

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/10/28/prisoners-to-remain-on-rikers-island-as-hurricane-sandy-heads-for-new-york/>

## Campaign and Advocacy

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | October 28, 2012

**UPDATE, October 30, 12 noon:** Solitary Watch has received the following statement via email from NYC DOC Deputy Commissioner Matthew Nerzig: No power outages on Rikers last night. No significant flooding or disruption of our operations. The Commissioner [DOC Commissioner Dora Schriro] spent the night there.

Solitary Watch would also appreciate hearing from families whose loved ones (prisoners or staff) weathered the storm on Rikers and can provide accounts of their experiences: [solitarywatchnews@gmail.com](mailto:solitarywatchnews@gmail.com).

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At a press conference this afternoon on New York City's preparations for Hurricane Sandy, Mayor Michael Bloomberg was asked about the safety of prisoners on Rikers Island, which lies near the mouth of Long Island Sound, between Queens and the Bronx. Bloomberg appeared annoyed by the question, and [responded](#) somewhat opaquely: Rikers Island, the land is up where they are and jails are secured. Apparently unable to fathom that anyone's main concern would be for the welfare of the more than 12,000 prisoners on Rikers, Bloomberg then reassured listeners: Don't worry about anybody getting out.

The last time a major hurricane was headed for New York, Irene, in August of 2011, Bloomberg gave a similarly terse response to a question about the island jail. We are not evacuating Rikers, he declared even as other shoreline communities and City Island were cleared of residents. With little information forthcoming from the New York City Department of Corrections and [Rikers left blank](#) on the city's Evacuation Zone maps, prisoners' loved ones were in a panic, says Lisa Ortega, whose 16-year-old son was being held on Rikers at the time. A story originating on Solitary Watch, [Locked Up and Left Behind](#), went viral, and thousands of readers expressed concern or outrage.

This time, the Department of Corrections (if not the Mayor) appears better prepared for inquiries about the status of Rikers in a hurricane. By Saturday, it had proactively posted a notice on its website stating:

Given its elevation, Rikers Island can withstand any storm up to and including a Category 4 hurricane. Rikers Island facilities are NOT in low-lying areas, and therefore like nearby small islands Roosevelt Island and City Island, is not seriously threatened by severe flooding.

The personal safety of New York City Department of Correction (NYCDOC) staff and the inmate population is clearly our top priority and in the highly unlikely event that an evacuation would become necessary, it would occur. The NYCDOC response to an unprecedented disaster of this magnitude would be integrated of course, into a city or region-wide strategy. The City has carefully reviewed Rikers Island, as it has done with the entire city, and no section of Rikers Island facilities are located in Hurricane Evacuation Zone A.

Be assured that NYCDOC staff will remain on Rikers Island and the facility is a fully self-sustaining entity, prepared to operate and care for inmates in an emergency if such an emergency develops.

Pressed for further details, the NYCDOC's Public Information office provided the following additional information:

The vast majority of Rikers Island is located in a No Flood Zone; only one facility is located in Zone C. The first floor of that one facility may be vulnerable to flooding and in that case, those inmates would be relocated from the first floor to higher floors in the jail or moved temporarily to other facilities on Rikers Island. It is only a portion of the outer perimeter of the island where there are no jails that might be vulnerable to flooding, even in a Category 4.

Asked whether an evacuation plan does in fact exist for even more serious disasters, Deputy Commissioner Matthew Nerzig responded: The short answer is yes. If it really came to that, and that is a scenario that our best intelligence tells us is extremely unlikely to occur, we would do that. But Nerzig emphasizes that when it comes to Sandy, Rikers simply is not vulnerable and will not need to be evacuated. Those points, he says, need to be underscored because they put storm-related issues in the right context and explain why our preparations are appropriate.

Despite such assurances, Lisa Ortegareremains skeptical about the existence of a viable evacuation plan. She points out that the onlyexit from Rikersis via a single bridge to Queens, inadequate to serve as a secureescape route for 12,000 or more prisoners and staff. The city needsto be able to share with us the specifics of their so-called evacuationprocedure. She listed a number of questions she would like to see answered:How and where would inmates be relocated to if need be?How long would their foodand water supply last?If the bridge was not available for use, are there boat and life jackets enough for all inmates?What staff are designated to staffand are they trained for such emergencies?

