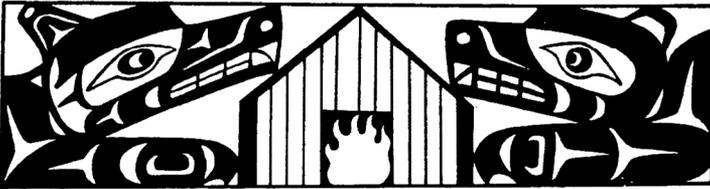


PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

LEARN *FROM THE* **PAST**



PREPARE *IN THE* **PRESENT**



TO DEFEND *THE* **FUTURE.**



CLASS ACTION! NEWS



ISSUE 22 - SUMMER 2021

< Editor's Note >

It is Summer & Issue #22 of 'Class Action News'. This magazine is by & for the 'Prisoner Class' in 'Settler Canada'.



In every Issue we provide a safe space for creative expression, informative news & support resources. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything of sincere value to share. Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please. Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best. Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation. Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 325 words max). For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous'.

'Class Action News' is published 4 times a year & is free for prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or an organization, please do consider a donation. It really does help to get this inside!

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Charles K & Anon !

Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

< Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment >

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which Prison Free Press operates is the Traditional Territory of the Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

≈ 'Dish With One Spoon' Treaty ≈

Power tends to corrupt,
and absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- Lord Acton

Ontario loses appeal of \$30M payment in Solitary Confinement Class Action ruling

A \$30-million class-action award against Ontario for its mistreatment of inmates in solitary confinement will stand, the Court of Appeal ruled on Wednesday.

In its decision, the court dismissed the province's challenge to an earlier finding that its system of administrative segregation was negligent and violated the prisoners' constitutional rights.

The court also rejected Ontario's arguments that it could not be held liable for what it described as a policy decision, and that legislation passed in 2019 made it immune to claims of negligence.

"Ontario cannot turn a blind eye to overwhelming evidence of the unconstitutionality of its actions," the Appeal Court said. "Damages for the charter breaches were an 'appropriate and just' remedy."

Administrative segregation in Ontario is used when inmates pose a safety risk to themselves or others, or have committed a serious breach of the rules. Evidence was that 43% of inmates placed in solitary had mental health alerts on file.

"Administrative segregation in Ontario consists of isolation in a small cell for 22 hours or more with no meaningful human contact," the court noted. "Evidence shows that the cells are often filthy and covered in bodily fluids."

Conrey Francis, an inmate with serious mental illness, launched the class action in 2017. Francis spent more than two years at the Toronto South Detention Centre before being acquitted of bank-robbery charges.

Francis was placed in isolation twice for refusing to take medication he said had nasty side-effects. Authorities decided doing so amounted to a "refusal to follow an order."

The solitary experience, the court said, was "excruciating," leaving Francis feeling "terrorized" and in a "state of delirium and shock." His mental health worsened to the point where he had suicidal thoughts and auditory hallucinations.

The class action was certified with Ontario's agreement in September 2018 and applied to situations between April 20, 2015, and September 18, 2018. The class comprised inmates with serious mental illness placed in

solitary as well as those left in segregation for at least 15 days.

In April 2020, Superior Court Justice Paul Perell awarded \$30 million in damages after finding segregation violated principles of fundamental justice. The province had been "systemically and routinely" negligent in running the solitary confinement regime, he ruled.

Solitary confinement, Perell noted, is widely known to cause serious mental harm, and its effects are grossly disproportionate to the purposes. As such, he ruled it to be cruel and unusual punishment.

The appellate court agreed with Perell, also rejecting Ontario's claim that it was immune from liability for what it characterized as policy decisions. Instead, the court said segregation could be characterized as "operational."

Ontario's interpretation of what constituted policy was too broad, the Appeal Court said. Adopting the province's approach would mean almost every government decision could be deemed policy, it said.

"To adopt Ontario's expansive meaning would require a conclusion either that the attorney general at the time did not understand the effect of the legislation being introduced, or that she misled the legislature as to its intention and effect," the Appeal Court said.

Lawyer James Sayce, who acted for Francis, said the court had made an important ruling in terms of immunity from liability.

"Government negligence has been an important part of Canada's legal landscape for decades," Sayce said. "This decision shows that it cannot be so easily legislated away."

The Francis lawsuit was similar to other successful ones that ultimately forced the federal government to change its practices regarding administrative segregation.

