

# Womens Prison Network



Issue #38 - Spring 2025

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #38 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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Cover: Kaitlyn Rollins



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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 ~

A month-long stay:

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

## Federal government trying to stop Class Action by Imprisoned Migrants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Repeatedly strip-searched

Among the plaintiffs involved in the class action is Tyron Richard, originally from Grenada.

Even though he was not considered dangerous, Richard spent 18 months in three different maximum-security jails in Ontario from January 2015 to July 2016.

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

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

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

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

### Most provinces withdrew

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

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

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

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

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

Brigitte Bureau

CBC News

Jan 17, 2025



California depends on prison labour to deal with climate disasters:

Canada must avoid a similar model

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

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

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

*The use of prison labour is particularly concerning, given Black Americans are incarcerated at nearly five times the rate of white Americans in state prisons. In 12 states, more than half of the prison population is Black.*

*California prisoners are denied access to minimum wage provisions, prevented from forming labour unions and denied access to other workplace safety regulations. They're also more likely to be injured or to die on the job than non-incarcerated firefighters. Their wages are capped at US\$29.80 per day, compared to non-incarcerated firefighters, who earn up to US\$358 daily, not including overtime.*

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

#### Prison labour in the Canadian context

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

*Like their counterparts south of the border, Canadian prisoners are engaged in various forms*

*of labour, including wildfire management, but are denied basic rights as workers.*

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

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

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

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

#### Prison labour in British Columbia

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

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

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

*"It is not necessary that the work be directly related to the offender's correctional plan ... work release is a very flexible program that*

allows correctional managers to respond to community projects and local needs for labour.”

This is particularly concerning given that ex-prisoners often struggle to secure gainful employment upon release, despite their participation in employment programming.

#### Prison labour as a response to climate disasters

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jordan House & Lydia Dobson  
The Conversation  
Jan 26, 2025

#### Staying in touch from behind bars

We are best friends, and for several years, we've had to work hard to maintain our friendship while one of us is incarcerated in Ontario.

Staying connected and maintaining our friendship despite incarceration has been challenging, and we know our experiences are shared among incarcerated people and their families and friends who are trying to stay in touch with them. We're revisiting the challenges we've faced navigating the federal and Ontario correctional systems to show the ways prisons try to cut incarcerated people off from their family and friends.

Anonymous (A): I remember the day you were arrested. I had no idea where you were. Your friends told me that you were in jail, but we didn't know which one. There was no way for me to call you or figure out what institution you were in.

Anonymous (B): It was difficult to call you the first few weeks. After spending a night at the police station, I was brought to the jail. I was put on a COVID-19 intake range which meant I had minimal time out of the cell every other day. I needed to put money on my phone card to get a hold of you because I have to pay for every call I make unless it is a collect call. I had to wait for a friend to drop off money at the jail or send me a money order. I then put in the request form for the money to be transferred to my phone card, which took four days to process. I was not allowed visits while on the COVID range. I was stuck with three people in a cell; one person slept on the floor.

I was put on a normal range after 14 days of COVID isolation and had more time to access a phone, but the range only had three phones for 40 people. When there wasn't a lockdown, we were only out of our cells for 7.5 hours a day. Phone calls were limited to 20 minutes and unless you're established on the range, “double pressing” (making two calls in a row) is frowned upon.

A: The lockdowns were so bad in that jail; days and sometimes weeks went by without a call from you. When we were preparing for sentencing, I made a lockdown chart for your lawyer to show how much time you spent locked in your cell without access to the phone. Of the 132 days you were at that institution, there were

only 30 days without lockdowns. There were almost always lockdowns on the weekend so I only heard from you during the week and it was hard to pick up the calls during my work day.

B: I was lucky to see two full days a week out of my cell at that time. The jail put us under additional lockdowns for fights called "behavioural management units" (BMU). BMU punishment is a week or two long where you only get let out of your cell for 20 to 30 minutes every three days to take a shower or use the phone. What the jail forgets to consider is that lockdowns make people angrier and upon release from BMU people tend to take it out on each other. There were no visits when my range was on BMU. I called you whenever I could and I felt lucky when you'd answer at whatever random times I'd be let out.

