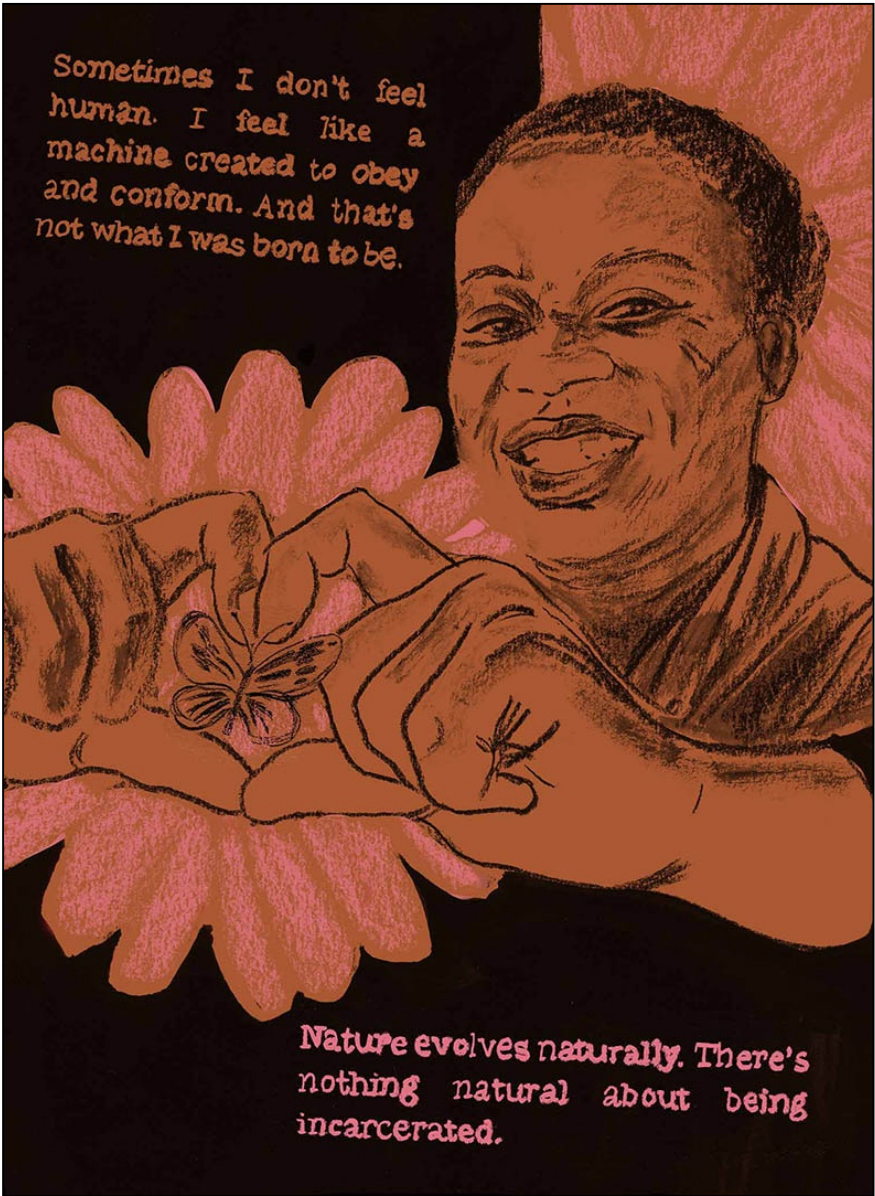


WOMENS PRISON NETWORK

Sometimes I don't feel human. I feel like a machine created to obey and conform. And that's not what I was born to be.



Nature evolves naturally. There's nothing natural about being incarcerated.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY ISSUE 35 - SUMMER 2024

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #35 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!!!

Editor: Iola
Publication: Women's Prison Network
Publisher: PrisonFreePress.org
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6
Circulation: 260+
Recirculation: ?,???
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

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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 ~

If I don't speak,
this silence is also going to kill me.
- Rehana Hashmi

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change.
I am changing the things I cannot accept.
- Angela Davis

Getting an education lowers a prisoner's likelihood of reoffending.

So why does Canada make it nearly impossible for inmates to take online courses?

When Jean Frazier learned her son wanted to pursue a university degree, she was excited.

He was more than a decade into a life sentence at a federal prison for a violent crime he committed as a teen. The school work, Frazier thought, would give him something to focus on behind bars and maybe put him on a brighter path for the future.

One of the best predictors of a prisoner's likelihood to reoffend following their release is if they try to educate themselves behind bars.

