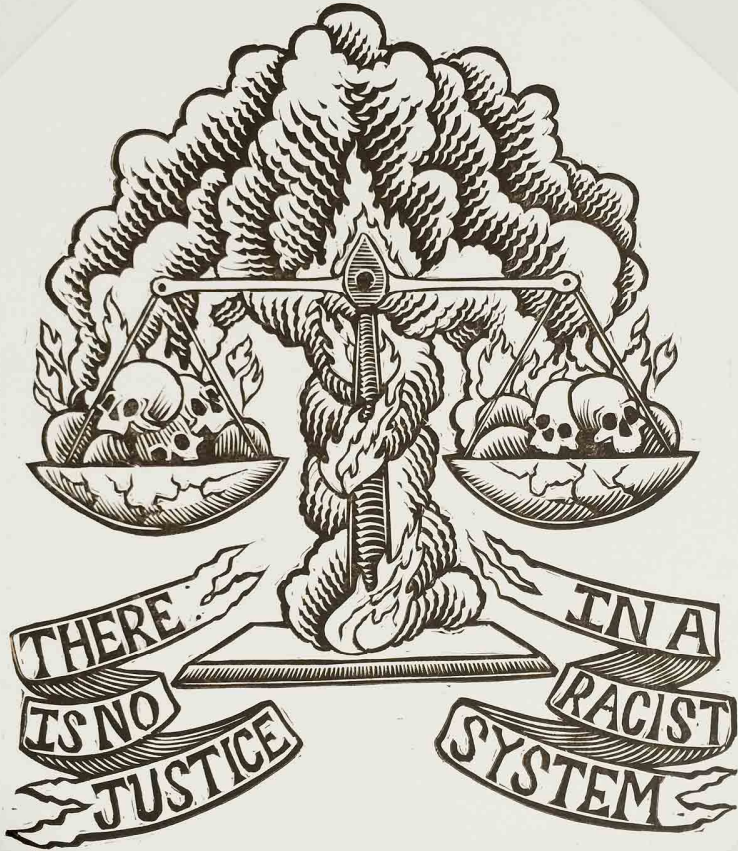


# CLASS ACTION! NEWS



< ISSUE #37 >  
SPRING 2025

< Editor's Note >

It is Spring & Issue #37 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 (CDN) will receive a \$25 donation.

Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 325 words max). For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous' unless requested.

'Class Action News' is published 4 times a year & is free for prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or an organization, please do consider a donation. It really, really does help to get this inside!

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Cover: Roger Peet



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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 ≈

A month-long stay:

- ... in a hospital can cost more than \$13,500;
- ... in a prison, more than \$4,000;
- ... in a shelter, more than \$2,000;
- ... in supportive housing, just \$600.

## Federal government trying to stop class action by imprisoned migrants

The Trudeau government has appealed an Ontario court's decision to approve a class action representing thousands of incarcerated immigrants.

Last July, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice gave the green light to a lawsuit filed on behalf of 8,360 people who were detained in 87 provincial and territorial jails by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) between 2016 and 2023. The migrants were not accused of any crime.

"Immigration detainees were incarcerated in provincial prisons and encountered the same conditions as criminal inmates, including comingling with violent offenders, use of restraints such as shackles and handcuffs, strip searches, and severe restrictions on contact and movement," wrote Justice Benjamin Glustein.

But lawyers for the federal government allege the judge "erred in law" when he determined there are grounds for a class action claiming negligence and violations of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, according to documents filed in court in August, and which Radio-Canada has just been made aware of.

According to federal lawyers, the jail conditions experienced by migrants were "mischaracterized" as "penal and punitive."

They argue principles pertaining to duty of care and Charter rights were therefore misapplied by the judge. For instance, they deny that the imprisonment of migrants for administrative reasons contravenes the Charter, which prohibits arbitrary imprisonment as well as cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

No date has been set for an appeal hearing, when the appeal court will determine if the class action can proceed or not.

