

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #20 - FALL 2020

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #20 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

This is a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, connections ...

We send copies into all Women & Youth prisons in Canada.

Send your art, poems, short stories, comments, articles, etc, to Women's Prison Network if you would like to be a part of the next Issue. - Thanks!

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 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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info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

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Cover Artwork:

'In The Padded Room - Refractory'
Female Convict Life at Woking, UK, 1889

Artists:

Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation.
Thank you so much for your work!

Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.

Please note: this magazine is for women, trans and youth from all cultures, so please do not send religious imagery.

Thank you for your art!

Writers:

One column is only 300 words, so do choose your words carefully.

It must be short & to the point.

Poems that are tight & give space for others are the first in.

Thank you for your words!

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Larry E!

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☞ 'Dish With One Spoon' Wampum ☞

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

Prisoner suing Ottawa over safety of inmates during COVID-19 pandemic

Physical distancing measures in correctional institutions during COVID-19 have been “grossly inadequate” putting the health and safety of prisoners at risk, alleges a lawsuit against the federal government.

The suit, filed by Sean Johnston, who is serving a life sentence for murder, and several human rights organizations, claims failure to protect the health of prisoners during the pandemic violates their charter rights.

Johnston and the groups, which include the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Prison Law Association, filed the application in federal court Tuesday against the country's attorney general.

“Physical distancing measures in prison have been grossly inadequate,” Johnston said in a statement. “Some of us remain double-bunked and cannot achieve physical distancing within our own cells, let alone throughout the institution.”

Without a vaccine or an approved treatment for COVID-19, physical distancing remains the greatest protection against contracting the novel coronavirus, the suit said.

They also allege Correctional Service Canada cannot keep prisoners safe because it cannot ensure the proper physical distancing measures without reducing the prison population.

“Unlike other correctional authorities around the world and across Canada, however, (Correctional Service Canada) has taken few if any steps to release prisoners from its institutions,” the suit said.

“Federal prisoners are disproportionately at risk both of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the penitentiary environment, and of suffering severe adverse outcomes including death, due to the prevalence among the federal inmate population of pre-existing vulnerabilities.”

The suit also alleges some prisons are using lockdowns, with prisoners confined to their own cells for indefinite periods, as a means to curb the spread of the disease. It is a practice that is tantamount to segregation, the suit alleges.

Two prisoners have died of COVID-19 and 333 others have tested positive for the disease, while 202 inmates since recovering, according to

Correctional Service Canada. The vast majority of those cases have come from outbreaks at two institutions in Quebec and one in British Columbia.

“Unlike other correctional authorities around the world and across Canada...(Correctional Service Canada) has taken few if any steps to release prisoners from its institutions,” the suit alleges.

The lawsuit's allegations have not been proven in court.

The office of Attorney General David Lametti did not respond to a request for comment.

The office of the minister of public safety and emergency preparedness said it has authorized both Correctional Service Canada and the Parole Board of Canada to use their power to release inmates “in keeping with their legal obligations and with all due consideration for public safety.”

“Since the beginning of March 2020, there have been fewer admissions to federal institutions and continued releases into the community, resulting in the overall federal custody population to decline by over 400 inmates, or more than the average size of a minimum-security facility,” the minister's office wrote.

“This downward trend in the overall federal inmate population is expected to continue over the coming months.”

Correctional Service Canada said the health, safety and well-being of staff and inmates is critical.

The service has suspended visits to inmates, temporary absences, work releases and inter-regional and international transfers of inmates in its effort to curb the spread of the disease, said spokeswoman Esther Mailhot.

The institutions have enhanced cleaning, including disinfecting common areas and high-contact surfaces, she said.

“We continue to educate staff and offenders around prevention and the spread of illness, including the importance of good hygiene practices, through training posters, fact sheets, and ongoing written and verbal communication,” she said.

The institutes are also “medically isolating inmates who show symptoms and are positive to COVID-19 to prevent the spread of infection.”

The Canadian Press
May 12, 2020

Remember the chatter about releasing inmates early to ease spread of COVID-19? It didn't happen

Even though Public Safety Minister Bill Blair asked prison and parole officials this spring to consider releasing low-risk inmates early due to the threat posed by COVID-19, there was no increase in the number of prisoners released during the first three months of the pandemic compared to a year earlier.

In fact, there were slightly fewer inmates released, according to new information obtained by the Star.

The federal inmate population nationwide did fall by about 600 - from 13,958 on March 1 to 13,357 on May 24, show records from the Correctional Service of Canada.