Ontario's ombudsman has also slammed the province's use of solitary, particularly with regard to those inmates who are mentally ill.

The Appeal Court ordered Ontario to pay \$50,000 in legal costs.

Colin Perkel

The Canadian Press

Mar 31, 2021

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office.

- Aesop

Federal prison service eavesdropped on inmate calls with lawyers

Federal prison staff intercepted conversations between an inmate and their lawyer without approval in 10% of cases reviewed, amounting to possible breaches of solicitor-client privilege, an internal audit reveals.

The newly released Correctional Service of Canada audit also discovered that a lack of guidance and training led to other “significant compliance issues,” including failure to support or document grounds for snooping on prisoners’ communications.

In addition, there were insufficient safeguards to ensure legal and policy obligations were met with respect to later notifying inmates that their communications had been intercepted.

The audit says the issues went largely undetected due to poor quality assurance and a lack of monitoring and reporting.

The prison service has legal authority in many instances to intercept inmate communications - including letters, telephone calls and conversations during the course of a visit - without receiving prior authorization from a court.

It says lawful monitoring of inmate communications is sometimes necessary in order to maintain the safety and security of prisons.

The auditors stress that given the implications for an inmate’s privacy, it is essential the prison service have an effective framework in place to ensure interceptions respect the law.

“We found that several of the key activities associated with the communication intercept process were not always compliant with requirements,” the April 2021 audit report says.

The Correctional Service agreed with the audit findings and recommendations and prepared a detailed plan to address the various issues. The plan is slated for full implementation by the end of this month.

The reviewers visited federal institutions in different parts of the country, interviewed staff and examined samples of intercepted communications. The first phase focused on intercepts that were approved and completed from Jan. 1, 2017, to June 22, 2018. A second phase looked at ones between Nov. 1, 2018, and April 12, 2019.

Prison officials are not permitted to intercept privileged communications unless specific legal

requirements are met. Privileged communications include correspondence and conversations between inmates and legal counsel, the correctional investigator, various elected politicians, consular officials, the federal human rights commission, and the information and privacy commissioners.

In the first phase of the audit, telephone communication between an inmate and their lawyer “was intercepted without approval” in eight of 79 files reviewed, just over 10 per cent, “resulting in a potential breach of solicitor-client privilege.”

The auditors suggest problems stemmed in part from confusion over the need to ensure lawyers’ phone numbers were excluded from lists related to potential intercepts.

The second-phase review of such phone intercepts demonstrated “a slight improvement,” but again highlighted a need to implement quality-assurance processes, the audit says.

John Struthers, president of the Criminal Lawyers’ Association, called the prison service’s unauthorized interceptions involving legal counsel systemic abuse of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

“Anybody who countenanced this, knew about it, permitted it or encouraged it should be removed from their position immediately,” said Struthers, whose organization has 1,700 members and serves as a voice for criminal justice and civil liberties.

“It is critically important that people who are charged with crimes have the right to retain and instruct counsel without delay, in privacy.”

The Correctional Service of Canada said it is committed to ensuring the privacy of offenders in compliance with laws, policies and guidelines.

Any breach of an inmate’s personal information is subject to reporting under the prison service’s guidelines for privacy breaches, said spokeswoman Marie Pier Lecuyer.

“As part of this process, CSC has communicated with offenders who were identified to explain any breach of their personal information and inform them of their right to file a complaint.”

Jim Bronskill

The Canadian Press

Jun 03, 2021

An unjust law is no law at all.

- Saint Augustine

Review of federal prison isolation units ‘Not Adequate’

A study has found shortcomings with the process intended to serve as a check on new units for isolating federal prisoners from the general jail population.

In response to criticism of solitary confinement, the government ushered in “structured intervention units” for inmates requiring isolation to allow better access to programming and mental-health care.

Prisoners transferred to the units are supposed to be allowed out of their cells for four hours each day, with two of those hours engaged in “meaningful human contact.”

According to the Correctional Service, personnel known as independent external decision makers review inmate cases on an ongoing basis, and provide binding recommendations related to their conditions and length of confinement.

However, a new study by academic experts says the reviews are “not adequate,” and it points to a lack of information about the nature of the information used by the decision makers, the logic behind their findings and the timing of the implementation of their decisions.

The study, made public Monday, was prepared by criminologists Anthony Doob and Jane Sprott and law professor Adelina Iftene using data provided by the Correctional Service.

