

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911

## We Stand in Solidarity With All Those Celebrating Black History

More than 60% of the people in prison are now people of color. For African American men in their twenties, 1 in every 8 is imprisoned on any given day. -- The Sentencing Project, Washington DC  
Ending mass incarceration and racial disparities in criminal justice is the new-school Civil Rights Movement of the 21st century -- Paul Butler, George Washington University Law School, Washington DC

## ASSORTED SHORT TAKES

### SOLITARY WATCH PROJECT

Solitary Watch, including the Solitary Watch News site (<http://solitarywatch.wordpress.com/>), is the first centralized source of information on solitary confinement in the United States, and will be run by Jim Ridgeway and Jean Casella, (<http://solitarywatch.wordpress.com>)

The full Solitary Watch web site-- which will be hosted by the Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse (VC3), a clinical program of the Washington and Lee University School of Law in Lexington, Virginia directed by veteran death penalty attorney David Bruck, will be launched in the spring of 2010. (<http://www.vc3.org/About/page.asp?pageid=564>)

On any given day, as many as 100,000 people are living in solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. Solitary confinement is increasingly being used as a way to control and warehouse mentally ill prisoners.

### BAD NEWS IN MUMIA ABU-JAMAL'S CASE

For many, Mumia's situation is the best known example of all that is wrong with the police, court and penal system leading to a sentence of execution. On January 19, 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court tossed out a lower federal court ruling that nullified the death sentence hanging over him. The case now goes back to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Pennsylvania to be reconsidered "in light of Smith v. Spisak, 558 U.S. \_\_\_ (2010)." The only similarity to the case of Abu-Jamal is that Spisak had also petitioned the Supreme Court partly on the basis of incorrect jury instructions.

### RESTRAINT NEEDED

New York City Police Department statistics for the first 3/4's of 2009 report more than 450,000 people were stopped by the cops, an increase of 13% over the same period in 2008. And overwhelming 84% of these stops were of Black or Hispanics. "Contraband" was found in only 1.6% of the Black New Yorkers. For Hispanics, it was just 1.5%. For whites, who make up only 16% of those stopped, contraband was found 2.2% of the time. Weapons were found on just 1.1% of the Blacks stopped, 1.4% of the Hispanics, and 1.7% of the whites. Only about 6% of stops result in an arrest for any reason.

The Center for Constitutional Rights (666 Broadway, New York NY 10012) has filed a classaction lawsuit over the stops.  
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This 2 page version of the CPR monthly newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. Others who would like to get our newsletter regularly *must* send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope (up to 12 at one time) for every issue they want to receive.

KEEP SENDING US YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES AND RENEWAL INFORMATION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE OUR NEXT CARD/CALENDAR MAILING!

Many thanks again to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making the newsletter available on-line at: <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>. Download it and mail it in to those inside!

Our debt level is currently at approximately \$9,000. Slowly but surely it is going down; we still need help!

Another heads up: the ONLY address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504.

# IN MEMORIAM

Fifty-two (52) people were officially murdered by state governments in the U.S. in 2009. Their names are:

Of these people, over 42% (22) were African-Americans, and 46% (24) were murdered by the state of Texas.

