

WOMEN'S  
PRISON  
NETWORK



ISSUE # 28  
FALL 2022

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #28 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by & for women, trans & 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: ?,???

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You!

Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

< Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment >

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

~ 'Dish With One Spoon' Wampum ~

'Ah, what can I do?' say a powerless few,  
With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye,  
Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you?  
- Buffy Sainte-Marie

Prisons insist ...

... inmates pay 2022 prices using 1980 dollars! But prisons don't teach magic. Too bad.

The minimum wage across Canada in 1980 was just over \$3.00/hour. To give some perspective, as recorded here back in December of 2018, a sampling of 1980 prices listed milk at less than \$2/gallon, bread 50c/loaf, bacon \$1.75/lb, flour \$1.00/5lbs, ground beef \$1.00/lb, peanut butter \$1.50/jar, potatoes \$1.00/5lbs, pork and beans 40c/can. To add another context, of a downtown apartment in major cities rented for about \$250/month.

At that time, a parliamentary committee established a pay-scale for federal prisoners based on the minimum wage, reduced by allowances for room and board, and other relevant expenses. Those 'relevant expenses' have risen and fallen over the years, depending on the political party in power in Ottawa at any given point, and adjustments in prison industry policy. For example, Correctional Service of Canada suspended the room and board charge for a period during the COVID pandemic to allow inmates to maintain family ties when no in-person visits were permitted.

Why is money given to federal inmates? The Act under which the federal prison industry operates says it's to encourage participation in institutional programs and social reintegration, but it's not a compensation for work, as that would lead to 'slave labour' accusations. Correctional Service of Canada will say that the money is to help inmates save for their release, help support family, pay for phone calls, supplement diets through canteen purchases, buy toiletries, clothing, tv's, radios, games or whatever the CSC catalog offers.

There's never been an increase in the pay-scale, Federal Conservative governments even made cuts at one point, and other factors have adjusted the figures over time. Basically, an inmate who has no job (there are few available, given the number of potential applicants) and is not involved in programming may end up with about \$4 every two weeks. Another inmate could qualify for 'welfare pay' at about \$16/two weeks, others in programs or with jobs can see around \$44/two weeks. There are very few inmates at A-level pay, just over \$60/two weeks.

Inmates have a \$850 annual spending ceiling, although money applied to phone cards is not subject to limits. Families/friends can and do send money to the incarcerated, but that doesn't change what can be done with it. No matter, the prices for whatever can be purchased is at market, the same or like what is available in the community. So, what is this about saving money, supporting families, or buying canteen, toiletries, and clothing? Any wonder there is a thriving black market in our federal institutions?

More on money, the assessed value of an inmate's 'cell effects' is capped at \$1500. From a pair of socks to shoes to a desk lamp to a tv, the total can't exceed that number. The \$1500 limit has been in place for at least the last 30 years, and possibly longer. Again, \$1500 bought a lot more in 1990 than it does in 2022. What will it buy in 2032?

There is no arguing that a prison sentence imposes many restrictions, and limits on the use of money are necessarily a part of it. But, when an inmate understands that their finances are restricted by policies that haven't changed or been updated in more than a generation, how can CSC claim it's meeting a rehabilitative and correctional mandate?

Charles Klassen  
turnoverarocktoday.com  
Jul 31, 2022

**Q. What's the difference between a prisoner of war and a homeless person?**



**A. Under the Geneva Convention, a prisoner of war is entitled to food, shelter and medical care.**

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

## Auditor-General report finds Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer

The Auditor-General released findings on Tuesday about systemic barriers at the Correctional Service of Canada, including that a majority of offenders were released on parole before the end of their sentences, but Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer and at higher levels of security.

The audit was released as part of a batch of spring reports from the office of Parliament and looked whether the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) programs address the diversity of the population in prison to provide a successful and safe return to the community.

Its main findings include the CSC has failed to address and eliminate the systemic barriers that persistently disadvantaged certain groups of offenders in custody identified in previous audits. It also said the CSC failed to develop a plan for its workforce to better reflect the diversity of the offender population.