A: Visits in that jail were difficult. The only way I could book a visit was by calling the jail. Sometimes I would be on hold for an hour and then the line would cut. The jail was a 40-minute drive away from my house and the visits were only 20 minutes long. Often, a guard would call me the morning of the visit saying that the visit was cancelled. Once, I went all the way to the jail only to be informed there was a lockdown and the visit was cancelled.

B: There would always be a lockdown when someone died in the jail. At least eight people died or killed themselves in my short time there and one happened in front of me. After someone died, there would be an investigation that would lock down our unit, meaning no phone calls and no yard or shower access for a week and change. I knew our visit would be cancelled, but there was no way to call you to tell you because of the lockdown. But even when you were allowed to visit, the visit was behind a glass window and we had to use broken phones to talk to each other that are hard to hear through. It made the visits stressful.

A: The jail often cut the phones off early so 20-minute visits became 10- to 15-minute ones. There are no warnings before the phones are cut, so I didn't get to say goodbye to you. It was hard seeing you on the other side, and all the other families and friends who didn't get to say goodbye after their short visits, either.

B: I found letters were the easiest way to have a full conversation with you when I was in the jail. It made my day to see a letter from you come in

with my name on it. I drew pictures for you and showed you my plans for release and when you sent pictures and words of encouragement that helped me believe in myself again when I felt really low.

A: I remember the first letter I wrote to you while you were in that jail: I wrote in a thick black pen and included some photos of your dog. A month after I sent it, it was returned to me with the note: "no marker" or "home printed pics." It was frustrating having the mail returned; it felt like the only means of communication we had left was taken away.

B: The mail would take months to arrive to me. Sometimes I received other people's mail along with pictures of their family, spouses, and kids so I assume my missing mail is also sent to other people in the jail, or that it never even made it inside.

Over a year ago, I pleaded guilty because of the weaknesses in my case and the terrible conditions in this provincial jail. I was then moved to a federal prison, which has a completely different system for visits, phone calls, and mail. In the federal system, the prison had to approve every number on my phone card. It took weeks for them to verify your number and I had no way of contacting you.

A: I remember relearning how to get in touch with you when you were transferred. The prison did not even tell you when you were going to be shipped out of the jail to the federal prison to serve the remainder of your sentence. There were a few weeks after your sentencing where I didn't hear from you and eventually I assumed that you had been transferred.

I wanted to see you as soon as possible after you were moved, especially since the visits in prison are longer and are not behind glass, but I had to apply to be a visitor. The application required I disclose a lot of personal information and send in pictures of myself. I was anxious waiting for approval, but after six weeks of waiting, I was finally approved.

The new facility is even more difficult to get to: it is a two-hour drive, one way, to visit you. I'm always nervous that I will go all the way there and be told to go home because there is a lockdown or I test positive on the ion scanner. You've told me many stories about people making the very long journey for a visit only to be turned back because they tested positive for

drugs on the scanner. These scanners are often faulty, but that doesn't stop guards from turning away visitors if they scan positively. Every time I visit you, I wash all my clothes, wipe my glasses and shoes, just like you told me to. I'm relieved every time I make it through the ion scanner and metal detector, and past the drug detector dog.

B: I love it when you visit, but the process to organize the visits, and getting in and out of the visitor room, is difficult. Unless you tell me on one of our calls, I don't get notified that I have a visit until the day of. Before entering the visitor room, I get frisked by the guards and my personal clothing is logged. After leaving the visit, depending on the day and the guards, I might be frisk searched again or strip searched. All the tables also have microphones in them to record our conversations so it never feels like we can talk freely.

For people in jail and prison, our visits and phone calls are all we have to maintain our relationships so that we have something to come home to. Community support is critical to my parole and freedom but jails and prisons use intimidation to deter our loved ones from visiting and talking to us.

A: There is an unspoken understanding among people in visitor waiting rooms in jails and prisons about what it means to maintain a relationship with someone who is incarcerated in jail or prison. There is a shared determination: we will do anything, no matter the emotional and financial cost, to see and talk to the people we love. When I get your call or when I make it to the visiting room, I know we have won. No matter the barriers jails and prisons put in our way, you and I always find ways to stay in touch.