Ortega, a member of the New York City Jails Action Coalition (JAC)is also concerned by stories she says were told to her by her son and other prisoners on Rikers following Hurricane Irene. Last year my son said inmates we all put on lockdown, and given sandwiches in their cells instead of being let out to eat, she says. The guards told themit was so there would be no panic or possible takeover by inmates. According to her son, the guards also told inmates, If shit goes down, we areout ofhere.'

In the end, the real question may be whether itwill ever bepossible forthe men, women, and children on Rikersto be truly safe, given the problems inherent in having a teeming urbanjail on an isolated islandand whether the mayor and the people of New York City actually care about their fate. [We need to] demand that DOC have a plan for the people living in Rikers Island, said Francisco Quinones, another member of JAC. Remember that those jailed there are also human and deserve a chance to live.

James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, Blood in the Face. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

Solitary Watch encouragescomments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Commentsthat violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

Thank you Tessa. That is such good news, thanks for posting. Disgraceful that the update took so long to come from them or the city.

On October 26th members of JAC Jail Action Coalition testified at a Hearing NYC Council . Held Jointlywith the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services regarding examining New York Citys compliance with the Brad H. Settlement and Administration of discharge planning for people with mental illness in city jails.To learn more and eventually in coming days view video of the hearings type nyc council calender and hit video. Testifying at NYC Council Hearings just one way to turn this situation around. Visiting with Council members and remind them out of 51 council members 47 are Democrats. No excuse for inaction because of political party discourse. We can continue to demonstrate in front of Bureau of Corrections on 41 cHAMBERS sTREET , ATTEND THEIR BI MONTHLY MEETINGS , SEND PROPOSALS FOR MINIMUM STANDARDS ,. wE HAVENT EVEN BEGUN TO CONFRONT THIS REJECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. wE CAN DEMONSTRATE DURING THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON. WE CAN ACT IN CONCERT WITH ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN ENDING SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN ARIZONA.WE CAN RUN WRITE-IN CAMPAIGNS FOR NYC cOUNCIL IN NEXT YEARS PRIMARIES AND ELECTION. WE CAN MEET WITH COBA CORRECTION OFFICERS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION. WE MUST FIND COMMON GROUND. OUR GOVERNMENT MEET WITH THE TALIBAN. JUST AS INMATES ARE HUMAN BEINGS SO ARE CORRECTION OFFICERS AND THEIR UNION LEADERS. WE CAN FIND COMMON GROUND TO ACT IN CONCERT AGAINST THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WHO REFUSE RTO HIRE ADDITIONAL CORRECTION OFFICERS AND ELIMINATE PENSIONS FOR NEW [HIRINGS.allanfeinblum@aol.com](mailto:HIRINGS.allanfeinblum@aol.com)

Suzanne and Tiffany just to give you an update from an inside source. Rikers & the Boat house are safe. Tiffany did your boyfriend contact you? Let me know. Please pass it on Rikers Island is safe and sound

Danielle, knowing ur human. Ppl are probably pissed of @ ur ignorance. Prisoners are of many categories . Fines, awaiting trial (Remandees @ over 40% . So I doubt ull have rapists, murderers running around the streets of New York. Love this site, as an Aussie . Good to read caring, lateral comments. We are All humans Some are just more humane Danielle:open ur eyes !

Tiffany R, n Suzanne B, maybe we can create a flyer have it around Rikers Island for the family and friends that are visiting. We need them as well to voice it, if they are not voicing their opinion but all talk. Than all it will be is all talk, that same flyer can be on FB, Instagram, twitter on the street. Hey Im just thinking, if you guys have a better ideas let me know. Keep safe

To Tiffany R, have you heard from your boyfriend, as he called. If u do speak to him be careful what is said on the phone. You know the drill so they wont do anything to him, as most calls are monitored/recorded. If you need NY1 # Ill be glad to give it to you. When I called they told me some B.S the more people call and complaint put it out there on FB, twitter to the right parties this is ridiculous. All your boyfriend is safe and everyone else there including the staff, some staff will have a voice and some will be powerless but trust one them will spill the beans. You ur family stay strong

