

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE # 26 - SPRING 2022

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #26 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in 'Settler Canada'.



In every Issue we provide a safe space for creative expression, informative news & support resources. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything of sincere value to share.

Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please.

Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best.

Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation.

Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ...

Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 325 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: aliyyah
Publication: Women's Prison Network
Publisher: PrisonFreePress.org
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

Circulation: 300+

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."

< Contents >

Letters/News 3-7, 10-11
Poems 8-9
Resources 12-16

< Artists in this Issue >

Cover: Brooke Anne



< Funding for this Issue >

Very special thanks out to:
Groundswell Community Justice Trust Fund !

< Donations for this Issue >

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).

< Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment >

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which Prison Free Press operates is the Traditional Territory of the Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

~ 'Dish With One Spoon' Wampum ~

We are powerful because we have survived.
- Audre Lorde

Force more likely to be used against Black and Indigenous people in federal prisons

Indigenous and Black people are more likely to be involved in use-of-force incidents in Canadian prisons, the federal prison ombudsman said Thursday.

Correctional investigator Ivan Zinger's annual report found that Black, Indigenous and people of colour were involved in 60% of all use-of-force incidents, but represent just 44% of federal inmates.

The findings were based on data collected from 2015 to 2020.

"Regardless of risk level, security level, age, sentence length or gender, identifying as an Indigenous or Black incarcerated person was associated with a greater likelihood of involvement in a use-of-force incident," Zinger said in a statement Thursday.

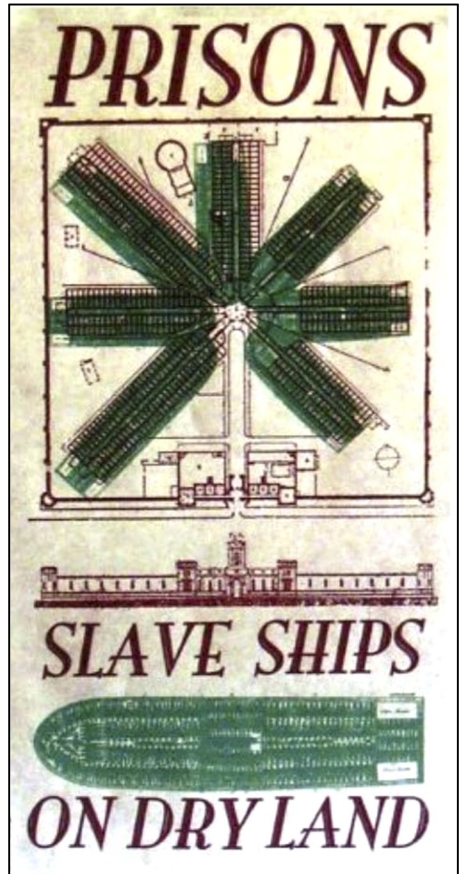
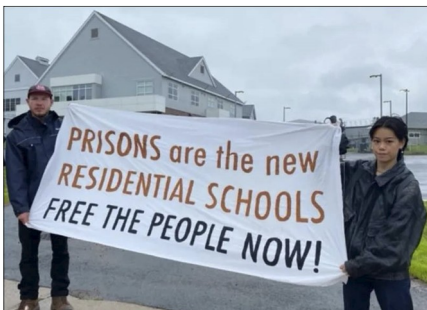
White individuals represent 52% of the federal inmate population, but were involved in about 42% of use-of-force incidents, Zinger said.

He called on Correctional Service Canada to develop an action plan to "address the relationship between the use of force and systemic racism against Indigenous and Black individuals."

In a statement Thursday, Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said the government is already addressing many of the issues raised in the report.

"Combating systemic racism across government is one of our top priorities, including in the federal correctional system," Mendicino said.

Jacques Gallant
The Star
Feb 10, 2022



From the slave ship to the citizenship we faced a lot of bullshp.

- Amiri Baraka

Today's lynching is a felony charge.

Today's lynching is incarceration.

Today's lynch mobs are professionals.

They have a badge; they have a law degree.