But the decline is attributed not to a rise in inmate releases but to "releases from federal custody continuing to outnumber admissions," according to the records. In other words, the drop appears to have been driven more by court shutdowns and fewer offenders being sentenced.

The records lend support to the findings of federal prison watchdog Ivan Zinger, who released a highly critical report in June that said there was "simply no advanced, coherent, concerted effort or plan in place to thin the federal prison population in order to slow the transmission of COVID-19 in federal corrections." Zinger went on to say the federal response had been "slow, contradictory, confused and deficient."

During the height of the pandemic, 360 federal inmates became infected with COVID-19 and two died. The outbreaks were confined to five CSC facilities - Mission Institution in British Columbia; Grand Valley Institution for Women in Ontario; and Joliette Institution, Port-Cartier Institution and the Federal Training Centre in Quebec.

The outbreaks prompted calls from prisoner advocates at the time to decrease the prison population, citing concerns that physical distancing was difficult due to inmates' close living quarters.

Mary Campbell, a retired Public Safety Canada director general in the corrections and criminal justice branch, told the Star in May that prisons were known "breeding grounds" for disease. "Get them out now," she said.

As the Star has reported, one of the challenges of releasing more offenders into the community is determining where to house them. Halfway houses are often the first stop for someone on day parole but they continue to face lengthy wait times.

Still, earlier in the spring, reporters learned that Blair had asked the heads of the CSC and the Parole Board of Canada to consider early releases for certain, non-violent offenders.

Then in a press briefing in late April, Blair told reporters "hundreds" of inmates had been deemed eligible and had received approvals for release.

His office later clarified that those releases were for inmates who were already scheduled to leave prison through parole or whose sentences were ending, according to the CBC.

Records released to the Star in response to an access-to-information request show there doesn't appear to have been any significant change in the number of inmate releases during the peak COVID-19 outbreak period compared to the previous year.

According to the records, from March 1 through May 24, there were 1,627 inmates released (including 585 on day parole, 33 on full parole and 954 on statutory release). Roughly the same number - 1,652 - were released during the same period in 2019 (including 579 on day parole, 30 on full parole and 993 on statutory release).

In an email Tuesday, Blair's office said the parole board is an arms-length agency of the government and "considers all relevant and available information" when making its decisions. During the pandemic, the parole board has "streamlined a number of its policies and processes" in response to a 14 per cent increase in parole review submissions.

"Actions taken by the (parole board) as well as fewer transfers to federal institutions have led to an overall population reduction within these institutions."

From March 2020 to present, the federal inmate population has declined by more than 1,000 inmates, the statement said.

Government officials were unable to quantify how many releases were specifically due to the pandemic, saying that a number of considerations go into releasing someone. However, a CSC spokeswoman did say the

downward trend in the inmate population was "expected to continue over the coming months."

She noted that while the average number of releases each month from March through May was 600, which is what it was before the pandemic, the number of releases in June and July went up to 652 and 621.

As the Star previously reported, the medium-security portion of B.C.'s Mission Institution - which saw one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in a federal prison - descended into "absolute chaos." Frontline workers tussled with management over access to protective equipment, while inmates screamed and banged on their metal doors during a period of lockdown.

Douglas Quan

The Star - Aug 5, 2020

Class action alleges prison staff conducting illegal strip searches

Two former federal prison inmates are trying to bring a class-action lawsuit against the federal government to argue strip searches represent a "serious deprivation of liberty."

Under federal law, prison staff can strip search inmates if they have reasonable grounds to suspect an inmate has contraband on their body. They can also perform routine strip searches when an inmate enters or leaves a "structured intervention unit," which replaced solitary confinement cells.

But the two plaintiffs, Michael Farrell and Kim Major, allege their bodies - including their genitals and buttocks - were inspected indiscriminately and without any suspicion of wrongdoing, according to the statement of claim, which was served to the federal government Monday morning.

"These are not trivial intrusions. The class members were forced to remove all of their clothing, bend over, spread open their buttocks, manipulate their genitalia, remove soiled tampons, and/or cough while squatting naked in front of others," says the claim, which is being represented by Abby Deshman of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and Kent Elson of Elson Advocacy.

The lawyers say this situation has been repeated "hundreds of thousands of times" on inmates "and has thus violated their rights under the

common law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

The claims have not been proven in court. A class-action lawsuit must be examined and certified by a judge before it can proceed.

Farrell, 51, was incarcerated for drug-related offences after becoming addicted to opioids following a back injury, the statement of claim says.

