

# WOMENS PRISON



# NETWORK



ISSUE #34



SPRING 2024



< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #34 of Women's Prison Network, a zine by & for women, trans & youth prisoners on Treaty Lands with Canada.



In every Issue we strive to 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 = 300 words max). For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous' unless requested.

'Women's Prison Network' is published 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women, Trans & Youth in Prisons in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

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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' Wampum ~

Doctor, you touched my vertebrae  
and you are touching my unpaid bills,  
touching my unmade marriages.  
And you look at me and say,  
"Have you ever had shock treatment?"  
And I say, "Doctor, life is a shock treatment."  
- Karen Finley

Use of lockdowns in Canadian prisons could amount to torture

The Supreme Court of Nova Scotia recently ruled in a pair of decisions that it is unlawful to lock down imprisoned people due to staff shortages. Lockdowns are a practice of restrictive confinement that has become increasingly common. This is despite the fact that, under the United Nations Nelson Mandela Rules, those lockdowns meet the criteria for torture.

In November 2023, the East Coast Prison Justice Society raised alarm over institutional lockdowns at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Dartmouth. One of the prisoners the society spoke with said, "things are worse than they have ever been."

Lockdowns are common not just in Nova Scotia, but across Canada. Perhaps most notoriously, the Toronto South Detention Centre has been subject to numerous investigations surrounding its abuse of restrictive confinement.

Recent data collected by Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General further demonstrates the extent of the problem in provincial institutions (no data is available on Nova Scotia). Between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, 15,929 individuals, out of a total of 29,693 people in custody, spent at least one day in a unit that was regularly locked down for 17 hours or more per day. These trends are relatively stable and consistent across provinces.

The East Coast Prison Justice Society said they were increasingly concerned by the impact these conditions have on the physical and mental health and well-being of prisoners. Given the ongoing problem of lockdowns across prisons in Canada, what is the significance of the court's rulings, and do they go far enough?

#### Loss of liberty and habeas corpus

The pair of rulings from the Nova Scotia Supreme Court found that the routine use of institutional lockdowns in the province's jails to address staffing shortages is unlawful.

Two habeas corpus petitions were filed by Durrell Diggs and Ryan Wilband, both low-risk prisoners, who were subjected to cell confinement for 51 and 29 days respectively, often with no time out of their cells. These petitions argued the use of lockdowns was a violation of their Charter rights. In Diggs's case the court ruled: "It is not a 'privilege' to be out of one's cell," it is something

imprisoned people are entitled to. The court ruled that the near-daily decision to put the jail on partial or total lockdown is unlawful and unreasonable.

The Mandela Rules state that being held in confinement for more than 15 days without at least four hours per day out of cell, two of which must include meaningful human contact, is prolonged solitary confinement and constitutes torture.

Nova Scotia's correctional regulations state prisoners are entitled to fresh air for a minimum of just 30 minutes every day, which falls below the Mandela Rules threshold. According to the recent court ruling, Wilband likely received that minimum on only five occasions over 28 days.

Another man imprisoned at the facility told researchers:

"We are locked down every second day because of staff shortages. They let us out of cells in groups, sometimes two or three, sometimes eight. One time the whole range at once was let out, but not usually. Some days no one gets out of their cell at all. The guards say how many people will be let out, but it is up to the prisoners as to who it is who gets out. The younger weaker guys do not even ask to get out because they know they will get beaten up if they take a spot from someone higher in the pecking order."

#### Impacts of lockdowns

Research finds these kinds of lockdowns can have severe impacts on an inmate's mental and physical health and well-being. Lockdowns disrupt communication with lawyers, contact with loved ones, access to programs, spiritual and cultural practice, hygiene and medical treatment. Inadequate time out of their cell is associated with worse mental health and higher suicide risk. In another recent decision, Nova Scotia's Supreme Court stated:

"Confining persons in custody - many of whom may have pre-existing mental health issues - to their cells for exorbitant periods of time does nothing to assist and support their rehabilitation ... Even a person with robust mental health would find it challenging to be regularly confined to a cell, often for more than 20 hours per day, with little notice and no ability to earn more time out. This practice is dehumanizing, and it is setting these individuals up to fail. They deserve better."

