

CLASS ACTION! NEWS



< ISSUE #36 >

WINTER 2024-25

< Editor's Note >

It is Winter & Issue #36 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: Charles K. & She!

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 ≈

Fighting crime by building more jails is like fighting cancer by building more cemeteries.

- Paul Kelly

Do not judge me by my successes,
judge me by how many times I fell down & got back up again.

- Nelson Mandela

Jury in coroner's inquest recommends 66 changes to prevent future deaths at Niagara Detention Centre

The coroner's inquest into the deaths of five men at the Niagara Detention Centre (NDC) ended with the jury making 66 recommendations aimed at preventing future deaths.

Timothy Anderson, Murray Balogh, David Cowe, Michael Croft and Jahrell Lungs all died of drug-related causes between 2018 and 2022.

Because they were incarcerated, inquests into their deaths are mandatory.

The non-binding recommendations are addressed to Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General, which oversees the province's correctional services, and the NDC. They include adopting harm-reduction principles, implementing 24-hour nursing services, abandoning zero-tolerance policies for drug use, continuously monitoring patients at risk of overdosing, and increasing access to naloxone, which can reverse the effects of opioid overdoses.

"The ministry thanks the Coroner's Jury for their recommendations," spokesperson Brent Ross told CBC Hamilton in an email. He did not address any specific recommendations, saying officials will review and respond to them "within the required six-month response period."

For about three weeks, the inquest, which the Ontario chief coroner's office held virtually, heard from workers and managers at the jail, as well as medical experts. Each witness answered questions from lawyers who work for the coroner, then from those representing the solicitor general's ministry, the Prison Harm Reduction Coalition, and two doctors, who served as witnesses. The Prison Harm Reduction Coalition represents Niagara community organizations advocating for the incarcerated and also those who use drugs.

Members of Anderson's and Balogh's families were party to the inquest and could ask questions through its lawyers.

Afterwards, jurors answered a series of factual questions about how the men died. On the causes of death, their verdict mirrored an agreed statement of facts read at the start of the inquest. It found that Cowe died of drug poisoning and the rest of the men due to drug

toxicity. All the deaths were accidental, the jury found.

Inquest juries are encouraged, but not required, to make recommendations. The Ontario chief coroner's office says on its website that it follows up with recipients within six months to indicate if recommendations were implemented, and if not, why.

Recommendations include all-day nursing. Many of the recommendations reflect topics discussed in detail during the inquest.

For example, one was to implement and recruit for 24-hour nursing services at NDC. Patrick Sproat, deputy superintendent of the facility in Thorold, Ont., told the inquest that not having 24-hour health-care staffing can lead to delays in accessing inmates' health records.

Sproat also answered several questions about possibly adopting "Good Samaritan principles," through which inmates could share information about drug use in the facility without fear of punishment.

Generally, Sproat said, NDC security staff do not want people to get in trouble for trying to help. However, in some cases, they must report or act on incidents, and there can be negative consequences for inmates.

Along those lines, the jury said the ministry should abandon zero-tolerance policies for drug use.

Jury says ministry should consider making naloxone available in cells

Pending 24-hour nursing staff implementation, the jury recommended a roster of on-call nurses. They also suggested that correctional staff could check on inmates readmitted from hospital after an overdose or suspected overdose every 20 minutes until a health-care worker could do so. Lungs died of drug toxicity at the NDC, following a hospital visit due to a suspected overdose. He had refused treatment at the hospital, and was not reassessed at the detention centre once he was readmitted.

Jurors also recommended the ministry and institution study the "feasibility and benefits" of directly providing naloxone spray for people in custody, including within locked cells.

Justin Chandler
CBC News
Nov 13, 2024

Ontario inmates at 'extremely high risk' of death from opioids

Incarcerated individuals in Ontario are about 30 times more likely to die of opioid toxicity than people who aren't imprisoned, an emergency room doctor and researcher told the coroner's inquest into six drug-related deaths at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre.