- Michelle Alexander

Jails and prisons are designed to break human beings, to convert the population into specimens in a zoo - obedient to our keepers, but dangerous to each other.

- Angela Davis

Where there is oppression, there will be resistance.

- Assata Shakur

Should people who have been convicted of crimes get automatic pardons when they have served their sentences?

While Ottawa has recently slashed the fee to apply for a pardon, advocates say the process should be removed altogether.

"The cost was definitely a barrier for many people to apply, but the next barrier is the application process itself," said Samantha McAleese, a PhD candidate at Carleton University who is studying the impact of the pardon system on people with criminal records.

"The application process in and of itself is a barrier to people accessing those human rights protections."

A criminal record can hinder a person's ability to get a job, volunteer, secure housing and travel. Effective Jan. 1, Ottawa slashed the pardon application fee from \$657 to \$50.

But on top of paying the fee, applicants are still required to cover costs associated with material required to apply, such as fingerprints and court documents, which McAleese said makes the system costly for some people.

The Fresh Start Coalition, made up of dozens of civil society groups pushing for reform of the pardon system, called on the federal government last November to create a so-called "spent regime," which would automatically seal a person's record "if they have successfully completed their sentence and lived in the community without further criminal convictions."

A bill from Sen. Kim Pate currently making its way through the Senate would implement an automatic system. Bill S-212 is the fourth iteration of the bill; should it pass, it would then need to clear the House of Commons to become law.

The bill calls for the automatic expiry of a criminal record in most cases if the person has spent a certain period of time after their sentence with no further criminal involvement: two years for summary conviction offences (cases involving shorter sentences) and five years for indictable offences (which typically involve longer sentences and more serious crimes.)

"It strikes me that a record expiry process makes a lot of sense, both in terms of efficiency for the government, but also to ease the process for individuals who have long since finished their

sentences and are trying to integrate into the community," Pate said in an interview.

A spokesperson for Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said more work remains to be done on the pardon system and his office looks forward to collaborating with Pate.

"We continue to explore automated pardons of some criminal records for less serious offences," said spokesperson Alexander Cohen.

McAleese said another part of the current application process requires individuals "to essentially re-live what they went through" by explaining the circumstances around their convictions.

"In my own research, that was one of the major concerns, is that it actually makes people re-live the trauma of being criminalized," McAleese said.

Pardons are available for most offences, but individuals serving life sentences, such as for murder, are not eligible, which would remain the case in an automatic system.

While a pardon removes a criminal record from the Canadian Police Information Centre database - which is typically consulted when employers and others are seeking a criminal-background check - it doesn't eliminate all traces that a person has been convicted of a crime. For example, documents such as court rulings could still be publicly accessible at a courthouse or even online. Pardons of convicted sex offenders can also still be located by police asked to conduct a so-called vulnerable sector check, typically for people who are looking to work or volunteer with young people.

The vulnerable sector check would remain if Bill S-212 passed, Pate said. That's important, said the former federal ombudsman for victims of crime, who called an automatic pardon process for less serious offences "reasonable."

"We certainly want to be able to have people reintegrate and get employment," said Heidi Illingworth, now executive director of Ottawa Victim Services. "We know people are not going to re-offend if they're living prosocial lives and they have jobs. That's really important when talking about public safety and what's best for the community."

The Fresh Start coalition, whose members include the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Black Legal Action Centre and McAleese, said in a news release last year that the current system

“places needless barriers in front of job-seekers - at a time when Canadian employers are desperate for help.”

Jacques Gallant
The Star - Jan 8, 2022

People are dying behind bars.
Where's the outcry?

Hundreds have died in provincial jails. Several recent deaths are the latest examples of how Canada's prison system remains deeply dysfunctional.

We still don't know the name of the person who passed away while being detained at the Laval Immigration Holding Centre on Jan. 28, but we do know they were one of several people who have died behind bars over the course of only the past six weeks in Canada.