### Repeatedly strip-searched

Among the plaintiffs involved in the class action is Tyrone Richard, originally from Grenada. Even though he was not considered dangerous, Richard spent 18 months in three different maximum-security jails in Ontario from January 2015 to July 2016.

Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, CBSA can detain foreign nationals if it believes their identity hasn't been well enough established, if they're deemed a danger to the public or if they're considered a flight risk,

meaning the border agency believes they won't appear for immigration processes including removal.

Richard was held as a flight risk. While in jail, he was subjected to dozens of strip searches.

"I was required to strip off my clothes, turn around, bend over, spread my buttocks, and undergo an inspection of my anus by a guard with a flashlight, and to undergo a visual inspection under and next to my genitals," Richard swore in his affidavit. "I would describe my life in prison as a living hell, where I cried almost every day."

### Most provinces withdrew

Previously, CBSA could send detainees to one of its three immigration holding centres, or to jails across the country under agreements with provincial governments.

Since 2022, however, most provinces have withdrawn from these agreements, with some saying imprisonment for immigration purposes contravenes Canada's human rights obligations.

The practice remains in effect in Ontario, the province with the largest number of immigration detainees. Newfoundland and Labrador has indicated its intention to stop incarcerating migrants on behalf of CBSA as of March 31.

In reaction to the withdrawal of most provinces, the federal government has announced that starting this year it will use its penitentiary in Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, Que., for what it calls "high-risk immigration detainees".

Organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have been calling on Canada to end the detention of migrants.

Brigitte Bureau

CBC News

Jan 17, 2025



California depends on prison labour to deal with climate disasters:

Canada must avoid a similar model

As wildfires continue to burn in and around Los Angeles, the fact that many of the firefighters battling the blazes are inmates from California's prison system has drawn significant attention in news coverage.

While the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) claims their fire camp program is voluntary and provides prisoners with meaningful opportunities, research demonstrates otherwise.

Critics, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), argue that the program exploits incarcerated individuals, labelling it as "modern-day slavery." One ex-prisoner described it as "involuntary servitude."

The use of prison labour is particularly concerning, given Black Americans are incarcerated at nearly five times the rate of white Americans in state prisons. In 12 states, more than half of the prison population is Black. California prisoners are denied access to minimum wage provisions, prevented from forming labour unions and denied access to other workplace safety regulations. They're also more likely to be injured or to die on the job than non-incarcerated firefighters. Their wages are capped at US\$29.80 per day, compared to non-incarcerated firefighters, who earn up to US\$358 daily, not including overtime.

While serving in a fire crew gives prisoners the chance to shave time off of their sentences and have records expunged, neither of these benefits is guaranteed. Both are contingent on the CDCR or county jails deeming the service in a fire camp to be "successful." This leaves prisoners vulnerable to being denied these benefits, despite risking injury or death.

Prison labour in the Canadian context

Some Canadian coverage of the L.A. fires has noted that provincial prisoners in British Columbia also work in a wildfire suppression program. However, little has been said about how that work relates to the larger system of prison labour in the country.

Like their counterparts south of the border, Canadian prisoners are engaged in various forms of labour, including wildfire management, but are denied basic rights as workers.

In 1975, Donald Griggs, then-superintendent of Ontario's Monteith Correctional Complex, told the *Globe and Mail* that prison labour had been used in response to fires from time immemorial: "When a fire got bad, the jails were emptied and the men were shoved out on the fire line."

By the late 1960s, programs for prisoners to support wildfire suppression had become more formalized. During that time, for example, prisoners at Beaver Creek, a federal prison in Ontario, participated in regional bushfire response efforts. Working in the program offered prisoners, who were paid \$1.25 an hour, a chance at some "action."

By the mid-1970s, some Ontario prisoners earned up to \$50 a day battling wildfires. Today, however, most prisoners don't earn anything close to those wages. Federal prisoner pay maxes out at \$6.90 per day.