Pointing to a study she helped conduct, Dr. Claire Bodkin told the inquest that between 2015 and 2020, 8,460 people in Ontario died from opioid toxicity. About 26% of them were incarcerated at some point during that period.

"That was certainly higher than I expected," Bodkin said, and shows people in provincial jails are at "extremely high risk" of an opioid-related death.

Bodkin, also a part-time professor, works with organizations including McMaster University, Hamilton Health Sciences and the Hamilton Social Medicine Response Team. She's among about 15 witnesses who were set to testify before the inquest, which began Monday and is examining the deaths of Jason Archer, Paul Debien, Nathaniel Golden, Igor Petrovic, Christopher Johnny Sharp and Robert Soberal. Inmates need to be set up for success, doctor says

"Prison health is public health," Bodkin told the inquest at the start of her testimony.

In provincial jails, where the average stay is two to three months, she said, inmates interact with people in the community. They need to receive support in prison and be set up for success when they're discharged, she added.

Upon request from the coroner's office, Bodkin delivered a presentation on opioid deaths of inmates, the complexities of delivering health care in prisons, treatment for people with addictions and preventing overdoses.

The inquest is mandatory under Ontario law because the men died while incarcerated. Through examining witnesses, analyzing official records and seeking testimony from experts, the jury seeks to determine how the men died and may make non-binding recommendations to prevent similar deaths.

When someone is incarcerated, Bodkin said, the person should have immediate access to opioid agonist therapy, a medical treatment for people dependent on opioids. She said she's currently

not aware of any data on how many people in Ontario jails need that treatment.

Bodkin said there also needs to be back-end work to ensure people discharged from prison know where to access further treatment and their health-care providers can verify when they had their last dose of medication.

Providing that continuity is "a big challenge," she said, adding that while she knows to call the jail health-care team to verify patients' past treatment, not every doctor does.

Bodkin noted her research shows the risk of death from opioid toxicity is notably high for people released from prison. The study looking at 2015 to 2020 found about 11% of individuals who experienced incarceration and died from opioid toxicity died within two weeks of release.

Early in the week, the jury heard the six men at the centre of the inquest received varying forms of health care, much of it related to drug addiction.

Bodkin said prisoners also have high rates of chronic diseases, childhood trauma and brain injuries, which should all factor into the care they receive.

She also told the inquest that harm reduction is as important as treatment.

"Clinically, we don't think about these as two separate things. We think about them as a spectrum of options."

Harm reduction means recognizing people will use drugs even when they're told not to, and to try to "reduce the health impacts, the social impacts and the legal impacts," of doing so, Bodkin said.

Examples include checking the content of street drugs to know what's in them, and providing clean needles and drug paraphernalia to reduce the risk of infection.

There are limited harm reduction pilots underway in the federal corrections system, Bodkins said, and she'd heard good things about a project in which inmates can use drugs under medical supervision.

Bodkins said on principle, she would recommend that and further measures, such as prisons providing access to clean drug-use equipment and naloxone, which reduces the effects of opioid overdoses.

The availability of naloxone in prisons came up in a 2018 inquest into deaths at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre. It also arose

during the recent inquest into five deaths at the Niagara Detention Centre. Inmates do not have direct access to naloxone in either jail.

In the Niagara inquest, Patrick Sproat, deputy superintendent of the facility, said he worried that if inmates were to have independent access to naloxone, they may choose not to report overdoses to staff and instead try to treat them themselves.

On Thursday, Jerry Wu of the John Howard Society of Canada - which advocates for the incarcerated - told Bodkin that's a common argument against increasing naloxone access in prisons.

"I don't think it's a good argument," Bodkin said, adding it would be better to address the reasons why people don't come forward.

In response to questions from Wu and Vilko Zbogor, who represents the Prison Harm Reduction Coalition, Bodkin said the sooner naloxone is administered, the better. She said it's easy to use and there is minimal risk of misuse or harm.