He alleges staff forced him to bend over and spread open his buttocks and ordered him to move his penis so that staff could look under and around it.

This traumatized Farrell, who was sexually and physically abused as a child during stints in foster homes, the claim says.

The lawyers say Farrell was unnecessarily strip searched every time he was transferred from one prison to another - each time he left the first prison and again when he arrived at the second prison - though he had no opportunity to access contraband.

Major, 55, was also sexually abused as a young child and then later on by her husband, according to the statement of claim. She served time on fraud charges and now lives in southern Ontario.

According to the statement of claim, she was forced to strip naked, including removing her dentures, whenever she left prison to attend medical appointments, was transferred to other prisons and upon her release, and risked being penalized or face physical force if she objected.

"These strip searches have caused deep emotional scars and exacerbated her pre-existing trauma," the claim says.

Deshman and Elson argue that strip searches are intrusions on individual liberty.

"The strip searches also engaged the right to security of the person," said the claim. "The strip searches violated the class members' physical and psychological integrity and caused significant harm."

Catharine Tunney

CBC News

Jul 06, 2020

What we accept, what we honour, who we choose to honour, says a lot about what we value as a society.

- Irene Moore Davis

End strip searches in Canadian prisons, Laurier researcher says

It's time to end the practice of strip searches at women's prisons and jails across Canada, according to a researcher at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Jessica Hutchison, a PhD student in the faculty of social work, studies the impact of strip searches on female inmates.

She's organized a panel discussion on Thursday evening in downtown Kitchener to share the stories of women who were strip searched while incarcerated.

"All it's doing is either traumatizing or re-traumatizing women who've experienced sexual assault before they even entered prison," said Hutchison.

Hutchison says many women in prison have been sexually assaulted before being convicted.

"Why does it make sense for the State to then force them to take off their clothes and perform intimate actions with private parts of their bodies?" she said.

'It's humiliating'

Heather Mason says she was strip searched more than 180 times over a four month span at the South West Detention Centre in Windsor.

"In provincial [jail] they're getting you fully naked," said Mason.

"You lift your arm if you have bigger breasts. You have to lift your breasts. They check your mouth, your ears your hair ... Sometimes they ask you to spread your cheeks."

"Every single time that you're strip searched after you've had a traumatic experience you're re-traumatized."

Mason will be speaking on the panel Thursday, along with Joey-Lynn Twins.

As a sixties scoop and residential school survivor, Twins says being strip searched made her feel like she was a powerless child again.

"It's very degrading. It's humiliating and [an] injustice," said Twins.

She was in prison for more than 35 years at Prison for Women in Kingston and Grand Valley Institution for women in Kitchener.

Twins remembers being strip searched every time she left for powwows or family visits.

Are strip searches effective?

The idea behind strip searches is to stop the flow

of drugs and weapons into prisons, according to Correctional Service Canada.

But Hutchison says she doesn't think they are an effective way of keeping drugs outside of prison walls.

She cites an example from Australia. According to Hutchison's research, a prison similarly sized to the Grand Valley Institution for Women had more than 18,000 strip searches performed on 200 women over a one year period and only one item of contraband was found.

In Hutchison's small study of six women who had been strip searched in Canadian prisons and jails, she asked them why they thought they had been strip searched if the practice wasn't ultimately effective.

"All of them said it's power and control," said Hutchison.

CBC asked Correctional Service Canada for a response. In an email statement, the federal government agency said "detecting drugs and contraband is an ongoing and challenging task and remains of utmost importance to ensure the safety and security of our institutions."

"In addition to searches of offenders, visitors, buildings and cells we also use non-intrusive detection tools including ion scanners and detector dogs," the statement said.

Julianne Hazlewood

CBC News

Nov 21, 2019

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

Federal Prisoner Mental Health Class Action: Updates

In 2015, Koskie Minsky LLP commenced a class action against the Attorney General of Canada ("Canada") on behalf of all inmates incarcerated in Federal correctional institutions who were seriously mentally ill. The case alleges, among other things, that Canada breached sections 7, 9 and 12 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by subjecting mentally ill inmates to periods of administrative segregation. The action was certified as a class proceeding in December 2016.

The court has ordered an amendment to the class definition to exclude those seriously mentally ill prisoners who were never in administrative segregation.