“We do not have any information about the person who lost their life while in custody of the Canadian Border Services Agency,” reads a press release by the Montreal-based migrant justice network Solidarity Across Borders. “All we know is that they were a migrant detained for administrative purposes: i.e. for not having papers. This person should never have been detained in the first place, and now they are gone. No one should ever be detained.” (Only British Columbia is currently reviewing the practice of incarcerating immigration detainees in provincial jails.)

A month earlier, 31-year-old Tamara Frances Lucier died while being held at the South West Detention Centre in Windsor, Ont. She was waiting for a bed in a mental health facility. “I went hysterical to hear my daughter was gone when she should have been safe,” said her father, Wilfred Lucier, in a media interview.

And on Jan. 26, Jeffrey Ryan, 34, died after a “serious assault” in a prison in Drumheller, Alta. Following the inmate's killing, the John Howard Society called for “urgent action to reduce violence in our federal prisons.”

These most recent deaths are only the latest examples of how Canada's prison system remains deeply dysfunctional. As these cases point out, it sometimes fails to provide even a basic standard of care for people who are held for a variety of reasons, including their

immigration status or based on charges related to issues of mental health. A 2017 report by Reuters found that 270 people were killed while in provincial jails over the span of five years, two-thirds of whom were legally innocent.

Annu Saini, a former inmate who was held in detention in 2010 for 90 days, has been writing to inmates as part of a coalition called Write On! Supporting Prisoners Through Correspondence. She told me in an interview that she was traumatized after she was held in solitary confinement.

“If I didn't [have mental health issues], I would after that,” said Saini.

A report released last year found that federal prisons continue to breach human rights obligations with the ongoing use of solitary confinement, which in 195 instances constituted “torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.” The research also showed that Black prisoners were held in these conditions for longer than other groups of prisoners, and that an inmate's mental health was not taken into significant consideration. Furthermore, nearly 39% of stays involved Indigenous prisoners. A subsequent study found a lack of adequate oversight.

“Many Canadians do not care how our prisoners are treated,” wrote academics Jane B. Sprott, Anthony N. Doob and Adelina Iftene, the report's authors. “They are seen simply as people who committed offences. But Canadians should care if they care about human rights; or if they care that a government organization is being allowed to operate outside of the law.”

Solitary confinement is also an issue in provincial institutions. Over 12,000 people - 46% who had a mental health alert on their file - were placed in segregation between June 2018 and June 2019, according to a 2020 motion filed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to end the practice.

“Ultimately, we as a society need to acknowledge the failure of the prison system,” wrote Saini in a 2018 commentary. “It is a place that, at best, does nothing to reduce crime and, at worst, is where innocent people go to die.”

Where's the justice in this system? Where's the outcry?

Amira Elghawaby
The Star - Feb 8, 2022

Nearly half of federally incarcerated women are Indigenous

Incarcerated Indigenous women now make up nearly 50% of all federally sentenced women, the federal correctional investigator said Friday, citing new data.

Dr. Ivan Zinger said in a statement that in the very near future Canada will reach the "sad milestone" of a 50-50 split, despite the fact that Indigenous women represent less than 5% of the total population of women in Canada.

The Correctional Investigator's Office also said statistical trends indicate the number of Indigenous people - both men and women - in federal custody is increasing at a time when overall numbers of incarcerated people are declining.

"On this trajectory, assuming overall declines in new admissions to custody, Canada will reach historic and unconscionable levels of Indigenous concentration in federal penitentiaries," Dr. Zinger said.

He said the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in correctional settings remains one of Canada's most pressing human-rights issues, and is evidence of "public policy failures over successive decades, as no government has been able to stop or reverse this trend."

Dr. Zinger reiterated a previous call for the Correctional Service of Canada to create a new position for a deputy commissioner of Indigenous corrections.

Last January, his office reported that the proportion of Indigenous men and women in federal custody had reached a new historic high, surpassing 30% of the overall incarcerated population. He said Friday that the combined male and female Indigenous proportion in federal corrections is now 32%, and still climbing.

In response to the release of the new data on Friday, Senator Kim Pate said the same issues that give rise to Indigenous women being murdered and going missing in disproportionately high numbers are those that result in some of them living on the streets and being imprisoned.

