

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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## SHORT TAKES

### CLOSE THE MOST EXPENSIVE PRISON

It costs roughly \$800,000 per year to house each captive there. Food costs \$38.45 per person per day. It currently houses about 171 people. It was established in 2002. It is Guantánamo. Military commissions have been reinstated with procedures that offer little chance for "fair" trials. Current administration directives effectively institutionalize indefinite detention without charge. Provisions in current defense legislation now make it impossible to transfer detainees to US soil. Thousands more people are detained in Bagram and "black sites" operated by the US around the world.

This is TEN YEARS TOO MANY!

### END PROLONGED SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT, 110 Maryland Ave NE--Suite 502, Washington DC 20002) launched a national campaign to gather endorsements from people of faith of a statement calling for government officials all across the country to take steps to end the use of prolonged solitary confinement. When we reach 500 endorsers from a particular state, we will send the statement, along with the list of those endorsers, to that state's governor and top corrections officials, along with every member of that state's legislature--and so on. We hope to help strengthen efforts in each state to bring an end to the use of prolonged solitary confinement.

Prolonged solitary confinement can cause serious harm to human beings; it has long been considered a form of torture. At least 36,000 people in the US prison system are currently being held in solitary confinement. Some prisoners are kept in these conditions for months, years, or even decades. It harms individuals and communities.

### HALT "LIFE WITHOUT" FOR CHILDREN

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which came into force more than 20 years ago, expressly prohibits the imposition of life imprisonment without the possibility of release for offenses, however serious, committed by people under 18 years old. All countries except the United States and Somalia have ratified the Convention. No other country is currently known to impose life imprisonment without the possibility of release on individuals for crimes, however serious, committed when they were children. The extreme racism of these sentences is illustrated by the situation in Illinois, where 82% of children in prison for life without parole are prisoners of color. There are more than 2,5000 prisoners in the US currently serving such sentences. Life without parole can be imposed on juveniles as a mandatory punishment.

### THE 398 IN SIX YEARS

Texas defendants convicted of "capital murder" were six times more often sentenced to life without parole than to execution: 66 people got execution sentences compared with the 398 with "death by imprisonment," life without sentences. We must remember too that it is about 15% of people sentenced to execution that are killed. There are 17 people who have been exonerated from death row by post-conviction DNA testing. From 2005 to 2009, when the law was changed, Texas allowed life without parole prison sentences for juveniles who had been certified to stand trial as adults. During that time, 21 people sentenced for crimes they were convicted of committing before age 18, had received life without sentences. There are 17 women with life without parole sentences. Two were under age at the time of the crime for which they were convicted. In Texas, 76% of those with "life without" are people of color.

## MUNDO DE TORTURADORES

El siglo XXI sigue siendo un mundo de torturadores. De los 194 Estados de que constan en las Naciones Unidas, cien de ellos practican regularmente la tortura, sea como medio para obtener informaciones o confesiones, sea como metodología para hacer reinar el terror: Siria, Egipto, Argelia, Chile, Argentina, Brasil, Cuba, Estados Unidos, China, Vietnam, India o Rusia, no hay continente que esté exento de esa barbarie. Esta es la vergonzosa conclusión del informe Un mundo de torturadores, publicado en Francia por la ONG Acción de los Cristianos contra la Tortura, ACAT. Las víctimas de las torturas tienen una identidad común a todos los países: periodistas, osindicalistas, opositores políticos, abogados, blogueros, miembros de minorías étnicas o religiosas, defensores de los derechos humanos, miembros de ONG. El retrato que hizo la ACAT muestra que, en vez de retroceder, esa metodología se ha mantenido a niveles altísimos pese a la reconversión de muchas dictaduras a la democracia liberal. No hay muchas zonas del mundo con las que hacerse ilusiones. Queremos creer que el uso de la tortura es una práctica reservada a los regímenes autoritarios. Pero éstos no tienen la exclusividad de esos crímenes y los principales países reconocidos como democráticos están lejos de ser irreprochables en ese materia.

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Copies of the Newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. To receive the Newsletter monthly, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address)-up to 12 at one time.

Please continue to send us address changes and renewal requests, in order to receive the year-end holiday card/new calendar.

Also, please note that the only address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO BOX 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. And remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS.

Many, many thanks to the REAL Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisnsproject.org/coalition.html>. Theirs is a GREAT SITE!

We continue to depend on our readers' contributions to be able to go on with our work. Thank you for your support!

## VOICES FROM INSIDE

Terre Haute IN October 10, 2011

A civil lawsuit has been filed against the Federal Bureau of Prisons (see Booth v. Federal Bureau of Prisons, US District Court for the southern District of Indiana). The case concerns a new lock down behavior modification program at USP Terre Haute called the Blue/Gold Program. After an inmate at USP Terre Haute has been found guilty of a prohibited act and punished by the disciplinary hearing officer, the administration then places him in the program. It lasts for 3-9 months and inmates are locked in their cells for over 20 hours a day. All privileges are restricted and inmates must participate in psychological programming. The program has not been promulgated according to the Administrative Procedures Act, 5 USC sec. 553, as federal agencies are required to, nor does it exist in any Federal Bureau of Prisons program statements.

Big Stone Gap VA October 16, 2011

The following information affects all NM state prisoners housed out-of-state. In September 2011, the US District Court for NM, in Trujillo v. Williams, 6:04-CV-0635-MV-WDS, found that "in requiring plaintiff to pay postage to send requests for legal forms and research material, they are forcing him to expend personal funds to obtain the basic material necessary to draft legal documents. They are also imposing a personal cost that would not be incurred if plaintiff had not been sent out of state...for the same reasons, the court finds plaintiff's complaint regarding grievances to be equally well taken."

Auburn NY October 23, 2011

My lawsuit that I filed in 205 has been settled. I received my evaluation for Gender Identity Disorder, started hormones and received my settlement check. To all my sisters, don't lose hope. It may take a while (in my case 6 years): Keep fighting for your rights!

Henning TN October 25, 2011

A few of us here are planning to file a class action lawsuit to challenge the conditions we're being held under, including the duration of time we must stay on max, the inadequate food and medical care we get, the failure of the administration to follow policy regarding reviewing us for release, and the constant cancellation of our recreation.