In the rare situations where prisoners are relatively well-compensated, prison labour still offers employers unique benefits. Prisoners' lack of freedom and limited ability to refuse work is touted as an advantage. Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) officials have argued that, compared to volunteer firefighters, prisoners "are always in one place and available for duty."

Prison labour in British Columbia

Canada's most prominent use of prison labour to manage wildfires is in B.C. While prisoners served in direct firefighting roles in the past, today provincial prisoners, who make between \$2 and \$8 per day, play a critical support role for wildfire-fighting crews by maintaining equipment and fire camps.

Notably, all the participating prisoners have "open custody" status, having "behaved exceptionally well during previous experience on other community work crews."

In Canada, prisoners are supposed to work as part of their rehabilitation, not as punishment. However, the reality often prioritizes the needs of employers over the rehabilitation of prisoners. A review of the CSC's Federal Work Release Program, which was established in 1992 and included a firefighting component, notes:

"It is not necessary that the work be directly related to the offender's correctional plan ... work release is a very flexible program that allows correctional managers to respond to community projects and local needs for labour." This is particularly concerning given that ex-prisoners often struggle to secure gainful

employment upon release, despite their participation in employment programming.

Prison labour as a response  
to climate disasters

While the idea of keeping people incarcerated to maintain a labour force to fight disasters might sound like something out of science fiction, it's not mere speculation. Responses to climate catastrophes like the L.A. fires demand huge amounts of resources and labour.

Former U.S. vice-president Kamala Harris, as California attorney general, led a campaign to defy a U.S. Supreme Court order to reduce the state's prison population partly because decarceration would "severely impact fire camp participation."

In Canada, prison labour has similarly been used in disaster responses. Most recently, CORCAN, the federal prison industry program, has been contracted to build temporary housing for people displaced by the 2024 wildfires in Jasper, Alta.

Just as Black, Indigenous and racialized people in the U.S. are more likely to become incarcerated, these are also the populations that suffer disproportionately from the impacts of wildfires. Studies have shown that Indigenous communities in Canada are the hardest hit by wildfires, while Indigenous Peoples make up the fastest growing prison populations.

Much like the U.S., Canada also disproportionately incarcerates Black, Indigenous and racialized people, while also depriving incarcerated labourers of access to minimum wage rights, workplace safety provisions and the right to unionize.

The root cause of many of these disasters - climate change - is disproportionately driven by the world's wealthiest elites. The use of prison labour to fight wildfires only further perpetuates the systemic inequalities exacerbated by climate injustice and reflects a continuation of indentured servitude.

Jordan House & Lydia Dobson  
The Conversation  
Jan 26, 2025

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One had better die fighting against injustice  
than die like a dog or a rat in a trap.  
- Ida B. Wells

Judge slams jail guards' 'disgusting and gross' treatment of prisoners at Maplehurst Correctional Complex in Milton

Another Ontario judge has castigated provincial correctional authorities over an incident at a Milton jail in which nearly 200 inmates were strip-searched, zip-tied and left in their underwear for hours in an apparent act of collective punishment.

Justice Colette Good was unsparing in her criticism of jail officials as she accepted a joint submission from the Crown and defence for a reduced sentence for a Brantford, Ont., man who had pleaded guilty to two robberies.

"Something like this should never happen in this country," Good said in court on Monday, describing what occurred at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex in December 2023 as a "disgusting and gross display of power."

It was at least the second time in the last two months the Crown admitted that an inmate's Charter rights were violated in the incident and that they were deserving of a reduced sentence as a result.

As previously reported by the Star, the incident began with the assault of a guard by an inmate on Dec. 20, 2023.

After the assault, all 192 other inmates on the unit were subsequently locked in their cells. Two days later, correctional officers clad in full riot gear rushed onto the unit, setting off flash grenades as part of a co-ordinated operation.

Guards contorted inmates' limbs moving cell-by-cell, they strip-searched each inmate, zip-tying their hands and removing them from their cells, which were subsequently "tossed" - all items removed and the cell left in disarray - by other correctional officers.

