

# WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK

ISSUE #27 - SUMMER 2022



- AUGUST 10 -

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #27 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: lola  
Publication: Women's Prison Network  
Publisher: PrisonFreePress.org  
PO Box 39, Stn P  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

Circulation: 275+  
Recirculation: ?,???  
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

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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).

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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 ~

All oppression creates a state of war.  
- Simone de Beauvoir

You don't really know who you are until you fight for it.  
- Maria Ressa

Senators call for exoneration of 12 Indigenous women who endured 'systemic inequality' in Canada's criminal justice system

*One woman confessed to a murder behind bars that correctional staff and fellow prisoners knew to be a suicide.*

*Another woman broke into a school to flee an abusive father and ended up in federal prison for more than a decade.*

*Two sisters have been imprisoned since 1994 for a murder that another person confessed to.*

*These are just four of the 12 Indigenous women profiled in a new report from a group of Canadian senators who want the cases to be reviewed for possible miscarriages of justice owing to race and gender.*

*In the report released on Monday morning, Senators Dawn Anderson, Yvonne Boyer and Kim Pate call for an exoneration of the 12 women, who they say have endured a pattern of discrimination, inequality and violence within the criminal justice system.*

*Their demand lands as the federal government is working to overhaul its conviction review process and struggling to contain soaring rates of Indigenous incarceration.*

*Earlier this month, correctional investigator Ivan Zinger told The Globe and Mail that for the first time, Indigenous women now make up half of the female population in federal penitentiaries, even though just 4.9% of women in Canada are Indigenous. For all Indigenous prisoners, men and women, the rate stands at 32%.*

*Minister of Justice David Lametti told The Globe that those rates should begin to decline once the government implements the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Bill C-5, which would remove mandatory minimum sentences for 20 firearms and drug crimes that disproportionately affect Black and Indigenous people before the courts.*

*But Senator Pate said that C-5 offers little reprieve for Indigenous women. Even if C-5 passes, 53 mandatory minimum sentences will remain on the books, she said.*

*"The government is tinkering with the system, whether it be Bill C-5 or any of the other things they have been talking about," she said.*

*The 34-page report recommends that the government remove all mandatory minimums and eliminate the over-representation of*

*Indigenous people in prisons by focusing on community-based alternatives to incarceration.*

*The request to re-examine the 12 cases would pose a significant test for Canada's conviction review process, which is fated for a major retooling under Minister Lametti. Last year, he tapped Harry LaForme, the first Indigenous lawyer on an appellate court in Canada, and Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, Quebec's first Black judge, to report on how the government could create an independent commission to review miscarriages of justice.*

*Under the current system, anyone who has exhausted the court appeal process has to apply directly to the justice minister for a case review. In their report, the two former judges said the minister has received 186 applications since 2003 and ordered 20 new trials or appeals. All the successful applications came from men. One was Indigenous and one was Black.*

*Mr. Lametti said he's currently working out parameters for a new conviction review body based on the work of the retired judges.*

*"One of the specific goals of that commission would be to hear a broader range of cases," he said.*

*On Monday, the senators said a review of the 12 Indigenous cases would be a good test for a more equitable conviction review process.*

*"We advocate that their cases be reviewed as a group in order to enable a more fulsome identification and analysis of the intersections and patterns of systemic inequality and violence experienced by each woman prior to and while navigating the criminal legal system," the report states.*

*The authors write that 10 systemic factors contributed to miscarriages of justice in each of the 12 cases. Those factors include police bias, prosecutorial bias, economic and social disruption of Indigenous families stemming from the establishment of reserves, removal of children and other state policies.*

*The report provides brief bios of the 12 women, who are identified by initials, and explains the circumstances that led to their imprisonment.*

*One woman, S.D., survived residential school only to become an accomplice to an abusive drug dealer husband, the report states. In prison, she pleaded guilty to murdering a close friend who had debilitating health issues. Staff and prisoners believed it was a suicide, the report states. She*

spent 30 years in prison, much of that time in isolation. She was the longest-serving prisoner at the time of her 2020 release, according to the report.

T.M. first landed in prison for taking shelter in her school to escape sexual abuse at home. She was convicted for breaking and entering and spent 10 years in prison, "all in segregation, during which she developed isolation-induced schizophrenia directly linked to her extended periods in prison segregation cells and the post-traumatic stress associated with the tortures of such isolation."

