

CLASS ACTION NEWS!



ISSUE #33
SPRING 2024

< *Editor's Note* >

It is Spring & Issue #33 of 'Class Action News'. This zine is by & for the 'Prisoner Class' on Treaty Lands with 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 (½ 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: Van Gogh - Prisoners' Round (1890)

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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).

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≈ 'Dish With One Spoon' Treaty ≈

Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it.
To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness - and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe.
- Arundhati Roy

Aging inmates seek compensation for abuse in Canadian prisons

They couldn't escape the law; now time has caught up with them as well.

A group of federal prison inmates aged 50 and older have been given the green light to proceed with a class-action lawsuit claiming their advanced years have made them targets for assault, intimidation and bullying.

Earlier this month, a federal court judge certified the proceeding - which includes allegations older inmates have been denied access to health services they need to cope with age-related indignities ranging from lost dentures to incontinence.

Justice Simon Fothergill gave the go-ahead for a class-action lawsuit claiming systemic negligence after hearing from inmates serving time for sexual assault and murder; he also heard evidence from Canada's former correctional investigator.

'An area of growing concern'

In 2011, Howard Sapers - who served as prison system watchdog from 2004 to 2016 - warned of the problems involving the growing number of people aging behind bars.

"The older offender is often a neglected, but significant and growing, segment of the offender population," Sapers wrote in an annual report.

"There is little doubt that the combined effects of an inadequate prison infrastructure and increased impairment of older offenders will be an area of growing concern in federal corrections."

According to Fothergill's decision, inmates 50 and older comprise nearly a quarter of the federal custodial population.

The lead plaintiff in the case is known as B.W., a man who has been serving two indeterminate sentences for sexual assault at B.C.'s Mission Institution since 2013. It's his second stint at the medium security prison. He did 10 years there starting in 1993.

B.W. claimed he was attacked by a younger, aggressive inmate in 2017. After repeated requests, he claimed the prison's warden said his living unit would be designated for older inmates, but younger men were placed there anyway.

B.W. also detailed difficulties getting treatment or recognition for health concerns including cancerous brown spots on his head, plantar

fasciitis and a need to use the toilet that arises "quickly and without warning."

"He says he has seen other older inmates relieving themselves in the yard," Fothergill wrote.

"To avoid this indignity, he sometimes forgoes his yard time."

"Prisons were not designed for the elderly' B.W.'s concerns were echoed by Jeffrey Ewert, an inmate in his 60s convicted of the murder and attempted murder of two young women.

"Ewert suffers from prostatitis and arthritis," the decision says.

"He has tried to obtain supplements and vitamins to help with these conditions, but has been told that these items are no longer available."

The judge also heard from Debra Sheets, an expert who noted that aging "affects vision, hearing, bladder function, and memory."

"Dr. Sheets notes that prisons were not designed for the elderly and present risks for aging inmates, especially due to their increased frailty," Fothergill wrote.

"Dr. Sheets observes that prison staff frequently lack training to assess, diagnose, and deliver geriatric health care to older inmates."

According to the decision, Sapers said Corrections Canada "has been aware of the rising proportion of older inmates since at least the 1990s, and understood that time would aggravate the issue if nothing was done."

Sapers said an "older offender division" was established in 1999 but its recommendations weren't implemented; a framework and strategy aimed at dealing with the issue in 2018 also went nowhere.

Former and current inmates

The class-action lawsuit would apply to former and current inmates who were over the age of 50 between April 17, 1985 and the day the proceeding was certified.

The group includes inmates who claim they were subjected to "physical, emotional and/or psychological abuse" and who have suffered harm through their inability to access free or paid health care.

One witness claimed that 34,916 current and former inmates were at least 50 at some point during their incarceration.

While arguing against certification, the correctional service said the inmates had "failed to present any evidence of any experience or

action common to each member of the proposed class."

They also claimed the proposed lawsuit failed to take into account "interventions that are tailored to an individual offender's circumstances and needs, the variety of CSC institutional settings and security levels, or the evolution of policies, procedures and operations over the past 40 years."

