

*C l a s s   A c t i o n   N e w s*



*I s s u e   # 3 4   ~   S u m m e r   2 0 2 4*

< Editor's Note >

It is Summer & Issue #34 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 (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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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 ≈

Spook

Being in a dungeon is said to be  
Conductive to insanity  
By liberal sages.  
"How very wrong" I hum  
My toenails clicking like  
Out of tune castanets  
Upon the damp concrete floor  
"I'm all here"

- Bruce Chester

## Ontario expanding jails by several hundred beds to deal with overflowing institutions

Ontario will add more beds to its beleaguered jails, which are bursting with inmates, Solicitor General Michael Kerzner said Monday.

The province intends to add several hundred spots throughout the system as it grapples with a surge of inmates over the past 18 months.

"We're expanding and building facilities that will help front-line staff to do their jobs safely and effectively while increasing capacity to keep violent and repeat offenders off our streets," Kerzner said.

The province's jail population has spiked recently. Data obtained by The Canadian Press through freedom-of-information laws shows the vast majority of the province's jails are over capacity.

Meanwhile, the province has said 81% of inmates in provincial jails are awaiting trial and presumptively innocent. Those institutions hold people accused of a crime but not out on bail, as well as those serving sentences of two years less a day.

As of Sept. 30, 2023, there was an average of 8,889 people in provincial jails, well over the 7,848-person capacity. Overall, the jails were operating at 113% capacity at that time.

Premier Doug Ford pledged in March to build more jails to deal with an influx of inmates, the vast majority of whom are innocent and awaiting trial.

Ontario will reopen two intermittent detention centres inside Toronto and London jails that had been closed in order to add up to 430 beds by 2026.

The province also intends to hire 200 correctional staff to deal with an influx of inmates, Kerzner said. The province will add 18 new beds at the Quinte Detention Centre in Napanee, Ont., and will add 184 beds to the new Brockville Correctional Complex.

The union representing correctional workers has long called for more staffing, more resources and more mental health support as bursting jails coupled with long-standing staffing shortages have led to a human resources crisis within its ranks.

Correctional workers are increasingly assaulted and both operational stress injuries and post-traumatic stress disorders are on the rise.

Suicides among correctional officers are also increasing, the union has said.

The union applauded the government's expansion plans.

"This investment in staffing and infrastructure is a good example of the type of solutions we need to help keep communities, our staff, and those inside our walls safe," said Chad Oldfield, an OPSEU spokesman and correctional officer, in a statement.

"We recognize the Ontario government's ongoing commitment to support correctional staff and hope to see similar solutions implemented in other areas moving forward."

Maplehurst Correction Complex in Milton, Ont., was the most overcrowded last year, with an average inmate population of 1,188 but official capacity for 887 - meaning it was operating at 134% capacity in 2023.

Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in London, Ont., was a close second at 133% capacity, with an average 471 inmates while having operational capacity for 353.

South West Detention Centre in Windsor, Ont., was operating at 129% capacity, with 337 inmates but space for only 262 people.

The province is currently building a new 345-bed jail in Thunder Bay, Ont., that will replace the current jail and double its capacity, at a cost of \$1.2 billion. The government also plans to build a 235-bed jail in eastern Ontario but that project has met opposition from locals, who don't want to see it built on prime farmland.

Liam Casey

The Canadian Press

Jun 10, 2024



## Putting migrants in federal prisons is unjustified and unjust

Last month, with a single sentence buried in Annex 3 of its latest budget, the federal government shamefully doubled down on rights-violating practices of the Canadian Border Services Agency by expanding immigration detention into federal prisons.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller insisted that prisons would only be used for “a very small segment” of the migrant population, which he described as “not criminals,” but “high-risk” individuals who often have “severe mental health problems.” In fact, the CBSA already has a policy of incarcerating people with “mental health issues” in provincial jails in order to provide “access to specialized care.” As if jail or prison is the right place to get mental health care.