Getting any education while incarcerated reduces recidivism by 20 to 30%, according to federal government research. The rate is even higher - up to 75% - for prisoners who take post-secondary courses. Officials in Ottawa have said successful reintegration into the community requires at least some education beyond the high school level.

But taking university or college courses inside Canadian prisons has become extremely difficult - and in some cases impossible - because the federal government does not allow prisoners access to the internet, while paper correspondence courses have been almost entirely eliminated.

"They're supposed to be rehabilitating people, integrating them back into society," Frazier said. "But they're stifling them. ... It doesn't make any sense."

After searching unsuccessfully for a correspondence course that didn't require internet access, Frazier enrolled her son in an online program at Athabasca University and essentially created a paper correspondence course herself.

She printed and mailed to the prison all of the course material, including a 500-page electronic textbook, and relayed any information she received from the instructor to her son in nightly phone calls.

For online quizzes, Frazier's son sometimes convinced a sympathetic teacher at the prison to print out screenshots of each question from an internet-connected staff computer. He would then give the answers to his mother over the phone so she could input them online.

"It was the only way," Frazier said.

Canada lags behind other nations

The United Kingdom, Australia, parts of the U.S. and several European countries all provide varying degrees of internet access to prisoners for educational purposes, but Canada lags behind. The pandemic-accelerated shift to online-only distance learning means Canadian prisoners arguably have less access to higher education today than they have had in decades.

Fewer prisoners are pursuing post-secondary degrees and diplomas as a result. Those that do - like Frazier's son - are met with daunting roadblocks.

"I think it's negligence on the part of the (federal government) not to move on this issue," said Ivan Zinger, Canada's Correctional Investigator, who has been raising concerns about the technological deprivation in Canadian prisons for years. "Especially when there's such clear benefits in terms of public safety."

The Correctional Service of Canada says security is their primary concern, and there are also technical challenges to enabling internet access in federal prisons because of the age of many of the facilities.

Still, CSC said it's "committed to improving offenders' access to computer-based learning and post-secondary education."

A spokesperson pointed to a pilot project, launched in 2020, that offers some inmates in some minimum and medium-security prisons access to limited digital educational material, including a handful of college courses.

For Zinger and other critics, the CSC's efforts are not good enough. He said the service should provide more support to inmates who want to educate themselves because ample evidence shows it is one of the best paths to rehabilitation - and that's CSC's main job.

"Why don't we give those who want to ameliorate their situation the tools and the support they need?"

Most Canadian inmates test below Grade-10 level

The Correctional Service of Canada is required by its policies to provide a high school education to any inmate who has not completed Grade 12. This is their education priority, they say, since four out of five prisoners test below a Grade-10 level when they arrive at an institution.

The CSC is not required to provide access to post-secondary education, despite the fact that the federal government has noted in policy documents that a basic education is “not sufficient to prepare incarcerated individuals for successful reintegration.” The CSC says its teachers are “available to support” inmates who choose to pursue post-secondary education on their own.

Until recently, tuition fees and the slow pace of prison mail were the main obstacles for inmates trying to get a diploma or degree. Today it’s a lack of technology, said Rick Sauvé, a former prisoner who now works as a peer support worker helping inmates transition out of prison.

Sauvé, 71, earned a bachelor’s degree from Queen’s University in 1987 while he was serving a life sentence. He did it primarily via paper correspondence, with some in-person classes.

That’s not an option for today’s prisoners, he said, adding that getting an education was “critical” to his success, both in terms of his well-being while he was incarcerated and his ability to find and keep a job when he was released. When Sauvé entered prison in 1978, he had a Grade 9 education. By the time he got parole in 1995 he was halfway to a Master’s degree.

“It was transformative,” he said. “The world opened up to me. I saw that my life could take many paths.”

It also gave him a goal and a sense of pride in his accomplishments, he added, something he could share with his family. When his daughter visited him in prison, they often did school work together.

“I started to see myself as a student, not just a prisoner.”

11 computers for more than 500 inmates
Prisoners who want to pursue university or college programs are responsible for all aspects of their participation themselves, including costs.

Frazier, who works full-time at a non-profit in Alberta, spent her evenings and weekends researching, printing and mailing course materials to the prison for her son.

“A lot of ink, a lot of paper.”

It took the better part of a year, but they eventually got through the first course.

At the rate they were going it would be 30 years before Frazier’s son completed his degree.

Frazier’s son pleaded guilty to second-degree murder as a young offender and was sentenced

as an adult to life in prison. The Star agreed not to publish his name or the name of his penitentiary because he feared that publicly criticizing the CSC could negatively affect his chances of receiving parole. The Star also agreed to use Frazier’s maiden name to avoid identifying her son.