### Why this ruling is important

Lockdowns are not new, although reliance on lockdowns in response to institutional issues including staffing and maintenance problems, has increased substantially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In our research we examine these practices and caution that without adequate oversight, they are likely to become a new normal.

Importantly, our research finds that lockdowns often replicate the torturous conditions of solitary confinement, a practice which was ended federally through Bill C-83, an amendment to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which received royal assent in 2019.

The recent Nova Scotia rulings are significant in that they state operational problems at the institutional level are not sufficient to justify lockdowns. Because a majority of lockdowns are caused by institutional operational issues, not prisoners' behaviour, lockdowns constitute a "pain of imprisonment" which exceeds the conditions and objectives of custodial sentences. Lockdowns compound the pains associated with imprisonment, including poor mental and physical health, which impacts community release, reintegration and recidivism.

More lockdowns mean people are subject to practices that amount to torture. Almost 80% of the provincial prisoner population in Nova Scotia are in jail awaiting trial, presumed innocent of charges and denied pre-trial release for reasons as simple as a lack of community housing and other supports.

### Recommendations

Many of the recommendations in the court's ruling are about ensuring adequate staffing to avoid lockdowns. However, this does not address other operational issues that can trigger lockdowns. An alternative is decreasing prison numbers rather than increasing prison staff, and abolishing solitary confinement altogether.

In 2020, prison numbers were significantly decreased in Nova Scotia. In total, over 40% of the provincially incarcerated population was released.

The judiciary, corrections, crown and defense counsels, along with community organizations, collaborated to cut provincial prison numbers. Some imprisoned people went to new supported community residency options, which proved

successful even for people with the most complex needs.

Beyond ending these lockdowns, a whole-of-government approach must be taken to foster and sustain community-based alternatives to pre-trial detention and to support other initiatives preventive of imprisonment.

Jessica Evans, Linda Mussell

The Conversation

Jan 31, 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

He alleges in the claim that he was subjected to racial abuse by both CSC staff and other inmates while in the minimum-security facility on Vancouver Island but not at the primarily medium-security Alberta prison.

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

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

He said he was treated differently and subjected to racial stereotyping. He claims his white parole officer said she would not want him coaching her children's sports teams because he was "clearly a drug dealer," while a CSC nurse said he wouldn't want someone like him living in his community. He said a white prisoner persistently shouted an offensive racist slur at him. When Araya told him he had better stop or he would have to "settle" the matter, it was Araya who was reprimanded.

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

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

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

Court also heard from Akwasi Owusu-Bempah, a criminology professor at the University of Toronto who studies racism in the criminal justice system. Owusu-Bempah said that "CSC's practices, procedures, instruments, policies and other acts and omissions systematically disadvantage racialized prisoners in comparison to white prisoners."

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

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

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

by members of the class and that Araya was unsuitable as a class representative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

programs and services that address offender's needs.

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

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

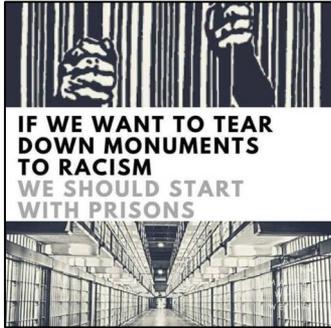
The CSC uses 28 categories of racial identification for inmates when they are processed for prison intake. The self-identification of Black inmates often includes geographic-base qualifiers, such as Caribbean or Sub-Sahara African.

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

Adrian Humphreys

National Post

Dec 19, 2023



Case of Indigenous sisters serving life sentence underscores need to reform review process for miscarriages of justice

The case of two sisters from Keeseekoosie First Nation in Saskatchewan who spent nearly three decades in prison for a murder they say they did not commit underscores the need to change how miscarriages of justice are reviewed in Canada, their lawyer says.

James Lockyer, the founding director of Innocence Canada, an organization that advocates for and exonerates people who have been wrongfully convicted of crimes, said the claims of his clients, Odelia and Nerissa Quewezance, have "huge merit." He added that

he is counting on federal Justice Minister Arif Virani, who is currently reviewing their case, to remedy the injustice they have faced.

But Mr. Lockyer also said he is hoping that in the future the Justice Minister will no longer be the authority in charge of reviewing potential wrongful convictions. Legislation known as Bill C-40 would replace the existing ministerial review regime with a new process led by an independent commission.

