

# Womens Prison Network



Prisoners Justice Day

~ August 10 ~

Issue 39 - Summer 2025

## &lt; Editor's Note &gt;

Welcome to Issue #39 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 &amp; 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 (½ 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: 150+

Recirculation: ???

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

All original artwork, poems & writings are the sole/soul property of the artist & author.

Fair Dealing & the Canadian Copyright Act  
Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2:

"Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

## &lt; Contents &gt;

News .....	3-7
Resources.....	10-16

## &lt; Artists in this Issue &gt;

Cover: Sharon Holmes



## &lt; Donations for this Issue &gt;

Very special thanks out to:

Charles K. !

*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).

## &lt; Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment &gt;

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 ~

No matter how well meaning and astute the investigators are or how well-researched, witnessed and documented the incidents of cruelty are, a prison is a prison is a prison.

- Gayle K. Horii

New Indigenous Justice Strategy aims to address overincarceration of Indigenous people

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Implementation a concern

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

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

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

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

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

Jackie McKay  
CBC News  
Mar 21, 2025



## CRTC looking into inmate phone call rates in Canada following Ontario case

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission is looking into the rates for phone calls at correctional facilities across the country, spurred by high long-distance charges that families of inmates at Ontario jails had to pay for years.

A proposed class-action lawsuit against the province and Bell, which ran the phone system in the province's jails from 2013 to 2021, alleges that the charges were exorbitant, with a flat rate of \$1 for local calls and about \$1 per minute plus a \$2.50 connection fee for long-distance calls.

One of the lead plaintiffs in the proposed class action had some monthly phone bills of over \$1,000 from the collect calls he received while his son was in solitary confinement, he wrote in an affidavit.

Bell Canada made more than \$64 million in gross revenues from such calls over that time period and gave nearly \$39 million of that to the province as commission.

The lawsuit has been on a long journey through the courts, to the CRTC, and perhaps now back to the courts.

But while the CRTC decided in December that it does not have jurisdiction over that specific case, it is "concerned about the overall provision of telecommunications services in correctional facilities across Canada."

"While the current proceeding has a narrow focus, it has highlighted broader concerns about the rates charged to inmates and their families, as well as the availability of calling options in correctional facilities," the commission wrote in its decision.

"Accordingly, the Commission will undertake additional information gathering to assess whether further action, including potential regulatory intervention, may be required."

Lawyer David Sterns said it has been frustrating trying to get the courts to hear and rule on the class action, but the CRTC has taken a positive step.

"It's an excellent idea," he said. "It's a little silver lining on this arduous journey that we've had."

Catherine Latimer, the executive director of the John Howard Society of Canada, said making it

easy for inmates to maintain contact with their families is an effective way to make society safer. "One of the factors that is instrumental in promoting pro-social conduct, or helping people rehabilitate and reintegrate successfully, is maintaining good connections with family and community," she said.

In Ontario's provincial correctional facilities, the vast majority of inmates - around 80% - have not been convicted of an offence and are awaiting bail or trial. Those who are serving a sentence are there for a matter of months, as provincial facilities handle sentences of less than two years.

"The public is generally interested in seeing a reduction in crime, and providing for successful rehabilitation and reintegration results in a reduction in repeat crime," Latimer said.

"So it's going to, in the long run, keep communities safer if they're not alienated, hardened and marginalized through the criminal justice and corrections experience, and the safeguard against that is the connection with family."

The first days and weeks of being in jail can be the most fraught, said Farhat Rehman of Mothers Offering Mutual Support, an Ottawa-based support group for people whose loved ones are incarcerated.

"That's when they suffer the most," she said. "If they have had mental health issues...the continuum of their treatment, whatever treatment they were having, is broken because the doctors or the psychiatrists or their counsellors cannot access them right away. So this communication is so critical."