The class-action lawsuit is being handled by the same law firm that was successful in certifying a class-action lawsuit last month on behalf of Black inmates who claim they were subjected to physical, emotional and psychological abuse in Canadian prisons.

A lawyer with the firm told the CBC they "welcome" the decision, but declined to comment further.

Jason Proctor
CBC News
Jan 30, 2024

Class-action lawsuit alleging anti-Black racism against inmates in Canada's prison is approved

Despite opposition by the government, the Federal Court has certified a class-action lawsuit against Canada's prison system alleging anti-Black racism suffered by inmates.

Court declared that the lawsuit - claiming systemic negligence resulting in the abuse of Black inmates as well as Charter breaches against Black inmates - can proceed as a class action, meaning it is litigated on behalf of a group of people rather than an individual.

The class was set as all Black inmates alleging physical, emotional or psychological abuse while incarcerated in a Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) facility since 1985.

The lawsuit was filed last year by Abel Araya, a Canadian citizen of Eritrean descent who did time in prison for drug trafficking. He served two years of his three-year sentence inside two federal penitentiaries.

Araya was an inmate in Drumheller Institution in Alberta and William Head Institution in British Columbia before his release in 2020.

He alleges in the claim that he was subjected to racial abuse by both CSC staff and other inmates while in the minimum-security facility on

Vancouver Island but not at the primarily medium-security Alberta prison.

His lawsuit claims he was often ignored or dismissed by white guards and was treated differently than white inmates.

He said he was ignored when first seeking medical treatment for a serious head injury. He said there was no programming available specifically for Black prisoners.

He said he was treated differently and subjected to racial stereotyping. He claims his white parole officer said she would not want him coaching her children's sports teams because he was "clearly a drug dealer," while a CSC nurse said he wouldn't want someone like him living in his community.

He said a white prisoner persistently shouted an offensive racist slur at him. When Araya told him he had better stop or he would have to "settle" the matter, it was Araya who was reprimanded.

Court heard that Araya often complained of racism at William Head but didn't file a formal grievance for fear he would be punished by prison staff.

Even after leaving prison and living at a halfway house during the COVID-19 pandemic, he said he experienced racism, including being pressured to leave the facility to make room for "vulnerable" prisoners, all of whom were white, he claimed.

The incidents, he said, amplified feelings of helplessness that brought panic attacks, sleeplessness, anxiety and depression after release.

Court also heard from Akwasi Owusu-Bempah, a criminology professor at the University of Toronto who studies racism in the criminal justice system.

Owusu-Bempah said that "CSC's practices, procedures, instruments, policies and other acts and omissions systematically disadvantage racialized prisoners in comparison to white prisoners."

He said several reports from the Office of the Correctional Investigator show that compared to white male inmates, Black male inmates are more likely to experience use of force, less likely to be placed in minimum-security, are more often placed in solitary confinement, receive lower potential reintegration scores, and are disproportionately denied temporary absences and parole.

Ottawa opposed certification of the lawsuit as a class action, and challenged Owusu-Bempah's evidence, saying he testified outside of his area of expertise and was more advocate than objective expert.

Lawyers for the Attorney General of Canada also argued Araya's claim fails to show a reasonable cause of action, that the class is overly broad, and there are no common issues of law or fact among class plaintiffs. Ottawa also claimed a class action is not the best way to resolve claims by members of the class and that Araya was unsuitable as a class representative.

Araya has filed a separate civil lawsuit in B.C. Supreme Court alleging he was denied medical care for his head injury. Prisons also have an internal grievance system to handle complaints, the government said. Lawyers said he received full parole at the earliest opportunity, with the support of his parole officer and he was never the subject of a disciplinary charge.

In a decision released Tuesday, Justice Simon Fothergill said he was satisfied that Araya's credibility was sufficient for him to proceed as a representative claimant and that Owusu-Bempah's evidence was largely useful and admissible.

Fothergill said alleged Charter breaches of undue deprivation of life, liberty or security of the person, and discriminatory protection or benefit under the law were arguable issues.

"A class action alleging systemic negligence implicating numerous acts and omissions by different perpetrators in various institutional settings over a lengthy period of time presents formidable challenges," Fothergill writes in his decision.

