

CLASS ACTION NEWS



ISSUE #27 / FALL 2022

< Editor's Note >

It is Fall & Issue #27 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' unless requested.

'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, really does help to get this inside!

Editor: Tomja
Publication: Class Action News
Publisher: PrisonFreePress.org
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6
Email: info@ClassActionNews.org

Circulation: 325+
Recirculation: ????

All original artwork, poems & writings are the sole/ soul property of the artist & author.

Fair Dealing & the Canadian Copyright Act Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2:
"Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

< Contents >

News 3-11
Health & Harm Reduction 12
Resources 13-16

< Artists in this Issue >

Cover: Joaquin Arostegui



< Donors for this Issue >

Very special thanks to:
You !

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 ~

All governments lie.
- I.F. Stone

It must surely be a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit that even a small number of those men and women in the hell of the prison system survive it and hold on to their humanity.
- Howard Zinn

Prisons insist ...

... inmates pay 2022 prices using 1980 dollars! But prisons don't teach magic. Too bad.

The minimum wage across Canada in 1980 was just over \$3.00/hour. To give some perspective, as recorded here back in December of 2018, a sampling of 1980 prices listed milk at less than \$2/gallon, bread 50c/loaf, bacon \$1.75/pd, flour \$1.00/5pds, ground beef \$1.00/pd, peanut butter \$1.50/jar, potatoes \$1.00/5pds, pork and beans 40c/can. To add another context, a downtown apartment in major cities rented for about \$250/month.

At that time, a parliamentary committee established a pay-scale for federal prisoners based on the minimum wage, reduced by allowances for room and board, and other relevant expenses. Those 'relevant expenses' have risen and fallen over the years, depending on the political party in power in Ottawa at any given point, and adjustments in prison industry policy. For example, Correctional Service of Canada suspended the room and board charge for a period during the COVID pandemic to allow inmates to maintain family ties when no in-person visits were permitted.

Why is money given to federal inmates? The Act under which the federal prison industry operates says it's to encourage participation in institutional programs and social reintegration, but it's not a compensation for work, as that would lead to 'slave labour' accusations. Correctional Service of Canada will say that the money is to help inmates save for their release, help support family, pay for phone calls, supplement diets through canteen purchases, buy toiletries, clothing, tv's, radios, games or whatever the CSC catalog offers.

There's never been an increase in the pay-scale, Federal Conservative governments even made cuts at one point, and other factors have adjusted the figures over time. Basically, an inmate who has no job (there are few available, given the number of potential applicants) and is not involved in programming may end up with about \$4 every two weeks. Another inmate could qualify for 'welfare pay' at about \$16/two weeks, others in programs or with jobs can see around \$44/two weeks. There are very few inmates at A-level pay, just over \$60/two weeks. Inmates have a \$850 annual spending ceiling, although money applied to phone cards is not

subject to limits. Families/friends can and do send money to the incarcerated, but that doesn't change what can be done with it. No matter, the prices for whatever can be purchased is at market, the same or like what is available in the community. So, what is this about saving money, supporting families, or buying canteen, toiletries, and clothing? Any wonder there is a thriving black market in our federal institutions?

More on money, the assessed value of an inmate's 'cell effects' is capped at \$1500. From a pair of socks to shoes to a desk lamp to a tv, the total can't exceed that number. The \$1500 limit has been in place for at least the last 30 years, and possibly longer. Again, \$1500 bought a lot more in 1990 than it does in 2022. What will it buy in 2032?

There is no arguing that a prison sentence imposes many restrictions, and limits on the use of money are necessarily a part of it. But, when an inmate understands that their finances are restricted by policies that haven't changed or been updated in more than a generation, how can CSC claim it's meeting a rehabilitative and correctional mandate?

Charles Klassen

turnoverarocktoday.com

Jul 31, 2022

Q. What's the difference between a prisoner of war and a homeless person?



A. Under the Geneva Convention, a prisoner of war is entitled to food, shelter and medical care.

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

Prisons are failing to comply with solitary confinement reforms

Prisons are badly failing to comply with solitary confinement laws and regularly violating inmate' rights, a new report by a group of Canadian senators says.

The Liberal government signalled that Bill C-83, passed in 2019, would put an end to the practice of solitary confinement.

But a report released Tuesday evening by a group of nine senators, which they cheekily titled "Senators go to jail," raises alarm bells about continued widespread use of the practice.