The claim now covers the following class:

All offenders who were placed in administrative segregation, who were diagnosed by a medical doctor with an Axis I Disorder (excluding substance use disorders), or Borderline Personality Disorder, who suffered from their disorder, in a manner described in Appendix A, and reported such during their incarceration, where the diagnosis by a medical doctor occurred either before or during incarceration in a federal institution between 1992 and present.

Appendix A refers to:

- Significant impairment in judgment (including inability to make decisions; confusion; disorientation);
- Significant impairment in thinking (including constant preoccupation with thoughts, paranoia; delusions that make the offender a danger to self or others);
- Significant impairment in mood (including constant depressed mood plus helplessness and hopelessness; agitation; manic mood that interferes with ability to effectively interact with other offenders, staffs or follow correctional plan);
- Significant impairment in communications that interferes with ability to effectively interact with other offenders, staff or follow correctional plan;
- Significant impairment due to anxiety (panic attacks; overwhelming anxiety) that interferes with ability to effectively interact with other offenders, staff or follow correctional plan;

- Other symptoms: hallucinations; delusions; severe obsessional rituals that interferes with ability to effectively interact with other offenders, staff or follow correctional plan;
- Chronic and severe suicidal ideation resulting in increased risk for suicide attempts;
- Chronic and severe self-injury; or,
- A GAF score of 50 or less.

Please note that the class no longer includes inmates incarcerated in Federal correctional facilities who suffer from a mental illness but were not placed in administrative segregation. If you suffer from a mental illness but were not placed in administrative segregation, you are no longer covered by the class action, and, in accordance with section 28 of the Class Proceedings Act, 1992, all applicable limitation periods will resume with respect to your claim after April 11, 2019 (45 days after publication of this notice).

For inquiries, please contact Koskie Minsky LLP:
Toll-Free Hotline: 1-866-777-6343

May 29, 2020

Justice Perell awarded \$20 million in base level damages to the Class. A distribution protocol is to be determined.

Untitled

in a naked state
the women who name
those women have to be contained
those women who disclose, expose
those who show, too eager to show
show scars, who hurting
hurt others
take them, scapegoat,
away

- Leah Thorn

Help one another is part of the religion of our sisterhood.

- May Alcott

How can one not speak about war, poverty, and inequality when people who suffer from these afflictions don't have a voice to speak?
- Isabel Allende

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

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The Bird of Hope

*The bird of hope is always near
 Its song is quiet, soft & clear
 The bird of hope has wings of love
 That fly on friendship far above
 The chaos & the pain
 The never-ending wait & strain
 Can you hear its beating heart?
 And do you know that you're a part
 Of hope for me & I for you?
 Because together we'll get through
 This pain is only here & now
 The bird of hope will teach us how
 To stay alive through friendship's grace
 Until we finally leave this place*

- Jennifer DeKievit

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

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

We are powerful because we have survived.

- Audre Lorde

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

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

Lyrical poetry is out for the time being, and something that is called rap or hip-hop is in. It is still poetry, and we can't live without it. We need language to tell us who we are, how we feel, what we're capable of - to explain the pains and glory of our existence.
 - Maya Angelou

Federal Solitary Confinement Class Action: Updates

Koskie Minsky LLP and McCarthy Tétrault LLP have commenced a class action against the Attorney General of Canada alleging systemic infliction of prolonged administrative solitary confinement upon prisoners incarcerated in federal correctional institutions. In prolonged administrative solitary confinement, prisoners are placed in small cells and are denied any meaningful human contact for at least 22 hours per day, for a period of at least 15 consecutive days. This treatment is imposed in instances where the prisoner has done nothing wrong and is not being punished.

The claim alleges that by virtue of this practice in federal correctional institutions, Canada has been negligent, has breached its fiduciary duties, has breached various rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, has subjected class members to false imprisonment, intentional infliction of mental suffering, assault, and battery, and has been unjustly enriched.

The class includes all persons, except "Excluded Persons", who were involuntarily subjected to a period of prolonged administrative solitary confinement at a federal correctional institution between November 1, 1992 and the present, and were alive as of March 3, 2015.

For inquiries or if you think you are a class member: Toll-Free Hotline 1-866-777-6311

March 9, 2020

In a unanimous decision, the Ontario Court of Appeal agreed that Canada's use of prolonged solitary confinement had breached Class members' Charter rights and freedoms. The Court upheld the base level award of \$20 million in Charter damages.

June 24, 2020

Canada has not appealed the Ontario Court of Appeal's decision granting summary judgment. The parties are now working towards implementing that decision.