But there have been previous cases facing similar challenges, including a recent class-action suit claiming similar racism filed against the RCMP.

"The Plaintiff reasonably characterizes prison inmates as a vulnerable population. If this proposed class action is not certified, it is unlikely that individual Class members will pursue alternative forms of redress on their own. To the extent that the allegations advanced in the Statement of Claim have merit, no remedy will be provided for the wrongs suffered by the proposed Class except by way of a collective proceeding."

He ordered the class definition be tightened and the time period be narrowed but allowed it to proceed as a class action.

Esther Mailhot, senior adviser for issues management and media relations with CSC, said it would be inappropriate to comment on specifics of this case because the claims are before court.

"CSC has an ethnoculturally diverse offender population. Once in our custody, we are committed to working hard to address societal systemic barriers for offenders by providing programs and services that address offender's needs.

"We are committed to ensuring that Black and ethnocultural offenders are afforded the same protections, dignity and treatment as others," Mailhot said.

Araya's lead lawyer, Patrick Dudding, could not be reached prior to deadline.

The CSC uses 28 categories of racial identification for inmates when they are processed for prison intake. The self-identification of Black inmates often includes geographic-base qualifiers, such as Caribbean or Sub-Saharan African.

The process and timing for class members to opt out of the proceeding have not been set.

Adrian Humphreys
National Post
Dec 19, 2023

Judge rules lockdowns due to staff shortages at Nova Scotia jails are unlawful

A pair of Nova Scotia Supreme Court rulings that say it is illegal to lock down inmates in provincial jails because of staffing shortages are being praised by an advocacy group as a victory for prisoner rights.

Lawyer Hanna Garson of the non-profit law firm PATH said the decisions by Justice Peter Rosinski in the cases of two inmates mean it's now up to the province to decrease the jail population through bail, community sentences and temporary absence leaves.

"Our courts have finally said 'Enough is enough, individuals in custody still have human rights, and they are not disposable,'" Garson said in an interview Monday.

In decisions dated Friday, Rosinski found that inmates Durrell Diggs and Ryan Wilband experienced "ongoing material deprivation" of their liberty while incarcerated at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility last fall.

The judge says Diggs was detained at the jail for 51 days from Sept. 13 to Nov. 3. On 38 of those days the "low security risk" inmate was confined to his cell for 22 hours per day, while on another eight days he was confined for 21 hours.

"That is the equivalent of being in close confinement or administrative segregation," Rosinski wrote.

The court document says that under full staffing at the jail, inmates should be safely out of their cells for up to 12 hours a day. It says that at a minimum, 19 correctional officers are required to safely let inmates out of their cells for nine hours or more per day.

"The less correctional officers that show up for work, the more severe the lockdowns will become each day," the ruling states.

Wilband, also described as a "low-risk general population inmate" on remand, was continually confined to his cell for "extraordinarily long periods of time each day," between Oct. 31 and Nov. 28 due to staffing shortages, the judge said. Evidence presented in court showed that on three of those days, Wilband had no time out of his cell.

Rosinski characterized the lockdowns as "unlawful" and said that in the Diggs case, Nova Scotia's attorney general had not shown that the lockdowns were reasonable.

"It is not a privilege to be out of one's cell. It is presumptively an entitlement," the judge wrote.

Judge's recommendations

Rosinski suggests better planning to ensure full staffing, distributing inmates throughout the provincial system and using bail and temporary absence leaves as ways of dealing with persistent staff shortages.

"I emphasize that the decision by Nova Scotia that is directly in issue here, is the daily decision to order total or partial lockdowns on any given day," he said.

The decisions follow a series of complaints known as habeas corpus applications related to the Halifax-area jail. In a habeas corpus application, a judge assesses the conditions of a person's confinement to determine whether their Charter rights have been violated and they

should be granted a remedy, such as more time out of their cell.

Until Rosinski's ruling, the courts have consistently maintained that lockdowns triggered by a lack of staff cannot be addressed via habeas corpus.

Garson said the difference this time is that the inmates in the two cases were represented in court by lawyers who were able to argue against the province, along with the fact that there seemed to be no end in sight to the lockdowns. Previously, many of the inmates who brought cases represented themselves in court.