Senator Yvonne Boyer said the proportion of Indigenous women in federal prisons "has skyrocketed," and that this is evidence current approaches to reform are failing.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau released mandate letters for his cabinet

members. His priorities for Justice Minister David Lametti include addressing systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Black and racialized Canadians and Indigenous people in the criminal justice system, as well as ensuring "all Canadians have access to fair and just treatment."

Mr. Trudeau also underscored the need to pass Bill C-5, legislation the government says is designed to reduce reliance on mandatory minimum penalties.

Ms. Pate and other senators have called for amendments to the legislation to include provisions introduced in Bill S-213.

Senator Mobina Jaffer, who put forward Bill S-213, said Friday that it would allow judges to do their jobs and exercise discretion not to impose mandatory minimum penalties when doing so would result in injustice or perpetuate systemic racism.

Kristy Kirkup
Globe and Mail
Dec 17, 2021

Prison system moves to ease pain of prisoners addicted to opioids

The federal prison service says it is making several changes to help prisoners addicted to opioids, including getting them faster access to treatment by eliminating a waiting list that is hundreds of people long.

The Correctional Service of Canada says the changes were made in response to the opioid crisis sweeping Canada and to resolve a human rights complaint launched in 2018.

The complaint filed by Prisoners' Legal Services in B.C. claimed they were being denied treatment for their addictions or had to wait months to get therapy.

Nicole Kief, a legal advocate for Prisoners' Legal Services, said the complaint was filed after more than 75 prisoners contacted their office about a lack of access to treatment.

"In the past, (the Correctional Service) has really wanted to have security controls over how the medication is given out," Kief said.

The service initially said its main concern was that prisoners would sell the medication to other inmates, she said.

The settlement agreement was reached last month.

"It's really clear that health-care providers should act in the best interest of their patients and they shouldn't be playing any role in security, punishment or surveillance, so one of the things that this document does is make that distinction," said Kief.

The Correctional Service said in a news release that since the onset of the opioid crisis in 2016, the number of people getting treatment has increased by 185%. In response, it hired Dr. Nader Sharifi, an addictions specialist, to serve as the national medical adviser for the treatment program and agreed to publish wait-list figures to the government website.

Sharifi said the standard of care for an opioid addiction is now focused on putting people in treatment rather than allowing them to detox. The government's goal is to eliminate the wait-list in the next few months, he said in an interview.

The government's latest data shows 2,684 inmates in federal prisons were receiving the treatment as of September 2021, while 351 remained on the wait-list. There are about 12,500 inmates in 43 federal prisons.

Ginette Clarke, director of health policy and programs for the service, said new wait-list data is released quarterly and will be published later this month.

"We try to manage the wait-list. We prioritize and triage, and we try to take lessons learned from sites and places that have been very effective in reducing the wait-list to zero," said Clarke.

The institution with the longest wait-list in September was the Saskatchewan Penitentiary with 79 people, followed by Stony Mountain in Manitoba at 40, while several other prisons had just a few or none on their waiting lists.

The department said it is also in the process of implementing a number of other harm reduction methods, including making naloxone more widely available and implementing more rehabilitation programs.

"The numbers of clients in custody with opioid use disorder has increased," Sharifi said. "Reflective of what's happening in the community, a significant number of clients within custody do have substance use issues that are prevalent throughout their lifetime, and opioid use disorder is one of them."

Research released last month from Simon Fraser University showed the prevalence of people in B.C. prisons with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders made up 32% of the population in 2017, up from 15% in 2009.

Sharifi said the 2017 figure is likely higher as overdose rates have continually increased.

Kief said the Prisoners' Legal Service is pleased with the steps the government has made to address addiction in prisons but more needs to be done.

"We're really concerned about the kind of assistance that people get while preparing for their release," Kief said. "They're not getting connected to the resources they need to be safe when they come out, so that's a real concern."

One of its clients overdosed and died soon after leaving prison, said Kief. Her group is calling for a coroner's inquest into the risk and rates of overdoses for those recently released from custody.