The prison service said it was reviewing the report.

“We continue to work hard to help inmates take advantage of the opportunities for time out of cell and meaningfully engage in diverse activities and programs, especially during the pandemic,” said spokeswoman Isabelle Robitaille.

As of this week there were 188 inmates in a structured intervention unit at federal prison facilities across Canada, representing about 1.5 per cent of the inmate population, she said.

An earlier report by Doob and Sprott, released in February, said 28 per cent of the stays in the units could be described, given international standards, as solitary confinement and 10 per cent could be considered to be torture.

The latest study examined data dealing with decision makers’ reviews of the length of a unit stay.

It found cases were often referred to decision makers within 67 days. However, there were

105 cases in which the person stayed in a unit for at least 76 days with no record of the case ever being sent to a decision maker.

The study also found:

— Although the decision maker may have “independent” authority to decide that someone should be released from a unit, the prison service can arrange the timing of that release to meet its own needs;

— Black prisoners’ stays in units were longer than the stays of other groups;

— The review process did not help remove those with mental-health issues more quickly.

The study concluded that the decision makers’ reviews “as they currently exist are not adequate.”

“Without access to considerably more information about the manner in which these reviews are carried out, it is difficult for us to know whether this system of oversight can be made adequate,” the authors wrote.

“Most disturbing to us, however, is not the fact that we were not able to examine in detail how the (decision makers’) process actually works, but that nobody seems to be doing this.”

Based on the new findings and previous analysis of data about the units, “it is clear that change is desperately needed,” the study said.

“Our findings also point to the importance of there being an oversight body that can look systematically not only at the kind of data that we, as volunteers, have been looking at, but also at other more detailed data related to the operation of the (units) and the practice of solitary confinement.”

Robitaille said the prison service is working with stakeholders and values their feedback on ongoing enhancements to the new model.

“While there is more work to do, we remain strongly committed to the successful implementation of SIUs as we work to safely and successfully rehabilitate offenders.”

Jim Bronskill

The Canadian Press

May 10, 2021

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

- Confucius

Ontario never delivered on promise of free GPS ankle bracelets to help lower pandemic jail population

Dozens of people across Ontario ordered released by the courts remain jailed because the province has failed to make good on promises to provide free electronic monitoring, says John Struthers, the president of the Criminal Lawyers Association.

A year ago, during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, government officials promised up to 90 ankle bracelets for individuals in custody in an effort to depopulate provincial jails.

In addition, officials offered assurances that the Ministry of the Solicitor General ministry was working to finalize the purchase of 2,000 ankle bracelets equipped with GPS technology. No public announcement was made. But the government's commitment came during behind-the-scenes discussions with representatives from the legal profession, sources say.

Correctional facilities were flagged early on as places where COVID-19 transmission could potentially run rampant if action wasn't taken. A year later, more than 1,000 people have tested positive in Ontario correctional facilities and outbreaks continue, though vaccination programs are underway.

Twelve months later, fewer than 10% of the promised ankle bracelets have been produced, said Struthers, a Toronto defence lawyer.

There are currently dozens of people eligible for release but unable to leave custody because they're on a waiting list for ankle monitors.

"This is costing the people of Ontario a fortune and creates potential civil liability. It has become ridiculous," his email stated.

Electronic monitoring is much cheaper than incarceration, particularly "in a pandemic, with variants," Struthers said.

He added: "There is growing concern that release is contrary to the current political will. The administration of the courts should be independent and objective."

Electronic monitoring bracelets continue to be available as a condition of release on bail to people who can afford to pay the cost of about \$600 a month, or about \$400 a month for those on Legal Aid.

Spokesperson Andrew Morrison confirmed Thursday that the Ministry of the Solicitor

General initially allotted 90 monitoring units for accused people in custody as an "emergency measure" to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The ministry has experienced increased waiting times to secure additional monitoring devices, he wrote in email.

"In response, the ministry has ordered additional monitoring bracelets from the supplier. The ministry is committed to ensuring that electronic monitoring continues to be available as a potential condition for release when ordered by the court."

The lack of free bracelets for those who can't afford the private option hurts more than just those people on the wait-list, said Cassandra DeMelo, a London, Ont., defence lawyer and women's vice-president of the CLA.

"This failure is also directly contributing to further spread in our community, as outbreaks continue to be declared in almost every single jail across the province," she said.