"It seems the courts were less willing to continue to define the lockdowns as lawful as time went on and the situation wasn't addressed," she added.

Lawyer warns of class-action suit

Garson said if the province doesn't heed the court's suggestions for remedies, it could be subject to a class-action suit seeking damages on behalf of inmates. Notice of such an action was filed last month with Nova Scotia's attorney general.

Response from Justice Department

The Justice Department said Monday that it is reviewing the court's decision and its recommendations while it continues efforts to increase staffing at the jail.

"We have dedicated a full-time position to focus on recruitment and retention and have implemented a continuous open application process that is seeing positive results," spokesperson Deborah Bayer said in an email. Bayer said the department recently hired 39 new staff for the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, including 14 correctional officer recruits, who will start work early next month.

Keith Doucette

The Canadian Press

Jan 15, 2024

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

- Desmond Tutu

We don't see things as they are.

We see them as we are.

- Anais Nin

More than 70% of people in jails awaiting bail or trial

A new report says the crisis in Canada's bail system has worsened over the last decade, with more people in pre-trial custody and some spending weeks in detention before being released.

A report released today by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association says that by 2021-2022, the proportion of people in provincial and territorial jails who were awaiting bail or trial was more than 70% - and nearly 79% in Ontario.

That's compared with just over 54% in 2014, when the association released its initial report on the issue.

The report says that while there are "clear timeframes" in the Criminal Code to ensure people don't "languish in pre-trial custody," as well as guidance from the Supreme Court of Canada on the matter, the ongoing strain on the court system contributes to major delays in the bail process.

The association says its research shows that on any given day, most cases in bail court are adjourned, often because the court ran out of time.

One of the report's authors told a news conference this morning that one possible step to consider would be encouraging courts to stay open until all matters for the day have been heard to completion.

"We need to change the culture of bail court decision making," said Nicole Myers, an associate professor of sociology at Queen's University.

"At its core, we must remember that innocent people are being jailed. Many of these folks are not subsequently found guilty of the offenses it's alleged that they've committed," she said. "So the reality is that people are being punished, they are serving what amounts to a sentence prior to and often in the absence of conviction." Across Canada, 51% of cases end with all charges withdrawn, meaning the accused is not found guilty of the alleged crime, she noted.

The Canadian Press
Feb 26, 2024

At least 54 inmates held past release date in Ontario jails in 2023

At least 54 inmates stayed in Ontario-run jails longer than they were supposed to last year, CBC Hamilton has learned.

Records obtained by CBC through a freedom-of-information request show the number of inmates held past their release date from early October 2022 to August 2023.

The records show 17 inmates were improperly detained at the Toronto South Detention Centre, nine inmates at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex and six at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre. Thirteen other jails in Ontario saw this happen to three inmates or fewer.

Reports related to the improper detentions at the Toronto South Detention Centre were heavily censored with white redactions, obscuring how much information there is in each report, as well as details like why and how long people were detained for.

But some reports indicate administrative errors between the courts and the jails caused some of the prolonged detentions. For example, jail staff say they didn't receive documents from court staff.

In at least one other case, an inmate informed staff he was supposed to be released.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General declined an interview but told CBC Hamilton "overdue releases account for less than 0.2% of all releases and the ministry conducts investigations to determine the cause and if any process changes are needed."

While the mistakes seem to be rare, given Ontario's total inmate population was 33,571 in the 2022 fiscal year, some experts, lawyers and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association said the province needs to investigate why this is happening and invest in the system to put a stop to it.

"Any time somebody is detained past their release date, it's not acceptable," said Asgar Manek, a defence lawyer in Hamilton who has had a client who was improperly detained.

Lawyer says inmates may be entitled to remedies

Manek said he previously had a client who stayed in jail for a few days past his release date due to a clerical error.

Howard Sapers, former federal correctional investigator and former Ontario independent

advisor on correctional reform, said communication gaps between departments, staffing shortages caused by stretched budgets, and a lack of oversight are all factors that lead to these errors.