The sisters, Q.Q. and N.Q. were charged with the murder of a residential school caretaker who they said made sexual advances. Their 14-year-old cousin confessed to the killing, but the sisters were convicted of second-degree murder in 1994 and remain in prison.

Biographical details for the unidentified sisters closely align with the story of Nerissa and Odelia Quewezance. A growing number of advocates, including Innocence Canada and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin have been working to have their convictions overturned.

"To be clear," the authors write, "there are more than these 12, but these are the cases we know well."

Patrick White  
Globe and Mail  
May 16, 2022

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Prisons - Stay out. Get out.

Nova Scotian social worker Robert Wright was asked by the defence back in 2014 to testify at the sentencing of a 16-year-old Black offender for attempted murder after he shot his 15-year-old cousin in the belly. The prosecutor argued against allowing the testimony, claiming Mr. Wright wasn't qualified as an expert.

Justice Anne Derrick, then of the Nova Scotia Provincial Court allowed him to speak. She cited his qualifications as a past executive director of the province's child and youth strategy, as a PhD candidate in social work and as an instructor at Mount Saint Vincent University.

He is also coincidentally a seventh- or eighth-generation Black Nova Scotian and knew from

his life's experience that he was qualified to speak on behalf of the convicted offender. One of six children raised by a single mother, a mostly absent father, witness to domestic violence and alcoholism, a celebrated athlete sister murdered in her mid-20s and a brother who did time for robbery made him 'expert' on the topic he addressed.

What Robert Wright wrote in an assessment and said in court was that the prosecution's depiction of the 16-year-old as a hardened and remorseless criminal, a conclusion supported by several psychological assessments as an unsalvageable youth necessitating a long adult prison sentence, missed one pertinent point: what it means to grow up Black in Nova Scotia. After considering the family history, the "racial trauma" pervasive in the African-Canadian community because of mistrust, rivalries and violence, the judge sentenced him as a youth, noting an adult sentence would most probably give him little chance at rehabilitation.

Mr. Wright's testimony was the first of its kind for Black offenders in the province and it led to more race-based reports, by him and other clinicians, triggering changes in the sentencing of Black offenders. By the summer of 2021, Nova Scotia's top court issued a 5-0 ruling written by that same Justice Derrick, telling judges in the province to consider the race-based issues of Black offenders at sentencing, or risk having their sentences thrown out on appeal.

With federal government funding, what are known now as Impact of Race and Culture Assessments are about to spread across the country. Provincial courts aren't required to give special consideration to Black offenders, and while accepted as important and helpful, Ontario courts for instance underscore that offenders do exercise free will.

Just as Gladue Reports offer some guidance when determining the fate of indigenous offenders, Impact of Race and Culture Assessments will do much the same for Blacks caught up in the criminal justice system.

Keeping people with a potential for redemption out of the hands of the prison industry benefits us all.

Charles Klassen  
turnoverarocktoday.com  
Mar 13, 2022

Ottawa criticized for failing to address 'obscenely disproportionate' incarceration of Indigenous women

The head of Canada's most prominent advocacy group for Indigenous women chastised the federal government on Thursday for its response to a *Globe and Mail* story detailing the overrepresentation of Indigenous women in federal prisons.

The article cited information from Canada's prison ombudsman, who said Indigenous women now make up half the population of female federal inmates – a disproportionate figure, considering the fact that only about 5% of Canadian women are Indigenous.

Asked about the issue in the House of Commons during Question Period on Thursday, Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino acknowledged that the overrepresentation is "unacceptable" and said the government would address the problem with a range of mostly unspecified reforms.

Lynne Groulx, CEO of the Native Women's Association, criticized Mr. Mendicino's answer.

"Successive federal governments have failed to reduce the obscenely disproportionate incarceration rates of Indigenous women in Canada," she said. "For that reason, we hoped to hear some passion, and indeed some outrage, from the minister when he was asked about this issue in the House of Commons. Instead, we got rehashed responses that reflected none of the anger we are feeling today."