Parliamentarians have a legal right to access federal penitentiaries to view the conditions for themselves, and 34 senators have visited such facilities since the bill's passage.

Prisoners told them they were not given meaningful human contact, time outside their isolation cells or access to mental health services, the report says, with some spending prolonged periods in some form of segregation. In some cases, living conditions were dire, with senators observing at one women's facility leaking roofs, mould and a prison cell where dried feces had not been cleaned from a wall.

Their observations echo similarly alarming findings from the Senate human rights committee, the auditor general and the correctional investigator.

"This report is one of too many that chronicles the lack of oversight and the lack of adherence to the law," said Sen. Kim Pate, who is affiliated with the Independent Senators Group. "Something significant has to change."

The senators are pushing for the passage of Pate's private bill, Bill S-230, which she says would address some of the oversight issues that have allowed problems to persist.

For one thing, it would require corrections facilities to go through a court process if they wanted to isolate a prisoner for more than 48 hours.

The bill would also amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to mandate that prisoners being isolated due to mental health issues be transferred to hospitals instead.

The same amendments were rejected by the Liberal government in June 2019.

The office of Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino, who oversees the Correctional

Service of Canada, has not yet responded to a request for comment.

The Canadian Press
Jun 15, 2022

Auditor-General report finds Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer

The Auditor-General released findings on Tuesday about systemic barriers at the Correctional Service of Canada, including that a majority of offenders were released on parole before the end of their sentences, but Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer and at higher levels of security.

The audit was released as part of a batch of spring reports from the office of Parliament and looked whether the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) programs address the diversity of the population in prison to provide a successful and safe return to the community.

Its main findings include the CSC has failed to address and eliminate the systemic barriers that persistently disadvantaged certain groups of offenders in custody identified in previous audits. It also said the CSC failed to develop a plan for its workforce to better reflect the diversity of the offender population.

"As a result, Indigenous and Black offenders faced greater barriers to a safe and gradual reintegration into society than other incarcerated groups," the report said.

The Auditor-General's report is taking place while experts and advocates closely scrutinize the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the federal correctional system. In its findings, the watchdog found that the problem has deepened, with Indigenous people making up an estimated 4% of the adult population yet accounting for 27% of federal offenders at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The report also said Indigenous women made up 43% of women serving federal sentences in custody were the fastest-growing population in the federal correctional system. Last month, Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger said that Indigenous women now account for 50% of the female population in federal penitentiaries, which he called "shocking and shameful."

The Auditor-General's Tuesday report said that the overrepresentation of Indigenous men and

women at higher levels of security is a “long-standing issue” and it made similar observations in a 2016 review.

The office’s findings also follow a Globe investigation from 2020 that showed CSC’s risk assessment tools - standardized tests designed to measure a prisoner’s risk to public safety and odds of reoffending known as the Custody Rating Scale - were systemically biased against Black men, Indigenous men and Indigenous women. In the wake of the report, the House of Commons public safety committee announced a study into systemic bias in prison risk scores, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed to do more to address systemic inequities in prison. Last year, a proposed class-action lawsuit over risk scores was filed against the federal government on behalf of tens of thousands of prisoners.

The watchdog’s report found disparities are present from the moment offenders enter federal institutions. For example, it said that the process for assigning security classifications - including the use of the Custody Rating Scale, as well as frequent overrides of the scale by corrections staff - results in disproportionately high numbers of Indigenous and Black offenders being placed in maximum-security institutions. The reliability of the Custody Rating Scale has not been validated since 2012 and its use had never been validated for Black offenders specifically, the report added.

“While the majority of offenders were released on parole before the end of their sentences, Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer and at higher levels of security before release,” the report said.

“We also found that Indigenous offenders were more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to have their initial security placement increased to a higher level through overrides of the Custody Rating Scale’s results,” the report said. “As well, we found fewer overrides down to minimum security for Indigenous offenders than for non-Indigenous offenders.”

Among its recommendations, which the CSC has accepted, the Auditor-General’s office said the CSC should improve the initial security classification process for offenders by conducting a review with external experts of the Custody Rating Scale and its use in decision making. It said this should be done in particular for women, Indigenous, and Black offenders.

It also said the CSC should identify and act to address root causes contributing to delays in the preparation of offenders – particularly Indigenous offenders - for release. CSC should also improve the “timely completion of reassessments of offenders’ security levels, to facilitate their safe transitions into the community”, the report said.