In early March, a justice of the peace ordered her client released from the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre yet he remains there on the waiting list for an the ankle bracelet. Meanwhile, the facility is in the midst of yet another outbreak, which is forcing the diversion of new arrests to Maplehurst Correctional Complex, just west of Toronto.

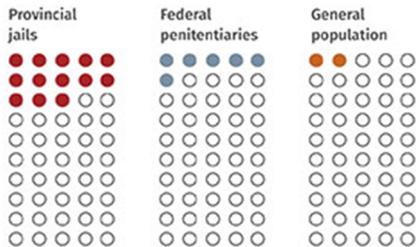
"Jail populations are an easy target for the government to renege on promises," DeMelo said. "We, as citizens, cannot accept this kind of disregard for human life. It is allowing factually innocent persons to sit and languish in jail with COVID literally at their door, while they could otherwise be safely at home with an ankle bracelet."

Jessica Sickinger, a criminal lawyer based in Newmarket, has a client who was placed on the waiting list at the time of her bail hearing. The judge is expected to decide whether to release her next week but even if she's let out, "her release would be delayed for a lengthy period of time as she is 22nd on the waiting list for an ankle monitor."

Betsy Powell
The Star
Apr 8, 2021

Your brain has a mind of its own.
- Kathryn Barrett

COVID infection rates in Canada's jails higher than in general population



CBC NEWS

Source: Data provided to CBC News by provincial and territorial corrections departments in May-June 2021

This Isn't Living

*The criminal lifestyle I chose to live
Is no way to describe it
'Cause sitting here in prison
I just exist
Beyond these chain-link fences
Topped with razor wire
People are living their lives
Going home every night
To loving husbands & wives
While I lay awake at night
'Cause another bad dream
Shook me outta my sleep
And there is no one here to comfort me
'Cause in prison you're all alone
Left to quietly weep*

- P Dowdell



Angry Beasts

*The life I live is with no regrets & very few fears
I have society to thank for these values I
adhered
With no support from a system
That claims cons need family ties
To help strengthen their fragile minds
This is far from the truth
They just give us empty hope & continuous lies
Which pushes us deeper into darkness & harder
to find
Once you're within these walls topped with
razor wire
You're assigned a Case Management Team
Who are nothing more than professional paid
liars
So when the day comes
When the majority of us are released
This should give you an idea
Why we leave like angry beasts.*

- P Dowdell



*Love is contraband in Hell,
'cause love is an acid
that eats away bars.*
- Assata Shakur

*The general population doesn't know what's
happening,
and it doesn't even know that it doesn't
know.*
- Noam Chomsky

Indigenous women, transgender and Two-Spirit people need support when leaving prison

We're all aware of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our health and wellness - but why isn't more attention being paid to the relationship between COVID-19 and the criminal justice system, specifically how it's impacting Indigenous women, transgender and Two-Spirit people.

The start of the pandemic came with the release of more than 2,300 people from jails across Ontario. Since then, numerous front-line workers and community organizations have called upon the Ontario government to ensure that the people being released have coordinated plans and supports in place.

Unfortunately, the government continues to neglect those calls, inadvertently placing all released inmates at risk of COVID-19 infection, exploitation and even death.

Kevin Walby, an associate professor of criminal justice at the University of Winnipeg, said it's like the provincial government just "gave up" when it comes to protecting the health of inmates and the broader population.

A failure to follow through

We have witnessed how the Ontario government has failed to follow through on their promises to end violence against Indigenous people.

As a doctoral student who has volunteered with women and youth in and out of prisons, and an Anishinaabe midwife and assistant professor, we have heard first-hand how dire this crisis is. Staff at Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society have told us that they've waited more than eight hours for women scheduled to be released from the Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ont., and that some were released as late as 10:30 p.m. with no access to transportation or accommodation.

The 2019 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) highlighted how Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people leaving prison can become entrapped in a cycle of incarceration. They are often victimized by traffickers who use the prison system to target, lure and exploit those who don't have access to housing or transportation.

Despite the province's 2020 commitment to respond to the national inquiry's Calls for Justice, it continues to release Indigenous women into precarious situations without resources for a safe passage to their families or communities.

To release anyone, particularly Indigenous women, transgender, and Two-Spirit individuals this way is irresponsible, dangerous and does not demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation.

Doing nothing has consequences

One tragic example of the consequences of these systemic failures is the death of Kimberly Squirrel. On Jan. 23, 2021, Squirrel was found frozen to death in Saskatoon just three days after being released from a provincial correctional facility; no one in her family was notified of her release and her death was entirely preventable.