Guards contorted inmates' arms and hands into painful positions as they led them out of their cells - "using their thumbs as joysticks," Good said - before the inmates were made to sit cross-legged with their heads bowed, facing the wall. Some inmates have also alleged to the Star that they were pepper-sprayed without warning. "This appeared to the court to be an institutional response that punished multiple prisoners who were not involved and had nothing to do with the assault," Good said.

The incident has affected dozens of criminal cases across the province, as inmates seek to have their charges stayed or sentences reduced

on the grounds that their Charter rights were violated.

The man who pleaded guilty in Brantford on Monday, Claude Simon, alleged he suffered multiple Charter violations, including the right not to be subject to cruel and unusual punishment.

The Crown, however, only conceded that jail officials violated his right to be protected from unreasonable search and seizure, admitting that the actions taken by the jail's Institutional Crisis Intervention Team - a kind of SWAT team for the jail - were unreasonable, disproportionate and contrary to ministry policy.

Jail staffer testifies about sudden drop in temperature

Video of the incidents was played as part of Simon's pretrial motion, and Good said the court saw "criminal acts occur towards prisoners," including one instance when an inmate appeared to be shot in the back with a pepperball gun.

Good noted how the video showed jail officials "fist-bumping in what appeared to be a congratulatory fashion" during the operation, and also that one guard "appeared to be doing mini goose steps" in an apparent effort to intimidate the prisoners.

When inmates were returned to their cells, which were emptied of everything except a mattress, they were left in their underwear for the remainder of the day while cold air was allegedly blown into the unit. Simon was left in his underwear for 24 hours, the court heard.

An HVAC manager at the jail testified that there was a sudden and unexplained drop in temperature at the same time as the incident. "The court finds that highly suspicious," Good said.

Good also criticized jail officials who testified on behalf of the Crown, saying the vast majority of them seemed to have "suffered amnesia" about the incident.

Guards' conduct significantly reduces inmate's sentence

Simon was released from court on Monday after spending 18 months in jail. Officially, his sentence was 27 months, after he was given the usual 1.5 credit for each day spent in pretrial custody. If not for his treatment by the jail, Good said, he would have likely been sentenced to at least an additional two years.

While the sentence the court approved was "well below" the normal range, Good said she hoped that "any reasonable and well informed member of the public" would understand why it was justified.

"(Simon) was abused by this institution and the so-called professionals that were in charge of making sure his time at Maplehurst was safe."

Good pointed out that the majority of inmates at Maplehurst are awaiting trial and have not been convicted or sentenced. They are presumed innocent, she said, and some people in jail are "legitimately innocent" of their charges.

"The thought that an innocent person, while waiting to have their case heard on its merits and have a trial, would be subject to this type of treatment, I think, would shock the conscience of the public."

Jail officials said the operation was a high-level search for weapons, but the court heard no evidence of any weapons being found, Good said.

Simon's lawyer, Jesse Dostal, told the court that while Simon accepted the Crown's offer, he maintained that his other Charter rights were also violated. He wasn't, however, willing to sit in jail while those arguments were litigated.

Outside court, Dostal told the Star that although Simon's case concluded before all the evidence about what happened at Maplehurst could be heard, he is "optimistic that the truth is going to come out and that the public will see what went on here."

Video of the incident has been disclosed to defence lawyers, who have been required to sign undertakings forbidding them from sharing it outside of court. The Star requested a copy of the video last year in a freedom-of-information request that was denied by the Ministry of the Solicitor General, which is responsible for correctional facilities in the province.

Neither the Ministry of the Attorney General, nor the Ministry of the Solicitor General responded to questions before publication.

Brendan Kennedy  
The Star  
Feb 26, 2025

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Lockdowns only get attention when they effect the unjailed.

