

CLASS ACTION NEWS



ISSUE 28 WINTER 2022/23

< Editor's Note >

It is Winter & Issue #28 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!

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Cover: Brian Hindson



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Very special thanks out 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 ~

Doing time creates a demented darkness
of my own imagination...
Doing time does this thing to you.
But, of course, you don't do time.
You do without it. Or rather, time does you.
Time is a cannibal that devours
the flesh of your years.
Day by day, bite by bite.
- Leonard Peltier

< Letters >

Permanent Parole

My complaint here is that I believe indefinite, permanent parole upon my 'conditional' release into any community in Canada should also be declared unconstitutional as it does not allow for anyone to successfully move on in their lives, to forget their past and wrongs, leaving them trapped.

Permanently paroled is unfair, unforgiving and hateful treatment for anyone.

It is not right for the CSC to allow this for anyone convicted whatsoever.

- Anon

< News >

Manitoba announces \$2.6M for healing lodges at correctional centres in Brandon, The Pas

Manitoba will establish two healing lodges at correctional centres in Brandon and The Pas, providing cultural connection and support for Indigenous offenders in those facilities while aiming to reduce their risk to reoffend, Justice Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced at a news conference on Monday.

The Standing Together Healing Lodges at the correctional centres in Brandon and The Pas will help support inmate education, language acquisition, family reunification and sobriety, while building a connection to their community, Goertzen said.

Time spent in a correctional facility should not go to waste, Goertzen said, and the healing lodges will use traditional ceremonies, teachings and land-based experiences to allow participants to heal.

"Ultimately, what happens within the correctional facility is indicative of what will happen outside."

The new healing lodges are part of a "continuum of care," said Goertzen, which will help individuals serving time at the correctional facilities focus on their treatment goals and move onto different paths once they leave.

The healing lodges are also a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 36th call to action, said a news release from the province.

It calls on federal, provincial and territorial governments to work with Indigenous communities to provide culturally relevant services to Indigenous offenders.

Edwin Wood, manager of the justice program at Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), said he and MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee were overwhelmed by the province's announcement.

"Elders have always taught us that the path to true healing, to truth and reconciliation, is our traditions, our culture, ceremonies, languages," he said at the Monday news conference.

The establishment of the healing lodges is significant, Wood said, because Indigenous offenders serving time in correctional facilities often tell him: "If I'd learned earlier who I was, where I came from or my language, I probably wouldn't be here today."

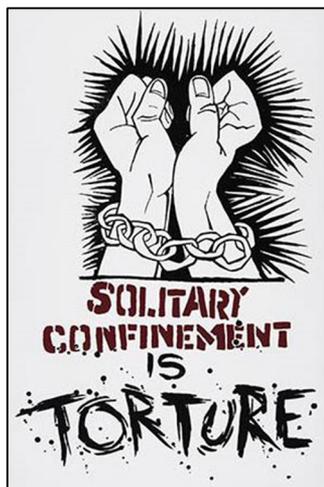
"Today's a testament of what working together can do," Wood said, calling it a "great, momentous day."

A one-time capital investment of \$1.4 million from the province will go toward the construction of the two new buildings at the correctional centres in Brandon and The Pas, said Goertzen, and another \$1.2 million will be invested in annual staffing and operating costs once the healing lodges are functional.

Ozten Shebahkeget

CBC News

Sep 26, 2022



The detention of migrants in Canadian jails is a public health emergency

This month, human rights organizations launched 12 Days of Action calling on the federal government to stop the incarceration of immigration detainees in provincial jails.

The effort is part of the broader #WelcomeToCanada campaign.

As scholars who study migration, we have joined this effort, alongside experts and organizations across the country serving and protecting the rights of migrants and refugees.

Four provinces - B.C., Nova Scotia, Alberta, and Manitoba - have already decided to stop the practice by cancelling their respective immigration detention contracts with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). It's time for the federal government to terminate the remaining contracts and abolish immigration detention in Canada.

Dangerous immigration detention system
Migrants and refugee claimants who are arrested and incarcerated in immigration detention are never held on criminal charges or convictions. Instead, the CBSA incarcerates people under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, most commonly because an officer believes the person in question will miss their immigration or refugee proceeding.

Every year, hundreds are held arbitrarily in provincial jails. Many people in immigration detention are survivors of armed conflict and persecution, having faced traumas and human rights abuses on their migration journeys.