Mr. Mendicino was speaking in response to a question from Leah Gazan, the NDP's critic for the status of women, who referenced the *Globe* story before asking when the government would heed long-standing calls to appoint a deputy commissioner responsible entirely for Indigenous issues within the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).

In response, Mr. Mendicino said: "We must acknowledge the continued legacy of colonialism in our justice system. The vast overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples, including women, is unacceptable."

He added that the Liberal government would work to reverse the overrepresentation trend through cultural sensitivity training, legislation repealing mandatory minimum sentences and "a whole suite of other reforms."

For Marion Buller, who was chief commissioner of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the answer was inadequate. "The minister's response, with all due respect, falls into the thoughts and prayers category," she said. "There's nothing there."

As of last week, federal prisons held 298 non-Indigenous women and 298 Indigenous women. This is the first time the ratio has reached 50/50, the ombudsman, Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger, told *The Globe*.

The share of all Indigenous people – men and women – in federal prison cells has increased from around 12% in 1997 to 32% today.

For almost 20 years, Dr. Zinger's office has been recommending that the CSC adopt a deputy commissioner role devoted entirely to Indigenous issues, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls made the idea one of its 231 calls for justice.

As of this week, CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly, who reports to the Public Safety Minister, would only say through a spokesperson that she is "open" to creating the post.

"That's not progress," Ms. Buller said. "The only progress is when the job description is written, the applications are taken and someone is hired."

Earlier in the line of questioning from Ms. Gazan, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller responded that, despite government investment in reducing violence against Indigenous women, "the results are trailing."

Ms. Buller said she took some solace in Mr. Miller's comments. "I'm very glad he said it, because the results, if any, are trailing. It's nice to hear a minister acknowledge that a government is not doing what it could have and should have been doing to heed calls for justice, to make this country safe for Indigenous women and girls, and get Indigenous women out of jail."

In 1996, Ottawa tried to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in prisons with a Criminal Code provision that directed judges to consider a person's Indigenous background during sentencing. The government's hope was that this would mitigate sentences and divert significant numbers of Indigenous people away from incarceration. The Supreme Court's 1999 Gladue decision reaffirmed the provision

and called the disproportionate number of Indigenous people in prison “a crisis.”

“If it was a crisis then, what is it now?” Ms. Groulx said. “Why have the recommendations to address this horrific situation that have been made by Correctional Investigators, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls been ignored?”

Patrick White  
Globe and Mail  
May 5, 2022

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Prisoners are denied their liberty, not their right to health care

*In the eyes of Correction Service of Canada, medical staff, prescription drugs, and specialist consultations, all constitute major costs, which detract from CSC's budget. This, along with the punitive culture of prisons, results in the mistreatment of prisoners through the denial of their health care.*

When an individual serves a federal prison sentence in Canada, they leave their health card, and all the rights that card affords them, at the prison gates. It is hard to keep track of an offender's health-care records from there. This is bad policy that fails the medically vulnerable while violating the law and costing taxpayers millions.

The Canada Health Act explicitly excludes federal prisoners from its definition of “insured person.” This, combined with the provisions of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA), which assign responsibility for providing prisoner health care to the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC), result in a health-care standard that is woefully inadequate inside our prisons.

Yet, this population has health-care needs far more severe than most - high rates of addiction and other mental illnesses, sky-high HPV rates, various chronic diseases, and the many issues associated with aging.

While those of us who have access to our provincial health care systems can walk into our local health clinic, federal prisoners wait months to see a physician who may not believe in employing a harm reduction approach to treating addictions, or who denies you a prescription that

you've been taking for decades before arriving at prison due to pressures from CSC surrounding cost and security.

This system undermines a health-care hallmark - independence for medical practitioners. Independence for doctors is required, yet out of reach inside our prisons. In the eyes of CSC, medical staff, prescription drugs, and specialist consultations, all constitute major costs, which detract from CSC's budget. The fox is providing the hens with health-care. This, along with the punitive culture of prisons, results in the mistreatment of prisoners through the denial of their health-care.

The lack of accountability CSC provides its physicians also allows for the negative stigma associated with criminal behaviour to infect those treating prisoners. Worse, provincial oversight bodies struggle to regulate physicians who are operating in a federal context. Often pain goes untreated, which sometimes results in cancers reaching lethal stages before being detected. All of this, along with the cumbersome process required to gain access to one's own health records, denies individuals their human rights.

