

Solidarity in the Face of Isolation: Support Prisoners in Restricted Units

Marie is currently being held in a special restrictive unit at Carswell, which is similar but not quite as extreme as the Communications Management Units (CMUs) where other activists have been held. These restrictive units emerged in the post 9/11 era and primarily house muslim prisoners scapegoated as terrorists and radical activists -who have never hurt anyone- that have been deemed "domestic terrorists." The label of "terrorist" is applied to activists before they even enter a courtroom and, for those convicted, it follows them into the prison system and this is what happened to Marie. Little information is available about the secretive facilities and the prisoners housed there.

Marie is held in a unit with 16 other prisoners who are kept isolated from the general prison population and are on lockdown in their cells the vast majority of the time. There are also extra regulations on their communications with the outside world. The strategy of the state is to isolate these prisoners from all means of support and solidarity within and outside of prisons and the movements they are a part of, which is emotionally difficult for the prisoners and those who care about them and effectively removes them from the communities and struggles they were a part of. These prisoners are the ones the state wants us to forget, which is precisely why supporting them is so important. Mail from supporters is often their only form of communication with other human beings and the materials we send them to read are one of the few things they can use to pass the time. Please make the time to reach out to Marie and other prisoners while fighting state repression and the prison industrial complex in addition to carrying on the struggles they have sacrificed to support.



SUPPORT MARIE MASON

Fight The
GREEN SCARE



For more information and ways to help, please visit marie's support websites:

<http://supportmariemason.org/>

<http://freemarie.org/>

Marie Mason is a loving mother of two and a long-time activist in the environmental and labor movements. In March 2008, she was arrested by federal authorities for charges related to two acts of property destruction that occurred in 1999 and 2000; no one was injured in either of them. She accepted a plea bargain in September 2008 and was sentenced on February 5, 2009 to just under 22 years. This is the longest sentence to date for any "Green Scare" prisoner.

The "Green Scare" is the name given to the recent arrests of animal rights and environmental activists who have been charged with acts of economic sabotage. Federal authorities have sought outrageous sentences (often Life in prison) and have publicly and legally labeled the activists as "terrorists" – despite the fact that no one has been killed or injured in any of the acts.

SUPPORT MARIE MASON

FIGHT THE GREEN SCARE

Marie Mason is a 46 year old mother of two. She is an avid community gardener, a musician, a writer, an Earth First! organizer and a volunteer for a free herbal healthcare collective. She also was an extended care assistant at a small Cincinnati school when she was arrested on March 10, 2008 by federal agents. She has been charged with involvement with a December, 1999 arson at a Michigan State University genetics laboratory at Agriculture Hall and a January, 2000 arson of logging equipment in Mesick, Michigan. Both arsons were claimed by the Earth Liberation Front.



At her sentencing, Marie explained her actions by stating that

For more than twenty years, I participated in every legal avenue open to me as a private citizen to educate and persuade government officials and corporate representatives to reconsider policies. I have also participated in civil disobedience in the style taught by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, whose non-violent teachings I embraced. I believed that I was taking risks to prevent a greater harm to living beings.

I care deeply about my fellow human being and the other living creatures with whom we share this planet. I felt responsible to take extreme action in the hope that it would save lives and halt deadly practices that directly threatened living beings and contributed to the degradation of the environment.

What I was more and more aware of in my research and in my dealings with indigenous activists' work around the globe is that the use of GMO's forced on communities by collusion between banks, companies and governments was causing starvation, debt and environmental damage through contact with these GMO's. I felt so much grief for this needless suffering, these needless deaths.

I hope to protect my community and the Earth, to respond in defense of the living systems of animals, land and water. I tried to preserve the natural world from destruction because it is all of our home, because its health is necessary for all of use to live well.

Supporting Marie Mason does not necessarily mean agreeing with her acts. It does mean opposing the fear-mongering tactics of the federal government, and the outrageous sentences they have imposed.

Predictably, the media presented the action as an assault on scientific efforts to relieve famine in the so-called developing world. But, as the ELF communiqué plainly stated, MSU's research was funded by the US government and corporations like Monsanto, which then use their considerable power to force such crops on desperate nations. These nations often resist the importation of GE crops and seeds, given their significant risks to human health, cultural identity, biological diversity and ecological integrity.

A long-time environmental, animal rights and social justice organizer, Mason had previously experienced government repression when ELF actions occurred in her community. An easy target for the federal agents in their quest to criminalize dissent, Mason was an identifiable and outspoken critic of genetic engineering and destructive forestry practices.

It is important for the government to realize that when they push communities of resistance with Green Scare tactics that communities push back with solidarity and renewed efforts to make the change we want to see. By supporting our political prisoners, we encourage others to take their place in the struggle.

Please write to Marie - send her images, poems, letters, and news articles. (All mail is read by prison authorities, don't send anything that could have negative repercussions for Marie or yourself!)

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