Under the current regime, the Justice Minister has the authority to review convictions and order new trials or appeals where there is a reasonable basis to conclude that a miscarriage of justice likely occurred. The Department of Justice told Mr. Lockyer in June, 2022, that the sisters' case was proceeding to the investigative stage of the review process.

Mr. Lockyer and other advocates for people who have experienced miscarriages of justice say the proposed commission-based process could be faster and more accessible. Bill C-40 is being studied at the House of Commons justice and human rights committee.

If a commission were established in Canada, it would eventually become an integral part of the justice system, which has never been the case with ministerial reviews, Mr. Lockyer said. Most criminal lawyers do not know the current process exists, he added. Or if they do, they know little about how it works.

"How can you expect people in prison to know?" Mr. Lockyer continued. "But if you get a commission set up, you're quickly going to get a lot of expertise in the field developing. And we need that."

Bill C-40, also known as David and Joyce Milgaard's Law, was named to recognize Mr. Milgaard and his mother. Mr. Milgaard was convicted of a rape and murder he did not commit and spent 23 years in prison. He was released in 1992 and exonerated in 1997.

Mr. Milgaard would have been delighted to have seen the introduction of Bill C-40, Mr. Lockyer said. He added that Innocence Canada hopes the legislation becomes law under the current government, and that there is every reason to believe the process would move more quickly under a commission.

"The whole floor plan, if you will, for the wrongly convicted would be hugely enhanced by the creation of an independent commission," he said.

Mr. Lockyer's clients, the Quewezance sisters, both survivors of residential schools, have been serving life sentences since they were found guilty of second-degree murder in 1994.

They were charged in 1993 in connection with the stabbing death of 70-year-old Anthony Joseph Dolff. The killing took place at his farmhouse, near Kamsack, Sask. Nerissa was 18 at the time, and Odelia was 21.

Mr. Dolff worked as a maintenance man at the St. Philip's Residential School, in Saskatchewan. The sisters attended the institution and were abused there.

Their teenage cousin, whose identity is protected under what was then known as the Young Offenders Act, pleaded guilty to the murder a few months later. He said he had wrapped a telephone cord around Mr. Dolff's neck, dropped a television on his head and stabbed him to death. But an all-white jury wasn't convinced the confession cleared the sisters, and they were sentenced to life, with no chance of parole for 10 years.

The cousin was sentenced to four years, which was the maximum sentence that could be handed to a young offender at the time.

The sisters are currently out of prison on bail. In March, a Saskatchewan judge ordered them to be released from custody while they await the outcome of the review of their convictions. They are required to adhere to a number of conditions, including a curfew.

Mr. Lockyer said both sisters are finding the bail conditions difficult to live with, and that they need a chance to be free of all restraints and carry on with their lives.

Kim Beaudin, the national vice-chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, which represents Indigenous people who live off-reserve, is acting as Nerissa's surety. With respect to the curfew, Mr. Beaudin said the sisters are adults and not "renegade teenagers."

The conditions, he said, mean the sisters are not free. He noted that the review of their case could take years. "That's a long time to leave somebody's life in limbo," he said.

The Quewezance sisters caught Mr. Milgaard's attention before his death in May, 2022. This resulted in Mr. Lockyer taking up their case.

"It's only because they thought to call David Milgaard 28 years into their sentences that they

got any kind of ability to go forward," Mr. Lockyer said.

Ontario Senator Kim Pate, a long-time advocate for women in the legal system, first met Odelia and Nerissa after they were convicted. She said it is incumbent upon the Justice Minister to make a decision as quickly as possible.

In 2022, Ms. Pate, along with two other senators, released a report titled "Injustices and Miscarriages of Justice Experienced by 12 Indigenous Women." The cases of Odelia and Nerissa are among those included.

There should be immediate action to release them from their sentences, Ms. Pate said.

"Right now, Odelia and Nerissa are still serving life sentences," she said. "They're out on bail, as the conviction review process is happening, but they are still subject to being jailed."

The Justice Minister's office said he can't comment on continuing criminal conviction reviews.

Former justice minister David Lametti, who put forward Bill C-40 months before he was shuffled out of cabinet in July, said he also can't comment on the sisters' review process.

Mr. Lametti said in a statement that one of the reasons he pressed for the independent review mechanism contained in Bill C-40 was to speed up the decision-making process. He noted that jurisdictions such as Britain already have this mechanism.