- She

## Supreme Court of Canada rules to bolster rights of inmates in provincial jails

The Supreme Court of Canada on Friday bolstered the rights of inmates in provincial jails who are accused of serious offences while incarcerated, a major ruling from the top court that broke with a long-standing precedent.

The 6-3 judgment, written by Chief Justice Richard Wagner, represents a rare reversal from the Supreme Court on established law. The chief justice described it as “one of the exceptional cases” where the top court weighs a new constitutional issue.

The question was how inmates in provincial jails are disciplined. Those who are accused of violating prison rules, in Saskatchewan and other provinces, are judged on what’s called the balance of probabilities - whether it is more likely than not they committed an offence.

That is a lower standard of proof than beyond a reasonable doubt guaranteed by the presumption of innocence in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

At the Supreme Court, the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan argued inmates in provincial jails deserve that Charter right. Chief Justice Wagner and a majority of the Supreme Court agreed.

“This is a huge victory for prisoner rights,” said Samara Sectar, a lawyer at Addario Law Group LLP in Toronto, who represented an intervener in the case, the Queen’s Prison Law Clinic. “A prison is not a Charter-free zone.”

Before Friday’s ruling, however, there had been a 1990 Supreme Court precedent that concluded inmate disciplinary proceedings were not criminal in nature, like trials in normal courts outside of a jail. In a 3-2 decision, the 1990 court ruled that significant punishments levied in jail did not merit the Charter protection of beyond a reasonable doubt.

The stakes for inmates in such situations are high. Those who are found guilty of a major disciplinary offence can be put in segregation or have their sentences effectively extended, with release dates pushed farther into the future.

This is what Chief Justice Wagner focused on in his judgment. He called such punishments “a true penal consequence” and said that while departing from precedent “should not be taken lightly,” he declared the 1990 ruling was no longer binding.

Chief Justice Wagner said proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt is a fundamental principle of Canadian law and this ruling confirmed that right “applies to persons behind the walls of correctional institutions who are charged with disciplinary offences.”

The ruling will reverberate among the provinces, starting in Saskatchewan, which will have to revise its regulations.

There was no immediate response to requests for comment on Friday morning from various provinces, including Saskatchewan, where the John Howard challenge was first heard in the lower courts. Provincial jails incarcerate people on sentences of less than two years, as well as those who are awaiting trial and have been denied bail, or are awaiting sentencing.

In federal prisons, where inmates are sentenced to two years or more, the standard of proof for serious allegations has been beyond a reasonable doubt since 1992. Such allegations are adjudicated by an independent chairperson, rather than a jail administrator.

The top court ruling means provinces will now have to follow the same standard, said Pierre Hawkins, public legal counsel at the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Hawkins, who highlighted the over-representation of Indigenous people in Saskatchewan jails, has worked closely with inmates accused of violations in recent years. He said the now-invalidated provincial rules stoked a “sense of unfairness” and the process to weigh alleged violations was colloquially described as a “kangaroo court.”

“People need to be treated with fairness,” said Mr. Hawkins. “These are human beings who have dignity and want to live their lives, albeit strictly limited.”

The Supreme Court case, heard over two days last October, attracted wide attention from the legal community. There were 15 interveners, with a range of civil society groups and attorneys-general from several provinces and the federal government.

The Saskatchewan government argued a lower standard of proof was necessary to maintain order and safety in provincial jails. Groups such as the Canadian Civil Liberties Association argued proof beyond a reasonable doubt was necessary in part because of well-documented systemic bias in jails against people from marginalized groups, such as Indigenous people.

In the 6-3 judgment, Justice Suzanne Côté wrote the dissent, as she often does. She was joined by justices Malcolm Rowe and Mahmud Jamal. They would have dismissed the John Howard appeal.

Justice Côté concluded that the 1990 Supreme Court decision “remains good law and a binding precedent and must be applied in the present case.” She agreed with the Saskatchewan government that its rules were designed to “maintain prison order.”