In at least four of the deaths under investigation, the men received naloxone. That often occurred within five to 10 minutes of a corrections worker responding.

In addition to lawyers for the coroner's office, Wu and Zbogor, several people are allowed to question witnesses, including the families of Sharp and Soberal. The five jurors may also ask witnesses questions.

Earlier this week, the inquest heard from corrections consultant Andrea Monteiro, who created a report that will serve as a basis of fact for the hearings. She analyzed thousands of institutional records and created a timeline of events around the men's death.

Two senior jail officials have been witnesses so far, as has a psychiatrist at the jail. Health-care managers and workers at the detention centre are set to speak in the coming days.

The virtual inquest is being broadcast publicly. Dr. John Carlisle is the presiding officer.

Justin Chandler
CBC News
Nov 30, 2024

Are the prisons over-populated,
or is the population over-imprisoned?
- Michel Foucault



The first step in fighting injustice is to make it visible.

Civil disobedience becomes a sacred duty when the state becomes lawless or corrupt.

What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or in the holy name of liberty and democracy?

- Mahatma Gandhi

But, that's the whole point of corporatization - to try to remove the public from making decisions over their own fate, to limit the public arena, to control opinion, to make sure that the fundamental decisions that determine how the world is going to be run - which includes production, commerce, distribution, thought, social policy, foreign policy, everything - are not in the hands of the public, but rather in the hands of highly concentrated private power. In effect, tyranny unaccountable to the public.

- Noam Chomsky

The real thieves, sir,
are those who keep us in here.

- Unknown

HMP inmates denied medical attention, rehab programs due to staff shortages

A collection of emails about staff shortages at Newfoundland and Labrador's largest corrections facility reveals the far-ranging chaos caused by the lack of officers to guard over inmates, including allegations of denied medical attention and cancelled rehabilitation and educational programs.

CBC News obtained those emails, dating back nearly two years, through an access-to-information request. They paint a picture of a prison that's struggling to remain operational — and in some cases, isn't.

Severe shortages of guards at Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's have prompted prison-wide lockdowns for days on end, repeatedly, in recent years.

In one email about those lockdowns, sent in July to Supt. Dan Chafe, one HMP supervisor said 14 of the prison's 29 guards weren't able to work, leaving nearly half of the necessary position unfilled. Eleven of those 14 were on sick leave that day, the supervisor said.

The documents show officials noting extended periods of leave among guards, with one email identifying 22 guards as having "significant leave usage."

The ongoing problem of daily absences is directly affecting inmates. In another email, sent in February to Justice Minister John Hogan, a non-profit worker said she had received several phone calls from inmates claiming they were being denied medical attention because of them. She said one inmate had had a broken wrist for six weeks.

"The bone is literally sticking out," she wrote.

That complaint was forwarded to the Justice Department's assistant deputy minister, Lorelei Roberts, who said trailers were brought on-site to help with space issues. Roberts's response didn't address why inmates were allegedly being denied care.

Roberts also said in an email to the senior director of corrections health services, Krista Wade, that programming is often cancelled to allow guards to escort inmates to medical appointments.

Wade noted dental appointments are also on the chopping block when the prison is short-staffed.

"These are frequently cancelled due to staffing issues at HMP," she wrote in an email on Feb. 21.

Roberts explained in a follow-up email that staff shortages are caused by a number of things, including officers "providing inmate transportation, sick calls, inmate compatibility issues, and hospitalizations, which require 24/7 correctional officer coverage."

"Medical services are prioritized by the correctional officers, [and] programming is often cancelled to allow for staffing allotments to accommodate medical appointments," wrote Roberts.

Programming cancelled

The lack of guards is also affecting how often inmates can complete programming.

Workers with Alcoholics Anonymous and the John Howard Society, an inmate advocacy group, have also complained about being turned away at the door due to lockdowns.