Suzanne B what I can recommend is to twitt President Obama along with Michelle the appropriate parties, unless WE can create a buzz on twitter. Now for others ignorance makes the world go around. Innocent or not its titled Human being than labled inmates. This what were voicing our opinions about. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty, I have taken several trips to Rikers to visit friends, a family member, I speak on it because i know what im talking about. not to forget as well as the Boat house in the Bronx. AGAIN PEOPLE LIKE SUZZAN B AND MYSELF WERE SPEAKING ON.BEHALF OF.THE.FAMILY N FRIENDS FOR HUMAN BEEING THAT ARE LABELED AS INMATES INNOCENT OR NOT

Thank you Tessa. Youre right. People are innocent until proven guilty, and many of those people on Rikers havent even been heard in court yet. Theyre waiting for trial. Many of them are young people. And as for those who are guilty and have been convicted I wont keep quiet and tacitly allow their deaths.

I saw what was written in that 2011 article and was shocked that the guards would have just abandoned them.

Will we be able to trust what reports do come out, I wonder. I know how bad prison conditions are and how little will there appears to be to improve them.

Az n gyermekem is rikers Island-on van s nemtudok rla semit.a hirek aggasztak s az emberek is azok,akik nemtudjk,hogy nagyon sok ember van ott gy,hogy nincs is igazn elkvett bne.ezzel mi is gy vagyunk,hiszen egy vd ami nem megalapozott,st felvtel bizonyítja a vd megalapozatlansgt,de azt csak trgyalson lehetne bizonyítani.Az 1 ve zajl meghallgatsokon,csak az gysz ltal emelt vd alapjn ajánlanak bntetsi ttelt,aminek semmi kze a valsghoz.A csald anyagi helyzete nem engedi meg a trgyals finanszírozst,csak a meghallgatsokra tudunk magngyvdt megfizetni.8000 kilomterre a csaldtl,teljesen egyedl ISTENNEL.mg szerencse,hogy ISTEN ott van mellette.Remljk megbnteti azt is,aki oda juttatta.Ibolya

Is there any news yet about the inmates at Rikers? There is absolutely nothing I can find on the net. Like all of you Im appalled that these people were abandoned to their fate.

Im very worried because my boyfriend is in bcc n his located in south1 n this the time he still haven called us or his family and we dont know how 2 get answers we just pray the lord his fine n every inmate in there

YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

Schuan Reed I agree with you, people are so mean. This is the reason we have disasters karmas in all.

Its easy to make ignorant statements about things you have not the least bit of knowledge of. Do you have any idea how many people are in jail for crimes they did not commit & even still who are you to say who may live or die unbelievable no morals what so ever, selfish individuals. Those should be the ones that suffer fate they put upon others

To all you haters! There ARE innocent people in jail! Do your homework before you open your mouth and sound really stupid!!

Hopefully no damage was done on Rikers Island or injuries sustained by correction officers and inmates. But, this disregard for our brothers and sisters at Rikers points out the need to use every means necessary to end solitary confinement. Just like the slave transporter who wrote Amazing Grace during a storm transporting slaves to England from africa , we have seen the storm of dehumanization , and from this moment on our battle must be waged on all fronts. City Council Hearings , demonstrations at One Police Plaza to secure Community Crisis Intervention teams so when our emotionally disturbed family members 911 call is not responded to by untrained rookies from local precinct instead of by 40 hour trained compassionate CCIT units. Taking a page from the civil Rights struggle , a boycott during Christmas season in front of Macys would draw attention to the urgency of our cause. The public has not fully realized solitary confinement is legal torture but in the words of Amazing Grace , I was blind but now i see. I was lost but now I am found. [Allanfeinblum@aol.com](mailto:Allanfeinblum@aol.com) JAC Jail Action coalition / member

Correction, Android phone dang. we cant force a dunky to drink water, even when their thirsty If you dont understand this line ask.

IF WE HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE INMATES, IT IS OBVIOUS WE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT THE FAMILY. THE FAMILY ARE THE PEOPLE LIKE AND ME YOU THAT THE.MAYOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE MEDIA TOLD TO STAY HOME. IF YOU READ THE ARTICLE THROUGH CAREFULLY, YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN THAT A MOTHER SPOKE ABOUT HER SON BEING AT RIKERS WHEN IRENE HIT RECENTLY. WE SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY BY CALLING NY1. I WONT GO ANY FURTHER. OBVIOUSLY THERE IS SOMEONE THAT ALWAYS MISSED THE SIGN BECAUSE THEY DIDNT READ, OR LISTEN INTELLIGENTLY. BY VOICING OUR OPINION, AND NOT.HAVING FAMILY OR FRIENDS THERE I THINK WE SPOKE FOR THE FAMILY, WHICH MAKES BETTER. BASICALLY WE CANT MAKE A DUNKY DRINK WATER WATER THEIR THIRSTY, READ BETWEEN THE LINE

Its truly awful that we forget how much pain the families of inmates may be in. All they want is some acknowledgment on the safety of loved ones.fuckers!