Rather than providing early and evidence-based support for these critical needs, the current approach of detaining migrants results in severe and lasting negative health and social consequences. Canada's immigration detention system is riddled with international human rights violations, and yet the number of immigration detainees continues to rise.

Canada is often perceived as a safe-haven for newcomers, but in 2020, 8,825 people were detained on immigration-related grounds, including 136 children. People in immigration detention face some of the most restrictive

forms of incarceration in Canada, including in maximum-security prisons and solitary confinement, both of which result in restricted access to legal counsel and other vital support services.

Many are shackled, handcuffed, strip-searched and have their personal possessions taken away. People living with mental health conditions and Black men of African and Caribbean origin often face the harshest, most punitive conditions.

People in immigration detention are at risk of being detained indefinitely, as there is no legislative cap on the duration of detention. This has left many to languish in confinement, uncertain if or when they will be released or deported.

Such was the case for Abdurahman Hassan, who was held in a maximum-security prison for over three years before his death in 2015. Since 2016, at least 300 people have been held in immigration detention for over a year, with the longest detainment lasting 11 years.

Long-lasting health impacts

Research demonstrates that immigrant detention is linked to significant mental health concerns. Incarceration without charge, indefinite detainment, the threat of deportation and living in a carceral environment have been shown to contribute to high rates of suicidality, self-harm, depression, anxiety and psychosis.

Abdirahmaan Warssama, who was detained for over five years, described his experience as

torture. The mental health consequences of detention continue long after release and affect people's loved ones and communities.

Children can also be detained, which has severe consequences on their health and well-being. Even brief periods of incarceration cause significant psychological harm. Reports have documented developmental delay, suicidal ideation and selective mutism. In 2014, the UNHCR called for the abolition of child detention - Canada's fulfilment of that call is long overdue.

In addition to mental health concerns, immigration detention has been linked to malnourishment, edema, hypertension, increased risk of certain infectious diseases, like COVID-19



and substantial unmet healthcare needs. Concerns are exacerbated among pregnant people, who face poor access to quality prenatal care, high rates of miscarriage, pre-eclampsia, pre-term delivery and infant mortality.

As a 2019 report on the state of Ontario's jails summarized, "Correctional facilities are not equipped to provide consistent, equitable, or high-quality health care."

The egregious conditions and policies of immigration detention have proven deadly. At least 17 people have died in CBSA custody since 2000. This includes the death of a migrant detained in the Laval Immigration Holding Centre on Jan. 28, 2022, who died after being found in "medical distress."

Like others, they remain unnamed and their cause of death is unknown to the public. CBSA remains the only major law enforcement agency in Canada without independent civilian oversight. End 'crimmigration'

Canada's unjust use of immigration detention stands in stark contrast with its image as welcoming and multicultural. Following the onset of the pandemic, authorities released hundreds of people from immigration detention to curb the spread of the virus. That provides ample evidence that immigration detention was not being used as a measure of last resort, and that alternatives to detention are available.

Instead of incarceration, newcomers should be welcomed into communities. There are a host of community-based organizations offering tailored and compassionate support to migrants and refugees across Canada.

Such alternatives to detention allow families to remain together, are more cost-effective and prevent the physical and mental health harms of detention. High rates of compliance have been observed where migrants and refugee claimants are afforded supports like housing and education, granted legal aid and case management support and treated with respect.

Based on the severe health and human rights implications of immigration detention, the public health evidence is clear - it is time to end immigrant detention once and for all.

Emma Stirling-Cameron & Shira Goldenberg
The Conversation

Nov 27, 2022

Judges should be free to impose conditional sentences when reasonable

If you're willing to shell out more than four hundred bucks, you can find yourself a pretty nice hotel room for the evening. Or you can go to jail, since that's how much it cost, in 2020-21, to house one inmate in a federal prison for one day.

According to Statistics Canada, that amounts to about \$150,000 per year. The exorbitant price of prison is just one reason why the federal government has proposed alternatives to jailing offenders who don't represent a danger to the public.

One such alternative, implemented in 1996, allows offenders to serve their sentences in the community instead of jail. Community supervision costs far less than custody, with a savings in the range of \$100,000 per year for every offender who receives a "conditional" sentence.