Besides the lack of internet, Frazier’s son also struggled to get regular computer access, which limited his ability to type his assignments - a requirement of the online course.

There are 11 desktop computers at the prison for more than 500 inmates, so it was difficult enough to book computer time before the pandemic. When social-distancing restrictions were put in place, computer and library access were often cut off entirely.

In January 2022, Frazier’s son made a formal request for his own laptop - which he would pay for and which would not be connected to the internet - so that he could complete his assignments in his cell, where inmates were largely confined at the time.

The prison warden denied his request, saying it was against CSC policy. Computers are only provided to inmates to review electronic disclosures in their legal cases.

This wasn’t always the case. Until October 2002, inmates were allowed to have computers in their cells as part of their personal property. But after some inmates were caught using smuggled modems to access the internet and CSC’s networks to commit crimes, personal computers were banned.

All technology has been tightly restricted ever since. Even today, the only approved way for an inmate to save a computer file is on a floppy disk. The CSC says they are “exploring” letting inmates use USB devices and intend to conduct a pilot project.

More than a decade ago, the Office of the Correctional Investigator highlighted how the U.S. Bureau of Prisons had begun using a closed email system that allowed inmates to communicate with pre-approved family contacts, recommending that CSC look into doing the same.

Repeated recommendations to increase inmates’ access to technology have gone unheeded in the years since, and Zinger, who has been Canada’s correctional investigator since 2017, has become increasingly exasperated.

"The (CSC) has continued to maintain obsolete infrastructure and technological platforms for such an extended period of time that these problems now appear insoluble," he wrote in his 2019-20 report. "CSC is so far behind the community standard that it seriously puts into question its legal obligation to prepare and assist offenders for release."

A 2019 paper by Queen's University's Lisa Kerr and Samantha Bondoux is equally unsparring, writing that CSC's internet ban "ensures that inmates will lack the basic skills required for nearly all forms of modern employment following release."

"These policies are so dysfunctional," Kerr and Bondoux write, "that one wonders how the status quo has been allowed to exist for so long."

Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, who oversees the CSC, declined to be interviewed for this story. His office deferred all questions to the CSC.

Federal prisons 'working on modernizing' education programming

A CSC spokesperson said a digital education pilot project offers some inmates access to high school courses, workplace certifications and college "micro-credentials" - short, certificate-awarding training courses - through a "cloud-based" program with "controlled internet access."

Internal CSC data shows inmates have completed more than 2,000 micro-credential courses in the last two years.

A limited number of courses from St. Lawrence and Loyalist colleges were also recently made available to some inmates in Ontario as part of the pilot, which the CSC says it is expanding across the country.

"CSC is working on modernizing its education program and improving offenders' access to computer-based learning," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also mentioned Walls to Bridges, a program run out of McMaster University, in which a local college or university professor teaches a course - at no cost to CSC - inside a prison or jail to both inmates and non-incarcerated students. A dozen courses were offered across the country last year.

El Jones, an activist and professor at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, works with graduate students to create a handful of

individualized paper correspondence courses each year for prisoners in Nova Scotia.

She said these kinds of community initiatives are valuable to those who can participate in them, but they are not enough to meet demand or fulfil CSC's responsibility.

"Even if you don't care about the person in prison," Jones said, "you should think about what it means for society as people get out."

The government's own research shows investments in prison education pay for themselves. CSC found \$6.37 in direct savings for every dollar spent on education "due to its effect on recidivism, and the power education has in keeping an individual from reoffending."

Frazier's son started his second Athabasca University course in 2022 but he immediately ran into obstacles. The course included 45 online videos essential to understanding the other material, and prison staff said they couldn't download the videos for him to view offline.

Seeing the burden his studies were putting on his mother, he enlisted a friend to send him online resources. He would mail his friend instructions for what to research. The friend would try to find something relevant, print it and mail it back to the prison. The process took months.

Then last spring's federal workers' strike shut down the prison library, cutting off computer access. Frazier's son ended up paying \$600 in additional fees to Athabasca because he needed multiple extensions, but he eventually completed the course.

He told his mother it would be his last, at least until after he is released.

Brendan Kennedy

The Star

Mar 15, 2024

Hunting Jews has always been a European sport. Now the Palestinians, who never played it, are paying the bill.

- Eduardo Galeano

You can stand tall without standing on someone.

You can be a victor without having victims.

- Harriet Woods

Anything less than the truth is a lie.