Pauline Budd, another member of the group, kept track of the calls she received from her daughter when she was in the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. She spent 30 days inside in 2014 awaiting bail and called home more than 200 times. In 2016, she spent another 13 days in jail for sentencing and awaiting bail pending appeal - her convictions were ultimately set aside - and called home in excess of 200 times again.

"It shows you the extent, somehow of people when they're incarcerated, how often they have the need to speak to somebody," she said.

"It could be their family member, it could be their lawyer, it could be medical professional, it could be friends. It's their support system."

Budd's phone bills for those two periods totalled more than \$700 - and would have been far higher if her daughter had to call long distance.

Sterns said he hopes the CRTC takes on the issue as the Federal Communications Commission has in the United States. An FCC order last year set caps on rates for jail and prison calls at between 6 and 12 cents a minute, depending on the size of the correctional facility.

"They recognized that this is an area where the prisoners are literally and figuratively captives of the telephone companies, and that there's no incentive, there's no competition force requiring the rates to be lower," he said.

"There's the ever-present temptation to make the prisoners pay for their stay."

Bell has said that while it provided phone services in Ontario correctional facilities it always complied with a CRTC-approved Inmate Service Tariff, offering the same collect call rates in correctional facilities as those charged for other public telephones and for home phone services.

Ontario changed the inmate phone system in 2020 and it includes both the ability to make prepaid calls, instead of just collect, and long-distance rates of a few cents a minute.

Ontario has asked the CRTC to reconsider its decision that it has no jurisdiction in the specific case in the proposed class-action lawsuit, and is also seeking leave to appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal, Sterns said.

The provincial Appeal Court in 2023 put the class action on hold as the parties asked the CRTC to consider the issue, with Bell and Ontario arguing that was the more appropriate venue. If it is ultimately decided that the CRTC does not have jurisdiction, after appeals of the CRTC decision are exhausted, the case will go back to Ontario Superior Court for lawyers to argue that it should be certified as a class action, Sterns said.

Allison Jones  
The Canadian Press  
Jan 30, 2025

---

When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.

- Helen Keller

Woman who spent 16 days in extreme solitary confinement sues federal government

A woman who spent 16 days in an extreme form of solitary confinement in a Nova Scotia prison is now suing the federal government for damages.

In 2020, Lisa Adams and her lawyers successfully argued before a Nova Scotia judge that her Charter rights had been breached after she spent 16 days in a "dry cell" on suspicion that she hid drugs in her vagina while serving a sentence at Nova Institution for Women in Truro.

A "dry cell" can be used for male and female inmates suspected of ingesting or hiding contraband inside their bodies. It is a solitary room with no flushing toilet or running water.

The inmate is observed through a glass window and a security camera at all times, even while using the toilet, until the item is removed through the person's bodily waste. There is always some form of lighting in a dry cell, as guards are required to take notes on what the inmate is doing every 15 minutes.

Adams eventually requested a pelvic examination by a doctor, which found she had no objects inside her.

In response to her case, the federal government changed the law and placed new restrictions on the use of "dry cells." The amendments set a 72-hour maximum for dry celling, although the head of the institution can extend that by an extra 24 to 48 hours under certain conditions.

"This whole thing has been a roller coaster, in all honesty," Adams said in a recent interview in Halifax.

#### Difficult memories

Adams now lives in Saint John, near her mother and two sons. She was released from prison in early 2021 after a two-year sentence for drug trafficking, and she is no longer under any conditions.

Her civil case is scheduled to start on June 16, and Adams says it's been difficult to prepare herself mentally.

In the dry cell, the medical staff noted she had a mental break in which she mumbled to herself, was unable to follow directions, rubbed her hands on her arms continuously, pulled at her hair and appeared "jumpy" and "scared at noises and sudden movements."

She became suicidal, to the extent where she said she wrote letters to her family to say goodbye.

Adams said she's tried to "compartmentalize" the experience, but the legal case has stopped her from moving forward.

"I know that I'm going to have to revisit it, and revisit it properly when it does go to trial," she said.