01/14/09	Curtis Moore	TX	05/14/09	Donald Gilson	OK
01/15/09	James Callahan	AL	05/19/09	Michael Lynn Riley	TX
01/21/09	Frank Moore	TX	05/20/09	Dennis Skillicorn	MO
01/22/09	Darwin Brown	OK	06/02/09	Terry Hankins	TX
01/22/09	Reginald Perkins	TX	06/03/09	Daniel Wilson	OH
01/28/09	Virgil Martinez	TX	06/11/09	Jack Trawick	AL
01/29/09	Ricardo Ortiz	TX	07/09/09	Michael DeLozier	OH
02/04/09	Steve Henley	TN	07/14/09	John Fautenberry	OH
02/04/09	David Martinez	TX	07/21/09	Marvallow Keene	OH
02/10/09	Dale Scheanette	TX	08/18/09	Jason Getsy	OH
02/11/09	Wayne Tompkins	FL	08/19/09	John Richard Marek	FL
02/12/09	Danny Joe Bradley	AL	09/16/09	Stephen Moody	TX
02/12/09	Johnny Johnson	TX	09/22/09	Christopher Coleman	TX
02/19/09	Edward Bell	VA	10/08/09	Max Payne	AL
02/20/09	Luke Williams	SC	10/20/09	Mark McClain	GA
03/03/09	Willie Pondexter	TX	10/27/09	Reginald Blanton	TX
03/04/09	Kenneth Morris	TX	11/05/09	Khristian Oliver	TX
03/10/09	James Edward Martinez	TX	11/10/09	Yosvanis Valle	TX
03/10/09	Robert Newland	GA	11/10/09	John Allen Muhammad	VA
03/11/09	Luis Salazar	TX	11/17/09	Larry Bill Elliot	VA
04/15/09	Michael Rosales	TX	11/18/09	Danielle Simpson	TX
04/16/09	Jimmy Lee Dill	AL	11/19/09	Robert Thompson	TX
04/29/09	William Mark Mize	GA	12/02/09	Cecil Johnson, Jr.	TN
04/30/09	Derrick Johnson	TX	12/03/09	Bobby Wayne Woods	TX
05/08/09	Thomas Ivey	SC	12/08/09	Kenneth Biros	OH
05/14/09	Willie McNair	AL	12/11/09	Matthew Eric Wrinkles	IN

## Un castigo cruel e injustificable

Editorial de *El Nuevo Día* 21 Diciembre 2006

La despiadada crueldad de la pena capital se sintió en la persona del puertorriqueño Ángel Nieves Díaz en el estado de Florida en Diciembre de 2006.

Ese recurso de castigo no necesitó ni siquiera la ayuda de sus detractores, porque la sesión de tortura en que se convirtió su aplicación a Nieves Díaz retrató fielmente las razones por las que tan bárbara práctica no debe tener cavida en la civilización.

Tan estremecedores fueron los acontecimientos que el gobernador Jeb Bush, quien se negó a conmutar la sentencial fatal, tuvo que suspender hasta nuevo aviso este método de la inyección, cuando la autopsia al cadáver de Nieves Díaz reveló que los verdugas perforaron el tejido muscular del reo, impidiendo la circulación de los químicos por la sangre.

Todo indica que fue esto, y no la desmentida versión de la dolencia hepática del reo, lo que impidió el efecto inmediato de la droga letal, que se prolongó por 34 minutos y en forma tal que la agonía de Nieves Díaz lanzó por el suelo la teoría de que ese método,

aplicado en las ejecuciones desde 1982 en los EE.UU., provoca una muerte indolora.

Las afirmaciones de quienes alegan esa teoría de la "muerte sin dolor" parecen transitar en dirección opuesta a los verdaderos hechos.

Los indicios en su contra y las dudas razonables no han surgido solamente en la Florida, donde, por lo demás, fue eliminado el uso de la silla eléctrica al incendiárseles las cabezas a dos reclusos en plena ejecución en la década de 1990.

Las autoridades de la Florida están obligada a conducir con seriedad la investigación relacionada con los hechos o los "errores" que agigantaron la magnitud de la tragedia el pasado diciembre de 2006 en la penitenciaría estatal de Raiford.

Pero no se vaya a pensar que las secuelas de la barbarie empiezan y termina en la Florida. Claro que no.

Dos días después de la ejecución del reo boriuca y atendiendo el caso de otro recluso hispano, Michael Morales, el juez federal Jeremy Fogel, de San José, detuvo las inyecciones letales en California, reflejo de las grandes preocupaciones que danan terreno contra esa atrocidad.

Y desde nuestra perspectiva, el que la pena capital exprese la voluntad de la mayoría no le quita su carácter extremo, vengativo, inhumano y anti democrático.