In addition, offenders serving conditional sentences can maintain their education or employment, and can therefore support themselves and their families while also paying taxes.

Although conditional sentences are often perceived as being soft on crime, offenders are subject to community supervision and must abide by strict conditions, the violation of which can result in their being sent to jail. And offenders must serve their entire sentences, since there's no parole when you haven't been incarcerated.

Conditional sentences therefore offer an effective and cost-effective alternative to the prohibitively expensive practice of imprisonment. It's too bad, then, that the number of such sentences has declined rapidly throughout the last two decades. While courts issued more than 11,000 conditional sentences in 2004-05, fewer than 7,000 were imposed in 2019-20.

One of the main reasons for this decline is the successive restrictions placed on the availability of such sentences. In an effort to appear tough on crime, the government of Stephen Harper passed legislation, in 2007 and again in 2012, limiting the offences for which a person can receive a conditional sentence.

Those restrictions were the subject of a Charter challenge by 20-year-old Cheyenne Sharma, who was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for

importing nearly two kilograms of cocaine. At the time of the offence, Sharma needed money to support her young daughter and to avoid eviction.

The Ontario Court of Appeal described her as a “prime candidate” for a conditional sentence. But she was nonetheless imprisoned because the Harper amendments precluded her from serving her time in the community.

This is the problem with imposing unnecessary limitations on the availability of conditional sentences: such restrictions limit judges’ discretion to fashion sentences that are appropriate, given the unique circumstances of the offence and the offender.

Certainly, some drug dealers deserve to be imprisoned. But for others like Sharma, imprisonment only causes further hardship for both offenders and their dependants, and wastes valuable public funds. The Supreme Court of Canada nevertheless rejected Sharma’s appeal earlier this month, which means the ball is now in Parliament’s court.

Ottawa has shown interest in increasing judicial discretion and reducing unnecessary incarceration, most notably through the introduction of Bill C-5, which eliminates mandatory penalties for a variety of offences.

However, the government’s defence of the Harper restrictions - and its willingness to take the matter to the Supreme Court - seems at odds with its support of Bill C-5.

By way of explanation, the office of the Attorney General said the Crown appealed the Sharma decision because it “engages an important issue regarding the bounds of parliamentary authority to enact and amend the criminal law without offending the Charter.”

That may be. But the government also urged senators to pass Bill C-5 to give “judges the discretion they need to have a punishment fit the crime.” Now it needs to redouble its own commitment to judicial discretion by ensuring that judges are free to impose conditional sentences wherever it’s reasonable to do so.

Star Editorial Board
Nov 17, 2022

The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.
- Ida B. Wells

Canada’s prison needle exchange program failing amid poor rollout

The federal prison needle exchange program is failing because of a poor rollout by the Correctional Service of Canada and a lack of improvement since it was introduced four years ago, health advocates say.

Inmates at nine of the 43 federal prisons have had access to sterile equipment for drug use since the program last expanded in 2019, and last summer officials said it would be implemented across the country.

The HIV Legal Network published a report this week that found the program is still inaccessible to most people and has not expanded beyond those nine institutions.

In June, only 53 people - of nearly 13,000 offenders in federal custody - were participating in the program.

Sandra Ka Hon Chu, co-executive director of the HIV Legal Network, said multiple layers of institutional approval and stigma are key reasons for the low participation rates.

“A lot of people who want to access the program because there’s injection drug use happening inside prisons are not able to access it because of the multiple barriers to participation,” she said.

The federal government said it is committed to expanding the program but that COVID-19 caused a delay in its plans.

A June 15 briefing note prepared for Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said consultations were held in early 2020 to expand the program to two more institutions, but “following delays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, re-engagement with these sites is required.”

The note, obtained through an access-to-information request, also said Correctional Service Canada would prepare plans for additional sites to be confirmed this fall.

Correctional Service spokeswoman Esme Bailey said in an emailed statement that the department is still committed to putting the program in more prisons and consultations continue.

For people behind bars, participation in the program requires approval that includes an evaluation by a nurse and a threat assessment approved by a warden. No reasons are provided

as to why an application is given the green light or not.

Ka Hon Chu says the process creates an “extremely high barrier” that dissuades people from applying “because there is zero guarantee of actually being accepted.”

The HIV Legal Network study, which was done with the help of Toronto Metropolitan University, said the assessment process is based on “security rather than clinical need” and the program requires daily inspections to verify equipment is being used correctly.