"Volunteers at HMP have experienced a lot of cancellations of meetings over the past several months," said Susan Green, the Justice Department's provincial manager of institutional programs, in an email sent in October 2023.

Green also noted the prison's library often remains inaccessible to inmates when under lockdown.

She also says there have been disruptions to education services, including adult basic education, literacy skills and GED preparation support, caused by a lack of guards and the last contractual teacher's unexpected leave of absence.

The emails show inmates also complained about dirty laundry, with several inmates saying they'd gone two weeks without clean clothes this summer because of staff shortages.

Lockdowns have also meant a lack of recreation at the facility. Earlier this year, a Justice Department spokesperson told CBC News inmates had participated in outdoor recreation a total of eight times between June and September.

The emails note steps the department has taken to relieve pressure on the prison roster, acknowledging last December that shortages have disrupted "the delivery of the programs designed to reduce recidivism and promote recovery."

It explains efforts officials made before 2024 to address the shortages, which includes hiring 44 correctional officers.

They also detail plans to improve "staff morale" and enhance health and safety measures. Officials discussed offering incentives for overtime, implementing a one-time retention bonus and establishing a wellness committee, as well as procuring "adjustable ergonomic seating for staff within all control rooms of HMP."

Abby Cole
CBC News
Nov 15, 2024

Canada prisons fail to follow solitary confinement rules

The special units replacing solitary confinement in Canada's prisons disproportionately house Black and Indigenous inmates and those with mental illness, and most inmates are not getting the required minimum four hours outside their cell, a report found.

Why It's Important

Canada created "structured intervention units" in 2019 to replace "administrative segregation," the Canadian government's version of solitary confinement, which court rulings found violated inmates' fundamental rights.

Under revised legislation the units were only to be used as a last resort. There were to be more checks on their use and a minimum number of hours for inmates to spend outside of their cells. That is not happening, this latest report, published on Friday, found.

Key Quotes

These units "are not working as intended, and as will be demonstrated in this report, they are also not improving. The problems are fundamental, not peripheral," the report, by an independent advisory panel, found.

The Correctional Service of Canada is researching "the operational dynamics and conditions of confinement" in prisons with these special units and is building an action plan to address the overrepresentation of Black people, Indigenous people and people with mental illness, Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc said in a statement.

By The Numbers

The report finds about 40% of structured intervention unit stays are over one month.

Indigenous people comprise 5% of Canada's population, 32.7% of the federal prisoner population and 44.2% of people in structured intervention units.

Black people, who comprise 4.3% of Canada's population and 9% of the federal prison population, make up 16.3% of the structured intervention unit population.

People with mental health needs comprise 19.8% of the prison population and 37.1% of the special unit population.

Black and Indigenous people spend longer in these cells. And people with mental illness are more likely to have multiple stays. At the same time, prisoners in these cells are not getting the specialized programming they need.

Anna Mehler Paperny
Reuters
Oct 4, 2024

An Addict, Addicted to Addiction

I came from a long line of sadness
And mental disease

Honestly I don't know any better
It becomes essential to me

My mother, my father, my sister, my brother
All of them have it, it's a sickness man, a
bummer

But really is it I wonder, 'cause to me it's been a
conundrum

We're sick & we love it, can't wait to use again
It's like being kicked in the stomach

We love to witness destruction
But can't admit this dysfunction

It's funny, we all start using for something
But won't quit it for nothing

It's like a prison we're stuck in
Sometimes it's hard to live with this judgment

Don't give up your wisdom for drugs
I've been there, did it, lived it & loved it

Just don't forget what I said
This ain't the end of the discussion

We all have cuts, scrapes, & scars
But at least we can always mend a concussion

- D-Linkwent

Ontario's closure of youth detention facilities has not resulted in more support for young people

The Ontario government said it would save \$40 million per year by closing 26 youth detention centres in 2021, with promises to use those savings to support community services for youth. Framed as a cost-savings strategy aligned with the objectives of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the money saved through the closures would be reinvested in community-based services and alternatives to youth detention.