"So I've kind of set it to the side as opposed to fully healing from it yet, because I didn't want to have to re-experience all of the details and have to go through it all over again."

#### Seeking compensation

Adams's 2020 case was a Charter challenge and not a lawsuit, so there was no compensation attached to the decision. That's why her lawyers are returning to court with a civil case now.

"She suffered an immense amount of psychological damage as a result of [the dry cell]. And that's what this case is about," said Mike Dull, one of the Halifax-based lawyers representing Adams.

Dull argues that previous decisions placed restrictions on solitary confinement and that correctional officials acted wrongly in Adams's case.

"What we are arguing is that the law, the courts, need to hold them to account," he said. "And the way that the justice system is able to do that is through financial means."

Dull declined to discuss what amount Adams's legal team is seeking, but noted courts have ordered compensation for other cases of solitary confinement.

#### Government defence

In its statement of defence, the Government of Canada said Adams had "reasonable access" to legal counsel and daily visits from medical professionals, and that a urine test and drug detector dog search revealed sufficient evidence of methamphetamine use to give the institution "reasonable grounds" to believe Adams had drugs in a body cavity.

The defence states there was no negligence or breach of duty toward Adams, that it did not breach her Charter rights and that she is not entitled to damages because its actions complied with the law as it read at the time and weren't "wrong, taken in bad faith, or an abuse of power."

The government's statement of defence agreed a doctor's examination found nothing inside Adams, and stated "Canada acknowledges that the confinement of [Adams] in a dry cell in the circumstances of this case was regrettable."

In response to an inquiry from CBC, the Correctional Service of Canada said they're moving toward "least invasive" search methods, and regulatory amendments around the use of body scanners came into effect last fall.

#### Class action suit not proceeding

In a separate case, a proposed class action against dry celling will not go ahead due to a lack of participants.

A limited number of women came forward to join the class action, and determining which of their cases involved a dry cell as opposed to another form of administrative segregation became complicated.

The case was led by the same lawyers who represent Lisa Adams, but she was not part of the proposed class action.

In a defence brief to the proposed class action, the federal government stated that between 2013 and 2022, the "dry cell protocol" was used on 90 inmates in the five federal women's institutions in Canada.

Mike Dull said it became difficult to define "what is and what isn't dry cell," and the case was unable to go ahead.

#### 'She was, in our opinion, tortured'

Adams's case is supported by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia and the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS). The Elizabeth Fry Society advocates for women who've been involved with the justice system.

CAEFS executive director Emilie Coyle said her organization worked closely with the government when it changed the wording of the dry cells law. She says Canadians should bear in mind that at the time Adams was dry celled, it was part of the law. In her view, this was wrong.

"She was, in our opinion, tortured in those conditions for 16 days. And the fact that she's able to be here and to speak about her experiences is quite remarkable, because she experienced some very traumatic treatment at the hands of our state," Coyle said.

Shaina Luck

CBC News - Mar 20, 2025

New numbers show Alberta lowest in Canada on per capita spending on inmates

New data shows Alberta spends the lowest amount of money per inmate in Canada — a number the province says is value for money but critics label short-sighted and worrisome.

The numbers, published by Statistics Canada earlier this month, show Alberta spends \$193 per day per inmate.

Saskatchewan spends \$199.

Almost every other province and territory puts in over \$300.

The numbers account for costs like salaries for guards and life necessities for inmates. They apply only to correctional centres, remand centres, people in custody awaiting trial, and those serving prison sentences shorter than two years.

The numbers are for 2022-23 and Statistics Canada, in its online report, says inferences “should be made with caution” given some provinces may calculate their overall expenditures differently.

But former prison watchdog Howard Sapers says the Alberta gap compared with other provinces is too big to be dismissed out of hand as just accounting and infrastructure.

Sapers said it suggests Alberta is underspending on correctional staff along with programs and supports for inmates after they're released.