"As a result, Indigenous and Black offenders faced greater barriers to a safe and gradual reintegration into society than other incarcerated groups," the report said.

The Auditor-General's report is taking place while experts and advocates closely scrutinize the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the federal correctional system. In its findings, the watchdog found that the problem has deepened, with Indigenous people making up an estimated 4% of the adult population yet accounting for 27% of federal offenders at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The report also said Indigenous women made up 43% of women serving federal sentences in custody were the fastest-growing population in the federal correctional system. Last month, Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger said that Indigenous women now account for 50% of the female population in federal penitentiaries, which he called "shocking and shameful."

The Auditor-General's Tuesday report said that the overrepresentation of Indigenous men and women at higher levels of security is a "long-standing issue" and it made similar observations in a 2016 review.

The office's findings also follow a Globe investigation from 2020 that showed CSC's risk assessment tools - standardized tests designed to

measure a prisoner's risk to public safety and odds of reoffending known as the Custody Rating Scale - were systemically biased against Black men, Indigenous men and Indigenous women. In the wake of the report, the House of Commons public safety committee announced a study into systemic bias in prison risk scores, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed to do more to address systemic inequities in prison. Last year, a proposed class-action lawsuit over risk scores was filed against the federal government on behalf of tens of thousands of prisoners.

The watchdog's report found disparities are present from the moment offenders enter federal institutions. For example, it said that the process for assigning security classifications - including the use of the Custody Rating Scale, as well as frequent overrides of the scale by corrections staff - results in disproportionately high numbers of Indigenous and Black offenders being placed in maximum-security institutions. The reliability of the Custody Rating Scale has not been validated since 2012 and its use had never been validated for Black offenders specifically, the report added.

"While the majority of offenders were released on parole before the end of their sentences, Indigenous and Black offenders remained in custody longer and at higher levels of security before release," the report said.

"We also found that Indigenous offenders were more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to have their initial security placement increased to a higher level through overrides of the Custody Rating Scale's results," the report said. "As well, we found fewer overrides down to minimum security for Indigenous offenders than for non-Indigenous offenders."

Among its recommendations, which the CSC has accepted, the Auditor-General's office said the CSC should improve the initial security classification process for offenders by conducting a review with external experts of the Custody Rating Scale and its use in decision making. It said this should be done in particular for women, Indigenous, and Black offenders.

It also said the CSC should identify and act to address root causes contributing to delays in the preparation of offenders - particularly Indigenous offenders - for release. CSC should also improve the "timely completion of reassessments of offenders' security levels, to facilitate their safe transitions into the community", the report said.

The Auditor-General also said in a separate report released Tuesday that despite Veterans Affairs Canada's efforts to improve wait times for disability benefits applications, former military and RCMP members still waited too long to receive compensation for injuries sustained during their service to Canada.

Veterans Affairs has a service standard for processing disability benefits applications within 16 weeks, in 80% of cases. The report found that the department has not met that service standard for seven years. It said veterans applying for disability benefits for the first time waited a median of 39 weeks for a decision, while applications from women, francophones and RCMP veterans took even longer.

The audit found that Veterans Affairs' data on how it processes disability benefits applications was poor and, as a result, the department didn't know if its efforts to speed up processing worked. It recommended the department address weaknesses in its data collection so it can better monitor the disability benefits program and improve efficiency. It also called on the department to create a long-term resourcing plan so it has enough staff to process the backlog of applications.

The findings were similar to those reported in a 2014 Auditor-General report on mental health services for veterans, which found that in a one-year period, 75% of decisions on initial applications for mental health conditions were processed within the service standard of 16 weeks.

Kristy Kirkup, Tom Cardoso,  
Michelle Carbert, Patrick White  
Globe and Mail  
May 31, 2022

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Prison service must do more to remove barriers for Indigenous, Black offenders

The federal auditor general says Canada's prison service has not given offenders timely access to programs to help ease them back into society, including courses specific to women, Indigenous people and visible minorities.