"Problems like this happen again and again because people simply aren't paying enough attention," he said, adding that most inmates in provincial jails haven't been found guilty of the charges they face.

Manek said in his experience, a lack of local judges, the timing of when documents are sent and the timing of release orders can also lead to overdue releases.

Kelly Hannah-Moffat, a professor at University of Toronto's Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, said while 54 may not be a lot compared to the entire inmate population in the provincial system, it is still serious.

"I don't think it diminishes the effect on the individual," she said.

Stephanie DiGiuseppe, a partner at Heinec Hutchison Robitaille LLP and assistant treasurer of the Criminal Lawyers Association, which represents criminal defence lawyers across Ontario, said the number of improper detentions is "inexcusable" and "shocking."

"It's a very simple task to execute," she said. "Every day in custody is the loss of a day of a person's liberty and ability to pursue their livelihood."

DiGiuseppe said she thinks inmates may be entitled to remedies for having their rights breached.

Experts say province needs to take action Hannah-Moffat said there should be more information about why the improper detentions occurred.

Some documents CBC obtained were redacted in white, a practice the Information Commissioner of Canada has previously ruled shouldn't occur.

Hannah-Moffat said there should also be audits of the administrative system and each improper detention because the circumstances "raises questions about the ways records are kept."

She said another solution could be the province jailing fewer people, given most inmates in the provincial system serve short sentences.

Sapers and Manek said the province needs to invest more money into the court and correctional systems.

That would include hiring more court and jail staff, improving their pay and technology upgrades. Manek also said there should be more local judges.

All the experts interviewed agreed the province needs to take immediate action to prevent more inmates being held past their release dates, like an audit or investigation.

"There has to be direct intervention by the solicitor general to examine why that is occurring ... there has to be a publicly available explanation and action taken," Shakir Rahim, director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's criminal justice program, said.

"Even one inmate being held past their release date is one too many."

Bobby Hristova
CBC News
Mar 01, 2024

All 10 provinces to stop jailing migrants after Newfoundland vows to end practice

Newfoundland and Labrador has informed the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) that it will no longer incarcerate people detained solely for immigration purposes in its provincial jails as of March 31, 2025, according to information obtained by Radio-Canada.

The province sent official notice to the agency on March 12, 2024, eight days after a Radio-Canada story stated it was, at the time, the only Canadian province intending to maintain the controversial practice.

The detention of migrants for administrative reasons in the same facilities as people charged with or convicted of crimes has been denounced by many experts as a violation of international law.

"Newfoundland and Labrador's decision is a momentous human rights victory that upholds the dignity and rights of people who come to Canada in search of safety or a better life," said Samer Muscati, acting disability rights deputy director at Human Rights Watch.

Since June 2022, all other provinces have either refused to imprison people held for immigration-related purposes or have committed to stop doing so in the coming months. Many provinces had signed formal contracts with CBSA under

which they had to give the agency one year's notice of cancellation.

"With all 10 provinces now having cancelled their immigration detention agreements and arrangements, the federal government should finally guarantee through a policy directive or legislative amendment that the border agency will stop using jails for immigration detention, once and for all," said Muscati.

The federal government would not comment on Human Rights Watch's proposal.

In an email to Radio-Canada, CBSA instead explained that it is "committed to limiting the use of detention" to the most difficult cases and that it is increasingly using alternatives to the practice.

More than 5 years behind bars

A Somali-born man described his years behind bars in Canada in an interview with Radio-Canada/CBC last year.

Abdirahman Warssama was locked up for five years and seven months in maximum security jails in Ontario, where he was violently beaten.

Even though he wasn't charged with a crime, he was incarcerated with hardened criminals while the CBSA tried unsuccessfully to arrange his removal to Somalia.

Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the federal agency can detain foreign nationals or permanent residents for three main reasons: if they're considered a flight risk, if their identities aren't well-established or if they pose a danger to the public.

The vast majority of the 71,988 migrants detained by CBSA between 2012 and 2023 were deemed to be flight risks, meaning the border agency believed they would not appear for immigration processes, such as a removal.

It's the CBSA that decides whether they're locked up in provincial jails or in one of its three federal immigration holding centres in Toronto, Laval, Que., or Surrey, B.C.