Participants are given a kit containing one syringe, one cooker, three water bottles, one vitamin C and filters. They are required to always keep the kit visible in their cell and visit a nurse when replacement pieces are needed.

Ka Hon Chu said participants are effectively “outing” themselves as drug users and risk being stigmatized by other inmates, correctional staff and the parole board.

“People were concerned that they would get more heavily surveilled as a result of their participation, that they would (be) more heavily scrutinized,” she said, noting one of the most common concerns the group heard is that people may be denied access to other programs as a result of taking part in the needle exchange.

The report recommends enhancing confidentiality by removing the need for daily visual inspections and by offering more discreet distribution points.

It also said a lack of knowledge about the program is affecting uptake.

Advocates argue in the absence of adequate programming aimed at harm reduction, the risk of HIV infection will continue to rise because people are relying on using unsanctioned, unsafe means of using drugs while behind bars.

“The concern is that there’ll be more equipment floating around in prisons, but the reality is that there is a lot of injection equipment already in prisons that (is) just not regulated and it’s not sterile,” said Ka Hon Chu.

The correctional investigator said in his latest annual report, released last summer, that the needle exchange program “exists more in name than in practice” because of low participation rates.

Ivan Zinger, who has raised the same concern in previous reports, also said the Correctional

Services drug strategy needs substantive reforms.

He said the culture in Canadian prisons “remains mired in a prohibitive and repressive mindset.”

“Maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to drugs that relies on ever more intrusive detection, disciplinary and repressive measures - strip-searches, body cavity scanning, cell searches, charges, urinalysis testing - is a costly game of diminishing returns,” the report said.

David Fraser

With files from Stephanie Taylor

The Canadian Press

Dec 1, 2022

Right? Light

I burn the midnight oil

As I write by lantern light

It’s quiet, calm & peaceful

And the flickers give me sight

The words form so freely

As they escape onto my page

It’s like I’ve freed them from some prison

To form their own poetic justice cage

The lines & verses act

Like a Judge & Jury do

But before they reveal their Sentence

The Verdict’s left to you

Try not to deliberate too long

You see, your Recess is overdue

So just swing your gavel slowly

To bring order inside of you

Because you’re ‘Poetry in Motion’

If their Sentence makes you write

Just beware when it’s windy

If you do by candle light

- Clayton Clifford

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.

- Elie Wiesel

Working prisoners are entitled to employment and safety standards just like anybody else

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) recently ended its longstanding relationship with the meatpacking company, Wallace Beef.

This means that federal prisoners incarcerated in the Joyceville Institution near Kingston will no longer provide slaughterhouse labour for the private firm.

The announcement comes after years of campaigning by animal rights and prison farm activists. Groups like Evolve Our Prison Farms have long criticized the Joyceville abattoir operation as cruel to animals and exploitative of prisoners. They also raised a number of concerns about the operation's lax oversight and poor environmental practices.

CSC has yet to announce if it will seek a new contractor, but regardless of what happens to the abattoir at Joyceville, it is long past the time for Canada to reconsider its approach to prison labour.

As Halifax lawyer Asaf Rashid and I argue in our new book, *Solidarity Beyond Bars: Unionizing Prison Labour*, there is no good legal or moral argument for denying prisoners their rights as workers.

Work as rehabilitation

According to the law and to correctional policy, prisoners in Canada work as part of their rehabilitation, not as punishment. This labour takes two main forms.

The first is institutional maintenance - prisoners perform much of the cooking, cleaning, clerical and other work necessary for the day-to-day functioning of the prisons in which they are incarcerated. Some also work in prison industries, designed to give prisoners "work-like" experience.

Federal prison industries are operated by CORCAN, a special operating agency of the Correctional Service of Canada. Among other activities, prisoners working for CORCAN produce office furniture and textiles, run construction, printing and laundry services and work on Canada's few remaining prison farms.

The problems with prison labour in this country are well known by the government. The Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI), Canada's federal prison watchdog, routinely admonishes CSC's employment programming. In the most

recent report, Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger highlighted employment and pay discrimination against Black prisoners in particular.

The year before, Zinger honed in on CORCAN's inadequate programming for women, noting that "jobs for women are often grounded in gendered roles and expectations, offering few marketable skills."