I press send by accident, so if he Bloomberg were to say where would we place them. Ill say this Bloomberg figured out how 160z to be

the proper size to be standard

Bloomberg will copout of it due to the fact that Sandy didnt create a Sunami. His going to say I knew they would be safe and so on B.S. Bloomberg does have to answer that question it will not be ignored. He can voice his opinion on 16Oz. Drinks but ignoring human life. Just because he has pardon a few inmates two yrs ago, that were doing long time ex:like John Forte as long with others, now starting to think he did it just to look good, because now is the present 12,000 inmates were ignored. I dont want to hear we had no were to ouy them

This is messed up, some of these people possibly innocent, stuck on Rikers not knowing there fate. I was also concerned about the inmates on The Boat and Metropolitan Detention Center. Rikers might hold up against the storm but the Boat i doubt it could. Metro Detention Center, also being in a evac. area, should be evacuated but yeah not hearing anything about that either so doubt the mayor is evacuating it. This is a grave situation for these inmates, I am praying for them and their families in this time. Hoping God will spare there lives.

asshole Bloomberg didnt have a plan for Rikers during Irene and negated the vulnerability of Rikers then or now. Rikers houses juveniles and those who are non-violent offenders and those that for instance, not paying a traffic ticket and those who have not eve been convicted. Im in NM but sure would like to learn how i can help, QUICK.

Finally! Its about time these putrid prisoners get a good bath.

Ok, I also called NY1, I was told that Rikers Island is NOT an evacuation zone and they on an Island but at higher where they are not affected. Mhmm I was told also told is just like Manhattan some parts are evacuated. Mhmm Rikers Island is not the size of Manhattan, I have visited friends there before Please pray for the inmates..I dont see how water does not affect them

Guiding Principles On Internal Displacement place responsibility on NYC for an evacuation plan on Rikers Island. The United Nations protect inmates and hold government responsible for the safety of those inmates in the care of government. Also, i called NY1 about breaking news 212-691-6397 and they attempted to reach department of Corrections but no response. NY1 is aware of our situation. allanfeinblum@aol.com

in washington the fire alarms go off in drills and the inmates are removed. when a real fire starts, they are left and the officers leavemost of society believes they are expendable

How often can the ACLU make recommendations that go unheeded? Those people are way more patient than I am, thank goodness:  
<http://www.aclu.org/blog/criminal-law-reform-prisoners-rights/rikers-island-spared-irene-what-about-next-time>

The Metropolitan Detention Center in Sunset Park, Brooklyn (29th Street btwn 2nd and 3rd Avenues) is also in Evacuation Zone A. Havent heard anything about plans to evacuate that facility.

For anyone who is wondering why this is important, this 2008 article on prisoners during Hurricane Katrina is a good place to start:

[http://papers.ssm.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1300971](http://papers.ssm.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1300971)

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Lessons from Hurricane Katrina: Prison Emergency Preparedness as a Constitutional Imperative

Hurricane Katrina was one of the worst natural disasters ever to strike the United States, in terms of casualties, suffering, and financial cost. Often overlooked among Katrinas victims are the 8,000 inmates who were incarcerated at Orleans Parish Prison (OPP) when Katrina struck. Despite a mandatory evacuation of New Orleans, these men and women, some of whom had been held on charges as insignificant as public intoxication, remained in the jail as the hurricane hit, and endured days of rising, toxic waters, a lack of food and drinking water, and a complete breakdown of order within OPP. When the inmates were finally evacuated from OPP, they suffered further harm, waiting for days on a highway overpass before being placed in other correctional institutions, where prisoners withstood exposure to the late-summer Louisiana heat and beatings at the hands of guards and other inmates. Finally, even as the prison situation settled down, inmates from the New Orleans criminal justice system were marooned in correctional institutions throughout the state, as the judicial system in New Orleans ceased to function.