- Tamara Starblanket

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lawyer says inmates may be entitled to remedies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bobby Hristova
CBC News
Mar 01, 2024

A first-hand account on grieving behind bars

In prison, death is as normal as it is on the outside. People will pass of old age and that's that. But what happens when someone dies of unnatural causes? What are corrections' protocols? How are they responsible and to what extent?

Prisons for ages have been dealing with murders, suicides, overdoses, uses of excessive force causing death and the question that keeps resurfacing is how could this have been prevented?

Accountability seems to be shifted to one another amongst corrections staff and higher ups but no one is to blame and no one ever has to answer for these deaths in a court of law. There is only an inquiry which is sad for all those permanently damaged by our broken system. If we were to hold those capturers accountable for our lives, police and corrections would have no choice but to buckle down and get to the root of the issues that leads to death. Anything other than that, would suggest that this is a population that isn't worth existing or deserving of fair justice.

I'm an Indigenous federal offender who has spent 10+ years in and out of the system and has

experienced death in jail on many occasions. In one instance, in a suspected overdose in a provincial facility, an inmate was unresponsive and his cellmate was calling for help in the middle of the night while locked in the cell, banging on the door and screaming for at least 20 minutes before an officer showed up to call the nurses.

They segregated his cellmate and interrogated him for information as to why his cellmate was unresponsive. Nurses then took another 20 to 30 minutes to arrive and drag the young man's body outside the cell to give chest compressions, taking turns with the guards while administering two doses of Narcan. An ambulance was called and took another 20 to 30 minutes to arrive where they continued to do chest compressions paired with a defibrillator. The young man was left with a weak pulse and was brain dead and later that day the plug was removed and he was subsequently pronounced dead.

For most people this would be shocking. But in prison this situation happens all too often. This man who died was a son, a friend, a brother. As prisoners, we were offered no truth as to why he died. We were put on lockdown for a week with no showers, no phones, pending an investigation. For moral support, a chaplain came by on day two of the lockdown and knocked on our cell window asking if we were ok and then walked away. That is the extent of support offered by corrections. His cellmate returned after four days in segregation, clearing him of any wrongdoing.

The lack of transparency corrections has when it comes to death is alarming. In the short stay of roughly 6 months at this facility there were 5 known deaths and only through word of mouth would you find out about the deaths. Nothing was posted, no health warnings, no education on how to prevent or act in the situation when an overdose arises. Simply a recipe for disaster.

Now let's talk about the reasons why deaths happen. We have a facility that clearly has an opioid epidemic and this facility in particular does not have their cells equipped with a medical emergency button. If this button were in place when his cellmate found him unresponsive it would have saved 40 to 60 minutes of response time which in turn may have saved his life. Whether or not he died from an overdose, just imagine an old man suffering from a stroke or a heart attack. Having to wait every hour for a

correctional officer to walk to notice that he needs medical attention.

What leads people to use alcohol and drugs in jail? Mental health and boredom. There is simply nothing better to do. Shortage of staff lockdowns are a direct link to deteriorating mental health of those incarcerated. Management gives their staff 1/3 of the year of time off if they feel like it which leads to staff shortages. Corrections refuses to acknowledge any wrongdoing and their slow response time reflects how much they care about these issues.

As for the effects after the fact, these residual energies of tormented souls dying in custody linger. The red tape on the cell remains on the door long after the investigation is over. This tape is a seal protecting the investigation, seeing that the cell is undisturbed before it's time for police to snap photos in the cell for evidence. If you were to look on every range, you will see the tape many times which forces the question in your mind, what happened that time? Could I be next? Will I fall victim as the others did? Will corrections let me down if given the chance? I would bet my bottom dollar on it.

In conclusion, corrections must review all protocols and training so that this vulnerable community can survive its stay in these institutions. Transparency and support for families and witnesses must be available or else it is at high risk to repeat itself. Sending the right message by not allowing people to die at an alarming rate at the hands of the system is the least the government can do. And start taking accountability as if this was a criminal case because failure to act is an act of its own. And these situations if not addressed will snowball and there lies the snowman of death.

Anonymous
Tracking (In)Justice
Mar 28, 2023

Putting migrants in federal prisons
is unjustified and unjust

Last month, with a single sentence buried in Annex 3 of its latest budget, the federal government shamefully doubled down on rights-violating practices of the Canadian Border

Services Agency by expanding immigration detention into federal prisons.

