONS
NO TRANSPHOBIA
NO BORDERS**



Activists occupy the Ministry of Justice to protest against transphobic measures to segregate incarcerated trans women

- **On International Women's Day, 50 activists occupy Ministry of Justice in London.**
- **Trans and cis allies condemn plans to transfer trans women to men's prisons, and the creation of the trans-only prison ward at HMP Downview, as well as state violence against all incarcerated women.**
- **The activists state that these reforms will lead to further violence against vulnerable people in the criminal justice system and demand the government focus on reduction of the prison population.**

8 March: As part of international protests connected to the Women's Strike, a group of 50 trans activists and their allies have occupied the Ministry of Justice on International Women's Day to express grave concern about government plans to move trans women to men's prison estates and to open segregated wings for trans women at HMP Downview.

Provisions introduced after the Ministry of Justice Review in 2016 of 'the care and management of transgender offenders' are at risk of being reversed. Motivations for reversal are based on transphobic scapegoating of trans women for the violence of the prison system, whilst ignoring the violence to which trans women are subjected in custody.

Esther Olivestone, one of the women organising the action said: "Trans women are taking action today to oppose government plans to transfer incarcerated trans women to the male prison estates and to create a separate trans-only prison ward; a move that will be a death sentence for many. We stand against the prison system, and all the violence that it enacts and enables."

There is considerable evidence to suggest that trans women incarcerated in men's prison estates experience high levels of violence and death. In 2016, Jenny Swift took her own life in HMP Doncaster after being denied access to hormones. Vicki Thompson was twenty one when she killed herself in HMP Leeds in 2015.

Activists say that incarcerating trans women separately does not provide a solution, as much of the harm inmates experience is from the prison staff. There has been increasing transphobic media coverage that presents trans women as subhuman and who must be separated at all costs. Academic endorsement for these dangerous and violent proposals has come from the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies who have publicly endorsed the transphobic measures.

The action, backed by groups including Sister not Cis-ter, and Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee was held in solidarity with sisters and siblings around the world who are on strike to refuse the conditions of gendered existence, and to declare that no one of any gender can be free while notions of justice rely on incarceration, borders, and cages.

Helena Steal, a member of Community Action on Prison Expansion, a group who endorsed the action said: “We support this action because what the government is proposing amounts to state sanctioned murder. We know that creating segregated wings will only create more prison spaces that will be in the government’s interest to fill. This mirrors disturbing plans to expand the prison estate to hold 10,000 more inmates by 2020, including plans to build a non-binary prison in Scotland. We need to get rid of cages, not build more!”

-ENDS-

For more information:

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Notes to editors:

1. This action by a coalition of organisations and activists, trans folk and cis allies is endorsed by: Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee (IWOC), Sister not Cis-ter, Sisters Uncut, Bent Bars, Feminist Anti-fascist Assembly, Women’s Strike Assembly, Empty Cages Collective, Smash IPP, Community Action on Prison Expansion (CAPE), Class War, Women's Death Brigade.
2. Information about the Women’s Strike Assembly www.womenstrike.org.uk
3. If you would like to organise with us or are interested in learning more about prison abolition and the conditions of trans prisoners, contact us at nocages@protonmail.com
4. Other groups which organise around prison abolition are:
 - IWOC (Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee): iwoc@iww.org.uk
 - Bent Bars Project (Letter writing project for LGBT prisoners): bent.bars.project@gmail.com
 - CAPE (Community Action on Prison Expansion): info@cape-campaign.org
 - Books Beyond Bars (A group distributing reading materials to LGBT prisoners): <https://www.facebook.com/booksbeyondbarsuk/>
 - Empty Cages Collective (A group organising around prison abolition in the UK): info@prisonabolition.org
 - YCAP (Yorkshire Campaign Against Prisons): ycap@tutanota.com
 - Smash IPP (A group organising against unjust 'Imprisonment for Public Protection' sentences): info@smashipp.noflag.org.uk