Anonymous Friends  
Briarpatch Magazine  
Jun 6, 2024

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*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

This Is My Story...

I started using at age 16  
Alcohol and weed at age 18  
I was introduced to crack at age 20  
I had a baby girl on April 13, 1990, 7 pds, 4 oz  
I named her Chantelle Marie Williams  
I was still using  
I quit one month before she was due  
That still didn't stop me from using.  
August 5, 1991, I had another baby girl  
I named her Jameisha Corinne Stevens  
7 pds, 11 oz  
I was still heavy into my addiction  
And it was growing worse  
I started stealing from stores to attain money  
I got into trouble with the law  
In 95-96 I went to a place called ONE WAY  
HOUSE  
There is where I had to have someone take my  
kids  
Jameisha's father showed up in court to get  
custody of her  
Chantelle wasn't his but he spoke up to the judge  
to take her as well  
I felt lost and alone and really turned to crime  
and drugs  
I've been in and out of the system  
and on the streets until last year 2004  
I had a visit for the first time since I lost them in  
'96  
They were all grown up. I barely recognized them  
But I knew I had to quit my drug use  
So I went and turned myself in  
November 22, 2004  
February 10, 2005 I got out.  
I stayed clean until April 22, 2005  
I relapsed at that time.  
I was clean when I went to court on March 28th  
And got custody of my daughter Chantelle  
I was so happy and I still am  
I relapsed on April 22.  
I went to my parole officer on April 27  
And told her what happened  
So here I sit at Pathfinders  
I'm still working on me for me and my kids

- Shelly

---

## The Eyes

*The eyes are blue blend with water  
If I look deep in her eyes  
I see the beautiful ocean.  
I see the ocean  
I swim in every hot day of my life  
I'm looking straight at the beautiful sky  
Wow!!!  
That's beautiful blue eyes  
I really like blue eyes  
Blue is a really pretty color*

- Taliya Simone Alvelo

---

## What I Have Lost

*I lost my mother to a gun  
Ever since then I've been on the run  
On Mother's Day I cannot phone  
She's not here I'm all alone  
After she was killed I heard her voice  
She said, "I'm sorry I left, but I had no choice."  
The man who killed her never did time  
It never cost him one thin dime*

- Betty Phillips

---

## My Children

*I love my children  
They're always in my heart  
I've loved all four  
From the very start  
My heart cries out  
When we're not together  
I love them now  
And I'll love them forever  
I love you my babies  
For always, you'll see  
My heart is yours  
For you, from me  
So wipe your tears away  
Please don't cry for me  
I'm coming home soon...  
Sooner than you think.*

Love, your mommy,  
- Olga Alvelo

## It is Easy to Tell

*People say it is easy to tell  
When someone else is going through hell  
I see the pain in your eyes  
Like a great big bad surprise  
I'm hurt. I don't like it  
No I don't. Not one bit.  
A sad guilty shameful mother  
Who once loved but lost her brother  
Also her son who doesn't know  
How much or how far it will go  
A Grandma who works too much and too hard  
Emotionally drained and scarred  
A Grandpa who doesn't talk too much  
But when he does has a hard but soft  
educational touch  
A brother who I adore and loves to score  
Well, this is my family which I love and care  
This is the love we have to share  
These are the things I have to say  
To vent my frustrations Day by Day*

- Stephanie Singh

---

## What I Have Lost

*I know through the years  
There were good times and bad  
Unfortunately what hurts  
I remember the bad  
I've disappointed you  
In so many ways  
The drinking, the drugging  
Almost forgetting your special day  
I know you've lost trust  
Today is a new day  
I'm sobering up  
While missing you the same  
The days are getting better  
I'm recalling the good days  
I know that this year  
I'll remember your special day*

- Jill Smith

---

*Lockdowns only get attention when they effect  
the unjailed.*

- She



Untitled

Child  
Years  
Never-never Land  
Touches  
Hurt  
Instant Love  
All Mine  
Loving and Lovable  
Emotional  
Intricate  
God's Child  
Hard Life  
Wondrous  
Admirable  
Trusting  
Eclectic  
Romantic  
Sunny