With previous efforts to engage the government proving unsuccessful, the John Howard Society of Canada has filed a claim in the Nova Scotia Superior Court, along with Mr. Michael Devlin, a federal prisoner suffering from deteriorating health and severe pain because of CSC's substandard care. He is one of countless nationwide who continue to suffer.

John Howard's claim alleges the federal health care system is outside of CSC's jurisdiction (*ultra vires*), and that it violates prisoner's human rights as guaranteed by sections 7, 12 and 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Prisoners are denied their liberty, not their right to health-care. The inhumanity and injustice of excluding them from our universal health care protections and allowing them to suffer needlessly with inadequate medical services must end.

Leandra Keren  
The Star  
Nov 30, 2021

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*I abide where there is a fight against wrong.*  
- Mother Jones

Former correctional officer at Nova Scotia women's prison pleads guilty to sexual assault, breach of trust charges

A former correctional officer at the Nova Institution for Women, a federal facility in Truro, N.S., has pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual assault and three counts of breach of trust.

Advocates have pointed to the case, involving former guard Brian Wilson, as an example of the broader challenges within federal correctional institutions. These include failure to believe prisoners who bring forward sexual abuse allegations, a power imbalance and toxicity of the culture inside institutions, unwillingness to address the prevalence of sexual misconduct, and the need for greater accountability.

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies said on Monday that several women who were incarcerated at the institution told CSC that they had been sexually assaulted.

Executive director Emilie Coyle said that all the factors that prevent people from reporting experiences of sexual violence in community "are compounded for women and gender diverse people who are, or have been, in prison."

Correctional officers and other staff at Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) wield "incredible power" over the liberty of individuals who are incarcerated, Ms. Coyle added.

"Coming forward with a claim against a CSC staff [member] could result in retaliation that could jeopardize one's chance of being granted parole when eligible," she said. "Despite this, these women still chose to share their stories. And they are not alone."

Ms. Coyle noted sexual assault charges have been brought against staff members in three of the six federal prisons designated for women in recent years.

The CSC did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Mr. Wilson's plea on Monday.

Mr. Wilson's lawyer, Derek Sonnichsen, confirmed that his client pleaded guilty to the three charges of sexual assault and the three of breach of trust. He added that Mr. Wilson did not want comment.

After a year-long investigation, the Truro Police charged Mr. Wilson in May, 2020.

Police said they received a complaint in March, 2019, alleging inappropriate relationships

between a corrections officer and female inmates at Nova.

Senator Kim Pate, an advocate for marginalized and institutionalized women, told *The Globe and Mail* last year that Truro police confirmed to her that she was the first to report the female prisoners' allegations of sexual misconduct at the prison to the force.

She also said she called the police because women contacted her personally and told her they had brought the allegations to CSC but were concerned a lack of response.

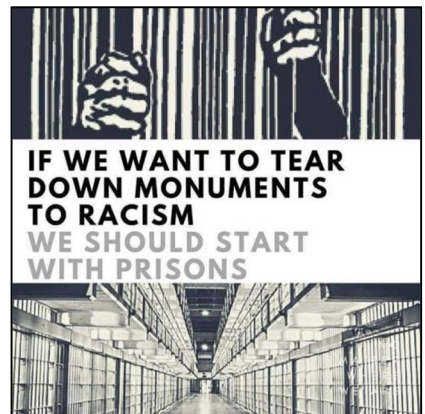
In May, 2019, three women who said they were sexually assaulted at the Nova institution launched a lawsuit against the federal correctional service.

At the time, CSC said it called police right away when it heard the allegations. Later, the agency admitted officials waited three months while they conducted their own internal investigation before contacting Truro police.

Ivan Zinger, the Correctional Investigator of Canada, has called on the federal government to legislate a zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse and violence behind bars, including mandatory requirements for CSC to publicly report and respond to incidents.

His office tabled a report in Parliament in 2020 on sexual violence and coercion in federal prisons. It noted that sexual violence is a systemic problem.