As Member of Parliament Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe stated in a Bloc Quebecois letter to the Trudeau government, “At a time when Canada prides itself on being a welcoming land open to immigrants, locking up immigrants in penitentiary institutions, with no respect for human rights, is nonsense, especially for a G7 country.”

It’s also a violation of international human rights standards, and a betrayal of Canada’s proud reputation as a safe haven for migrants and refugees, to those “fleeing persecution, terror and war,” as our Prime Minister once tweeted.

The CBSA has been undermining that reputation for years. Since 2016, about 45,000 people have been detained in Canada under immigration law. This group has included refugee claimants, children, breast-feeding mothers with infants and people with disabilities. The vast majority had posed no risk to “public safety”: over 90% were incarcerated because the CBSA suspected they may not appear for an immigration proceeding, or because the CBSA was not satisfied with their identity documents. Rather than using more humane (and less expensive) alternatives to detention that allow for people to live in the community, the CBSA opted to detain thousands of migrants, even though every year, the agency monitors thousands of people in the community, and it is rare that any of them abscond.

While fewer than 10% of detentions over the past 8 years involved allegations of public-safety

risk, the CBSA repeatedly cites exceptional cases to justify a broader use of detention. Even accepting the CBSA’s flawed argument, resorting to federal prisons to detain the relatively small number of “public safety” cases is an over-reaction when other, less extreme alternatives are available. The CBSA’s three immigration detention facilities - which were allocated this year to receive \$325-million in upgrades in the budget - operate like medium-security prisons, with constant surveillance, guards and segregation cells.

The CBSA remains the only major law enforcement agency in Canada without independent civilian oversight. (Bill C-20, which would provide for that oversight, has been languishing in Parliament for months.) The unchecked exercise of the CBSA’s broad powers has repeatedly resulted in human rights violations in immigration detention, and investigations have uncovered shocking actions by CBSA officers, including hiding evidence, strategizing to “rattle the cages” of a man with mental health conditions detained for over 5 years, and attempting to carry out deportation using a fraudulently obtained passport. A recent Toronto Star investigation found that an “alarming” number of immigration detainees locked up in Ontario jails had pre-existing mental health conditions.

Immigration detention can be of indefinite duration: there is no time limit imposed by law. People who have committed no crime can sometimes remain there for months or years. Since 2000, at least 17 people have died in immigration detention. At a recent inquest into the death of detainee Abdurahman Hassan, the jury’s first recommendation was to stop the use of jails in detaining migrants.

Following the launch of the #WelcomeToCanada campaign, led by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, all 10 provinces committed to ending the use of provincial jails for immigration detention. In doing so, many provincial officials expressed grave concerns about human rights abuses. Over the past two years, hundreds of lawyers, academic scholars, health care providers, and people from faith-based communities, alongside individuals with experience in immigration detention and dozens of leading Canadian and international organizations, have called on the federal government to end the use of jails for

the purpose of detaining people while their migration requests are under review.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's letter put it this way: "Mr. Minister, I appeal today to your humanity so that your government reconsiders its position and rejects this project, in favour of a more appropriate follow-up to the situation of foreign nationals."