David Ebner  
Globe and Mail  
Mar 13, 2025

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Two dead as dangerous infection spreads through Ontario's most over-crowded jail

Two people have died following an outbreak of a dangerous bacterial infection at a provincial jail in Milton.

Halton Region Public Health told the Star on Friday evening that an outbreak of invasive group A streptococcal disease at Maplehurst Correctional Complex was declared on Feb. 26. The health unit has confirmed five cases, including two deaths.

The health unit did not say when the deaths occurred, nor whether those who died are inmates or staff.

The health unit's response to media on Friday evening marked the agency's first public comments about the 10-day long outbreak. In the meantime, unconfirmed reports of deaths at the jail circulated online.

“We are working closely with the facility and provincial partners to manage the outbreak and ensure appropriate infection prevention and control measures are in place,” a spokesperson for Halton's public health team said in an email. The Ministry of the Solicitor General, which is responsible for provincial jails, has not provided any information about the deaths and did not respond to the Star's questions on Friday.

A sign declaring the outbreak was seen Friday afternoon taped to the front door of the jail. Staff at the front desk of the empty visitor reception area confirmed Friday that multiple units of the jail were currently locked down, but declined to answer further questions.

Invasive group A streptococcus is a severe form of the highly infectious disease, which spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids or respiratory droplets. Most cases require hospitalization and roughly one in 10 are fatal. Of the 551 cases reported in the province from Oct. 1, 2024 to Jan. 31 of this year, 64 people died and 396 were hospitalized, according to Public Health Ontario data.

Severe cases can also result in necrotizing fasciitis, commonly known as “flesh-eating disease.” Halton public health said there have been no cases of necrotizing fasciitis identified at Maplehurst.

Public health officials have conducted two infection control inspections at the jail since the outbreak, most recently on Friday, the spokesperson said.

“There were no infractions observed at the time of the most recent inspection.”

Toronto lawyer Jeffrey Hartman said his client inside Maplehurst has been locked down for the past 20 days, but was only given a mask last week.

People on the range are “upset and aggravated,” according to Hartman. Since being placed in lockdown, his client has watched as other inmates on the range have fallen ill.

“He has seen four people who have these purple rashes on their face,” Hartman said. “Some on their faces, some on their stomach.”

According to the lawyer, his client has been permitted to shower only “once or twice” since being locked down.

The union representing correctional officers said several have required “medical attention” as a result of the outbreak.

“Our members continue to work in these difficult conditions,” said Janet Lavery, acting chair of OPSEU's ministry-employee relations committee.

Lavery declined to provide more details about affected staff.

The majority of inmates at Maplehurst and other provincial jails are on remand, meaning they are awaiting trial and have not been convicted.

Maplehurst is one of the largest jails in the province, and it's also the most overcrowded, according to data recently obtained by the Star via a ‘Freedom of Information’ request. Occupancy figures from December show the jail was 45% overcapacity, meaning there were 430



more inmates than the facility was built to house.

Due to the overcrowding, three inmates are regularly held in cells meant for two - a phenomenon known as triple-bunking - with one inmate forced to sleep on a mattress on the floor, their feet or their head next to the toilet.

The issue is routinely cited in court as a mitigating factor in sentencing decisions that often lead to a sentence being reduced due to harsh pretrial conditions.

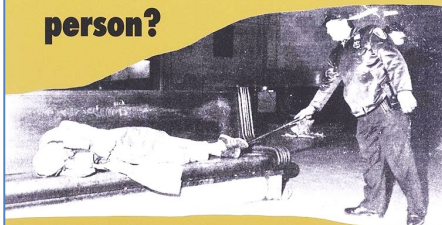
At least four defence lawyers told the Star their clients inside Maplehurst have been subject to lockdowns for at least a week, and in some cases, longer.

Lawyer Alison Craig said she hasn't been able to speak with her client for the last seven days, but has received no official word from the jail about the reason for the lockdowns. A defence lawyer in Guelph, Ranney Hintsas, said she has been told by local court staff that inmates from the affected units are not being transported for scheduled court appearances.