Kristy Kirkup  
Globe and Mail  
Apr 4, 2022



Canada's use of criminal jails for immigration detainees violates Charter, lawsuit alleges

*Canada's use of maximum-security provincial jails for immigration detention is under fire again as two former detainees have launched a class-action lawsuit against the federal government alleging the practice violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

*"The purpose of jails is to punish individuals who have committed serious crimes," says lawyer Cory Wanless. "No one who is not convicted of a crime or is not accused of a crime should be placed there."*

*Immigration detainees are not criminally charged and their detention is not supposed to be punitive. They are detained, on an indefinite basis, for one of three reasons: the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) believes they are "unlikely to appear" for their deportation or other immigration matter; their identity hasn't been confirmed, or because the CBSA believes they are a "danger to the public," usually due to past criminal charges for which they have already served a sentence.*

*The vast majority of detainees - more than 80% - are held solely on the grounds they are "unlikely to appear."*

*The decision of whether or not to hold someone in immigration detention is made by the quasi-judicial Immigration and Refugee Board, which holds hearings in the first 48 hours after someone is arrested by the CBSA, again after seven days and then every 30 days thereafter.*

*The fairness of those hearings has been called into question since detainees are often unrepresented and the standards are far below those of a court. But the system has ultimately been upheld as constitutional.*

*Once the tribunal decides whether or not someone should be detained, however, the location of their detention is at the sole discretion of the CBSA, which uses a simple administrative form to determine whether the detainee will be held in one of two places: a less-restrictive Immigration Holding Centre, which is purpose-built for immigration detention; or a maximum-security provincial jail, where detainees are mixed with and treated the same as someone serving a criminal sentence or awaiting trial.*

*There is no external oversight of the CBSA's decision.*

*Tyron Richard, a father of four originally from Grenada and one of the lawsuit's plaintiffs, spent more than 18 months in immigration detention, from January 2015 until July 2016. He spent the bulk of his detention at the Central East Correctional Centre, a maximum-security jail in Lindsay, Ont., where many long-term immigration detainees are held.*

*Richard, who came to Canada as a teenager and is a permanent resident, was the primary caregiver to three of his children at the time of his arrest by the CBSA. He had just dropped off his kids at school and daycare and was at his job at an auto-repair shop in Scarborough when CBSA officers apprehended him.*

*A 2008 conviction on break-and-enter and weapons charges, for which he served a nine-month conditional sentence (but no jail time, other than 29 days of pretrial custody), meant his permanent residency would be revoked due to "serious criminality." But Richard appealed and in 2010 won a four-year stay of his deportation, dutifully complying with all of CBSA's conditions and reporting dates. During this time he earned his high school diploma, had a steady job and thought he had done everything he needed to do to maintain his immigration status. He updated the CBSA every time he changed his address, as was required. But he didn't realize he was also supposed to separately update the Immigration and Refugee Board. As a result, he didn't receive notice of a hearing at the end of his four-year stay, so the board considered his appeal to be abandoned. His deportation order was subsequently revived.*

*Richard says he wasn't aware of any of this when CBSA officers showed up at his workplace, handcuffed him and sent him to jail, where he would remain for the next year and a half.*

*"I kept asking them, "What did I do wrong?" he said in a recent interview. "They didn't explain anything. I felt helpless. I felt like I was actually never going to see my family again."*

*Richard, who, with the help of lawyer Subodh Bharati, was eventually able to secure his release and regain his permanent residency, said it was never made clear to him why he was placed in a maximum-security jail rather than an Immigration Holding Centre.*

*Since immigration detention is not supposed to be punitive, according to both international law and the Canadian government's own description,*



holding immigration detainees in the most restrictive conditions breaches several Charter rights, the lawsuit alleges, including not to be arbitrarily imprisoned and not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment.

"As a nation we decided that in certain circumstances we think it's a good idea to detain those who may be deported or facing deportation," said Wanless, who is representing Richard with Bharati. "Having made that decision we have an obligation as a country to treat them humanely."

The Attorney General of Canada has not filed a statement of defence. In response to questions for this story, a CBSA spokesperson said the agency would not comment on "potential or ongoing litigation."

The potential class-action lawsuit, which was filed Monday and has not yet been certified, comes as the Canadian branches of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are in the midst of a cross-country campaign arguing that Canada's treatment of immigration detainees violates international human rights law, particularly by discriminating against detainees with mental health conditions, who are automatically deemed "high risk" by the CBSA and sent to provincial jails as a result.

