

## STATEMENT AGAINST PRISON EXPANSION IN BRITAIN

***We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, call upon all levels of government to immediately stop all plans for prison expansion in Britain. We also call upon businesses, social agencies, community organizations, academics and financial institutions to refuse to support, endorse or assist with any plans for prison expansion in Britain.***

*We make this call in the context of a government that is currently embarking on a £3.2 - 4.7 billion prison-building spree, which will create 20,000 new prisoner spaces in Britain by 2014. This plan adds to the 23,000 new prison spaces already been built in Britain since 1997. We make this call also knowing that the British government is expanding immigration detention, with plans announced in May 2008 to create 1,300 – 1,500 new immigration detention spaces.*

*We make this call knowing that there is no clear evidence that more prisons or detention centres will make our communities safer. In fact, considerable research shows that more prisons will contribute to further harm and violence. We also make this call knowing that alternatives to prisons serve our communities much better in the long run.*

***We, [insert name here] make this call for the following reasons: [Individuals and groups insert reasons below:]***

### **Sample “MANY REASONS” Statement by CoRe**

We, Communities of Resistance, make this call for the following reasons:

The prison population in Britain has nearly doubled in the past 20 years, largely due to changes in sentencing policy. Although overall crime rates have not generally increased during that period, the number of people locked behind bars has risen dramatically. Prisons are increasingly used as warehouses for those who are poor and homeless, people with mental health issues, people of colour, migrants and people with disabilities. Among those in prison are approximately 3,000 children.

Britain is following prison expansion trends that are dangerously similar to that of the United States, which now locks up 1 in every 100 adults. Yet as made painfully clear in the US context, prisons do not reduce crime. Prisons have failed to protect our communities and have failed to stop violence, particularly against women, migrants, people of colour, queer and transgender people, people with disabilities, children and youth. As Dr Carol Hedderman, a former senior Home Office researcher, has stated: “Prison will never be an effective crime-control tool because the evidence clearly demonstrates that it actively creates or compounds the factors that contribute to offending.”

We do not need more prisons in Britain. We need real solutions and community-based responses that prioritize prevention and focus on root causes of harm.

For these reasons, we call for an immediate moratorium on prison expansion and demand a complete halt to current plans to build any new prisons and immigration detention centres in Britain.