The OCI's 2019-2020 report starkly states:

"Few CORCAN-run industries provide training or teach skills that are job-relevant or meet labour market demands. The service has continued to maintain obsolete infrastructure and technological platforms for such an extended period of time that these problems now appear insoluble."

Wage clawbacks

Pay is another significant issue. In 2013, Stephen Harper's Conservative government implemented new room and board and other fees that amounted to a 30 per cent wage clawback and eliminated incentive pay for CORCAN work.

In announcing the new fees, the government ignored the fact that pay scales for federal prisoners, implemented in 1981, already accounted for room and board deductions. The maximum pay for federal prisoners is \$6.90 per day, minus mandatory fees.

According to the OCI, since these changes, the average pay for prisoners working full time is around 30 cents an hour. Meanwhile, the cost of living in prison has skyrocketed as more and more expenses - including the cost of basic hygiene items - have been downloaded onto prisoners.

Money is also required for the letters and phone calls prisoners need to maintain community relationships, which are viewed favourably when parole boards make decisions. What's more, scholars - and prisoners themselves - have warned that low pay hinders prisoners' ability to successfully reintegrate post-release (like avoiding committing crimes out of financial necessity), which ultimately reduces public safety.

Prison labour, like other work, can also be dangerous and unhealthy.

No labour rights

However, just as they are excluded from employment standards and labour laws,

prisoners are generally excluded from health and safety laws designed to protect workers.

There is no public safety justification, let alone a moral one, for the exclusion of working prisoners from normal employment and health and safety protections. There's no reason at all to curtail prisoners' labour rights.

A union for prisoners may seem far-fetched, but there is historical precedent. In 1977, provincial prisoners working in a privately managed abattoir at Ontario's Guelph Correctional Centre unionized, winning full rights as workers. The union lasted nearly two decades before the operation was moved off the prison grounds as part of a corporate merger.

As the OCI and other critics have made clear, federal prison labour schemes are failing prisoners and the public. In looking to the future, CSC should seriously consider this success from the past. All workers deserve full rights and protections.

Jordan House
The Conversation
Nov 24, 2022

People are dying behind bars.
Where's the outcry?

We still don't know the name of the person who passed away while being detained at the Laval Immigration Holding Centre on Jan. 28, but we do know they were one of several people who have died behind bars over the course of only the past six weeks in Canada.

"We do not have any information about the person who lost their life while in custody of the Canadian Border Services Agency," reads a press release by the Montreal-based migrant justice network *Solidarity Across Borders*. "All we know is that they were a migrant detained for administrative purposes: i.e. for not having papers. This person should never have been detained in the first place, and now they are gone. No one should ever be detained." (Only British Columbia is currently reviewing the practice of incarcerating immigration detainees in provincial jails.)

A month earlier, 31-year-old Tamara Frances Lucier died while being held at the South West Detention Centre in Windsor, Ont. She was waiting for a bed in a mental health facility. "I

went hysterical to hear my daughter was gone when she should have been safe," said her father, Wilfred Lucier, in a media interview.

And on Jan. 26, Jeffrey Ryan, 34, died after a "serious assault" in a prison in Drumheller, Alta. Following the inmate's killing, the John Howard Society called for "urgent action to reduce violence in our federal prisons."

These most recent deaths are only the latest examples of how Canada's prison system remains deeply dysfunctional. As these cases point out, it sometimes fails to provide even a basic standard of care for people who are held for a variety of reasons, including their immigration status or based on charges related to issues of mental health. A 2017 report by Reuters found that 270 people were killed while in provincial jails over the span of five years, two-thirds of whom were legally innocent.

Annu Saini, a former inmate who was held in detention in 2010 for 90 days, has been writing to inmates as part of a coalition called *Write On! Supporting Prisoners Through Correspondence*. She told me in an interview that she was traumatized after she was held in solitary confinement.

"If I didn't [have mental health issues], I would after that," said Saini.

A report released last year found that federal prisons continue to breach human rights obligations with the ongoing use of solitary confinement, which in 195 instances constituted "torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment." The research also showed that Black prisoners were held in these conditions for longer than other groups of prisoners, and that an inmate's mental health was not taken into significant consideration. Furthermore, nearly 39% of stays involved Indigenous prisoners. A subsequent study found a lack of adequate oversight.