The resulting effects were both tragic and unconstitutional, as the suffering at OPP could have been prevented. This Article asserts that prison administrators have a constitutional duty to plan for emergencies, and argues that the failures of New Orleans officials to do so violated prisoners Sixth and Eighth Amendment rights, as well as internationally recognized human rights standards. With the wealth of training and planning materials available to prison officials and the knowledge of possible emergencies, it is unconscionable for prisons to have nonexistent or inadequate plans.

What can people do? Where can we call?

What about the boat house prison in the Bronx..what about these inmates and staff.I wouldnt be suprise if the Rikers Island, the Boat house have all on lockdown and leave with no announcement. If that were to.happen we will all know about it, we cant be all one track mind. Im just going to trust God for all these inmates to be safe

At a New York city Council Friday JAC testified concerning the lack of an evacuation plan for Rikers Island and the council members did not reply to my question. I am disturbed by some of the comments inferring if someone is accused of a crime and even if found guilty that person is no longer a member of the human race. Jesus christ urged our love for prisoners , the naked and the hungry. Unless reent status quota of exploitation , occupying of Bed Stuy , Brownsville and Crown heights , our religion teaches us we are all created by a Creator , not to be destroyed , exploited or trated inhumanely in the name of punishment for a committed crime. I am proud to be a member of RIPPD Rights for Imprisoned People with Psychiatric Disabilities and JAC Jail Action Coalition. Both groups have demonstrated in the streets of Queens , Chambers Street in Manhattan . we have worked with NYC Council members ..testified at

hearings .. Solitary must end for all prisoners . Solitary is torture and any reform is just putting off the day when all prisoners are free.  
allan feinblum [allanfeinblum@aol.com](mailto:allanfeinblum@aol.com)

Thank you for covering this important story. Does anyone know if there are safety procedures/evacuation plans in place for the Vernon C. Bain Prison Barge? This is another area of concern.

Some basic info about the prison barge:  
[http://gothamist.com/2012/09/20/did\\_you\\_know\\_about\\_this\\_floating\\_pr.php](http://gothamist.com/2012/09/20/did_you_know_about_this_floating_pr.php)

It really sadden me, to see this happening. Regardless what their crimes are, they do deserve the right to be evacuated. Although, I dont have family on the Island but I do have an X there, no matter what he did he doesnt deserve to be on lockdown along with the others; bloomberg concerns is only for the staff the staff is concern for their safety. We knew about the hurricane since Thursday that was enough time to move the inmates, to Queens house or else where. Maybe one these prisoners could save the world. Im so sad by this it brings me tears. Human being with authority are so mean, thats the reason we going down like this, please rember Sandy is nothing compare to whats going to happen. If they dont do anything about the inmates, lets keep them all inmates and staff safe, with God nothing is impossible, all may get hit, and Rikers gets ni drop of rain, I truely believe in God

Oh and transferring them to another more secure facility is not setting them free.

Have you forgotten that people without funds to make bail are held there awaiting trial?

Someone with too many unpaid parking tickets could end up there.

Most prisons have a majority of inmates serving time on drug related charges not murder or rape. Check the data.

This is a site designed to advocate for those held in solitary and therefore cannot ask themselves.

Those that are free can leave or move about.

Asking how someone in a cage might fair in this storm is not a slight on the free but a legitimate question.

The purported war on drugs has been a war on the poor. IN NJ, pre-trial people are held in isolation. There are far fewer rapists, murderers and thieves in prison than you think.

Saying Not to sound like a jerk isnt really an effective way to preface and justify a very twisted argument. Youre basically saying that anybody in jail or prison has no right to live. Maybe we should just kill the 2.4 million people locked up then with your logic

Furthermore, people are constantly proven innocent who have been locked up for years, even people on death row. If it truly is innocent people you are concerned about, I can guarantee that some of them are being housed on Rikers. Look at some statistics on economic class, geography, race and prison and tell me that anybody who is locked up is any more guilty than the rest of us. Wake up.

Were concerned because the people housed there have no voice. They are not looked at as human and therefore their safety is not important. Just look at this report of what happened during Katrina to people who were incarcerated  
<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/08/27/imprisoned-disaster-political-will-and-hurricane-katrina/>

I dont want to wait until after the fact to file reports and try to make amends. Action needed to have been planned 5 days ago.