Auditor general Karen Hogan found Black and Indigenous offenders experienced poorer outcomes than any other groups in the federal

correctional system and faced greater barriers to a safe and gradual return to the outside world.

Hogan notes her office raised similar issues in audits in 2015, 2016 and 2017, yet the correctional service has done little to change the policies, practices, tools and approaches that produce these differing outcomes.

Hogan says disparities were present from the moment offenders entered federal institutions.

The process for selecting security classifications saw Indigenous and Black offenders assigned to maximum-security institutions at twice the rate of other groups of offenders.

They also remained in federal custody longer and at higher levels of security before their release.

The audit found that timely access to correctional programs continued to decline across all groups of offenders. Access to programming worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of men serving sentences of two to four years who were released from April to December 2021, 94% had not completed the correctional programs they needed before they were first eligible to apply for day parole.

"This is a barrier to serving the remainder of their sentences under supervision in the community," the report says.

Correctional service efforts to support greater equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace also fell short, leaving persistent barriers unresolved, the report says.

Close to one-quarter of management and staff had not completed mandatory diversity training a year after the deadline.

In addition, the prison service had not established a plan to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of its offender populations, which has particular relevance for institutions with high numbers of Indigenous and Black offenders, the report says.

Hogan notes the correctional service has acknowledged systemic racism in the system, initiating an anti-racism framework to identify and remove systemic barriers.

The service has agreed to act on the auditor general's recommendations to remedy the various issues she identified.

The Canadian Press  
May 31, 2022

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Mandatory sentences prevent judges from using judgment. They should be ended.

In 1998, the Solicitor General of Canada reported that Indigenous people made up 12% of the federal prison population, four times their percentage in the Canadian population.

The following year, the Supreme Court of Canada released its landmark *R. v. Gladue* decision, which acknowledged Indigenous over-incarceration and instructed courts to recognize the unique circumstances of aboriginal offenders and consider alternatives to prison.

More than two decades later, Indigenous people comprise 32% of federal inmates, or nearly eight times their share of the Canadian population. Even more catastrophically, aboriginal women now make up exactly half of the female prison population.

That's catastrophic all right - a catastrophic failure to address the problem. And while there are many reasons for that failure, the implementation of mandatory minimum sentences, particularly for non-violent drug crimes, has played a major role.

Not that the Conservative Party of Canada has noticed. On the contrary, some Conservative members of Parliament devoted Question Period last week to attacking Bill C-5, which will eliminate mandatory prison sentences for 14 offences in the Criminal Code and six in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Among other things, the Conservatives charged that the Liberals seek to "make it allowable for criminals to get house arrest," which makes one wonder exactly who else they think should be subject to a conditional sentence.

If the Conservatives really want to learn about the rationale behind Bill C-5 and the deleterious effects of mandatory sentences, they need look no further than data from the Department of Justice - particularly data collected during the Harper government's 2006-2015 "tough on crime" regime.

Between 2007-2008 and 2016-2017, the percentage of aboriginal people imprisoned as a result of a mandatory sentence nearly doubled, from 14% to 26%. And this rise occurred despite courts implementing the Gladue principles, since courts can't consider alternatives to prison when a jail sentence is mandatory.

Although mandatory sentences affect Indigenous offenders disproportionately, they're not the only ones who suffer. In fact, we all do. According to the justice department, between 2002 and 2013, while the Harper government imposed mandatory sentences for numerous offences, per capita justice spending increased by 23%.

That might be worth it if mandatory sentences reduced crime, but there's no evidence of that. On the contrary, the Solicitor General reports there are "indications that increasing lengths of incarceration [are] associated with slightly greater increases in recidivism [re-offending]."

That said, Bill C-5 won't and shouldn't eliminate prison sentences. Jail time is appropriate for some offences and some offenders, including some Indigenous ones. But that decision ought to be left to judges since it's the duty of judges to fashion appropriate sentences - to put it simply, to use their judgment.