Indigenous transgender and Two-Spirit people have long experienced sexist, transphobic and racist discrimination at the hands of the Canadian prison system. The disproportionate social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transgender and Two-Spirit communities further highlights the importance of providing supports upon release.

It is only a matter of time before someone else is harmed - or even killed - as a direct result of the provincial government's inefficiency and disregard for implementing appropriate measures for the safe release of Indigenous women, transgender and Two-Spirit people.

Enough is enough

The urgency of these issues is further underscored by COVID-19 and its disproportionate impact on Indigenous communities. Without re-entry plans, adequate safety measures and communication in place, individuals are released into precarious circumstances. Without access to accommodation or transportation, they may be unable to safely self-isolate to prevent the spread of the virus.

In an open letter to the Ministry of the Solicitor General, we - as part of a collective of community members, Elders, Healers, front-line workers, researchers, educators and students who advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian criminal justice system - have called upon the Ontario government to:

1. Develop and release re-entry plans for all inmates, including provisions for adequate financial and transitional supports.

2. Publicly release current policies and measures in place for the safe release of all - including Indigenous women, transgender and Two-Spirit people.
3. Publicly release COVID-19 safety measures for individuals prior to and upon release from correctional institutions.

Against the advice of public health experts and advocates, Ontario continues to incarcerate people at an alarming rate. Provincial and federal governments must be held accountable for the harms that their inaction and blatant maleficence has caused.

Indigenous women, transgender and Two-Spirit people deserve to be treated with respect - both inside and outside of prison.

We offer our most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Kimberly Squirrel.

Tenzin Butsang, Karen Lawford

The Conversation

April 5, 2021

Advocacy group sets up GoFundMe page to help female inmates at Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Sask.

An inmate advocacy group has set up a GoFundMe page to support inmates at the Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert, Sask. Inmates For Humane Conditions is raising money to help Pine Grove inmates buy phone packages so they can connect with family, items like vitamins and hygiene products, and transportation upon release.

"Donations will also be used to help inmates who are in need of a means of transportation home to prevent another tragic loss such as Kimberly Squirrel," the GoFundMe page said.

Last month, 34-year-old Squirrel's frozen body was found in Saskatoon just days after she was released from Pine Grove, the province's only correctional facility for adult women.

Cory Cardinal, an inmate at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre and a vocal advocate for prisoner rights, is the founder of Inmates For Humane Conditions. It is a group of inmates advocating for better conditions inside Saskatchewan correctional centres.

Cardinal said he is currently on a hunger strike because of the conditions inmates face at Pine Grove.

Cardinal said there is an overuse of segregation and phone sanctions at the prison, a lack of programming, and a lack of pre- and post-release support.

He said inmates have limited access to services and aren't given access to a phone to set things up prior to getting out.

"They're being failed by the system," Cardinal said.

Prisoner advocate Sherri Maier helped put the GoFundMe together on behalf of Cardinal.

Maier said some women at Pine Grove have also started a hunger strike in solidarity with Cardinal.

She said with only one prison for women, some of these inmates have to travel long distances to get home and some don't have anyone to help them.

"There is no way for them to get home and Cardinal doesn't want to see another incident like [Squirrel's death] happen," she said.

"Some girls will get out on a Saturday or Sunday and they'll ask to get out on Friday because there is nothing open on a Saturday or Sunday to get a bank account or try and get social assistance or anything like that," she said.

She said these requests are usually denied.

"Even in the middle of winter some of them are released into the freezing cold," she said.

Maier said funds raised can also be used by male inmates in the province for things like phone cards.

As of June the GoFundMe campaign has raised \$5,380 of the \$5,000 goal.

Scott Larson

CBC News

Feb 26, 2021

The Heart of the World

Here I am,

Locked in my own shadow

For more than twenty years,

And yet

I have reached my hand

Through stone and steel and razor wire

And touched the heart of the world

Mitakuye Oyasin, my Lakota brethren say.

We are all related.

We are One.

- Leonard Peltier

Canada locks up Black immigrants, asylum seekers longer than other detainees

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International say Canada detains thousands of asylum seekers every year in often abusive conditions where people of colour appear to be held for longer periods.

The two leading human rights organizations documented in a joint report how people in immigration detention, including those fleeing persecution and seeking protection in Canada, are regularly handcuffed, shackled and held with little to no contact with the outside world.