Since these closures, however, there has been no government reporting on where or when this \$40 million will be reinvested. Meanwhile, organizations that serve youth report ongoing resource constraints.

The closure of youth detention centres is a positive development. However, without adequate investment in community organizations that serve youth, it is a move set up to fail.

Youth detention in Ontario

Between 2018 and 2022, youth imprisonment numbers fell by around 50% in Ontario. That continued a longer trend which has seen youth detention numbers fall by over 85% over a 25-year period from 1997 to 2022. There has also been a recent uptick in youth imprisonment numbers, increasing from 9,654 in 2021-22 to 10,960 in 2022-23.

Currently, Ontario's youth prisons are at overcapacity, and the Sudbury youth detention centre is set to close next year.

Several of the 26 youth detention centres that were closed were situated in northern Ontario. The Ontario Ombudsman, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Grand Council Treaty #3 have said the abrupt closures would disproportionately impact Indigenous youth in detention.

Community organizations overwhelmed

We have examined the annual reports for 2019-24 from 46 organizations serving youth in the justice system from Kenora, Thunder Bay and Kingston where a significant number of the youth detention closures occurred.

While many community organizations believe closing detention centres is a good long-term decision, there are many immediate concerns. We found consistent reporting of limited funding to support all youth in need.

Organizations are impacted by record-high numbers of youth seeking access to services, with some organizations seeing a significant increase in the number of youth accessing their services - especially mental health programs. This has resulted in some organizations increasing the hours and days they are open to accommodate as many youth as possible, while also balancing staff burnout.

Organizations did not report any substantial increase in funds from the government due to the closure of youth detention centres. Some noted challenges around fundraising, as many events were put on hold during the pandemic. This has resulted in organizations being unable to hire new staff or increase their services. In some cases this has also led to staff layoffs.

Investing in community

Deinstitutionalization refers to the period when institutions that housed or confined people with mental, cognitive, intellectual and physical disabilities were shut down, and people were released to live in communities.

However, this process is often not met with sufficient funding for social supports. Inevitably, more people struggling with mental health end up in hospital emergency departments and in conflict with the law. This shift in responsibility has been referred to as transinstitutionalization.

We have written about these trends in Ontario following the 2021 youth detention centre closures. Many of the young people in these centres struggle with mental health issues, neurodivergence and addictions.

Significant investments in community supports are needed. Otherwise, many youth will continue to be funneled into other institutions, including hospitals and adult prisons.

Since 2009, Ontario has seen a significant increase in hospital emergency room visits for mental health or substance-related concerns, especially among 14–21 year olds. Mental illness and drug dependence are some of the most prevailing health problems for criminalized Canadians. In a study of 1,770 young people in Québec, researchers found those struggling with alcohol or drugs and familial problems are more likely to face re-imprisonment.

Helping youth in detention

In 2023, a justice centre was opened in Kenora, and in 2024, funding was announced for child

and youth mental health in Ontario. Yet, more support is needed. In many northern, rural and remote communities, services for children and youth with intensive needs simply do not exist.

Youth face a number of additional barriers accessing support and treatment. These include long wait lists, overemphasis on illness-based and medical models, fragmented services, lack of developmentally and culturally appropriate services, and support that fails to consider the preferences and perspectives of youth and families.

Strains on youth community supports are also felt in other provinces. Researchers interviewed youth justice community workers in Alberta who reported inadequate funding with impacts on resources for youth, including psychological support and the ability for staff to give enough attention and time to youth. Conditions also lead to staff burnout and exit from the sector altogether.

The move to shift youth in the justice system away from confinement and towards community is a positive one. However, without investment in community-based service providers to support youth being transitioned out of custodial settings, it is unlikely that youth will thrive.