“This is important not just for those who have concerns about what is going on behind prison walls but also for those who are concerned about public safety,” Sapers, who served as the Correctional Investigator of Canada from 2004 to 2016, said in an interview.

“There is a relationship between what you invest and what you get out of it.”

Justin Piché, a University of Ottawa professor who studies incarceration, said he believes Alberta's comparatively low spending level is also a result of the Edmonton Remand Centre — the largest jail in Canada — relying on surveillance cameras to reduce staffing costs.

“The way that they've done it makes it cheaper to run than other models that exist across the country,” Piché said.

That's not necessarily a good thing, he said.

“A facility that's more bereft of human interaction is going to be more inhumane than others,” said Piché. “Human beings need human

connection, and in these giant facilities there's fewer opportunities for that.”

Since the Edmonton Remand Centre opened in 2013, multiple inquiries into inmate deaths have led judges to call for more staffing and face-to-face contact.

An inquiry into the 2020 suicide of Jonathan Anderson led Justice Marilena Carminati to say in a report last week that unless additional mental health staff are hired, “similar deaths are likely to occur.”

The report says that as of 2022, there were 16 mental health workers employed at the remand centre, which can hold 1,500 inmates.

During the inquiry, an employee testified that the remand centre's mental health unit had been short-staffed for years.

Another inquiry into an inmate suicide led Justice Joyce Lester to recommend in 2022 that additional officers staff the male mental health unit at all times.

Lawyers for the centre, in a response letter, rejected that suggestion, saying extra staffing was not necessary and that it “cannot guarantee the unit be staffed at all times by a minimum of two officers during day and afternoon shift.”

Arthur Green, spokesman for Alberta Public Safety Minister Mike Ellis, declined to answer an emailed question on why Alberta has the lowest daily cost.

In a statement, Green said the province is committed to the health and safety of those in correctional and remand centres, but “at the same time, we are responsible and accountable to taxpayers.”

Green pointed to four correctional centres that opened therapeutic living units in 2023.

“These units provide addiction treatment programs to inmates suffering from addiction and supports them in their pursuit of recovery,” he said.

“The intensive programming supports their mental health and ensures they can continue with a co-ordinated network of personalized, community-based services even after their sentences are complete.”

Green said work is always evolving to rehabilitate inmates while keeping the public safe.

Piché, as well as Chris Hay, the president of the John Howard Society of Alberta, say the Alberta government should look at investing in crime prevention programs, as well as programs that

help offenders get back on their feet after they're released.

Hay noted that investing in reintegration support is something the Alberta government is starting to do, albeit slowly.

His organization recently received \$500,000 from the province to pilot a program at the Lethbridge Correctional Centre in southern Alberta.

The program, mirroring one in Ontario, involves every inmate working with a case manager before being released while also pairing those inmates up with non-profit organizations to access support and resources after they get out.

"It's a step in the right direction," Hay said. "We're starting slow, but the Alberta government is playing the game here."

Hay said programs like what his organization is piloting are key to reducing recidivism, which refers to the likelihood a former inmate will continue to commit crimes upon release.

He said recidivism can't be divorced from the justice system: the more effort that goes into punishment, the higher the chance inmates will reoffend.

Alberta doesn't prioritize rehabilitation, he said.

"(It) puts a higher priority on enforcement and punishment."

Jack Farrell

The Canadian Press

Sept 27, 2024

---

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

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

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

The question was how inmates in provincial jails are disciplined. Those who are accused of violating prison rules, in Saskatchewan and other provinces, are judged on what's called the

balance of probabilities - whether it is more likely than not they committed an offence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

David Ebner  
Globe and Mail  
Mar 13, 2025

Prison needle programs could save double what they cost - our new modelling shows how

Needle and syringe programs are a proven public health intervention that provide free, sterile injecting equipment to people who use drugs. By reducing needle sharing, these programs help prevent the spread of blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis C and HIV and minimise life-threatening bacterial infections.

Australia leads the world in community-based needle and syringe programs. But they are not used in Australian prisons - which are hotspots for injection-related infections.