"I hope for its timely passage," Mr. Lametti said of the bill.

Kristy Kirkup  
Globe and Mail  
Dec 16, 2023

With reports: Jana Pruden & Patrick White

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Every society honors its live conformists and its dead troublemakers.

Likely as not, the child you can do the least with will do the most to make you proud.

What you have become is the price you paid to get what you used to want.

- Mignon McLaughlin

## The Wall

*Souls stained with recent tears  
 With a suitable performance of the ritual  
 All along the road, once again no show  
 Tortures my insides  
 Before I built a wall, that no one could tear down  
 Until you came along & demolished it one brick  
 at a time, until my heart was exposed  
 To you & only you, I give my heart over  
 My dreams & my fantasies filled with your love  
 To be slowly taken away from me  
 One stone at a time, I start to rebuild that wall*

T. Flear

## No Visit Again

*In the broken darkness  
 The monkey makes sorrowful noises  
 Till we had nothing but thoughts  
 And memories in common  
 There is no end of things in the heart  
 Heavy with weeping  
 With ripples like dragon scales  
 The ocean flowing out of me  
 Lifeless in appearance  
 Invisible to most*

T. Flear

## Inside These walls

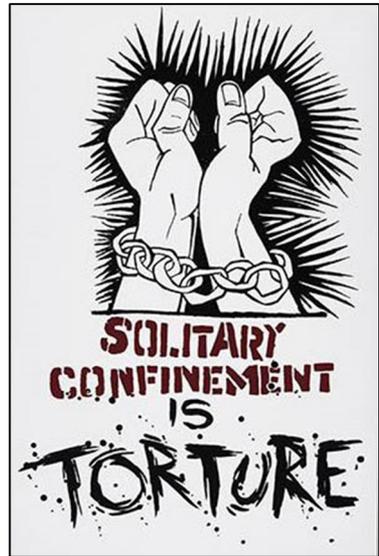
*The seed that fell among thorns  
 Which choked the life out of it  
 Everyone has their breaking point  
 Acknowledging you're institutionalized hits hard  
 Being scared of the outside world  
 What a realization that is  
 Getn 2 used 2 these walls  
 Just don't set your mind right  
 Ya know the world goes on without cha  
 So what's the difference  
 Real family, or Jail family  
 That's the difference  
 One blood  
 Top left*

T. Flear

## Inside This Range

*I see all the pain  
 I feel all the pain  
 From the lost souls in here  
 The mind waves are extreme  
 The tempers & mood swings are worse  
 Dysfunctional & criminal thoughts  
 But the love of a mother helps  
 So giving & nurturing  
 Is what these girls need  
 And very few ever got  
 I can't help myself, it's 2<sup>nd</sup> nature  
 Everyone needs 2 be loved  
 Even if it's just from me*

T. Flear



*The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of  
 truth upon them.*

- Ida B. Wells

*Life is a hard battle anyway.*

*If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good  
 fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier.*

*I will not allow my life's light to be determined by  
 the darkness around me.*

- Sojourner Truth

Going to jail can disrupt health care for people with mental illness

People with mental illness can experience significant disruptions to their health care when they are taken into custody, Canada's former correctional investigator said Tuesday at a coroner's inquest for a mentally ill man who died in an Ontario jail.

Howard Sapers took the stand on the second day of the inquest examining the death of Soleiman Faqiri, who died in his cell on Dec. 15, 2016, after a violent struggle with correctional officers at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ont.

The inquest has heard Faqiri was detained at the facility east of Toronto after he was charged with aggravated assault, assault and threatening death in an incident that occurred while he was experiencing a mental-health crisis. He died in his cell less than two weeks later.

When a person is detained in a provincial jail or federal penitentiary, they are no longer covered by the Canada Health Act during the period of custody, Sapers told the inquest jury Tuesday.

The provision of health services falls, generally, on the correctional system, which can either create infirmaries, hospitals and the like inside institutions, or move inmates to community hospitals to receive health care it then has to pay for, he said.

"There's been a move in corrections really around the world to move away from corrections systems also acting as health-care systems and to try to move the provision of health outside of jail," Sapers said.