The secretary general of Amnesty International Canada said the country's abusive immigration detention system is in stark contrast to the rich diversity and the values of equality and justice that Canada is known for.

There should be no place in Canada for racism, cruelty and human rights violations against people coming to this country seeking safety and a better life, said Ketty Niyabandi.

On its website, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) said that individuals may be detained for a number of reasons, including if they have criminal convictions, if they lack "ties to the community," or if they may be a danger to the public or the security of Canada.

It said a national immigration detention framework introduced in 2016, with a five-year investment of \$138 million, created a "better, fairer" system that supports the "humane and dignified treatment of individuals while protecting public safety."

Groups call on Canada to phase out its system

Niyabandi said Canada should sign and ratify the United Nations' Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture to further prevent violations and open detention sites for international inspection.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are calling on the Canadian authorities to gradually end immigration detention in Canada, she added.

The 100-page report said people can be held for months or years on immigration-related grounds. Detainees who are from communities of colour, particularly Black detainees, appear to be held for longer periods, often in provincial jails.

The report said Canada locked up 8,825 people between the ages of 15 and 83, including 1,932 in provincial jails, between April 2019 and March 2020.

During the same period, 136 children were put in detention to avoid separating them from their detained parents, including 73 children under age six.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International found that Canada has held more than 300 immigration detainees for longer than a year since 2016.

'I felt like a dog'

The report includes 90 interviews with former immigration detainees and their relatives, mental health experts, academics, lawyers, civil society representatives and government officials. The names of most of the detainees were withheld to protect them from reprisals by immigration authorities, the report said.

"I didn't feel like a human in there: I felt like a dog. The guards would just open the latch to feed me," said one former detainee, who was held in an Ontario jail in 2020.

"When we mixed with Canadian inmates in jail, they asked us why we are there. They thought we were Taliban. We explained that we are fleeing the Taliban," said another former detainee, who was held in a Nova Scotia jail after coming to Canada in 2017. "I chose Canada because I thought it was welcoming to refugees. I thought Canada was better than this."

The two organizations' researchers also reviewed relevant reports, UN documents, and unpublished government documents obtained through 112 access-to-information requests.

Many asylum seekers are held in provincial jails with the regular jail population and are often subjected to solitary confinement, the report said, and those with psychosocial disabilities or mental health conditions experience discrimination.

Samer Muscati, associate disability rights director at Human Rights Watch, said Canada is one of the few countries in the global north where people seeking safety risk being locked up indefinitely.

Muscati said immigration authorities discriminate against people with disabilities by making the conditions of their detention harsher

and the terms of their release more onerous than for many other detainees.

The two organizations found that many immigration detainees develop suicidal thoughts as they begin to lose hope that they will be released, and those fleeing traumatic experiences and persecution are particularly affected.

They said many former immigration detainees continue to live with the effects of psychosocial disabilities they developed during incarceration months and even years after their release.

The CBSA remains the only major law enforcement agency in Canada without independent civilian oversight, which repeatedly resulted in serious human rights violations in the context of immigration detention, the advocacy groups said.

COVID-19 presents 'a real opportunity'

"Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Canadian authorities have released immigration detainees at unprecedented rates," Muscati said.

"Instead of returning to business as usual as the pandemic comes under control in Canada, the government has a real opportunity to overhaul its immigration and refugee protection system to prioritize mental health and human rights."

With files from CBC's Emma Paling

The Canadian Press

Jun 17, 2021

B.C. ombudsperson labels youth confinement in jail 'unsafe,' calls for changes

A three-year investigation by British Columbia's ombudsperson concludes the provincial government's practice of placing jailed youth in solitary confinement is "unjust and unsafe."

Jay Chalke, whose office investigates complaints against provincial and local authorities, says in a release that the confinement also disproportionately impacts Indigenous youth. Chalke says B.C.'s laws should be changed to boost oversight abilities and to set a maximum of 22 hours that the youth, aged 12 from to 17, can be placed in solitary.

B.C. has two youth custody centres in Prince George and Burnaby, and the study found the average duration of confinement increased over

a three-year period, including in one case when a youth spent 78 out of 81 days in solitary.

The report makes 26 recommendations, ranging from amending B.C.'s Youth Justice Act to providing better care for prisoners with mental health issues.

In response to the report, Children and Family Development Minister Mitzi Dean says B.C. is developing a framework to improve and modernize its youth justice system.