This is a breach of human rights and United Nations resolutions, which make clear health-care standards for people in prison must be equivalent to those in the community.

In addition to meeting human rights standards, our new modelling - the first of its kind in Australia - shows there would be significant economic benefits to implementing prison-based programs.

Australia is a world leader in needle and syringe programs in the community. There are 4,218 sites across the country (as of 2021). Each year they distribute more than 50 million needles and syringes.

Among people who inject drugs, that's about 508 needles and syringes per person each year - the highest rate globally, and more than double the World Health Organization's benchmark for high needle and syringe program coverage (200 per person per year).

For reference, the country with the second-highest coverage was Finland (with 450 needles and syringes per person who injects drugs per year) followed by the Netherlands (367).

A law enforcement emphasis in responding to drug use - rather than public health focus - has resulted in grossly disproportionate rates of incarceration among people who use drugs.

In Australia, between 29% and 52% of people in prisons report injecting drugs at some point in their lives, and around 40% of people who were injecting drugs in the community before prison continue to inject inside.

Without access to sterile injecting equipment, needle sharing and unsafe injecting practices are common. As a result, people who inject drugs in prison are at higher risk of transmitting blood-

borne viruses such as hepatitis C than those in the community.

In 2023, 42% of all hepatitis C treatments in the country were delivered in prisons. These treatments are government-funded, highly effective and curative (meaning total recovery).

But the prevention strategies used in the community - which stop infections happening again - are not used in prison. Re-infection in prisons occurs at more than twice the rate of initial infection.

Australian peak bodies, as well as major research and community health organisations, have long supported the introduction of prison-based programs.

However, legal and political opposition, concerns around safety and security, and funding constraints have all contributed to the lack of progress.

As of 2023, prison needle and syringe programs operated in 11 countries worldwide. The outcomes are positive for both health (reduction in needle sharing, drug use and hepatitis C and HIV transmission) and prison safety.

A 2024 study of Canada's existing needle and syringe program, operating in 9 prisons, found it will save the health-care system \$0.85 million in treatment costs between 2018 and 2030 by preventing hepatitis C and other injection-related infections. In contrast, the program cost just \$0.45 million to run. Canada has since expanded the program to 11 prisons nationwide.

To bring an economic perspective to this debate in Australia, our new study estimated the costs and benefits of introducing needle and syringe programs in all Australian prisons, aiming to reach 50% of people who inject drugs in prison between 2025 and 2030.

We drew on a similar program in Luxembourg which follows international best practice. This needle and syringe program is delivered through prison health services. Sterile injecting equipment is provided face-to-face by health staff. Used equipment is exchanged one-for-one (meaning a sterile needle-syringe can be exchanged for a used one), in a confidential and safe manner.

Then, we identified the specific components and resources needed to implement the program, such as sterile injecting equipment and annual training sessions for prison health staff.

We researched their associated costs to calculate the total cost of scaling-up nationally.

Finally, we modelled the number of hepatitis C and other injection-related infections the program would prevent. These infections can have serious health consequences and are costly to treat. The money saved here helped us calculate the cost savings (that is, the benefits) of the program.

Implementing prison-based programs nationally would cost approximately \$12.2 million between 2025 and 2030. But this investment could prevent 894 hepatitis C infections and 522 injection-related bacterial and fungal infections.

We estimated these infections would cost the health-care system \$31.7 million to treat - more than double the cost of preventing them with a prison needle and syringe program.

In other words: for every dollar invested in prison-based programs, more than two dollars would be saved in health-care costs.

People have strong views about injecting drug use and prison-based needle and syringe programs. But countries where needle and syringe programs have been successfully implemented in prisons have several things in common.

First, there is widespread understanding among everyone involved in using, administering or overseeing the program of its benefits. Eliminating blood-borne viruses can reduce health risks for people in prison and improve the safety of staff.