Sharifi said it has been well documented that people have a "very high risk for overdose" in the first 30 days after their release, but steps have been taken to address the issue.

"We ensure that clients being released from custody are connected to a health-care and addictions-care provider within the community and have a discharge prescription that is prearranged for them to ensure that there are no gaps in care on release," he said.

Brianna Charlebois
National Observer
Jan 12, 2022

When you are doing time, you have the time to realize how art can keep you free.

- Welmon Sharlhorne

You only learn to be a better writer by actually writing.

- Doris Lessing

You can't turn back the clock.

But you can wind it up again.

- Bonnie Prudden

Nothing in life is to be feared.

It is only to be understood.

- Marie Curie

If You Dare Care 4 a Bear

The dead don't share
 But they really stare
 Touch them if you dare
 Not like they care
 Watch out there's a bear
 Oh know where?
 Right there, full of hair
 No, no that's wear
 I am no longer scared
 But I really did care
 For that one bear
 Life is really unfair

- Christy-Lee MacWilliams

Same Shit, Different Day

Loneliness is setting in
 Screams from a cell in the distance
 'Help, I can't take it'
 My head says to me
 When they told me I'd be rich
 They forgot to mention
 I'd also lose those I love
 Doing things for a quick buck
 This I told myself I wouldn't do
 The things I did for a quick fix
 Realizing my friends are long gone
 In a cell, I sit by myself
 Wondering where I went wrong
 'Listen to your mother' they said
 Jail is a lonely place for people
 Who said they'd never go
 That I'd never get caught
 That was 20 years ago
 Still in the same place
 After getting caught, again
 Just this time
 In a different spot

- Sydnee L.

The world has improved mostly because
 unorthodox people did unorthodox things.
 Not surprisingly, they had the courage and
 daring to think they could make a difference.
 - Ruby Dee

Gratitude

Life, make me grateful
 Make me grateful once again for you
 I feel so wounded, too wounded to forgive
 Help me find my heart & soul, my heart & soul I
 have to mend
 So I can forgive me & still love me in the end
 Life, make me grateful once again, once again
 for you
 Make me humble & tear my false beliefs away
 There is too much fear in me to live
 Too much work to mend a shattered heart
 I forgive me, forgive me for my pain
 I let my love fall like rain upon my shattered
 heart & soul
 And make me grateful for my life once again

- Brooke Anne

On the Journey

The unsafe territory of this testosterone filled
 place
 Hangs on an expression, a greeting or even a
 word
 That could begin my rise from being
 marginalized & downtrodden
 Or leave me standing afraid with senses
 humiliated
 Journeying forever alone
 This place, this journey, removed from any
 context of love & support
 Or choice
 Or safety
 Each monotonous call of the PA a humiliation
 Compounds the misery of an invisible existence
 A halo of light
 A vision of the real me
 Is conjured up to fill the void
 An image with the most personal connection
 Traveling the road of a last chance
 Begging for her to come out
 Pushing closer
 To the point of irrationality
 Where the end
 Is no longer the end
 But just the beginning
 Of a journey with many more miles to go

- Brooke Anne

A Letter from Auntie

Hey kids, what's up?
 This is to: my niece & nephew
 I know I haven't been
 The best aunt there is
 Know the love I have
 For you won't end
 Take my mistakes & tribulations
 And learn the way I didn't
 School for hard knocks
 Is not cool
 I love you more
 Than I did myself
 I promise you I'll do better
 I want to see you graduate
 Have kids of your own
 Even though you may not hear it
 It is true that Auntie loves you so
 Do your homework
 Stay away from drugs
 Use my experiences in life
 As a lesson as what not to do
 By succeeding in life
 Means hopefully, I did my job
 Love Auntie

- Sydnee L.