The government of Ontario committed to making that transition in 2018, and even convened an expert panel on the issue, but the shift hasn't happened yet, he said. The responsibility for health care in custody "resides squarely on the shoulders of the operators of the jails, and so you have correctional nurses and other clinicians who are employed by corrections to work on those jails," he said.

The switch from receiving care in the community and in jail can mean sudden and important changes, he noted.

"If you have a mental-health issue, and your mental-health condition has been stabilized through medications, and those medications are available to you at your local pharmacy and

they've been prescribed by your doctor – all of that may change the moment you enter a prison or a provincial jail," he said.

"You no longer have access to your doctor, the medications that you were prescribed may not be considered appropriate for use inside a custody facility ... and so your health care can be very disrupted."

For many who have a history of taking psychotropic medication – a category that includes antidepressants, antipsychotics and mood stabilizers, among others – there usually is a period of trial and error before the right prescription is determined, he said.

"But all of that, it may be disrupted as soon as you enter the admissions area of a jail," he added.

What's more, he said, health professionals within an institution, such as nurses and psychologists, are employees of the correctional system and may report to someone who is an administrator rather than a clinician, Sapers said.

"Correctional staff, as I've said before, often lack accurate health information. It's difficult sometimes to share information," he said.

In the 12 years he served as correctional investigator, a type of specialized ombudsman dealing only with the federal correctional system, lack of access to health care was a top complaint, Sapers said.

He noted there is no equivalent role at the provincial level in Ontario. While the provincial ombudsman can and has investigated issues related to the correctional system, that person has multiple files and topics to look into, he said.

The coroner's inquest began this week and is expected to last 15 days, ending shortly before the seventh anniversary of Faqiri's death.

On Monday, the inquest heard an agreed statement of facts laying out some key events that took place in the lead up to Faqiri's death.

In that time, the inquest heard, Faqiri saw the institution's physician and was referred to a psychiatrist, but never saw a psychiatrist, nor did he take all the doses of the medication he was prescribed. The physician also decided not to send Faqiri to a hospital for a psychiatric assessment or as an emergency patient, it heard. His condition worsened, and his behaviour grew increasingly concerning, the inquest heard. At one point, he was smearing feces on himself.

His brother and a nurse testified in court to support an order that he undergo an assessment to determine his fitness to stand trial, the statement said. A video assessment was scheduled, but Faqiri was deemed too unwell to attend, it said.

On the day he died, Faqiri was transferred to a new cell and taken to a secure shower, the inquest heard. As he was being led, handcuffed and in his boxers, from the shower to his cell, several corrections officers said he spat at the (1) sergeant who was holding his handcuffs, according to the statement.

The sergeant responded by slapping Faqiri, who (2) then hunched in a ball, the statement said. He was then subjected to "various incidents of use of force" as the officers pushed him to his cell, including being struck in the head area, sprayed in the face with pepper spray foam and restrained face down on the ground, it said.

At some point, his legs were shackled and officers put a spit hood, a covering meant to prevent someone from spitting, on him, the statement said.

He was found to be unresponsive when officers removed the spit hood, the statement said.

His brother, Yusuf Faqiri, said his family has long called for an inquest, but the evidence remains difficult to hear and watch.

"We loved him," he said.

"This fight is for Solei but it's for so many other Canadians ... because I truly in my heart don't want another mother or brother to go through what we went through."

The Canadian Press  
Nov 21, 2023

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### Trans+ People in Canadian Prisons Project

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

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

research, and we would be grateful if you would help us to make sure that all the right people know about the project.

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

(1) talk to us in a 1-hour private, confidential interview about their thoughts and experiences,

(2) answer similar questions in writing using the mail.

We are hoping to connect with:

Current Trans+ prisoners in Canadian federal prisons,

AND

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

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

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

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

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

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If you think you're too small to make a difference, you've obviously never been in bed with a mosquito.