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

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

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

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

While fewer than 10% of detentions over the past 8 years involved allegations of public-safety risk, the CBSA repeatedly cites exceptional cases to justify a broader use of detention. Even accepting the CBSA's flawed argument, resorting to federal prisons to detain the relatively small number of "public safety" cases is an over-reaction when other, less extreme alternatives are available. The CBSA's three immigration detention facilities - which were allocated this year to receive \$325-million in upgrades in the

budget - operate like medium-security prisons, with constant surveillance, guards and segregation cells.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Prison

No person's land
We share a common life
We share a common journey
It takes courageous souls
Braver & more hopeful
To deal & go through what we do
Our task is enormous
To look at all that has gone before us
And all that will come after us
To recognize that each one of us
Has a unique task in co-creation
A unique contribution to make
In the world & to humanity

Tina Flear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"At its core, we must remember that innocent people are being jailed. Many of these folks are not subsequently found guilty of the offenses it's alleged that they've committed," she said. "So the reality is that people are being punished, they are serving what amounts to a sentence prior to and often in the absence of conviction."

Across Canada, 51% of cases end with all charges withdrawn, meaning the accused is not found guilty of the alleged crime, she noted.

The Canadian Press
Feb 26, 2024

Nothing in life is to be feared.
It is only to be understood.
- Marie Curie

Hell in Here

*That was the deep, uncanny minds of souls
They silently moved through its massive darkness
A world without men, only women
And in the dark it looked as hard as stone
Outside full of cement walls & barbwire
Cages upon cages & more locked doors
Lucky 2 see the tip of a tree
No flowers, just weeds & maybe a squirrel
Months 2 get letters, royalty 2 get visits
Heaven with its own disfigured stars*

Tina Flear

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

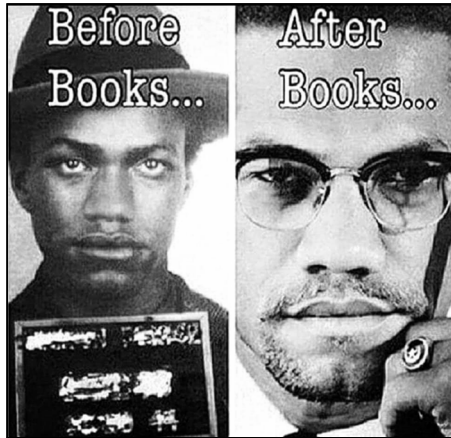
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

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

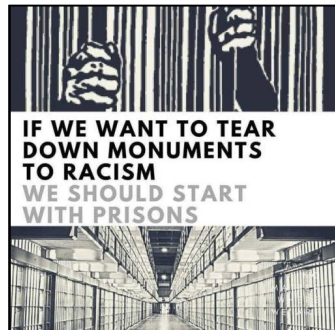
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven – 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC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



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

- Judy Castrina

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

*Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all.
Security is mostly a superstition.
It does not exist in nature.*

- Helen Keller

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

We can't change prisons without changing society, we know that this is a long and dangerous struggle.

But the more who are involved in it, the less dangerous, and the more possible it will be.

- Claire Culhane

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

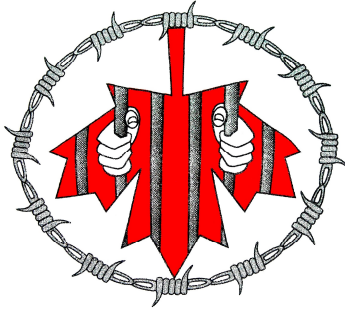
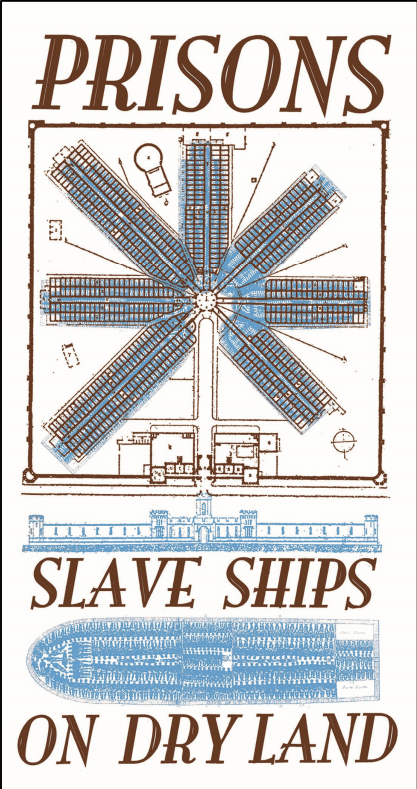
The Impact

- 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 ~ 416-505-5333



Women's Prison Network
Summer 2024 - Issue #35

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

visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Fall Issue #36 is mailed out:
Sep 1, 2024
Send in your work before:
Aug 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