Second, successful implementation is inclusive. It ensures a range of people have meaningful input in how the program is designed and delivered, including incarcerated people, health-care professionals and policymakers, prison officers and government bodies.

Third, drug use in prison is treated as a public health issue, not a political football. The failed War on Drugs has only compounded the issue, leading to the over-incarceration of people who use drugs and the creation of lucrative prison drug markets.

If Australia is to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030 - as the national hepatitis C strategy outlines - it will be essential to combine prison-based treatment with prevention strategies, including needle and syringe programs.

We now know they are likely to save money too.

Farah Houdroge, Mark Stoové, Nick Scott  
TheConversation.com  
Apr 20, 2025

## 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

## Prison Radio

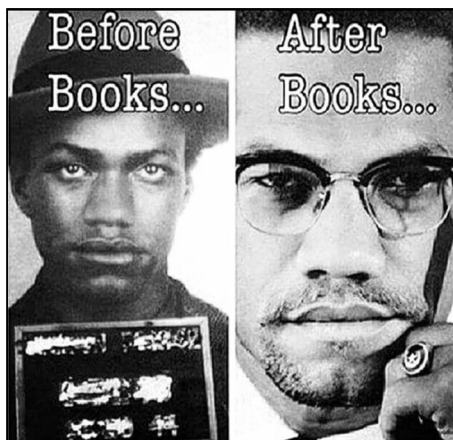
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM  
Black Power Hour – Wed 9 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM  
PRS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am  
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
Stark Raven – 1<sup>st</sup> Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston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

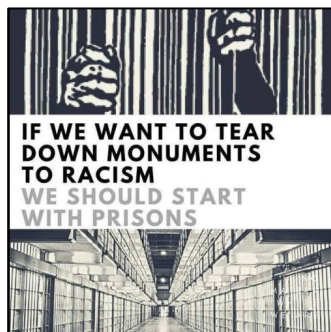
Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,  
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6  
Email: [CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net](mailto:CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net)  
Call: 613-417-3359 to record a message or  
music request to be broadcast on-air.



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



Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it.

- Tori Amos

### 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](http://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 & VCV

*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](mailto: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](mailto: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't use up creativity.*

*The more you use, the more you have.*

*- Maya Angelou*

## 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 Joaquín  
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

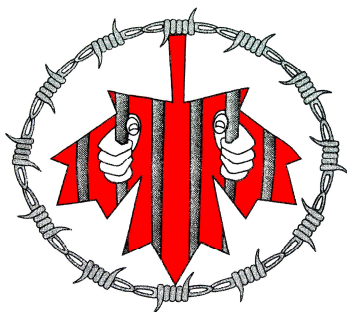
### The Impact

- 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  
Summer 2025 - Issue #39

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

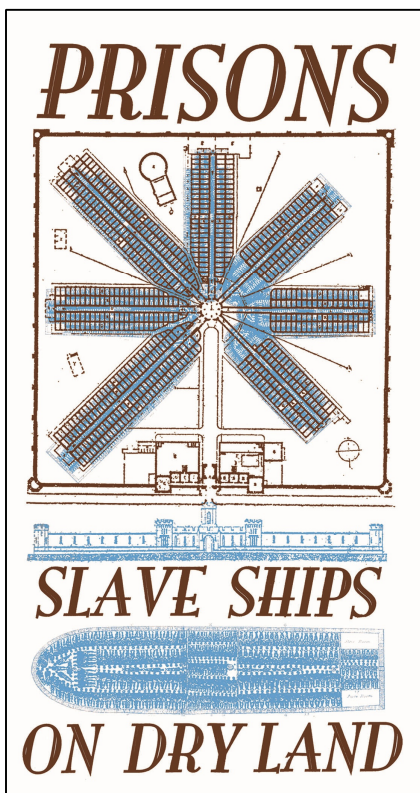
visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org  
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Fall Issue #40 is mailed out:  
Sep 1, 2025

Send in your work before:  
Aug 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