Such failures are likely to increase acute mental health crises and demands on ambulatory care within general medicine and psychiatric hospitals. These gaps are also likely to increase the number of youth who will come into conflict with the criminal legal system as adults.

Jessica Evans, Hannah Zur, Linda Mussell

The Conversation

Sep 24, 2024

Cruel and Unusual: As “draconian” solitary confinement continues, Corrections, Minister and Government fail to heed Senate committee recommendations

The Senate Committee on Human Rights condemns the refusal of the government to stop prison practices that courts have found to be “draconian” and “cruel and unusual” despite a landmark Senate report on federal prison conditions and another scathing review from the federal government’s own advisors.

The committee is profoundly disturbed by the federal government’s apparent indifference to

the continued use of solitary confinement in Canada’s prisons and dismayed by the government’s unwillingness to take responsibility for perpetuating these practices.

In response to appellate court decisions in Ontario and British Columbia, the government claimed to put an end to the practice of solitary confinement - known as administrative segregation - with the creation of structured intervention units (SIUs) in 2019, which supposedly guaranteed prisoners basic levels of care, human contact and time outside of their cell.

The third annual report of the government’s Structured Intervention Unit Advisory Panel, released in July 2024, came to the same conclusion as their previous reports: “SIUs are not addressing the problems they were designed to address.” The panel found “no meaningful or consistent improvements in operations over four years.”

Since the release of its own report in June 2021, Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons, the committee has sought a meaningful federal response to the many abusive and discriminatory practices it identified over five years of study. Rule 12-23 (1) of the Rules of the Senate allows the Senate to request “a complete and detailed response” from the government to a committee report adopted by the Senate. The government must respond within 150 days or explain why it couldn’t.

When Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc released the initial government response to the committee’s study, a number of recommendations were only partially or inadequately addressed, while many others were completely ignored. The Correctional Investigator of Canada subsequently told the committee the response was “not proportionate to the gravity of the findings” made in the report.

Despite agreeing to meet with the committee, Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc subsequently declined to meet with the committee to discuss the government’s response. The committee is also disappointed that Justice Minister Arif Virani and former government leader Steven MacKinnon have not responded to recommendations relating to their areas of responsibility.

The committee turned to the Prime Minister for a more robust response but received a scant,

four-paragraph note in which he referred the committee back to the Minister of Public Safety. As the vast majority of prisoners will be released, perpetuating practices that actively impede rehabilitation and community integration constitutes a real risk to public safety. The government's inadequate response and the relevant ministers' unwillingness to defend it shows that the government is unconcerned with public safety, indifferent to the routine violations of human rights in Canada's penitentiaries, and contemptuous of the parliamentarians and witnesses who contributed to this study.

Quick Facts

- The committee's June 2021 report, *Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons*, was the product of a marathon endeavour that took senators on fact-finding missions to penitentiaries across the country. Launched in 2016, the study saw more than 150 witnesses give evidence; the final report made 71 recommendations aimed at stemming abusive and discriminatory practices that dehumanize prisoners and inhibit their rehabilitation and community integration.
- In the government's response to the report, at least 18 of the report's 71 recommendations were not addressed at all, while others were bundled together in a manner that hid whether they were truly being addressed. The committee urges cabinet to produce a detailed response to each recommendation that would include the government's position on each recommendation, an explanation for its position and, where applicable, a timeline for action.
- Racialized people are overrepresented in the federal correctional system. Despite representing just 5% of the Canadian population, Indigenous Peoples account for more than 32% of the people serving federal sentences and 50% of federally sentenced women are Indigenous. Similarly, Black people account for 4.3% of Canada's population but about 9% of the federally sentenced population.

Senate Committee on Human Rights
Oct 24, 2024

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to Hear Historic Case for Deaf People in Prison

Beginning on October 15, 2024, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal will hear a historic case about the rights of Deaf people in federal prison.