The Auditor-General also said in a separate report released Tuesday that despite Veterans Affairs Canada’s efforts to improve wait times for disability benefits applications, former military and RCMP members still waited too long to receive compensation for injuries sustained during their service to Canada.

Veterans Affairs has a service standard for processing disability benefits applications within 16 weeks, in 80% of cases. The report found that the department has not met that service standard for seven years. It said veterans applying for disability benefits for the first time waited a median of 39 weeks for a decision, while applications from women, francophones and RCMP veterans took even longer.

The audit found that Veterans Affairs’ data on how it processes disability benefits applications was poor and, as a result, the department didn’t know if its efforts to speed up processing worked. It recommended the department address weaknesses in its data collection so it can better monitor the disability benefits program and improve efficiency. It also called on the department to create a long-term resourcing plan so it has enough staff to process the backlog of applications.

The findings were similar to those reported in a 2014 Auditor-General report on mental health services for veterans, which found that in a one-year period, 75% of decisions on initial applications for mental health conditions were processed within the service standard of 16 weeks.

Kristy Kirkup, Tom Cardoso,
Michelle Carbert, Patrick White
Globe and Mail
May 31, 2022

When we remember we are all mad,
the mysteries disappear and life stands
explained.

- Mark Twain

Canada's criminal justice system is racist.
We need more than apologies to fix it

In June, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) turned a news story about its racism into a media spectacle around an apology.

The TPS data confirmed that the Toronto police are more likely to use force on Black people, more likely to search Black people, and more likely to point a firearm at a Black person, even when that Black person is not perceived to be in possession of any weapons.

Toronto's interim police Chief James Ramer apologized to Black communities. But apologies, on their own do not right wrongs. And they certainly don't create the systemic changes needed to address anti-Black racism in policing or the rest of the criminal justice system.

Governments and government actors have criminalized people for being Black, Indigenous or racialized, for being poor or houseless, and for having a mental illness or an addiction. They must do more than apologize. They must instead try to right their wrongs and - as much as is possible - undo the damage they've done and are still doing.

In July, the federal government took a step towards addressing some of the harms caused by the criminal justice system. Members of Parliament voted to adopt Bill C-5. If it becomes law, the bill will amend the Criminal Code to remove a number of mandatory minimum sentences and get rid of criminal records associated with simple drug possession charges two years after the end of the sentence.

This is a step in the right direction. But it is a small step.

First, despite years of advocacy urging the government to repeal all mandatory minimum sentences, the bill would only remove a small number. Courts across the country have already found (or are likely to find) that a number of mandatory minimum sentences that would remain on the books are unconstitutional.

Many of the mandatory minimum sentences that have led to significant increases in the numbers of Black and Indigenous people in prisons will also remain in the Criminal Code. This is why earlier this year, the Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC), together with the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund and the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, called on the government to, among

other things, repeal all mandatory minimum sentences.

Second, while the bill was amended to automatically sequester criminal records for simple possession, much more work needs to be done to remove the unnecessary discriminatory barriers that people face due to old criminal records.

Even if Bill C-5 passes in its current form, the vast majority of people with criminal records will still have to wait 5 or 10 years after the end of their sentence before they can even apply for a record suspension. Then, they will have to embark on a long and complex application process to prove, among other things, that they have not been convicted of any new criminal offences and that they are "of good conduct."

It's a completely counter-productive system. Having a criminal record makes it harder for people to get jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. These are all important to helping people reintegrate into society, and to keeping them out of the criminal justice system.

There is no evidence that forcing people to carry the burden of a criminal record for 10 years helps increase public safety. You can't tell based on a past record whether a person is more likely to commit an act of violence in the future. And after a few years - much less than a decade - a person with a criminal record is no more likely to become involved in the justice system than a person without one.

The current record suspension system is discriminatory. We know that police target and overcharge Black people. So, considering whether someone is "of good conduct" by looking at things like whether they've had police contact or been charged, even if those charges were withdrawn, will disproportionately impact Black people and compound the harms already caused by racist policing practices.

This is why BLAC, along with the members of the Fresh Start Coalition, is advocating for a spent criminal records regime. This means that after a set period of time, all criminal records - not just those related to drug possession - drop off a standard criminal record check. People would not have to apply and navigate complicated bureaucratic processes. It would just happen. Canada already does this with youth records.