There were a record number of invasive group A streptococcus cases in Ontario in 2023, with nearly 2,000 cases and 227 deaths.

Brendan Kennedy & Abby O'Brien  
The Star  
Mar 7, 2025

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



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

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

**Prison Life**

*It's waiting on letters when you're doing time.  
And your family won't write, or send you a dime.  
It's waiting on visits that never take place, from friends or loved ones, who forgot your face.  
It's hearing them lie.  
And saying that we're trying, making you promises.  
But you know they are lying.  
It's making plans with someone who you thought you knew.  
But their plans suddenly change, and it didn't include you.  
It's hearing them say how much they care.  
But in your time of need they are never there.  
It's hearing them promise and it goes straight to your head.  
But when push comes to shove, they leave you for dead.  
It's feelings and Love, Honor and Pride.  
Pain and Emotions and hurting inside.  
It's expressing yourself to your loved ones and friends,  
But they can't feel your pain because you're in the pen.  
It's calling and hearing 'A' Block's on the phone.  
But you maintain because life goes on.  
It's really messed up when you're doing time  
But that's 'Prison Life'.  
Out of sight, out of mind.*

- THE END

*When the ice on the razor wire starts to look pretty, you've been in prison too long.  
- Trish*

*Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage.  
Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are.  
- Augustine of Hippo*

New Indigenous Justice Strategy aims to address over-incarceration of Indigenous people

Indigenous justice experts are welcoming Canada's new Indigenous Justice Strategy, but some are disappointed at its lack of concrete next steps.

The strategy was released on March 10 and lays out 26 priority actions aimed at addressing systemic discrimination and overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system. It was created with the input of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community members, organizations and provincial and territorial governments.

"I think any strategy that advances and provides access for Indigenous people and is aimed and targeted at removing overrepresentation or reversing the overrepresentation is extremely important," said Kory Wilson, chair of the B.C. First Nations Justice Council.

The B.C. First Nations Justice Council was created in 2015 to work on transforming the justice system to be more equitable for Indigenous people in the province. It is working to implement the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy that was created in 2020.

Wilson said the B.C. strategy has had a lot of success for Indigenous people in the province and hopes the national strategy would do the same.

"The reality is the justice system as exists in Canada needs to be more accessible and more aware of the challenges facing Indigenous people so there needs to be an overhaul of the entire system," said Wilson.

The incarceration rate of Indigenous persons in provincial custody was about nine times higher than for non-Indigenous persons in 2020/2021, according to Statistics Canada. On an average day in 2020/2021 there were 42.6 Indigenous people in provincial custody per 10,000 population, compared to four non-Indigenous people.

The strategy contains specific chapters on priorities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The First Nations chapter focuses on reforming the justice system to better include First Nations laws and traditions to deal with the overrepresentation and discrimination First Nations people currently face.

"The revitalization of Indigenous laws and Indigenous ways of knowing and how we've

worked in the past has to start to be recognized," said Wilson.

The Inuit chapter of the strategy talks about the need for increased infrastructure like housing, shelters, and transitional housing to help reduce interactions with the justice system, prevent crimes and support rehabilitation, as well as ensuring there are services, policing, and materials available in Inuktitut.

Implementation a concern

Christina Cook, a lawyer in B.C. and a member of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation in Manitoba, said she is cautiously optimistic about the Indigenous Justice Strategy but that "It's also a bit disappointing that the report doesn't contain a lot of concrete next steps. There's a lot of aspirational language contained therein."

"It's a lot of recycling of previous reports and recommendations, which is frustrating, but it could be transformative and positive, could it actually result in concrete changes," said Cook.

Justice Canada said in a statement that the strategy will guide continued collaboration with Indigenous people and governments as regional implementation plans are developed over the next two years.

Cook said her concern about implementation comes from the lack of action on previous government reports like Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry or the national inquiry for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

"It's easy to diagnose the problem, but it's hard to actually fix it," said Cook.