- Cynthia Leigh Waters

---

To My Children

Nothing hurts me more right now than being away from you.  
I can handle the consequences of jail, fines, community service, rehab, everything but the hurt I put you through by being away  
Depriving you hurts more than any punishment sentenced to me.  
I can only pray that you will learn from my bad choices  
and not go through the same mistakes  
Please know that it is you that motivates me to do right now and plan for the future.  
The consequences of being away again is too great to re-offend

- Love, Mom

---

What I Have Lost

Integrity, credibility, job security, freedom, sanity, possessions, schedules, friends, marriage, health, stability, time . . . the hardest loss . . . time with my children. . . gone forever.

---

You Were My Joy & My Life

You were my joy and my life,  
My everything, my all  
You were an answer to prayer  
I loved you so much  
I had to give you away  
You weren't a toy  
I would have broken you  
You were my sunshine  
After you were gone  
I lived in perpetual darkness.  
I became an underground animal  
Never seeking the sun  
You are my sun

- Betty Phillips

---

What I Have Lost... Time

I have lost time with my children  
I have lost time with my family  
I have lost time looking at their faces  
I have lost time seeing them grow  
I have lost time hearing them laugh  
I have lost time when they have cried  
I have lost time experiencing their joys  
I have lost time taking their picture  
I have lost time in their memories  
I have lost too much time  
I don't want to lose time anymore

- Darlene Haley

---

The Ocean

The ocean is a blend of blue, green and yellow.  
Just imagine you in the ocean  
You run as fast as you can,  
but the water slows you down,  
and if you touch the dry seaweed,  
it pokes your foot and crab pinches you  
The ocean is as blue as her eyes  
The waves are like somebody trying to drown you  
When you swallow the water,  
it is like swallowing Pepto Bismol  
And later it comes back up  
We all need water

- Taliya Simone Alvelo

### The Little Things

*The path I have been on  
has robbed me of so many  
Little things  
in life  
Times I put my family second  
Times I made someone in my family cry  
I feel I shall never make that up to them  
no matter what I try  
Now that I want to change  
after so many years  
I'm excited about what's ahead of me  
and my children  
and my grandchildren  
Where we all can cherish  
and enjoy the  
Little things  
The struggles I can share  
I can grab hold of what I  
have left of my life  
and remember every minute of it.*

- Debra Radhs

---

### What I Have Lost

1. I lost my innocence
2. I lost my childhood
3. I lost my mom
4. I lost my dad
5. I lost my dog
6. I lost my good friend
7. I lost my freedom
8. I lost my pride
9. I lost my husband
10. I lost my grandmother
11. I lost my heart
12. I lost my mind
13. I lost six years of drug-free time

- Anon

---

*If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun.*

- Katherine Hepburn

*One accurate measurement is worth a thousand  
expert opinions.*

- Grace Hopper

### Prison Life

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

- The End

---

*It's not the load that breaks you down,  
it's the way you carry it.*

- Lena Horne

*Night time is really the best time to work.  
All the ideas are there to be yours because  
everyone else is asleep.*

- Catherine O'Hara

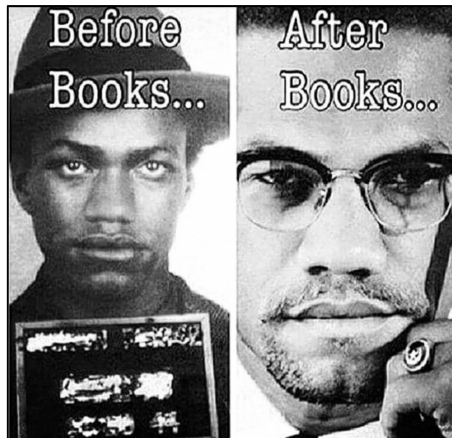
## Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