Dean says the ministry accepts the "spirit and intent of the recommendations" and will incorporate them into its youth justice framework.

"Both the child welfare system and the justice system are overly involved in the lives of Indigenous people, children and families. It is part of the damaging colonial legacy that continues to this day - and as part of our commitment to reconciliation, we need to address it head on," she says in a statement.

Chalke says he's encouraged that the ministry has accepted the recommendations but the lack of urgency by government is concerning.

"It is time to give these issues - and these young people - the priority they need," Chalke said in a statement.

Despite a drop in the number of youths being placed into the province's two detention centres from 2017 to 2019, the report notes the duration of isolation rose and Indigenous youth accounted for more than half of the solitary confinement incidents.

"These practices of isolation can create a self-reinforcing cycle in which the harmful effects of isolation make it harder for a person to be in a non-isolated environment, and so isolation is more likely to continue," the report says.

[Alone: The Prolonged and Repeated Isolation of Youth in Custody](#)

The Canadian Press

Jun 15, 2021

The full-bellied child says to the hungry child, "Keep good cheer."

- Herbert Agar

We're all imperfect, and life is simply a perpetual, unending struggle against those imperfections.

- Sidney Poitier

Jail Accountability and Information Line (JAIL) for prisoners in OCDC

The Jail Accountability and Information Line takes calls from prisoners and their loved ones from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Mon to Wed. This line tracks issues experienced by people incarcerated at the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre.

☎ 613-567-JAIL (5245) ☎

Jail Hotline for MCC, TSDC & VCW

The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) is launching the Toronto South Detention Centre, Vanier Centre for Women and Maplehurst Correctional Complex Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday
9-11am & 2-4pm - 416-755-9329**

Why a Jail Hotline?

Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.

Who Should Call This Hotline?

Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.

If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

☎ 416-755-9329 ☎

- Inmate's Voice -

This is a new call-in system for prisoners to have their phone messages automatically uploaded to be listened to by anyone.

☎ 647-288-1300 ☎

This service enables prisoners in Canada to have their voices heard about the injustices they face in prisons/ jails.

Prisoners can leave a recording by calling our complaint line. Those recordings will be uploaded to our website and opened up for discussion publicly.

They are also emailed to several advocates such as the Ombudsman, Ministry of Attorney General, Sylvia Jones and many other local, national, and international media organisations after they are reviewed.

www.InmatesVoice.org

Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners

For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.

Funds will be used to help inmates purchase call packages to keep them connected to their family, help out with canteen for necessary things & for transportation home. Maintained by prisoner advocacy groups Beyond Prison Walls Canada and Inmates for Humane Conditions.

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

We need to do more than just what is right. We need to join together and right what is wrong.

- Leonard Peltier

Nobody is going to pour truth into your brain.

It's something you have to find out for yourself.

- Noam Chomsky

The genius of our ruling class is that it has kept a majority of the people from ever questioning the inequity of a system where most people drudge along, paying heavy taxes for which they get nothing in return.

- Gore Vidal

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

HEP C = 18-30% in prison
HIV = 1-5% in prison

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs, ...
... well, anything in contact
with blood !!!

BLEACH DOES NOT KILL HEP C

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.



Nov 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.

☞ Respect ☞

Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:

General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869 (It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration in Canada
- Over 5000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increases with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress/ trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

K.I.P.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, K.I.P. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at:

info.kipcanada@gmail.com

or by phone at: 416-505-5333



PRISON RADIO

- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Halifax - CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour - Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! - Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM
CPR: Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm
Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Vancouver - CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm

CPR: This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio & Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

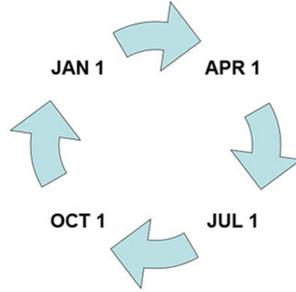
Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University,
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6*

*Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or
music request to be broadcast on-air.*

☞ Prisoners Justice Day is Aug 10 ☞

- CLASS ACTION! NEWS -



- MAILOUT DATES -

☞ Issue #22 - Summer 2021 ☞

Class Action News
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

download, print, contact:
www.ClassActionNews.org

Next Issue: #23 - Fall 2021
Deadline: Sep 1, 2021
Mail-out: Oct 1, 2021

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that needs gettin' out?

... Hmm ... ?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