Yet by removing judges' ability to employ judgment, mandatory sentences transfer discretion to prosecutors, who decide what offences and what offenders to prosecute. And unlike judges, prosecutors aren't required to explain their decisions, nor are those decisions subject to appeal. This is backroom justice, which is no justice at all.

Although the Conservatives still seem to have trouble understanding that, the public has no such difficulty. Ninety per cent expressed support in a justice department survey for "giving judges the flexibility to impose a sentence that is less than the mandatory minimum."

Canadians therefore realize something many Conservative MPs don't: we can clear the way into prison for more and more Indigenous people, but we can't imprison our way out of crime. That will require sound judgment, which is why we ought to let judges exercise it.

Star Editorial Board  
May 24, 2022

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Women will not simply be mainstreamed into the polluted stream.

Women are changing the stream, making it clean and green and safe for all:

every gender, race, creed, sexual orientation, age, and ability.

- Bella Abzug



## Rethinking immigration detentions

Remember the “kids in cages,” the photos of child migrants who were detained at the southern border of the United States?

Remember how we took pride in doing things differently here, how we congratulated ourselves on Canada being, in the words of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a “beacon of hope” for immigrants and refugees?

Well as it turns out, many heard and believed those narratives too only to find that their experiences in Canada involved detention. Sure, Canada is a place where migrants can pursue lives of freedom and fulfilment - until they go to jail.

Which, for many, is as soon as they arrive here. According to a 2021 joint report from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, Canada held some 32,000 migrants in detention between April 2016 and March 2020.

Children aren't spared from detention either. According to the report, a total of 138 children were detained in fiscal year 2019-2020 alone, including 73 under the age of six. Thankfully, the number of children detained dropped to just four the following fiscal year.

Overall, the number of detainees steadily increased from 2016 to 2020, peaking at 8,825 detainees in 2019-2020. It then decreased dramatically with the onset of the COVID pandemic, though conditions deteriorated significantly for those who remained in detention. The latest CBSA stats show there were a total 629 individuals detained in the second quarter of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The average detention of was 24 days.

The release of the detainees during the pandemic provides ample evidence that most people don't need to be held, as alternatives such as community supervision are available. Indeed, only five to seven per cent of detainees are held because they're considered a danger to public safety, while approximately 94% are detained because they're considered a flight risk, to establish their identity, or to examine their immigration status.

The Canada Border Services Agency, which possesses broad and largely unchecked powers of arrest and detention, houses approximately two-thirds of detainees in immigration detention centres, but also incarcerates a significant

number in provincial facilities in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

Those in provincial jails are housed with individuals awaiting trial or sentencing, as well as inmates convicted of offences, including violent offences, for which they've received sentences of less than two years.

This means immigrant detainees - who, remember, have not even been accused of committing crimes - are subject to the same restrictive conditions, such as searches, shackling and solitary confinement, as other inmates. Even worse, they're frequently subject to all manner of assault and abuse at the hands of violent prisoners.

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada reviews the reasons for detention every 30 days. It can decide whether an individual should remain detained or released, sometimes with conditions. But the reality is, unlike other inmates, there's no limit to how long immigration detainees can be held.

Needless to say, such treatment can have a profoundly deleterious effect on mental health, especially given that many are fleeing trauma and persecution. Numerous studies have demonstrated that even short periods of detention can cause depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation.

And needless to say, no migrant should ever be subject to this kind of treatment in Canada, or anywhere for that matter. Given the availability of alternatives, the CBSA has an obligation to scale down detention, ideally to the point where the only individuals detained are those who represent a significant danger to public safety.

Similarly, the provinces should cease incarcerating individuals on behalf of the CBSA. To its credit, the government of British Columbia has announced that it will no longer participate, with Public Safety Minister and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth stating that the arrangement doesn't align with B.C.'s “commitment to upholding human rights.”