A motion date to re-determine aggregate damages in the Brazeau matter was determined May 29, 2020. The parties will now file materials respecting the distribution of damages in both matters. The Court will determine the distribution protocol as soon as practicable.

A motion date to determine the individual issues protocol (for additional individual damages) is scheduled to proceed on October 6-8, 2020.

Ontario Prisoner Class Action

Koskie Minsky LLP has commenced a class action against the Province of Ontario alleging that lockdowns arising from the Province of Ontario's failure to properly staff its correctional institutions facilities have caused and continue to cause physical and psychological damage to inmates across the Province.

A staffing-related "lockdown" of a correctional institution occurs when prisoners are locked in their cells due to shortages of prison staff. Lockdowns can last for days or even weeks at a time. Staffing related lockdowns have become a common feature of Ontario's correctional institutions that deprive prisoners of their most basic rights.

The class includes:

All current and former inmates of correctional institutions as defined in the Ministry of Correctional Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.22 (the "Correctional Institutions"), between May 30, 2009 and November 27, 2017 who are or were remanded, except the Excluded Persons;

All current and former inmates of the Correctional Institutions between May 30, 2009 and November 27, 2017 who are or were serving a sentence at a Correctional Institution or who have violated parole and are or were imprisoned at a Correctional Institution as a result, except the Excluded Persons; and,

"Excluded Persons" are:

1. all inmates detained only in accordance with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, S.C. 2001, c.27; and,
2. all inmates of Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, the Ontario Correctional Institute and the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre (solely with respect to their incarceration at those Correctional Institutions).

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.

On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.
- Arundhati Roy

Pregnant inmates are getting prenatal care far below health standards, study shows

Prenatal care for pregnant women in Ontario jails falls far short of international standards, says a new study from McMaster University.

A team led by Dr. Dustin Costescu, an associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, pored over correctional and health administrative data and found that incarcerated women - and even women who had been in jail at some point and weren't anymore - were less likely to receive prenatal care that was up to par. And in some cases, they didn't see doctors until just before they gave birth.

The team looked at 626 women who were pregnant behind bars, 2,327 who were previously incarcerated, and 1.3 million Ontario women in the general population between 2005 and 2015. Only 48 per cent of the imprisoned women, and 59 per cent of the women who'd ever been incarcerated, received eight or more prenatal visits while they were pregnant, Costescu said. Eighty-five per cent of women in the general population did.

In the worst cases, Costescu said, this means mothers and babies are sick, sometimes with potentially fatal illnesses, and no one is catching them in order to treat them. Sometimes, women aren't even sure how many babies they're having. "The diagnosis of pregnancy is vitally important to rule out complications like an ectopic pregnancy, which is the leading cause of death in the first trimester, to diagnosing multiple pregnancies, which becomes potentially very high risk," he said.

Costescu's study was recently published in JAMA Network Open.

The study says only 38 per cent of women in prison during pregnancy had prenatal care visits during the first trimester, compared to 80 per cent of women in the general population. The first trimester, he said, is "a critical time during fetal development."

The findings are "deeply distressing" but not surprising, said Emilie Coyle, executive director for the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies.

Jails and prisons are supposed to offer health care consistent with what's in the community, she said, but that usually doesn't happen. That's especially true with preventative care.

"Pregnant women have reported being denied prenatal care appointments, or missing appointments because there are no staff available to accompany them," she said in an email. "In prison, security always outweighs adequate care. When appointments do happen, it is often the result of the woman's own advocacy."

When appointments do happen, she said, there's often a "lack of dignity," including women being shackled during examinations.

The study was funded by the Regional Medical Associates of Hamilton and ICES, a non-profit research institute.

Samantha Craggs

CBC News - Aug 23, 2020

Immigrant Detainee Class Action: Update

Koskie Minsky LLP and Henein Hutchison LLP have commenced a class action against the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario alleging human rights violations relating to the treatment of immigrant detainees in Ontario's prisons.

The statement of claim issued on August 11, 2016 alleges, among other things, that the Canada Border Services Agency and the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services have been negligent, have breached their fiduciary duties and have breached the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in incarcerating immigrant detainees in Ontario's correctional facilities.

The class includes all migrants detained by the Canada Border Services Agency and incarcerated in a provincial prison between December, 2003 and the present. The Plaintiffs' lawyers believe that thousands of people will be included in this class proceeding.

Godday Dadzie, an Ivory Coast national incarcerated in the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario, and Al Zeekehmen, a Liberian national incarcerated in Maplehurst Correctional Complex in Milton, Ontario are the proposed representative plaintiffs.