Untitled

When I felt scared or when I felt weak
 I turned to creator who kept me on my feet
 I pray every day for my life to get better
 Yet it still feels like I'm in stormy weather
 The clouds are grey & the sun is covered
 The rain poured down & then I discovered
 Everything I went through was for a reason
 About how I grew up & what I believe in
 My past is what got me here today
 And I ask creator for forgiveness every day
 I seem to be happy but sometimes I'm not
 Some days it feels like family is all I got
 So I'll put on a brave face, just as I was taught
 Because, my heart still beats
 And my feet are on the ground
 Holding a hand drum, singing my favourite songs

- BroBro

You See, I See

You see heroin, I see low self-esteem.
 You see cocaine, I see fear.
 You see alcohol, I see social anxiety.
 You see track marks, I see depression.
 You see a junkie, I see someone's son.
 You see a prostitute, I see someone's daughter
 caught in addiction.
 You see self-centeredness, I see the disease.
 You see a pill head, I see over-prescribing of
 opiates.
 You see someone unwilling to change. I see
 someone hasn't connected with them yet.
 You see denial, I see someone hurting.
 You see someone nodding out, I see God showing
 us they need help.
 You see the end, I see the beginning.
 You see a dope fiend, I see a future success
 story.
 You see them, I see me.

- Kevin Alter
 (By Request)

Time 4 a Change

I started in TYAC
 Should have been camping
 With people I love
 Instead I was chasing
 Money, drugs & bad people
 Acting like a rapper
 I was too cool for school
 20 years later
 Sitting in a federal prison cell
 Doing 'Life on an Instalment Plan'
 Chasing the same money, drugs & people
 Waiting for visits from family
 I don't know
 For letters from people
 Who don't care
 Staring at these 4 white walls
 Thinking, It's Time 4 a Change

- Sydnee L.

Write what should not be forgotten.
 - Isabel Allende

Grand chief demands public inquiry into in-custody deaths following CBC investigation

A Manitoba First Nations leader is demanding a public inquiry into the deaths of Indigenous people in custody, following a CBC investigation into dozens of deaths in Canadian jail cells since 2010.

The investigation chronicled 61 cases of people who had died in custody after being arrested related to intoxication. Nearly half were Indigenous.

"If people aren't alarmed about that, they should be," said Arlen Dumas, grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

"It seems to be that this is a common occurrence, and it's unacceptable."

A national inquiry is needed to investigate all deaths in custody - not just those that occur in police custody, but also in federal prisons and provincial jails, Dumas says.

Wayne Okemow, whose niece died after being held in a northern Manitoba RCMP detachment, joined Dumas's call for an inquiry.

He says accountability is needed for what happened to his niece, Tracy Okemow.

The 31-year-old woman died in 2012, after being detained in the Gods Lake Narrows RCMP detachment for nine hours.

She was medically cleared to spend the night in a jail cell, despite evidence she had taken too many pills. Guards told investigators she could be heard moaning in pain all night. She was transported by medevac to Winnipeg but died the next day.

No inquest was held into her death.

Prior to 2017, an inquest was mandatory in Manitoba any time someone died in police custody.

Those inquests, called by the chief medical examiner and presided over by a provincial court judge, do not assign blame, but look at how the death could have been prevented.

But 2017 changes to Manitoba's Fatality Inquiries Act gave the chief medical examiner some discretion on when to call an inquest.

A lawyer who has represented multiple Manitoba families in such inquests says there should never be an exception when someone dies in police custody.

"Those amendments were disastrous for the act,"

said Corey Shefman, a lawyer at Toronto's Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP.

"It's important because the family, the community, the province and yes, the country needs to know what happened, why it happened and what we're doing to stop it from happening again."

More complex and costly than an inquest, a public inquiry would aim to establish the facts around what happened, why it happened and who may be accountable under government-mandated terms of reference.

Public inquiries can also find fault, whereas inquests can't.

The last inquiry held in Manitoba was for the death of Phoenix Sinclair in 2014.

Shefman agrees with Dumas that an inquiry should examine all deaths in state custody deaths.

"A broad public inquiry is required to understand why this is happening and how to stop it," he said.

Dr. Peter Markesteyn, who was Manitoba's chief medical examiner from 1982 to 1999, also agrees a national inquiry is needed.