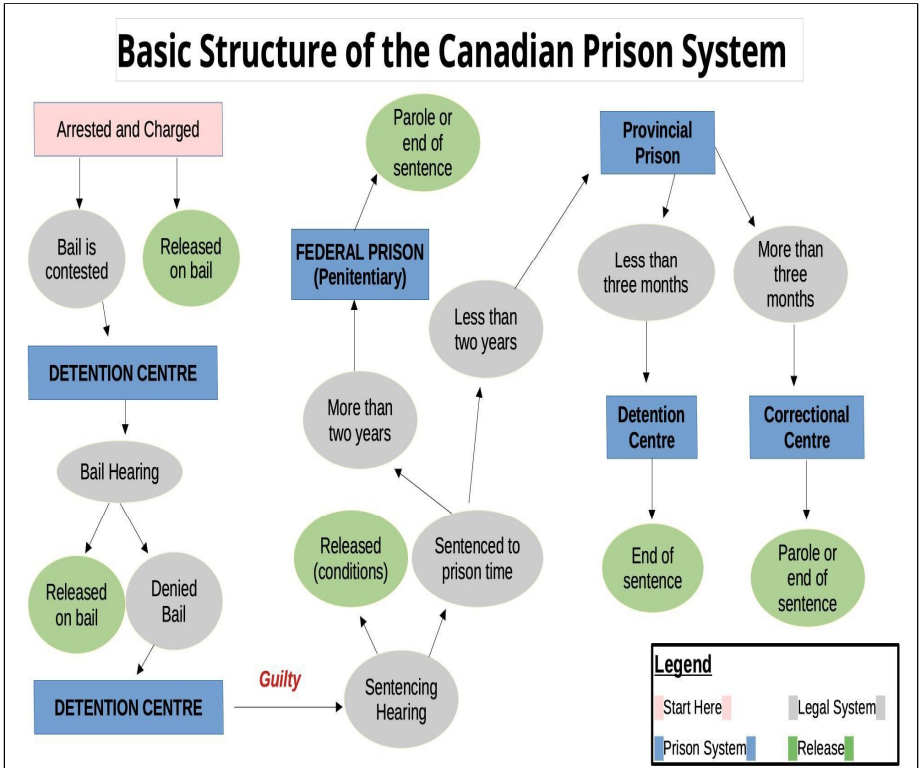
We join in that appeal. Detaining survivors of displacement - especially in prisons - only deepens the trauma that many of them have endured. The road to a welcoming society is not paved with human rights violations. We need to invest in people, not prisons. And it's time the federal government got on board.

Lloyd Axworthy & Allan Rock  
Globe and Mail  
May 6, 2024



A committee takes hours to put into minutes what can be done in seconds.  
- Judy Castrina

Any poor bastard  
Reading this through  
You're up shit creek  
In a barbwire canoe  
- Anon



The violent criminals who suddenly identify as Indigenous once in prison

Canada seems to be overrun with so-called "Pretendians" - people who claim to be Indigenous in order to access some sort of perceived benefit. We're used to seeing Pretendians in places like universities, but the last place you would expect to see them is in Canada's prison system. However, some of Canada's worst criminals are now telling Corrections Canada that they're Indigenous in order to gain access to special, court mandated services for bona fide Indigenous prisoners. These services were created to tackle the worsening problem of Indigenous over-incarceration in Canada - but far from helping Native people, they're helping non-Native organized crime. And the worst part is that Corrections Canada is playing along.

Among those Pretendians are a group of Hell's Angels - the most prominent of which is Normand Marvin "Casper" Ouimet. Ouimet served time for conspiracy to commit murder - he pled down after having been charged with 29 counts of murder back in 2011. Ouimet was a key figure in Quebec's deadly Biker Wars of the 1990s.

In a 2019 interview with LaPresse reporter Isabelle Hachey, Ouimet confessed that he used a long lost Indigenous ancestor as an excuse to get into the Indigenous Program at his prison. Once in that program he was able to access benefits such as private rooms, special meals, and extra visits with loved ones. Most significantly, prisoners in some programs, like Corrections Canada's Indigenous Pathways Program are able to move through their prison term faster and get early release - Ouimet was released to a halfway house earlier this year.

Last Year, the federal prison system oversight body, "The Office of the Correctional Investigator" produced a report which spoke exhaustively about the worsening problem of Indigenous over incarceration rates. It made numerous recommendations on how to fix the problem, including more money for prison staff and facilities, but there were no recommendations about stopping Pretendians from taking over these prison units. Instead, buried at the bottom of the report, was a throwaway section featuring feedback from the Indigenous Elders who work in the prisons.

There, the elders complained again and again about how frauds were making their jobs impossible.

One elder bemoans the conflict caused by having frauds and real Natives side-by-side in the same program: "I'm trying to build a group and everybody's fighting. The French self identifies (sic) are fighting with the real Cree guys." Another elder says that the frauds, the Pretendians, "are just saying they're Indigenous because they want the free buffalo burger once a month."