"Many Canadians do not care how our prisoners are treated," wrote academics Jane B. Sprott, Anthony N. Doob and Adelina Iftene, the report's authors. "They are seen simply as people who committed offences. But Canadians should care if they care about human rights; or if they care that a government organization is being allowed to operate outside of the law."

Solitary confinement is also an issue in provincial institutions. Over 12,000 people – 46% who had a mental health alert on their file – were placed in segregation between June 2018 and

June 2019, according to a 2020 motion filed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to end the practice.

“Ultimately, we as a society need to acknowledge the failure of the prison system,” wrote Saini in a 2018 commentary. “It is a place that, at best, does nothing to reduce crime and, at worst, is where innocent people go to die.”

Where’s the justice in this system? Where’s the outcry?

Amira Elghawaby
The Star
Feb 8, 2022

Canada’s prison system continues to punish Black and Indigenous people

The treatment of Black and Indigenous people in Canadian federal prisons hasn’t improved in the past decade. In many ways, it’s gotten worse.

That’s according to the 2021-22 annual report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator, which was tabled in Parliament on Nov. 1.

The report features findings from three national investigations that look at the experiences and outcomes of Black and Indigenous people in federal custody, while also reviewing restrictive confinement conditions and practices since the elimination of solitary confinement in 2019.

“I am very disappointed to report that the same systemic concerns and barriers identified nearly a decade ago, including discrimination, stereotyping, racial bias, and labeling of Black prisoners, remain as pervasive and persistent as before,” Correctional Investigator Dr. Ivan Zinger told reporters at a press conference. “In fact, the situation for Black people behind bars in Canada today is as bad, and, in some respects, worse than it was in 2013.”

Use of force against Black Canadians

The 152-page report details how the population of incarcerated Black people are over-represented at both maximum-security prisons and involuntary transfers, noting that they are more likely to be involved in a use of force incident regardless of their risk level, age, sentence length, or gender.

Black people in Canadian prisons are more likely to receive unequal or unfair treatment, through

inmate pay levels, access to personal care items, meaningful prison employment, and early release opportunities. Not only that, but Black individuals interviewed for the report reported being called racial slurs and derogatory language by CSC staff, while also feeling ignored and disregarded by the system.

The report concluded that despite having lower overall rates of recidivism, Black people in Canada are more likely to be assessed as higher risk.

“At the most basic level, the correctional system should not serve to further perpetuate disadvantage,” Zinger told reporters.

Zinger emphasized the fact that the report’s findings are not new. Not only have they been documented in past reports, Zinger says recommendations should have been remedied by the Correctional Service of Canada by now.

“The Service has had ample time and opportunity to address disproportionately poorer outcomes for Black people under federal sentence,” Zinger said.

The report lays out 18 recommendations, eight of which are focused on improving the lives and outcomes of Black individuals incarcerated in Canadian federal penitentiaries.

50% of incarcerated women are Indigenous. Zinger also renewed his Office’s call for the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections. The need for this appointment only continues to grow, as Indigenous women now make up at least 50% of all women incarcerated in the country.

The recommendations laid out in the report range from banning dry cell placements beyond 72 hours to updating the CSC’s 2007 National Drug Strategy that promotes a zero-tolerance approach to drugs behind bars.

One recommendation follows calls from Halifax nurse Dr. Martha Paynter, who urged the federal government to reform the Mother-Child program in her recent book *Abortion to Abolition: Reproductive Health and Justice in Canada*.

The program is designed to help preserve relationships between mothers who are incarcerated and their child, in an effort to “promote stability and continuity for the mother-child relationship.”

Zinger’s recommendation calls for a review of program requirements and eligibility criteria in hopes of expanding access and participation

within the program, while also removing barriers specifically facing Indigenous mothers.

Mother-Child program 'barely used'

Wellness Within is a non-profit organization advocating for reproductive justice, prison abolition and health equity in Nova Scotia.

Last week, Wellness Within issued a press release responding to the OCI's report, citing both "interest and concern," - specifically related to the Mother-Child program.

Volunteer doulas and advocates for the incarcerated often engage with the Mother-Child program to assert and preserve the rights of people and children in prisons.

"In theory, the Mother Child Program allows some imprisoned mothers to have their young children reside with them either full or part time," the release reads.