Anti-Black racism in the criminal justice system is a fact. The federal government has an

opportunity to go beyond apologies, towards meaningful action. Bill C-5 will take us part of the way, but there is much farther and further to go.

Moya Teklu & Khaldah Salih
National Observer
Aug 17, 2022

Conditions at HMP are so bad, some inmates are getting time off their sentences

A Supreme Court judge blasted the state of Newfoundland and Labrador's largest prison in a decision released Wednesday, granting an offender extra time off his sentence for living in "harsh conditions" and noting several more instances in which inmates had been offered credit because of the building's deficiencies.

Johnathan Slade pleaded guilty to two counts of robbery and three counts of breach of probation and release order.

He has served 467 days in remand already, much of it at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP), the Victorian-era institution in St. John's.

The facility has long been plagued by criticism. It was the subject of two government reports probing the prison's conditions and several suicide deaths that took place within its walls.

During COVID-19, according to testimony included in the Supreme Court decision, the environment only worsened.

Justice Glen Noel noted that Slade, 27, has several mental health diagnoses including ADHD, PTSD and bipolar disorder, as well as permanent physical disabilities from car accidents.

Those injuries, wrote Noel, left Slade incontinent and in pain.

Slade argued that he had been confined for several periods without recreational time, forced to use the bathroom in cells without doors and was unable to attend programming or regularly see a psychologist.

He also contracted COVID-19 at the jail in March.

"Mr. Slade's mental and physical illness predisposed him to suffer adverse effects when compared to an individual without his disabilities," Noel wrote, noting that Slade also experienced suicidal ideation.

Slade saw a psychologist five times in a 20-month period and was unable to access any rehabilitative programs, such as addictions therapy.

He was often confined to his wing without access to open areas.

"There are no common or recreational areas, resulting in him having to pace back and forth the narrow hallway of the cells, often impeded by opened inmate cell doors protruding into the hallway," Noel wrote. "I find that such restrictions would have caused Mr. Slade reduced mobility and increased pain."

Due to his injuries, Slade also wore protective underwear, making him an easy mark for abuse.

"He experienced great embarrassment from the lack of privacy and his inability to use these hygiene products [discreetly]," the justice said.

"He became the target of ridicule from other inmates, and even at times, the guards. I find this would have had a particular profound effect on Mr. Slade's mental health struggles."

Slade also pointed to hygiene problems within the penitentiary, describing toilets that didn't flush, mold on the walls and rat infestations so bad that the rodents would often climb into inmates' beds at night.

"I find it intolerable and unacceptable that Mr. Slade has had to endure certain aspects of the conditions he describes at HMP," Noel wrote.

Slade was handed 180 days of credit, reducing his four-year sentence.

Other judges have applied the rule, too.

In one case, an inmate was held in a temporary unit for 60 days during a COVID-19 lockdown. That inmate was granted an extra 60 days of time served.

Another offender, earlier this year, was offered 45 days of credit - called a "Duncan" credit, which can be applied when offenders suffer undue harm while in remand - due to contracting COVID-19 while in custody.

Defence counsel listed several other recent applications of the credit in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Department of Justice announced in 2019 that it would construct a new penitentiary to replace the 150-year-old facility. It's expected to be built within the next three years.

Malone Mullin
CBC News
Jul 07, 2022

Expansion of prison needle exchange programs continue despite pandemic delays

Despite pandemic slowdowns, Correctional Service Canada is still planning to expand the needle exchange programs currently offered at nine federal prisons, government officials say.

At a presentation given to the International AIDS Conference in Montreal on the weekend, Henry de Souza, the agency's director general of clinical services and public health, said "a number of institutions" have been identified for an expansion, and the program will continue to be implemented across the country.

Inmates have been able to request sterile equipment for drug use at two Canadian prisons since 2018, and another seven were added in 2019. Some advocates have expressed fears the program, which is designed to reduce needle sharing and the spread of infectious disease, could be cancelled after numbers showed a low uptake.

Only 53 inmates were actively using the programs in mid-June, officials told the AIDS conference Friday night, out of 277 who had been approved to participate over the last four years.

These programs are in addition to the country's only prison-based "overdose prevention service," which began operating in 2019 at the men's medium-security Drumheller Institution in Alberta. It is essentially a supervised injection site, offering sterile equipment and consumption under observation.