Danielle, you should remember that most of the people incarcerated at Rikers (over 70%) have not been convicted of the crime that has resulted in their incarceration at Rikers. They are awaiting trial, because they are too poor to afford bail. Our country considers them innocent until proven guilty. However, I am of the opinion this is really irrelevant when dealing with peoples human rights, because I believe everyone deserves human rights.

Secondly, unlike many residence in New York, the people incarcerated at Rikers Island cannot evacuate if they choose to, but have to rely on the NYC Department of Correction (DOC) to make that decision. And why should this concern us? Well, the DOC told the public not to worry, because Rikers Island is safe from flooding, just like City Island. But City Island is in Zone A, which is a mandatory evacuation zone. So yeah, I think there is a valid concern for the over 12,000 lives of the people incarcerated at Rikers Island. Also, the Commissioner of DOC, Dora Schriro, lives on City Island, so I cannot fathom how DOC could make such a statement.

Not to sound like a jerk, but why ARE people getting upset about several thousand criminals not being released from prison? They had their chance to be civil members of society they wouldnt be in prison if they were innocent. I honestly cant believe that people are more worried about the criminals of the city and not concerned in the slightest about the residents.

Its not like a concrete juggernaut of a building is going to topple over any time soon. Theyre probably safer in their high-security establishment than anywhere else. I would be very uncomfortable with the idea of potentially allowing rapists, murderers, and thieves to escape in the chaos of an evacuation.

Science!!

[http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/f?p=gnispq:3:1128843052993791::NO::P3\\_FID:962524](http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/f?p=gnispq:3:1128843052993791::NO::P3_FID:962524)

A useful question is, what sort of disaster WOULD warrant an evacuation? Geographically, I think the mayor is right; Rikers Island is essentially a knob, and most of it, where the jails/prisons are, is high enough that flooding isnt going to be an issue. So tsunamis? earthquakes? Weve had them on the east coast, though they are rare. Seems like that is one narrow little bridge there. In any case, I hope we can be calm over Sandy; I think despite Bloomborgs cranky attitude, the prisoners are going to be OK.



I think Ortega is right to get these questions answered. If Katrina is an example of what our government means by being prepared. I hope we do not forget the past. Every man counts!!! I fully support Ortega in her endeavor to get the questions she proposed answered and commend her for being a voice to those who can not speak for themselves.

Here are the other charts:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/10/why-sandy-has-meteorologists-scared-in-4-images/264198/>

I was watching the weather channel when the major made his speech and the seasoned weathermen were shocked by his speech.

This last graphic I created from National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration data that has weather watchers worried. It shows the probability of a greater than six foot storm surge in and around New York City. Hurricane Irene, by comparison, caused a four foot surge.

[http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/mt/assets/science/assets\\_c/2012/10/probofstormsurge-thumb-615558-103328.jpg](http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/mt/assets/science/assets_c/2012/10/probofstormsurge-thumb-615558-103328.jpg)

Note that the highest probabilities are focused tightly around New York City, which also happens to be the most densely populated area in the country. Thats a very bad combination. Jeff Masters, author of the must-read storm blog Wunderground, laid out the general problem.

[According to last nights forecast], the destructive potential of the storm surge was exceptionally high: 5.7 on a scale of 0 to 6, he wrote. This is a higher destructive potential than any hurricane observed between 1969 2005, including Category 5 storms like Katrina, Rita, Wilma, Camille, and Andrew.

Specifically, New York Citys infrastructure may take an unprecedented hit. The subway narrowly escaped flooding during Irene, and Sandy (for all the reasons above) is expected to be worse. So

According to the latest storm surge forecast for NYC from NHC, Sandys storm surge is expected to be several feet higher than Irene's. If the peak surge arrives near Monday evenings high tide at 9 pm EDT, a portion of New York Citys subway system could flood, resulting in billions of dollars in damage, Masters concluded. I give a 50% chance that Sandys storm surge will end up flooding a portion of the New York City subway system.

Update 1:06pm: To get a taste of how forecasters are feeling, here is The Weather Channels senior meteorologist, Stu Ostro:

History is being written as an extreme weather event continues to unfold, one which will occupy a place in the annals of weather history as one of the most extraordinary to have affected the United States.

Thank you both for your always current and relevant information. Solitary Watch is a gift to advocates and activists who care and monitor isolation issues.

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**Solitary Watch News**