When the legislative changes to Manitoba's Fatality Inquiries Act were being debated in 2017, he spoke against them during a committee hearing.

"The issue is the person is under arrest or is under control of a police officer, and therefore it is important that the rights of that individual ... [are] protected," he told CBC.

"And that's why the act was originally constructed to make it mandatory, and therefore to take the political issue out of it."

When asked about a national inquiry by CBC News, a spokesperson for federal Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino gave a prepared statement that did not address the idea of an inquiry.

A spokesperson for Manitoba Justice Minister Cameron Friesen also sent a written statement that did not address whether his government would call a provincial inquiry.

Manitoba's justice minister no longer has the ability to call inquests into in-custody deaths because of the changes made to the Fatalities Act in 2017.

However, Tracy Okemow died in 2012, meaning Friesen could still call an inquest into her death. So far, he has refused to do so. CBC asked the office of Manitoba's chief medical examiner why an inquest wasn't called into Okemow's death. The medical examiner's office said it could not comment. Okemow's death occurred under the former NDP government.

The Opposition NDP now says if elected to form government in 2023, they will order an inquest. "We should know what were the mitigating factors that contributed to Tracy's death and do everything possible to ensure that that doesn't happen again," said Nahanni Fontaine, the NDP's justice critic.

She said her party would reverse the amendments to the Fatality Inquiries Act and supports the call for a national inquiry into in-custody deaths of Indigenous people.

The AMC's Dumas also wants to see an inquest called for Okemow.

"I know that it's been quite some time, but I think in the hope that we can correct the systems and the mechanisms today, we will help save lives for the future," he said.

"Tracy's death can't be in vain."

Kristin Annable, Caroline Barghout, Joanne Levasseur, Vera-Lynn Kubinec
CBC News - Dec 17, 2021



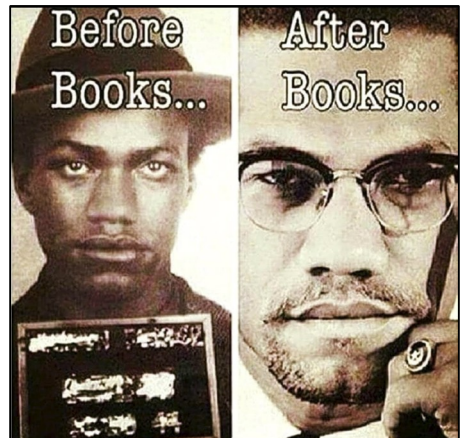
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10-18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction of literary merit.

Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.

Book Clubs for Inmates
720 Bathurst St.
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4



I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me.

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life.

As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

Going to prison is like dying with your eyes open.
- Bernard Kerik

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 ☎

Jail Accountability and Information Line (JAIL) for prisoners in OCDC

The Jail Accountability and Information Line takes calls from prisoners and their loved ones from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Mon to Wed. This line tracks issues experienced by people incarcerated at the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre.

☎ 613-567-JAIL (5245) ☎

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

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

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

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

Why a Jail Hotline?

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

Who Should Call This Hotline?

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

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

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

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

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

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

Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

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

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

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

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

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

Love is contraband in Hell,
'cause love is an acid
that eats away bars.
- Assata Shakur

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

If I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom.
 I'm not backing off.
 - Fannie Lou Hamer

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

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

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

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

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

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



Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 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



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

K.I.P.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, K.I.P. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

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

*info.kipcanada@gmail.com
or by phone at: 416-505-5333*

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration
- Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

www.kipcanada.org ~ 416-505-5333

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 -

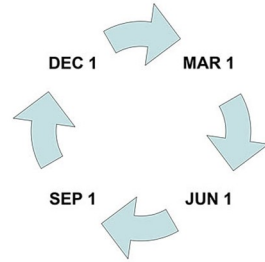
We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org



- WOMENS PRISON NETWORK -



- MAILOUT DATES -

Women's Prison Network
Spring 2022 - Issue #26

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

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download, print, donate!
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Summer Issue #27 is mailed out:

Jun 1, 2022

Send in your work before:

May 1, 2022

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!