Since the site opened, there have been 55 participants, 1,591 visits and zero overdoses at the site, officials told the conference. The correctional service says it also offers mental health counselling, access to naloxone to counter opioid overdose effects and preventive treatments, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis - medicine taken to prevent getting HIV.

All of these efforts have led to a decrease in infections, said Marie-Pierre Gendron, an epidemiologist at Correctional Service Canada. She said HIV infection among inmates is down from 2.02% of the Federal prison population in 2007 to 0.93% in 2020; and hepatitis C is down from 21% in 2010 to 3.2% in 2021.

"I'm encouraged by the way they're describing the program as something they're proud of," says Sandra Ka Hon Chu, co-executive director of the HIV Legal Network.

But a major "red flag" that could be leading to lower participation is the fact that security personnel are involved in the process, she said. That's not the case in other countries' prison needle exchange programs, some of which are fully anonymous or even offer syringes in automated dispensing machines.

"It's really a critical flaw in the program," she said.

Inmates are subject to a threat assessment by security and approval by a warden before being able to access programs, as officials described the process. Almost a quarter of requests to participate in the program have been rejected, according to statistics presented at the conference.

Shawn Huish, the warden at Mission Institution in British Columbia, said it was a challenge to shift the mindset of correctional workers accustomed to searching for drugs, confiscating them and trying to stop inmates from taking them - while at the same time reassuring inmates that participating in the program would not affect their release.

There was a lot of "fake news" to battle, Huish said, including a billboard erected outside the prison that painted the program in a negative light.

"Our biggest focus was talking, educating, breaking down the fear. Having a needle acknowledged in jail can be scary for folks," he said. "You're afraid you're going to get needle sticks. So we looked at the records. In two and a half years, we've had one staff member get pricked, and it was while searching, and it was a thumb tack."

Leah Cook, the regional manager of public health for the Prairies, oversaw the implementation of the supervised injection site at Drumheller and said it is "the only known service of its kind in a correctional setting on the world stage, for which I am incredibly proud."

Cook said a "safe zone" was created so that participants in the program could carry their own drug supply to the observation room without the fear of being searched - and it's been nicknamed the "yellow brick road."

Correctional Service Canada did not immediately respond to questions sent over the weekend.

Marie-Danielle Smith
The Canadian Press
Aug 2, 2022

B.C. ending immigration detention arrangement with CBSA, citing human rights

British Columbia is ending an arrangement with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to hold immigration detainees in provincial correctional centres, saying it doesn't align with its stance on human rights.

Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth said in a statement Thursday the province conducted a review that analyzed its contract with the agency, including public safety, and consulted with advocacy groups.

"The review brought to light that aspects of the arrangement do not align with our government's commitment to upholding human rights standards or our dedication to pursuing social justice and equity for everyone," he said.

The report said the number of immigration detainees in provincial custody is declining but provincial jails are used to holding "high risk detainees." It also noted that while CBSA compensates B.C. Corrections to hold detainees, it does not cover the total cost.

"This is a trend that is likely to continue given the overall reduction in the number of detainees in provincial custody. If the arrangement ended, these are resources that could be used to support B.C. Corrections' clients, including individuals in custody with complex needs and behaviours," it said.

The move comes following calls from human rights advocates in B.C. urging the province to end its contract with the CBSA and stop incarcerating immigrants and refugees in provincial jails.

A coalition of human rights organizations and advocates - including the B.C. Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International - launched a campaign in October urging Canadians to call on the provincial government to stop allowing the CBSA to use provincial jails to lock up people seeking asylum.

The groups released a report in June 2021 saying immigrants with no criminal charges against them are detained in holding centres,

federal prisons or provincial jails for "indeterminate amounts of time."

Human rights group says move is major milestone

"Canada is among the few countries in the global north with no legal limit on the duration of immigration detention, meaning people can be detained for months or years with no end in sight," the groups said in a joint statement following the announcement.

"British Columbia's decision is a major milestone on the path to ending immigration detention in provincial jails in Canada."

Ketty Niyabandi, secretary-general of Amnesty International Canada, said in a statement that she commends B.C. on being the first province to make the decision, calling it a "momentous step."



"This is a true human rights victory, one which upholds the dignity and rights of people who come to Canada in search of safety or a better life," she said.

According to campaign organizers, between April 2019 and March 2020, almost 9,000 people were in immigration detention in Canada, including 138 infants and children. Since 2000, at least 16 people have died in these detention centres.