According to the release, organizers have observed the program "is barely used." That observation was reaffirmed by the OCI report.

"Although most incarcerated women are mothers, and on a given day there are 700 women incarcerated in the federal system, in the past 20 years, there have only been 154 applications to the program," the report reads.

Wellness Within says the program "lacks evaluation, is not evidence-based, and has such restrictive eligibility criteria that is available to only a handful of women who are disproportionately non-Indigenous."

Women fastest growing demographic in prison system

That concern is compounded by the fact that women are the fastest growing population in Canadian federal prisons, increasing by 16.3% between 2010 and 2019.

Ultimately, the organization believes investing additional funding in the Mother-Child program is the wrong way to respond to maternal incarceration. Instead, they say lawmakers should invest in alternatives to incarceration that keep families together.

The report also features the first of a two-part follow-up review of a 2012 report tabled in Parliament called *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*.

"Indigenous individuals are increasingly entering the system at a younger age, spending considerably longer time behind bars, and returning to federal corrections at unprecedented rates compared to their non-

Indigenous counterparts," the report reads. "Year over year, Canadian prisons are being filled by Indigenous Peoples who are caught up in the proverbial revolving door, experiencing worse circumstances while inside, with few viable options for getting out and staying out."

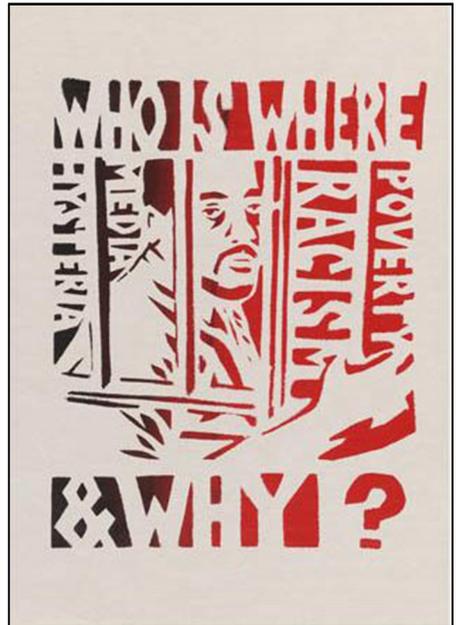
Findings show the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in federal prisons has only accelerated since the report was tabled, while disparities in outcomes continue to widen.

While Zinger noted he will have additional remarks when the investigation is complete, he said the CSC "does not seem to accept that it has any role or influence on reversing the perpetual crisis of Indigenous overrepresentation in Canadian jails and prisons."

Stephen Wentzell

Rabble News

Nov 17, 2022



Jails and prisons are designed to break human beings, to convert the population into specimens in a zoo - obedient to our keepers, but dangerous to each other.

- Angela Davis

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:

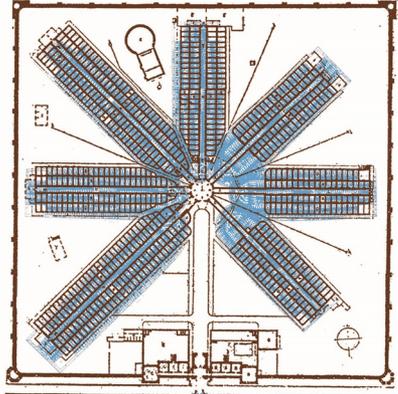
TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

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

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

PRISONS



SLAVE SHIPS



ON DRY LAND

The walls are the publishers of the poor.

- Eduardo Galeano

Nobody is going to pour truth into your brain. It's something you have to find out for yourself.

- Noam Chomsky

**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

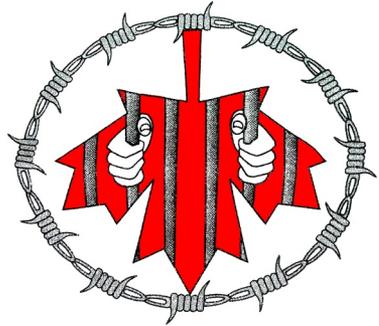
CPR: This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio & Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

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 ☜



☞ Issue #28 - Winter 2022-23 ☜

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

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www.ClassActionNews.org

> Jan > Apr > Jul > Oct >

Next Issue: #29 - Spring 2023

Deadline: Mar 1, 2023
Mail-out: Apr 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 !