Over the years, migrants have been sent to prison when there was no federal centre in the province where they were detained, when they were considered high risk or when they suffered from mental health problems.

But CBSA says that now, it only detains migrants in jails in provinces where that measure still exists when there are "serious concerns about danger to the public, or to other detainees, or staff."

That could be a person who has "prior convictions and outstanding charges for violent crimes" or someone who has demonstrated "violent, non-compliant and unpredictable behaviour," the federal border agency said.

CBSA upgrading holding centres

Faced with the provinces' decisions, CBSA said last December that it's upgrading its immigration holding centres and adapting its staffing and guard training in order to "accommodate high-risk detainees."

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International each said they believe the federal government should put an end to immigration detention.

"We commend the provinces for their decisions to stop locking up refugee claimants and migrants in jails solely on immigration grounds," said Ketty Niyabandi, secretary general of Amnesty International Canada's English-speaking section.

"There is now clear pressure for the federal government to stop this rights-violating system across the country."

Brigitte Bureau
CBC News
Mar 21, 2024



The rich rob the poor,
and the poor rob one another.
- Sojourner Truth

B.C. inmates with addiction issues at high risk of reincarceration

A new study led by a B.C. criminology professor says people jailed in the province who have addiction and mental health issues are at high risk of being reincarcerated within a few years of being released.

Amanda Butler, an assistant criminology professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., says former inmates with substance use disorders and mental health issues are more likely to end up back in jail than those without addiction or "mental health needs" on their own. The study published in the journal *Criminal Justice and Behavior* says 72% of people with both substance use and mental health disorders ended up back in jail within three years of being let out.

Butler said in an interview Thursday that people let out of provincial jails often find themselves without adequate housing or employment options.

She said jailing people with mental health and substance use disorders often exacerbates their problems.

"The reality is that for many of these folks, they are ill and they haven't had their needs met and it's not serving anybody to continue to put them in institutions that will continue to fail them," Butler said.

Substance use disorders, Butler said, are the strongest indicator that someone will likely reoffend and end up back in custody, and the corrections system is not designed to get at the root causes of criminality.

"In Canada, we still have a system where our purpose and principles of sentencing are largely focused on denunciation, deterrence, retribution," she said. "It still largely is a system that is focused on denouncing criminal behaviour (and) separating people from society."

She said the correctional system is focused on reducing crime and addressing public safety, "but the reality is that so many of the factors that are related to offending don't fall within their mandate."

Butler's study found that 70% of former inmates with substance use disorders alone also went back to prison within a few years of their release.

She said the correctional system is "siloed" off from the health and social services sector that

could focus on improving offenders' health and possibly reduce the risk of reoffending because "the social determinants of health overlap considerably with the social determinants of crime."

Butler's study examined data collected by BC Corrections for 13,109 people who were released from provincial jails between October 2012 and September 2014.

She says the disorders are often undertreated at the facilities, and her study highlights the need to treat the problems to reduce reincarceration.

Overall, the study found 61% of released inmates from the time period ended up back in jail within three years, and those with both addiction and mental health disorders were found to be at "substantially elevated risk of reincarceration."

Butler said crunching the numbers on thousands of individuals makes it easy to lose sight of the human toll of a punishment-focused correctional system.

"When you're writing up the findings and you're trying to make sense of it and you're interpreting the data, you are reminded that every one of these statistics is a person, that this is a human being," she said.

"A lot of them are suffering, not just at the stage in which their crime was committed, but many of these people have been failed by health and social service and education systems their entire lives up until when their offending began."

Darryl Greer
The Canadian Press
Mar 21, 2024

Trans+ People in Canadian Prisons Project

In 2017, "gender identity or expression" was added to the Canadian Human Rights Act as prohibited grounds for discrimination.

We, Aaron Devor, PhD and Sarah M. Steele, PhD, would like to know a lot more about the experiences of Trans+ people within Canadian Federal Prisons and are conducting a research study to find out more. We hope that what we learn and report from this project will influence future CSC policies and procedures. We are writing today to ask for your participation in our research, and we would be grateful if you would

help us to make sure that all the right people know about the project.