Jackie McKay  
CBC News  
Mar 21, 2025

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The full-bellied child says to the hungry child,  
"Keep good cheer."

- Herbert Agar

When you are doing time, you have the time to realize how art can keep you free.

- Welmon Sharlthorne

What does this system seem designed to do?

As I see it, it seems designed to send people right back to prison, which is what happens about 70% of the time.

- Michelle Alexander

## Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

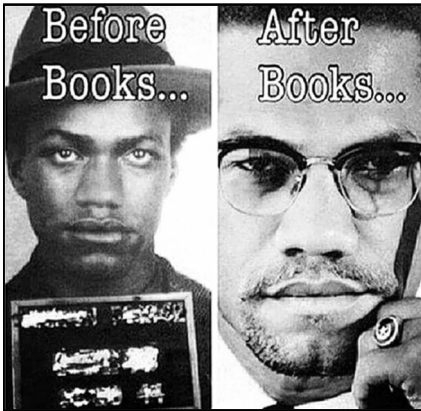
*Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)* is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

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

*Nationalism is a silly cock crowing on his own dunghill.*

- Richard Aldington

## 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

*You can stand tall without standing on someone.*

*You can be a victor without having victims.*

- Harriet Woods

*Laws are like sausages.*

*You sleep far better the less you know about how they are made.*

- Otto Von Bismarck

*Politicians are swine.*

*You cannot reason with swine.*

*You must hit them on the nose with a stick.*

- Bertold Brecht

**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](http://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 - 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.

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.

2025 dates: Feb 19, Mar 19, Apr 16, May 14, Jun 11, Jul 9, Aug 6, Sep 3, Oct 1, Oct 29, Nov 26, Dec 24.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr Carruthers Hall,  
Queen's University,  
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Email: [CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net](mailto:CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net)

Call: 613-917-1390 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 & 2-4 pm

☎ 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 & 2-4 pm

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

**Penpal Program for Gay, Queer,  
Trans Prisoners**

*The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.*

*If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:*

Prisoner Correspondence Project  
c/o QPIRG Concordia  
1455 de Maisonneuve W.  
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

*Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.*



**Nov 20 is Transgender Day  
of Remembrance**

*Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.*

*And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.*

☞ Respect ☞

**Incarcerated in Canada?  
Need Information?**

*Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:*

*General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.*

*Write to us at:*

**Write ON!**  
234-1110 Cumberland St,  
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

**Prison Visiting Rideshare Project**

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

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

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

**PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY**

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural  
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

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

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

**PJD@PrisonFreePress.org**

## A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

### The Reality

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

### The Need

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

### The Impact

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

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

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

[www.kipcanada.org](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.

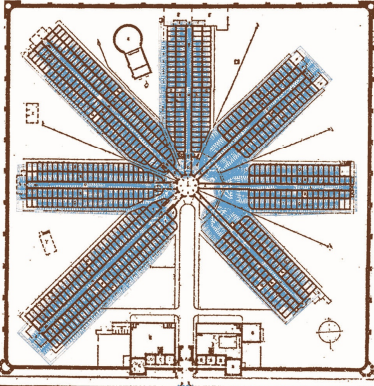
Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

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



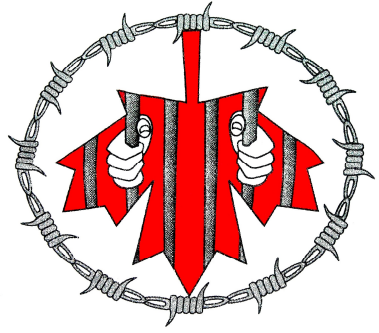
# SLAVE SHIPS



# ON DRY LAND



**SOLITARY  
CONFINEMENT  
IS  
TORTURE**



Issue #37 - Spring 2025

Class Action News  
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Next Issue: #38 - Summer 2025

Deadline: Jun 1, 2025

Mail-out: Jul 1, 2025

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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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