

# **Anti Toxic Prison Conference Plans Abolition Strategies & Rocks Carswell**

**Noise Demonstration at Prison Gate**

**Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons**

**2017**

From June 2 to 5, the second annual Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons (FTP) hosted its 2017 National Convergence in Denton, Texas, gathering over 200 activists and revolutionaries from across the country to explore the intersections of the environmental movement and the struggle to end mass incarceration.

The Convergence was held in Denton to be within striking distance of the Federal Medical Center (FMC) Carswell prison located in nearby Forth Worth and demand its closure.

Officially the site is designed to house female prisoners who have special health-related needs. Over 1,500 women and transgender prisoners are currently housed there. The facility is surrounded by toxic military Superfund sites from the base where it is co-located.

The Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons (FTP) is a collaborative project whose purpose is to develop a strategic framework for organizing against prisons that is rooted in environmental justice.

The project is dedicated to grassroots organizing, advocacy and direct action tactics that target especially toxic prison facilities which are putting prisoners at risk of dangerous environmental conditions, as well as impacting surrounding communities and ecosystems by their construction and operation.

Organizers and advocates from across the continent gathered to participate in workshops, some with as many as 75 attendees, plenary panel discussions and breakout conversations.

Throughout the weekend participants were also able to open lines of communication with prisoners through direct call-ins with them, letters written to be shared, prerecorded messages, and calls from support people who relayed messages on behalf of their friends or family.

Panels included sessions such as “Prisons, Health and the Environment: Mapping the Impact of Toxic Prisons and a Strategy to Shut them Down,” featuring the voices of Ramona Africa, David Pellow, Cherelle Blazer and Gabriel Piser, followed in the afternoon by “Organizing Behind Bars- Former Prisoners and the Family Members of Current Prisoners Tell Their Stories,” with stories from former George Jackson Brigade member Mark Cook, Leonard Peltier’s niece, and defense committee organizer Kari Ann Boushee, among others.

Delicious lunches, dinners, and day long snacks were prepared by the Seeds of Peace kitchen collective.

FTP was excited to help launch an international effort to demand the immediate closure of Carswell’s Administrative Unit, a unit similar to draconian Communication Management Units (CMU). The unit is used to isolate female and trans political prisoners as well as ones with serious mental health needs.

Prisoners and their loved ones have been documenting abuses in this prison for years with little to no response from the federal Bureau of Prisons which oversees it.

The Carswell Admin Unit currently holds prominent voices from the inside such as Ana Belen Montes, convicted as a Cuban spy, Aafia Siddiqui, framed on charges of attempting to murder GIs, and until his recent transfer into the general prison population, Green Scare victim, Marius Mason.

On June 5, convergence participants traveled to the Carswell prison armed with a mobile sound system, bull-horn, and enormous banners. See front page photo.

The demonstration created a loud disruption for guards and establish contact with prisoners across the razor wire fences with amplified chants of, "You are not forgotten, you are not alone, we will fight to bring you home!" Prisoners replied with waves and raised fists.

This is the second national convergence and the interest and enthusiasm shown has encouraged organizers to make the FTP National Convergence an annual event.

Help close Carswell by calling the US Department of Justice and telling them to immediately shut down the Carswell Admin Unit: Department of Justice Comment Line: 202—353-1555. DOJ Main Switchboard: 202—514-2000.

For more information, please check out [FightToxicPrisons.org](http://FightToxicPrisons.org).



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