It doesn't comport with Canada's commitments either. Other provinces, including Ontario, should therefore immediately follow suit, so that Canada's treatment of refugees accurately mirrors the narratives we tell ourselves - and the world.

Star Editorial Board - Aug 2, 2022

The Indigenous incarceration crisis demands a bolder response: Decarceration

Four years ago, I called attention to a staggering statistic: that 98% of girls in Saskatchewan youth jails and upwards of 70% of inmates in Manitoba jails were Indigenous. These were unacceptable rates by any measure. At the time, 43% of women in federal prisons were Indigenous.

Now, Canada has crossed a terrible threshold: 50% of all women in federal prisons are Indigenous, despite the fact that Indigenous women make up only 5% of Canada's total female population. Yet this shameful reality continues to be ignored by politicians, policy-makers and the Canadian public.

I used to think that the solution to the disproportionate overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Canadian jails and prisons was largely a policy problem - that by changing policies, and making sure that existing laws were enforced properly, Canada could address the crisis. But the time for incremental policy change has passed. We have known about the problem for decades. What Canada needs now is "decarceration" - and we need it urgently.

In 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada called the overrepresentation of Indigenous people a "crisis." The federal and provincial/territorial governments have commissioned dozens of studies, inquiries and royal commissions over the years that have all raised similar concerns, such as when the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry declared: "The Canadian criminal justice system has failed the Aboriginal peoples of Canada." The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) also sounded the alarm on the high rates of Indigenous people in Canadian prisons: "It's not that they're inherently criminal," said chief commissioner Marion Buller, "it's that they're poor."

This is also not a problem that can be solved by the slow drip of pilot projects, policy and procedure changes, and "sensitivity training." We've been there and done that, with civil society organizations, governments, judges and politicians that have repeated and revived them over the decades. Where they have been scaled and implemented meaningfully at all, they clearly did not have the intended effect; sometimes, they've even made things worse, as the Ontario government did when it claimed that substantial

cuts to legal aid funding would make the justice system more "efficient," or by creating specialty courts that divert some people from incarceration, but are so systemically underfunded that they create little more than the appearance of change.

A central feature of the inability of Canadian governments to meaningfully address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in jails and prisons is that for Canada and its institutions, Indigenous peoples and their interests remain primarily a colonial concern, 155 years after Confederation.

Much of the Canadian economy is built on the exploitation of Indigenous lands without the consent of Indigenous peoples and without returning any benefits to Indigenous peoples. Efforts to engage in the so-called protection of Indigenous children through the foster-care system continues to result in the forced displacement of disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children from their families and communities to primarily non-Indigenous families disconnected from their culture and language - an active and immoral perpetuation of the legacy of residential schools and the "Sixties Scoop." And Indigenous people are being criminalized and incarcerated at a rate that even the most dedicated cheerleaders for the colonial order being maintained would surely have difficulty justifying.

The solution that remains is systematic decarceration: the intentional and directed reduction of the number of Indigenous people in jails and prisons as a policy goal in and of itself.

This means ending the use of mandatory minimum sentences retroactively. It means that judges and Crown attorneys must ensure that the presumption of innocence is upheld. Most importantly, decarceration requires that alternatives to incarceration that address the underlying causes of too many Indigenous people becoming involved with the criminal justice system be prioritized. More immediately, when Crown counsel makes decisions about whether prosecuting certain offences is in the public interest - such as administration of justice offences and crimes of poverty - they must exercise their discretion to not lay charges, or stay charges laid by police.

Decarceration projects are being successfully implemented in some parts of the United States,



and there is no principled reason why it could not be effective here as well.

The effects of colonialism are not merely a legacy of past wrongs. Colonialism is an ongoing project, perpetrated by federal, provincial and territorial governments, and that continues to penalize Indigenous peoples in Canada for the crime of merely existing.

Through decarceration, Canada may begin to forge a new path.