There are two ways for people to get involved in this research:

- (1) talk to us in a 1-hour private, confidential interview about their thoughts and experiences,
- (2) answer similar questions in writing using the mail.

We are hoping to connect with:

- (1) Current Trans+ prisoners in Canadian federal prisons,
- AND

- (2) Current cisgender (non-Trans+) prisoners who have ever lived in a Canadian federal correctional institution with Trans+ prisoners.

If you chose to participate, no guards or administrators will be present or observing in any way. Each institution will have a CSC Staff person who can help arrange participation and has promised to keep your involvement confidential. This means that only this staff member and the researchers will know who answered our questions. Information that is shared with us that could identify someone, such as names and any other personal details, will not be shared with anyone else. We will use a pseudonym (fake name) when quoting people or mentioning the stories that are shared with us. When reporting to CSC, publishing written reports, in online media, etc. we will never use anyone's real name or give any details that will allow other people to know who participated.

This project is being conducted by the University of Victoria with funding from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).

If people have questions, or would like to volunteer to be interviewed, or participate by mail, they can contact us at 1-800-516-3083 (on the common access list) or at:

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Prison is, simply put,
the bottom rung of the welfare ladder.
- Stephen Reid

You don't really know who you are,
until you fight for it.
- Maria Ressa

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

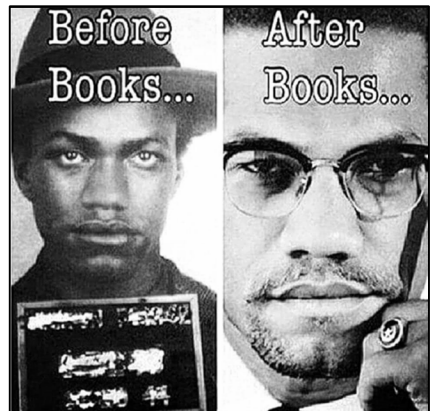
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10-18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction of literary merit.

Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.

Book Clubs for Inmates

720 Bathurst St, Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4



I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me.

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life.

As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

The truth will set you free.

But first,
it will piss you off.

- Gloria Steinem

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%, compared to 2.4 and 16.6% among male prisoners.

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

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3%, 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%, 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%) 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.

All governments lie.
- I.F. Stone

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 ☎

Phone Line for Disabled Prisoners who Experience Ableism and Racism in Ont.

www.djno.ca

OUT of PRISON: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):

Hamilton - 905-631-4084

Kenora - 807-548-4312

London - 519-690-0836

Milton - 416-775-7938

Niagara - 905-227-5066

Ottawa - 613-768-9951

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.

Free 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 to Saturday
9-11 am & 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

Free Jail Hotline for EMDC

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

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

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.

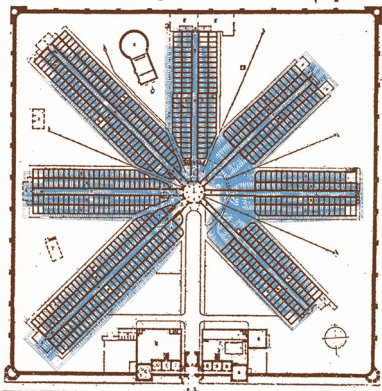
Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

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

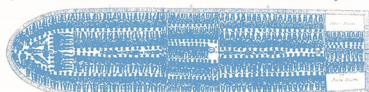
info.kipcanada@gmail.com

or by phone at: 416-505-5333

PRISONS



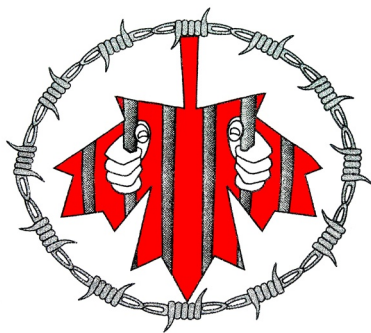
SLAVE SHIPS



ON DRY LAND



**MILITARY
CONFINEMENT
IS
TORTURE**



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download, print, contact:
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Mail-out: Jul 1, 2024

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 !