Ultimately, as with so many Pretendian cases, the issue comes down to "self-identification." Self-identification is when institutions ask people if they're Indigenous or not, and if they say "yes," the institution believes them, with no further questions.

One further question they could ask is for their Indigenous ID - First Nations people are citizens of actual autonomous political entities with governments, called "First Nations," and so they carry ID that identifies them as such.

Asking for ID is how we tell if someone wanting to enter Canada is a citizen or not, and it is the simplest way to determine if someone is really Indigenous. Instead, Corrections Canada takes the word of convicted criminals - it trusts them to tell the truth, after all, why would they lie? Sure there are the private rooms, the buffalo burger, the early release, but other than that, why would a convicted criminal lie?

When I put this problem to the Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections back in February, they replied that they refused to verify claims to Indigenous identity on general principle, saying: "Self-identification is based on an offender's expression of their identity ... As with any other designated group member (persons who self-identify as being of a visible minority group or a person with a disability), there is no expectation of proof. If an inmate identifies as Indigenous, he or she is considered Indigenous. CSC does not monitor or verify this information."

While Corrections Canada ignores the problem, the number of self-identified Indigenous prisoners has increased. In 2021, Indigenous people were reported to be imprisoned at a rate nine times higher than non-Indigenous Canadians, a number which increased by 14% over the previous year. This already large increase was even greater in Ontario, where

Indigenous incarceration grew by 24% in a single year. Does this reflect a surge in Indigenous crime, or a surge in the number of Pretendians accessing Indigenous services in prison? There is evidence to suggest it is the latter. According to anecdotal reports from informants I spoke with within the prison system over the past several months, these frauds may make up more than half of all "Indigenous" prisoners in some prisons.

The effect of the surging numbers of Pretendians in prison is threefold. First the growing numbers of "Indigenous" prisoners are used to convince those in government and the media that the problem of over-incarceration is getting worse. This leads to more money and more resources going to Corrections Canada to solve it. In 2017, the government pledged more than \$50 million dollars on these programs, with an additional \$10 million in each of the following years. And with more resources, it makes becoming a Pretendian even more attractive - creating a vicious, reinforcing circle. Second, real Indigenous people who have actually gone through massive social problems informed me that they can't access Indigenous programs, and when they do, they get in fights with the frauds. Lastly, and maybe worst of all - Corrections Canada, through their indifference or maybe just their laziness are creating an image of Native people as inherently criminal, when in fact what we are is inherently exploitable by criminals and big government.

Think for a moment of the actual mechanics of prison induction: doing psychological testing, handing over your possessions, stripping naked... spreading. Throughout this entire process, would it be so much more invasive to check and see if someone is verifiably Indigenous?

Robert Jago,  
National Post  
Jun 03, 2024

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Prison program offers incarcerated dads valuable lessons on bonding with their kids

*A father of four says it wasn't until he went to prison that he became a consistent presence in his kids' lives.*

While he always loved his kids and wanted to provide for them, he said his approach to fatherhood transformed during his five-and-a-half years behind bars for drug-related crimes.

"I tried to give (my kids) a life I never had, but in doing so I neglected so many other things," the man said in a recent phone interview. The Canadian Press is not identifying him because he fears reprisal from his former associates.

"I started to ask myself: do I want them to remember me for what I bought for them, not what I taught them?" he said.

He's one of nearly 1,000 incarcerated men who've since 2017 gone through the Dad HERO program in Canada, which over the course of eight weeks imparts lessons about how to be a positive presence in their children's lives, both while in prison and when they're out.

The man, now in his mid-30s, said he was only able to start connecting with his kids after he learned more about himself. He got in touch with his Mi'kmaq heritage and spirituality. He came to terms with the tragedies in his life - the alcohol and drug addiction that were pervasive in his childhood home, the death of his brother and a cousin - and recognized the mistakes he made in the aftermath.

"I acknowledged and I took ownership for the things that I did," he said.

That helped him figure out how to relate to his kids, who were dealing with their own hardships in no small part because of his incarceration.