For further info: Toll-Free 1-866-777-6309

July 9, 2020

The parties are currently conducting examinations for discovery, in preparation for trial.

TD just increased its shares in Trump's private prison corporation by 8000%

We just found out that in the midst of the pandemic, TD Bank increased its shares in private prisons giant GEO Group by a whopping by 8000%.

And now, TD has blood on its hands from COVID deaths because of its GEO investment - people are dying of the virus at GEO Group's facilities because of a total lack of preventative measures. That's just the tip of the iceberg of GEO Group's appalling track record of human rights abuses. Along with CoreCivic, they run Trump's concentration camps along the Mexican-US border where kids are held in cages and separated from their parents.

This is why every major bank in the world promised to end financial ties with GEO Group and CoreCivic in 2019 - a massive victory against the American prison industrial complex.

Through the pressure of tens of thousands of SumOfUs members, including hundreds who showed up at Canada Pension Plan's public events, we forced our pension fund to divest from Geo Group and CoreCivic.

We thought the message was clear - Canadians do not want our money invested in US private prison corporations like GEO Group.

It's not just customers that want out of GEO Group. Investors, alarmed by the rising death toll at GEO's facilities, just brought a class action lawsuit against the company over its blundering response to the pandemic in July.

TD's purchase of GEO also goes against the public image it wants to create. In the wake of George Floyd's death, TD pays lip service to Black Lives Matter while holding tens of thousands of shares in GEO Group - a corporation that is notorious for profiting off the mass incarceration of Black people.

And not only that, TD received an 'F' in the 'Is Your Bank Loaded?' report card due to its heavy investment in the gun industry - involvement that has led to the disproportionate gun deaths of Black people.

So we're asking TD Bank: why did you increase your investment in GEO Group by over 30,000 shares? And also, what other financial ties do you have with private prisons corporations like GEO Group, CoreCivic, and other profiteers of the US prison industrial complex?

Action by SumOfUs members in Canada has supported campaigns in the US time and time again. In SumOfUs' biggest win in Canada last year - we got the Canada Pension Plan to pull its investment from US prison corporations like Geo Group and CoreCivic after a year of sustained pressure.

SumOfUs.org
Aug 2020

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

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

- Anon

The secret of our success is that we never,
never give up.

- Wilma Mankiller

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

✎ PEN PALS ✎

Send in your ad: 25 Words or Less.

We use Code #'s for Personal Safety.

When mail contact has been made, it is up to you to exchange your name & address, ... but only, if that is what you choose to do.

Please Print Your Name & Address on
All Letters and Photos.

All Envelopes are Destroyed !!!

Participants agree that by using this service, it is at their own risk, and by accessing this service all users agree that WPN is not to be held liable in any way for harms suffered as a result of this service.

This magazine is only sent into women's prisons. Ads are not on the web version.

NOT
AVAILABLE
ONLINE !

Love looks forward, hate looks back,
anxiety has eyes all over its head.
- Mignon McLaughlin

Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

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

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

Write to us at:

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



Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

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

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

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

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 love of learning in children through the consistent 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

A life of reaction is a life of slavery,
intellectually and spiritually.
One must fight for a life of action, not
reaction.

- Rita Mae Brown

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support.

We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

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

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

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



Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

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

Facts about HIV and HCV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents 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.

F.E.A.T.'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, F.E.A.T 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 F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid:

info@FeatForChildren.org
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*

FeatForChildren.org ~ 416-505-5333

Prison Radio

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

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

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

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

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

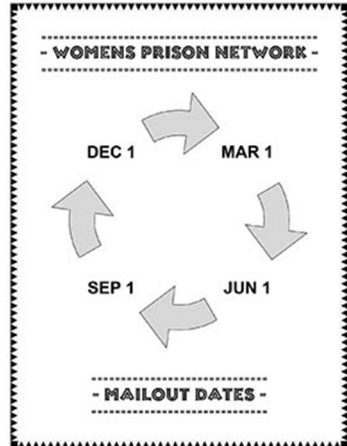
☞ In Remembrance ☞
- August 10 -

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



Women's Prison Network
Fall 2020 - Issue #20

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

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download, print, donate!
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Winter Issue #21 mailed out:
Dec 1, 2020
Send in your work before:
Nov 1, 2020

Women, Trans & Youth Prisoners:
Wish to receive 'Women's Prison Network'?
Contact us & we will add you to the mailing list!
Please let us know if you move.
This magazine is by and for you.
Thank you for sharing!