In the statement, the associate disability rights director at Human Rights Watch Samer Muscati added that he hopes the move will urge other provinces and the federal government to follow suit.

Farnworth says B.C. Corrections will be providing CBSA with 12 months' notice as is required under its current contract.

"B.C. Corrections is committed to working with the CBSA to develop a safe and efficient transition plan that achieves our common commitment to public safety while ensuring the rights of individuals are preserved and protected," Farnworth said.

The human rights groups said B.C. Corrections has told them the province will give the agency official written notice to terminate the contract next week.

The Canadian Press

With files from Christina Jung
Jul 21, 2022

Why does Canada still allow torture here at home?

Eddy Nalon bled to death in a segregation cell at Millhaven Penitentiary on this day in 1974. For every year since, prisoners have courageously marked Aug. 10 as Prisoners Justice Day.

They fast, refuse to work and think about all prisoners who have died. Long before the medical science backed them up, prisoners knew that being locked alone in a cell indeterminately would undermine sanity and drive them toward suicide.

The consciousness of Canadians has caught up with what prisoners have known for years. Prolonged solitary confinement is torture. Canadian appellate courts in B.C. and Ontario have now held that indeterminate periods of isolated confinement violate Charter rights. Class action lawsuits have been successful resulting in damages for the cruelty prisoners experienced for being held in segregated confinement for more than 15 days straight.

The United Nations defines solitary confinement as 22 hours or more alone in a cell without meaningful human contact. More than 15 consecutive days of it has been prohibited as cruel and a form of torture. Yet, despite this international standard and the admonishments of Canadian courts, Canada continues to practice this form of abuse.

In 2019, Canada repealed legislation permitting administrative segregation, one form of solitary confinement. Ministers said this would be the end of solitary confinement in Canada. They were wrong.

Confinement in cells for more than 22 hours without meaningful human contact continues under different names. From dry celling to lockdowns to medical observation - the list is long. Solitary has worsened over the last two years with a ready public health justification for cruel confinement.

Most concerning is that structured intervention units (SIUs) that were billed as the answer to abusive solitary confinement now perpetuate it. Prof. Doob and Sprott's analysis of the SIUs revealed that 10% (195) of SIU placements result in prohibited, prolonged, solitary confinement or torture. This finding was accepted by the minister of Public Safety before a Parliamentary Committee.

When Parliamentarians learn that Canadians are being tortured right here at home, the practice should be stopped immediately. Canadians should not tolerate other Canadians being tortured by state officials.

Stopping this is not difficult: Direct and legislate correctional authorities to cap solitary confinement at 15 consecutive days; ratify the optional protocol against torture; and denounce torture in all forms, particularly in our own backyard.

The correctional investigator, auditor general, senators, and advocates have raised countless failings in our correctional system. They are frustrated that recommended reforms have been ignored.

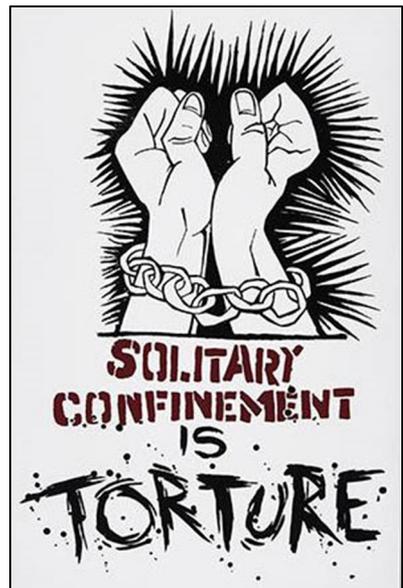
It would take a wholesale transformation of the federal correctional system to fully respect the rule of law and provide prisoners with the rights and justice to which they are entitled - but surely, stopping practices that are recognized in international human rights documents and by our courts as cruel and torturous is not too much to hope for on this Prisoners Justice Day.

How many more Eddy Nalons will Canada fail?

Catherine Latimer

The Star

Aug 10, 2022



Prison service must do more to remove barriers for Indigenous, Black offenders

The federal auditor general says Canada's prison service has not given offenders timely access to programs to help ease them back into society, including courses specific to women, Indigenous people and visible minorities.

Auditor general Karen Hogan found Black and Indigenous offenders experienced poorer outcomes than any other groups in the federal correctional system and faced greater barriers to a safe and gradual return to the outside world.