It is widely acknowledged that Deaf people in prison face extreme isolation, which has severe psychological effects and makes it much harder for them to access and succeed on parole. Correctional Service Canada ("CSC") currently has no policy outlining how they will accommodate people with disabilities in prison, and in particular people who are Deaf. They also have no policy on when ASL interpreters will be provided, leaving many Deaf people in prison without access to effective communication. Further, the Video Relay Service ("VRS"), which is how Deaf people in the community use the telephone, is not available in prison. Instead, Deaf people in federal prison use teletypewriter ("TTY"), a cumbersome and outdated technology that often scrambles messages.

This human rights case is brought by a Deaf Métis man who experienced intense isolation in federal prison due to CSC's failure to provide sufficient access to ASL interpreters and access to VRS. This failure interfered with his ability to maintain contact with his family, receive medical services, take part in Indigenous cultural and spiritual practices, work with prison staff, succeed in the community, communicate with legal counsel, and participate in the daily life of prison. Dr. Debra Russell, the honorary president of the World Sign Language Interpreters Association, will provide expert testimony during the hearing.

Jennifer Metcalfe, Executive Director of Prisoners' Legal Services ("PLS"), states: "CSC has a duty to accommodate Deaf people in prison. It must immediately take steps to ensure that Deaf and hard of hearing people have adequate access to ASL interpreters, and it must implement VRS in prisons across the country."

The Complainant is represented by Brodie Noga and Katie Ussher of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt and Jessica Magonet and Lisa Crossley of PLS.

Prisoners' Legal Services (PLS)
Oct 11, 2024

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

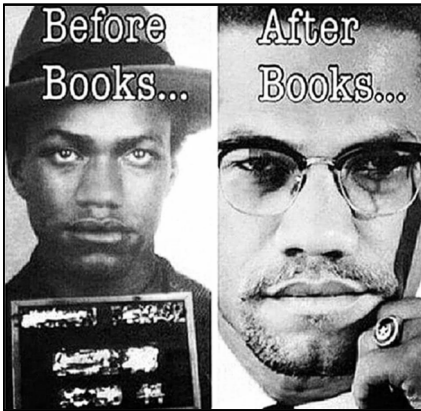
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

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

If you want to know how many prison cells to build, look at the number of third graders who can't read.

- Mary Landrieu

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.

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. We will use a pseudonym (fake name) when quoting people or mentioning the stories that are shared with us.

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, UVic

PO Box 3050 STN CSC

Victoria BC V8W 3P5



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.

Hep 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

Doing 2yrs less? So, when you get out:

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

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 - Wed 9 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!
234-110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

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

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

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

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

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

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

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

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

The Need

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

The Impact

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

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

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

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

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

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

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

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

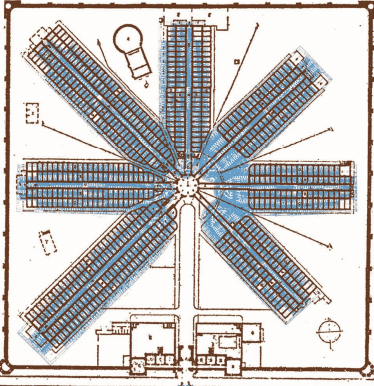
Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

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

info.kipcanada@gmail.com

or by phone at: 416-505-5333

PRISONS



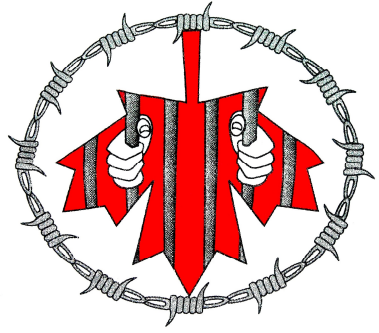
SLAVE SHIPS



ON DRY LAND



**SOLITARY
CONFINEMENT
IS
TORTURE**



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Next Issue: #37 - Spring 2025

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Mail-out: Apr 1, 2025

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 !



POB39P M5S2S6