They told him that he had chosen to deal drugs instead of spending time with them - that even before he was incarcerated, he was away for long stretches at a time. He stopped making excuses and let them be mad at him, he said.

"I started to talk to them and relate to them about the things that they were doing and the reason why they were acting out and stuff like that, and letting them know that I was just a soft ear, that they could talk to me. I wasn't there to get mad at them."

He'd already started doing some of that work with his older three kids, who are now teenagers, when he signed up for Dad HERO.

But his relationship with his younger child's mother was strained, and that made it hard for him to father his son. He'd heard that one of the pillars of the program, which is administered by the Canadian Families and Corrections Network and funded entirely by men's health

charity Movember, centred on learning how to co-parent.

He learned how to communicate not only with his son's mother, but also with his boy.

"It was important for me to find out ways to build our bond because I didn't have such a close relationship with him," the man said. "Even just things like, don't ask questions with one-word answers. Tell me three of your favourite foods, and three things you like about those foods. Then it becomes more of a conversation."

Now out of prison, the man said he's proud of how far he's come. Though some of his kids live far away, they have a group chat where they're in daily contact.

Louise Leonardi, executive director of CFCN, said men had been asking her organization for parenting help for years before they were able to get the funding for Dad HERO, which stands for Helping Everyone Realize Opportunities.

The men who had been requesting the program asked not only for parenting tips, but also for information about child development, advice on communicating with co-parents and ways to talk to kids about incarceration.

"As one fellow said to us, kids just need you to be there," Leonardi said. "I think that stands for everyone. But from prison, that means you stay in regular communication, whether it's over the phone or writing letters or having visits if you're allowed. It's just important to keep that bond of communication all of the time."

The program is currently running in 26 sites, with separate locations for the different security levels of some institutions.

Leonardi said the effects of the program go beyond just the relationship between dads and their kids - it helps set the dads up for success in other spheres as well.

"In prison it's so isolating, so depressing," Leonardi said. "The emotional take on a person is very, very hard. So in terms of mental health, building resilience, keeping them strong so when they get out they can do better, they can be with their families."

Nicole Thompson  
The Canadian Press  
Jun 14, 2024

Faqiri family demands apology for Ontario's 'inaction' on inquest

After seven painful years spent calling for accountability, Soleiman Faqiri's family hoped that by now, the province of Ontario would have acted on at least one of the recommendations issued in the inquest into his death at the hands of jail guards.

Instead, they say, there's been radio silence.

In December, a coroner's inquest confirmed what family insisted on all along: that Faqiri's 2016 death at the Central East Correctional Centre was indeed a homicide. Along with that finding came 57 separate recommendations from the coroner's jury - all aimed at preventing anyone with mental illness from dying at an Ontario jail again.

But five months on, the province won't say if it will act on any of those recommendations, including to release a public statement recognizing jails are not an appropriate environment for those with significant mental health issues - something the jury at the coroner's inquest said should be done within 60 days.

Asked about the province's response, Howard Sapers, a former federal correctional investigator and former Ontario independent adviser on correctional reform, was blunt.

"The lack of action is inexcusable," Sapers said.

Faqiri's family agrees and is now demanding an apology from the provincial government, not only for his death, but the government's inaction on the jury's recommendations.

The family held a news conference Thursday morning at Queen's Park, joined by Opposition NDP critic for the attorney general Kristyn Wong-Tam, to call on Premier Doug Ford to respond.

"We want to call out the government for their inaction and their indifference to the lives of the mentally ill," Faqiri's brother, Yusuf, told CBC News. "They're under the expectation, outrageously, that this case will go away. This case will not go away."

Faqiri's mother put it more bluntly.

"They've done nothing. The system has remained the same. Nothing's changed," said Maryam Faqiri. "The truth came out, they killed my son ... And they haven't even said my son's name publicly."



On Wednesday, Wong-Tam tabled a private members' bill in the legislature called the Justice for Soli Act (Stop Criminalizing Mental Health).

The bill would see the provincial government formally recognize that "a correctional facility is not an appropriate environment for a person experiencing a mental health crisis" and "mental illness requires health care and should not be criminalized."