The organizations are lobbying the provinces to cancel their contracts with the CBSA and stop holding immigration detainees in provincial jails.

Earlier this year, British Columbia agreed to review its contract, the first province to do so.

The lawsuit, which seeks a total of \$100 million in damages, argues that the differences between an Immigration Holding Centre and a maximum-security provincial jail are "stark." In the former, detainees wear their own clothes, are not confined to cells, have freer access to phones and outdoor recreation, and can have multiple daily visits, including direct-contact visits.

In provincial jails, detainees are often handcuffed and strip-searched; subject to frequent and unpredictable lockdowns, during which they are confined to their cells for hours or entire days; sometimes placed in solitary confinement; forced to wear prison uniforms; have very limited access to phones and visits; and regularly face violence and the threat of violence. All of which "causes significant deterioration in mental health" or exacerbates existing mental health conditions, reads the statement of claim.

A second plaintiff, Alexis Garcia Paez, spent nearly three weeks in immigration detention last October, according to the lawsuit. A refugee claimant from Mexico, Paez had just been released from the Toronto South Detention Centre following a criminal bail hearing when the CBSA detained him at the same jail, solely on the grounds that he was "unlikely to appear."

Both Paez and Richard have suffered from post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression, among other conditions, as a result of their detentions, the lawsuit states. Richard developed a fear of small spaces and often struggles to sleep, enduring "frequent" nightmares.

The average length of time someone is held in immigration detention is about three weeks, but some detainees, like Richard, spend much longer behind bars. Since 2016, his lawsuit alleges, Canada has held more than 300 immigration detainees for a year or longer.

While a minority of detainees are held in maximum-security jails - the percentage has ranged from 16% to 40% in the last 10 years - most long-term detainees are held in jail, and roughly two-thirds of all days spent in immigration detention are in jail.

Bharati said immigration detention is actually "harsher" than criminal detention because of its indefinite nature. "I also think it's discriminatory. No Canadian would ever be put in a maximum-security prison without substantive procedural safeguards," he said. "But immigration detainees are."

Brendan Kennedy

The Star

May 17, 2022



## Life is Like a Butterfly

First you are a caterpillar  
 Who never seen it all  
 But day by day I creep & crawl  
 Searching for what life has to offer  
 Even through falls & flaws  
 Each day I pick myself back up  
 Because duty calls  
 Even on days that are rainy, windy & sunny  
 Because I always have to full my tummy  
 But when that day comes, when I evolve  
 I'll be flying through it all

- Butterfly 23

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## Struggles of Incarceration

Isn't much to do, got a question?  
 Ask the screw, he says 'Fuck you'  
 Can barely breathe, vents clogged, hatches shut  
 Screws don't care, they say 'So what?'  
 Lights on 24/7, thinkin' of heaven, ask the screw  
 'Kevin'  
 Can we have the lights out?  
 He yells, 'When you're a con - lights are on'  
 Dirty clothes, stained & green  
 Can't ask this screw, she's so mean  
 We're never seen, locked in our cell, oops you  
 fell?  
 Well the Call Button don't work ... but shhh,  
 don't tell  
 Yard? What's that? Fresh air, yeah that's rare  
 The screws are busy behind the window  
 With no care & a judgemental stare  
 Bread bellies for the wm, you're leaving here far  
 from thin  
 The food is gross, won't touch most  
 Bread, bread, bread, now we're fed  
 Bloated & fat & sent to bed  
 Sleep & eat is all we do  
 Screws on the other side of glass makin' fun of  
 you  
 Sleep tight, think how you'll get it right  
 So eventually you can sleep without the light

- K.Zeb\*

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Action is the antidote to despair.

- Joan Baez

## The 'Dash'

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone, from the beginning ... to the end. He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most was the 'dash' between those years.

For the 'dash' represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own, the car, the house ... the cash ... what matters is how we lived and how we spent our 'dash'.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real then we can always try to understand the way other people feel. And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile ... remembering that this special 'dash' might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is read with your life's actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about you and how you spent your 'dash'?