- Michelle Walker

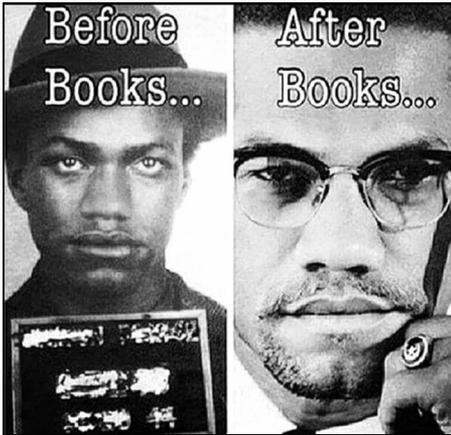
## Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

*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

## Prison Radio

- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM  
Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm  
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM  
PRS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am  
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
Stark Raven – 1<sup>st</sup> Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM  
Prison Radio – Wed 7-8 pm

*This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and 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, Lower 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.*



### 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

### Jail Hotline for MCC, OCI, TEDC, TSDC & VCW

*The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) provides prisoners with free links to advocacy, referrals, information, and support through the Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:*

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

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

#### Why a Jail Hotline?

*Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.*

#### Who Should Call This Hotline?

*Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.*

*If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:*

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

### NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

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

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

### 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).*

### 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

*No person is your friend who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow.*

- Alice Walker

### Children of Inmates Reading Program(ChIRP)

*"Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning"*

*"Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school"*

BCFI's commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children's educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child.

This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent's voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents' choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

Book Clubs for Inmates

720 Bathurst St.

Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4

[www.BookClubsForInmates.com](http://www.BookClubsForInmates.com)

*I am not eccentric.*

*It's just that I am more alive than most people.*

*I am an unpopular electric eel set in a pond of goldfish.*

- Edith Sitwell

### 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, 375 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.*

## Facts about HIV and HCV

*With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.*

*In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.*

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

*In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.*

*While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.*

*Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.*

*Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).*

*These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.*

## Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

*These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.*

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: *Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!*

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: *Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.*

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

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners  
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:  
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,  
- anything in contact with blood! -

**BLEACH DOES NOT  
KILL HEP C**



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*

## 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
- Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased 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

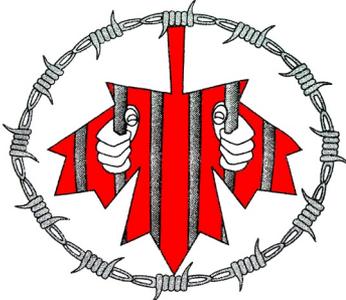
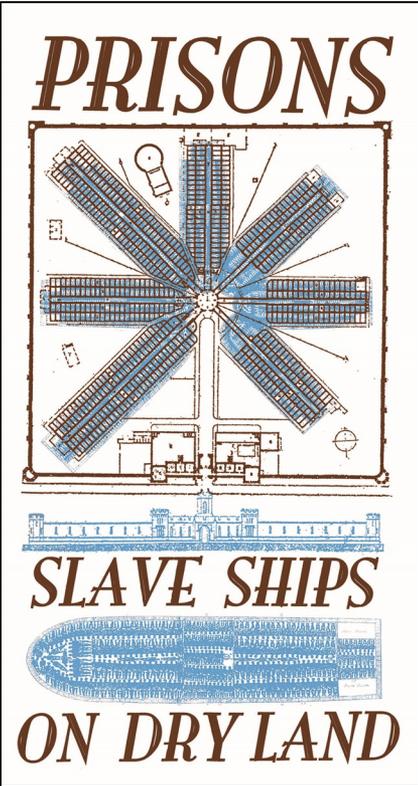
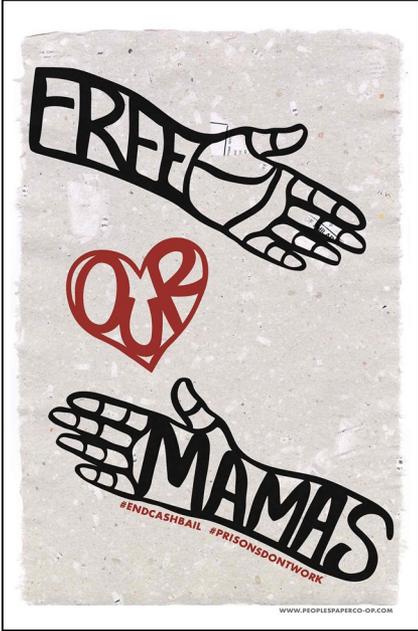
### The Impact

- 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



Women's Prison Network  
Spring 2024 - Issue #34

PO Box 39, Stn P  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org  
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Summer Issue #35 is mailed out:  
Jun 1, 2024  
Send in your work before:  
May 1, 2024

**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