#### State of jails 'ineffective and unsafe':

##### Coroner's Panel

A spokesperson for the Ministry of the Solicitor General told CBC News only that it is "continuing to carefully review the inquest recommendations and will respond to the Office of the Chief Coroner directly." Asked how much longer that review will take, the ministry didn't respond.

Sapers, who testified as a witness at the inquest, said implementing the recommendations would "save lives."

"Even if there are one or two recommendations that need consultation and more thought, I would have expected a signal that Ontario was not happy with the status quo," he said.

The status quo is a criminal justice system struggling to deliver on "basic promises" and "an in-custody reality that in its current state is increasingly both ineffective and unsafe," according to a report published by the Ontario Chief Coroner's expert panel on deaths in provincial custody last year.

The panel found the number of deaths in Ontario jails rose "dramatically" from 19 in 2014 to 25 in 2019 and then nearly doubled to 46 in 2021. Asked for a count of in-custody deaths since then, the province did not respond.

Faqiri, who suffered from schizoaffective disorder - a combination of schizophrenic and bipolar symptoms - was taken into custody on Dec. 4, 2016, after allegedly stabbing a neighbour during what his family has said was a psychotic episode.

He was awaiting a mental health assessment at the Central East Correctional Centre when he died face down on a cell floor, after guards punched and struck him repeatedly, pepper sprayed him twice, covered him with a spit hood and left him shackled.

The long-awaited inquest into Faqiri's death took place in late 2023 and pulled back the curtain

on what was described to jurors as a broken system, plagued by a lack of training and staff, tensions around different layers of management and an overreliance on segregation.

Corrections staff, health-care staff and management all recognized the 30-year-old was in crisis, the jury heard. Yet despite ministry policy, he was never taken to hospital or seen by a psychiatrist.

#### 'People keep dying, predictably and preventably'

While non-binding, the recommendations stemming from his death gave the province a "realistic, immediate action plan to prevent the next predictable death of someone in a mental health crisis" in corrections, said lawyer Anita Szigeti, who represented the mental health advocacy organization Empowerment Council during the inquest.

By now, Szigeti said, the province could have easily acted on "cost-neutral" recommendations, including committing to independent oversight of provincial jails, reviewing use-of-force options - particularly when it comes to people in crisis - and ending the use of spit hoods.

As recently as April, Szigeti points out, another man with a mental illness died in an Ontario jail - while the province continues to "review" recommendations made months ago. Ibrahim Ali's family spoke to The Globe and Mail about his condition earlier this month.

"The Coroner's motto is, 'We speak for the dead to protect the living,'" said Szigeti. "The Government of Ontario is not listening. They're plugging their ears and humming to avoid having to confront the reality that vulnerable people keep dying, predictably and preventably." Following the inquest, Faqiri's family also hoped Ontario Provincial Police might reopen their investigation into his death. A finding of homicide at an inquest does not carry any criminal liability, however the force could have chosen to reinvestigate based on information presented to the jury.

Asked about that possibility, the OPP told CBC News its investigation ended in 2020. "If new information were to come to light, the OPP would review that information to determine whether further investigation is warranted," said spokesperson Gosia Puzio.

For Faqiri's family, action on the recommendations can't come soon enough, his brother said.

"All of us have a stake when individuals have a mental illness," said Yusuf.

"These are human beings and their lives are being lost because of uninformed policy decisions or because of lack of resources. How many more inquests do we need until the system transforms?"

Shanifa Nasser  
CBC News  
May 16, 2024

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### 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:

Trans+ Prison Project  
Chair in Transgender Studies  
University of Victoria  
PO Box 3050 STN CSC  
Victoria BC V8W 3P5

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### Prison Health is Public Health:

*The Right to Hepatitis C Prevention, Diagnosis, and Care in Canada's Correctional Settings*

#### About Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a preventable and curable liver infection. It is the leading cause of liver disease and transplantation, and one of the most burdensome infectious diseases in Canada. HCV spreads through contact with infected blood, but symptoms may be delayed for years, so many people who are infected are unaware. The only way to confirm a chronic HCV infection is through a blood test.