Corey Shefman  
Globe and Mail  
May 11, 2022

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Prisons are failing to comply with solitary confinement reforms

Prisons are badly failing to comply with solitary confinement laws and regularly violating inmate' rights, a new report by a group of Canadian senators says.

The Liberal government signalled that Bill C-83, passed in 2019, would put an end to the practice of solitary confinement.

But a report released Tuesday evening by a group of nine senators, which they cheekily titled "Senators go to jail," raises alarm bells about continued widespread use of the practice.

Parliamentarians have a legal right to access federal penitentiaries to view the conditions for themselves, and 34 senators have visited such facilities since the bill's passage.

Prisoners told them they were not given meaningful human contact, time outside their isolation cells or access to mental health services, the report says, with some spending prolonged periods in some form of segregation.

In some cases, living conditions were dire, with senators observing at one women's facility leaking roofs, mould and a prison cell where dried feces had not been cleaned from a wall.

Their observations echo similarly alarming findings from the Senate human rights committee, the auditor general and the correctional investigator.

"This report is one of too many that chronicles the lack of oversight and the lack of adherence to the law," said Sen. Kim Pate, who is affiliated with the Independent Senators Group. "Something significant has to change."

The senators are pushing for the passage of Pate's private bill, Bill S-230, which she says would address some of the oversight issues that have allowed problems to persist.

For one thing, it would require corrections facilities to go through a court process if they wanted to isolate a prisoner for more than 48 hours.

The bill would also amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to mandate that prisoners being isolated due to mental health issues be transferred to hospitals instead.

The same amendments were rejected by the Liberal government in June 2019.

The office of Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino, who oversees the Correctional Service of Canada, has not yet responded to a request for comment.

The Canadian Press  
Jun 15, 2022

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Because you are women,  
people will force their thinking on you,  
their boundaries on you.

They will tell you how to dress,  
how to behave, who you can meet and  
where you can go.

Don't live in the shadows of people's  
judgement.

Make your own choices in the light of your  
own wisdom.

- Amitabh Bachchan

## Locked Up

Are we out today? Everybody says  
 Locked up is the new norm  
 1-2 hours out every day  
 The only sunshine we see  
 Is from our cell windows  
 Locked up 22 hours a day  
 We all look forward to those 2 hours out  
 Getting fat on bread & sleep  
 Nothing left to do except eat & sleep  
 Losing our mind, eating all the time  
 All we can do is hope  
 We aren't locked up today  
 We watch the clock, 1, 2, 3 o'clock 4  
 Waiting for the guard to open our door  
 Waiting for med rounds  
 So we can sleep the day through  
 Hopefully tomorrow we aren't stuck in our cell  
 Locked up for another day 2

Sydney L.

---

## You &amp; I

In hopes we dream for a whisper of friendship in  
 life  
 To share & indulge through the mighty strive &  
 delight  
 Grasping with us an eternal love  
 Sent from the soaring heavens above  
 A shining beacon calling us to sea  
 Pulling us through our great travesty  
 Standing tall beside each we'll be  
 Best friends through all calamity  
 Forever so true & supportive for each  
 Together forever we'll be endlessly

Amanda Duhaime

---

You may encounter many defeats,  
 but you must not be defeated.  
 In fact,  
 it may be necessary to encounter the defeats,  
 so you can know who you are,  
 what you can rise from,  
 how you can still come out of it.

- Maya Angelou

## Mission

Through life's prickly path we've been cut so  
 deep  
 Through the hardships & woes we've bearded  
 endlessly  
 Trying to bring us on paths less known  
 We've struggled so hard through less than is  
 shown  
 Of the depths of our travesty we have intoned  
 Life has tried to bring us down  
 Countless times it's failed us and how  
 Through our strangled darkness the mockery of  
 our light  
 Shines on through the pain in our lives  
 We strive strong remembering all that we've  
 endured  
 And how we've been wronged all through the  
 years  
 It's encouraging to know our friendship adheres  
 By what's left of our sorrow & fears  
 Our hearts bleeding from being mistreated  
 We walk our paths undefeated  
 Feeling happy to be living & breathing  
 Thank god for still believing  
 This mission was what we needed  
 To be who we are, wonderful human beings

Amanda Duhaime

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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.