Hogan notes her office raised similar issues in audits in 2015, 2016 and 2017, yet the correctional service has done little to change the policies, practices, tools and approaches that produce these differing outcomes.

Hogan says disparities were present from the moment offenders entered federal institutions.

The process for selecting security classifications saw Indigenous and Black offenders assigned to maximum-security institutions at twice the rate of other groups of offenders.

They also remained in federal custody longer and at higher levels of security before their release.

The audit found that timely access to correctional programs continued to decline across all groups of offenders. Access to programming worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of men serving sentences of two to four years who were released from April to December 2021, 94% had not completed the correctional programs they needed before they were first eligible to apply for day parole.

"This is a barrier to serving the remainder of their sentences under supervision in the community," the report says.

Correctional service efforts to support greater equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace also fell short, leaving persistent barriers unresolved, the report says.

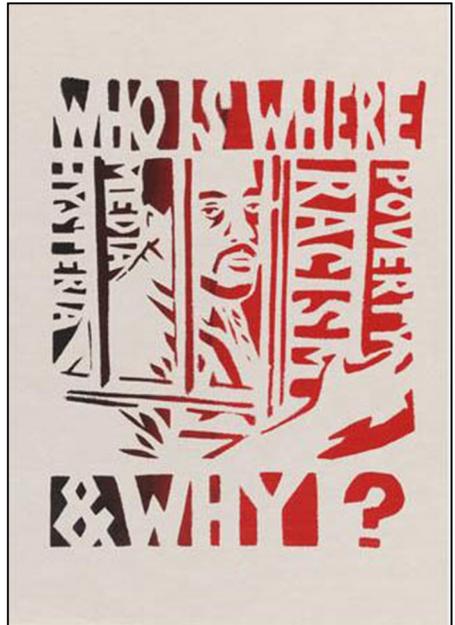
Close to one-quarter of management and staff had not completed mandatory diversity training a year after the deadline.

In addition, the prison service had not established a plan to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of its offender populations, which has particular relevance for institutions with high numbers of Indigenous and Black offenders, the report says.

Hogan notes the correctional service has acknowledged systemic racism in the system, initiating an anti-racism framework to identify and remove systemic barriers.

The service has agreed to act on the auditor general's recommendations to remedy the various issues she identified.

The Canadian Press
May 31, 2022



Prison is a second-by-second assault on the soul, a day-to-day degradation of the self, an oppressive steel and brick umbrella that transforms seconds into hours and hours into days.

- Mumia Abu-Jamal

From time to time they move you around from one cell to another, and that's always a big deal in your life.

Your cell is just about all you've got, your only refuge.

Like an animal's cage, it's your home - a home that would make anyone envy the homeless.

- Leonard Peltier

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

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 ☎

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, OCI, TEDC, TSDC & VCW

The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) provides prisoners with free links to advocacy, referrals, information, and support through the Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:

**Monday - Saturday
9-11am & 2-4pm**

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

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:

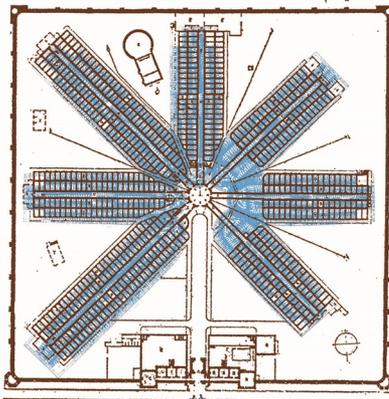
TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

**Mon - Wed - Fri - Sat
9-11am & 2-4pm**

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

PRISONS



SLAVE SHIPS



ON DRY LAND

Almost all the anti-social behaviour which makes us think it's necessary to have armies, police, prisons and governments to control our lives, is actually caused by the system inequalities and injustice those armies, police, prisons and governments make possible.

- David Graeber

**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!
234-1110 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
PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 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.

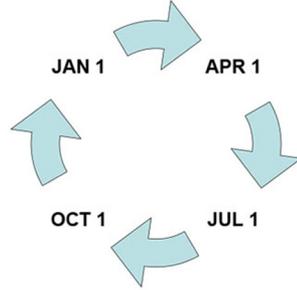
Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

*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 #27 - Fall 2022 ☜

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

download, print, contact:
www.ClassActionNews.org

Next Issue: #28 - Winter 2022-23
Deadline: Dec 1, 2022
Mail-out: Jan 1, 2023

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 !