#### Hepatitis C Elimination is Within Canada's Reach

Progress in treating HCV is one of the great medical breakthroughs of our time, making elimination possible. Direct Acting Antivirals (DAAs) are a new generation of medications for treating HCV infection. These new therapies are highly effective, curing HCV infection in more than 95% of people treated with daily pills in as little as 8-12 weeks, with minimal side effects.

#### Canada's Promise

In May 2016, the first-ever Global Viral Hepatitis Strategy was endorsed by the 194

Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO), with the goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. As a Member State, Canada signed onto this strategy and endorsed the targets contained within it. The WHO strategy includes specific targets, and all countries were tasked with developing a National Action Plan to meet these targets. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) responded by publishing the Pan-Canadian framework for action to reduce the health impact of Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections (STBBIs) in 2018 and the Government of Canada five-year action plan on STBBIs in 2019.

### Why Focus on Correctional Settings?

People who are incarcerated (PWA) are 40 times more likely to be exposed to HCV than Canada's general population. In addition, people who are released from incarceration often face barriers to accessing health care in the community. The delivery of HCV care to people in correctional settings in Canada is essential to HCV elimination.

#### Current State:

##### Federal - YES !!!

Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) could be well-positioned to achieve HCV elimination in people incarcerated within federal Canadian correctional institutions by 2030, with best practices such as universal HCV screening, universal access to treatment, and some harm reduction services available.

##### Provincial/Territorial - NO !!!

The same standard of health care is not available to people in correctional centres as in the community in any province, and significant disparities in HCV care exist across provincial correctional centres. HCV elimination is unlikely to occur in the Canadian provincial/territorial prison system by 2030.

[www.actionhepatitiscanada.ca/prisonhealth](http://www.actionhepatitiscanada.ca/prisonhealth)

Nobody is going to pour truth into your brain.

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

- Noam Chomsky

### Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

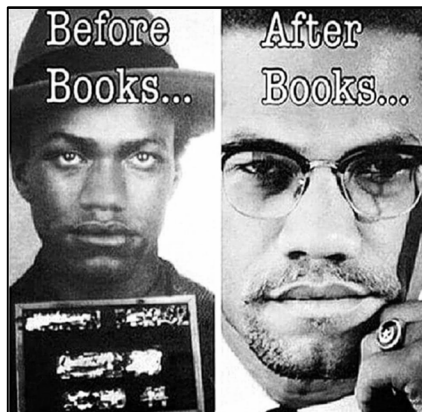
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

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

Society is like a stew,  
if you don't keep it stirred  
all the scum settles on the top.

- Edward Abbey

## 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 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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!**  
234-110 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](http://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.

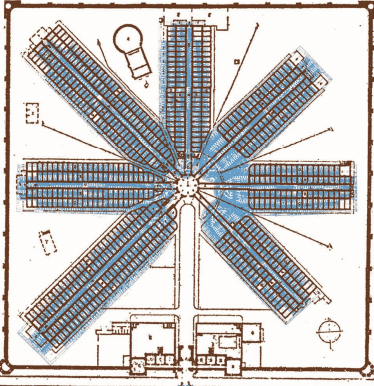
Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

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

[info.kipcanada@gmail.com](mailto:info.kipcanada@gmail.com)

or by phone at: 416-505-5333

# PRISONS



# SLAVE SHIPS



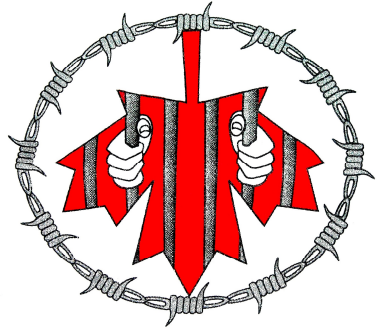
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**SOLITARY  
CONFINEMENT**

IS

**TORTURE**



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Next Issue: #35 - Fall 2024

Deadline: Sep 1, 2024  
Mail-out: Oct 1, 2024

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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 !

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