*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

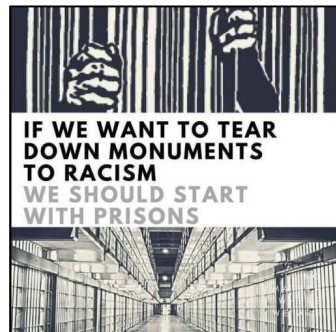
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM  
Black Power Hour – Wed 9 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM  
PRS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am  
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
Stark Raven – 1<sup>st</sup> Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM  
CPR – Wed 7-8 pm

*The CPR 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.*

*CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones on the last Wed of each month.*

*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: 613-417-3359 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.*



*No matter how old a mother is, she watches her middle-aged children for signs of improvement.*

- Florida Scott Maxwell

### 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

*You can stand tall without standing on someone.  
You can be a victor without having victims.*

- Harriet Woods

### 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)

*We live in an era where masses of people come and go across a hostile planet, desolate and violent.*

*Refugees, emigrants, exiles, deportees.*

*We are a tragic contingent.*

- Isabel Allende

### 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.*



### Toronto Queer Film Festival 2025 March 28 > 30

*Prisoner related on Sat, Mar 29, 8:30pm:  
Within These Cages (2001 7min)  
by Faith Nolan & Melanya Liwanag Aguila.  
Faith Nolan doing a music workshop with  
Women prisoners at S.F. County Jail  
Malqueridas (2023 74min) by Tana Gilbert  
Personal stories from within San Joaquin  
Women's Prison in Santiago, Chile.*

Tranzac Club  
292 Brunswick Ave  
[TQFF.ca](http://TQFF.ca) / [TorontoQueerFilmFest.com](http://TorontoQueerFilmFest.com)

## Prison Health is Public Health:

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

### About Hepatitis C

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

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

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

### Canada's Promise

In May 2016, the first-ever Global Viral Hepatitis Strategy was endorsed by the 194 Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO), with the goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. As a Member State, Canada signed onto this strategy and endorsed the targets contained within it. The WHO strategy includes specific targets, and all countries were tasked with developing a National Action Plan to meet these targets. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) responded by publishing the Pan-Canadian framework for action to reduce the health impact of Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections (STBBIs) in 2018 and the Government of Canada five-year action plan on STBBIs in 2019.

### Why Focus on Correctional Settings?

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

### Current State:

#### Federal - YES !!!

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

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

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

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

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

- When released, get right on 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.

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

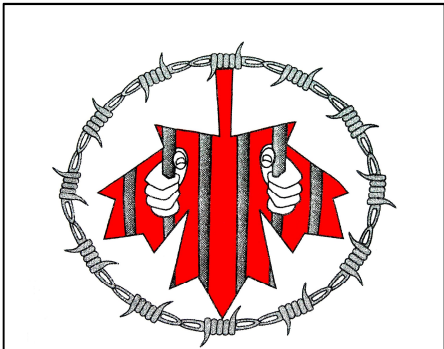
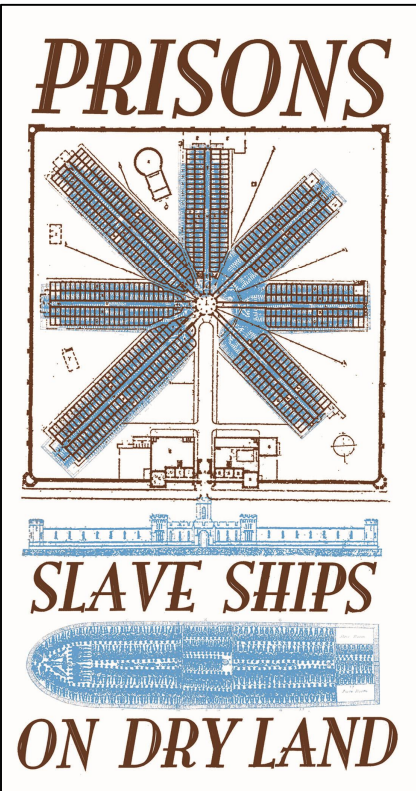
### The Impact

- 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 2025 - Issue #38

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

visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org  
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Summer Issue #39 is mailed out:

Jun 1, 2025

Send in your work before:

May 1, 2025

**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