Racial violence has been rationalized,  
 legitimated,  
 and channelled through our criminal justice  
 system;  
 it is expressed as police brutality, solitary  
 confinement,  
 and the discriminatory and arbitrary  
 imposition of the death penalty.

- Michelle Alexander

Where there is oppression, there will be  
 resistance.

- Assata Shakur



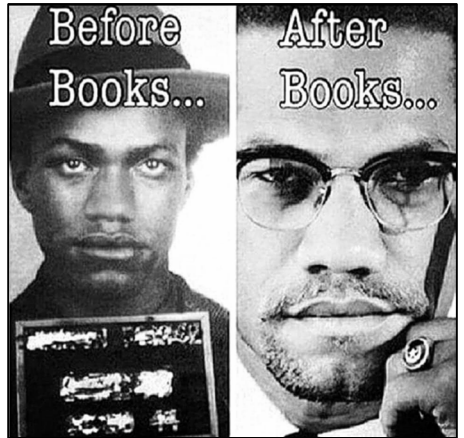
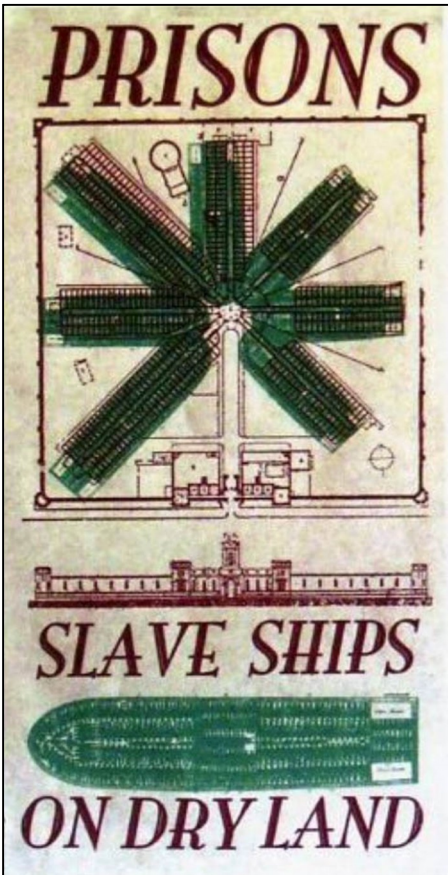
Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

*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

Educate yourself for the coming conflicts.  
- Mary Harris Jones (Mother Jones)

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com)*

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

### Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

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

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

*Write to us at:*

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

### NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

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

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

I'm not afraid of storms,  
for I'm learning to sail my ship.

- Louisa May Alcott

## 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)

A drawing,

- whether it becomes a window,  
a mirror, a weapon, or a tool,  
- is always also a lifeline.

- Andrea K. Scott

## 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](mailto: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



## Prison Radio

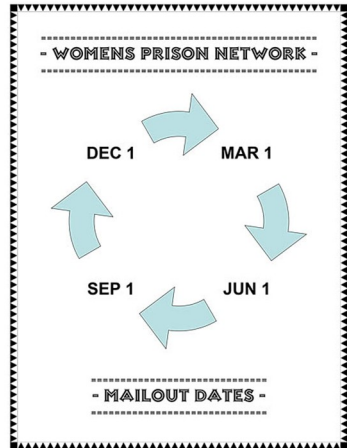
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM  
*Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm*  
*Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm*
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM  
*PRS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon*
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
*Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am*  
*Call-in 519-837-2378*
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
*Stark 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.*



Women's Prison Network  
Fall 2022 - Issue #28

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)

Winter Issue #29 is mailed out:  
Dec 1, 2022  
Send in your work before:  
Nov 1, 2022

### 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)

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!