- Shawna McFadden

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## Life Between the Prison Walls

Between 5 corners of the prison walls  
 Asking god to help me through it all  
 You inhale & exhale, feeling like it's hell  
 Then yell 'god help me please'  
 'Cause I can't take it anymore, I'm ill  
 So ill, I feel like my life is on pause  
 Without no end, motive just white walls  
 Every 30 minutes I see a guard  
 With no guarantees, details or regards  
 Just alone getting old without cause  
 That's all

- Butterfly 23

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## New site for memorial honouring EMDC deaths

A makeshift memorial representing inmates who have died at the provincial jail in London, Ont. has been relocated.

Families of those who died in custody at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre (EMDC) vow to continue shining a light on their loved ones' deaths.

"We lost our loved ones in vain, and it shouldn't happen to anybody else," said Glenn Struthers. He and his wife Judy Struthers are among a number of families who regularly demonstrate outside the Exeter Road facility, demanding better safety for inmates and jail staff.

Their son Justin Struthers died at EMDC on Dec. 26, 2017. "I have a bucket list," said Judy. "Number one can never happen. I want my son back, they can't do that for me."

On Tuesday, the couple was found tending to crosses at the new site of the memorial, which was recently relocated to the property of a nearby business on Exeter Road.

The province dismantled the original site on jail property this past summer. It followed a ruling by the Grievance Settlement Board, which handles Ontario public sector complaints.

The union representing correctional employees argued the memorial, in its original location outside the jail, represented an ongoing source of psychological stress for its members.

"There's memorials all over the place, why not these people," asked Judy. "And if they're saying they take them down because it caused them stress? Stress starts in the walls, behind those walls at EMDC."

The new site is just west of the provincial jail, Judy said the business owner gave them permission to erect the crosses, but she added that they're still hoping to be able to bring them back to the jail.

"We have a petition in now to put a memorial back up there. And I'm fighting until we do it." There have been 19 deaths at EMDC since 2009. The crosses began appearing in 2018.

Bryan Bicknell  
CTV News  
Dec 28, 2021

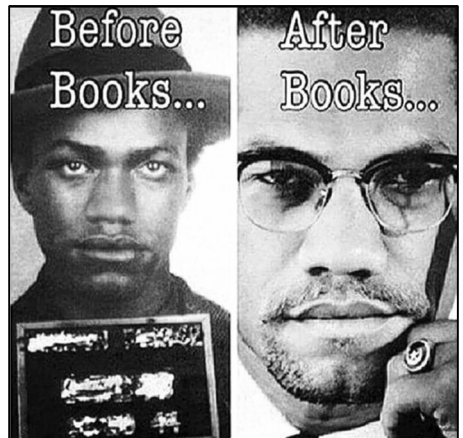
## Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

*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

**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**

**Mon - Wed - Fri - Sat  
9-11am & 2-4pm**

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

*My crime is being Indian.*

*What's yours?*

*- Leonard Peltier*

## Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP)

*"Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning"*

*"Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school"*

BCFI's commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children's educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child. This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent's voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents' choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

Book Clubs for Inmates  
720 Bathurst St.  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4  
[www.BookClubsForInmates.com](http://www.BookClubsForInmates.com)

*There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice,  
but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.*

- Elie Wiesel

## 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](http://www.kipcanada.org) ~ 416-505-5333

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## 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 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon*
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
*Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am*  
*Call-in 519-837-2378*
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
*Stark Raven – 1<sup>st</sup> Mon 7-8 pm*
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM  
*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](mailto:CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net)*  
*Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.*

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### PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞  
- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural  
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.  
- Each and Every Year -

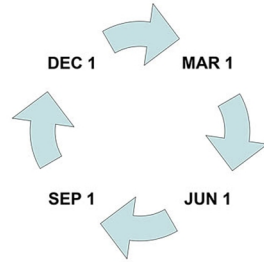
*We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.*

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

[PJD@PrisonFreePress.org](mailto:PJD@PrisonFreePress.org)



- WOMENS PRISON NETWORK -



- MAILOUT DATES -

Women's Prison Network  
Summer 2022 - Issue #27

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

[info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org](mailto:info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org)

*visit, download, print, donate!*  
[WomensPrisonNetwork.org](http://WomensPrisonNetwork.org)

Fall Issue #28 is mailed out:  
Sep 1, 2022

Send in your work before:  
Aug 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!*

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