

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | March 23, 2014



The following roundup features noteworthy news, reports and opinions on solitary confinement from the past week that have not been covered in other Solitary Watch posts.

Jerome Murdough, a 56-year-old man arrested on trespassing, died last month on Rikers Island after his cell overheated to at least 100 degrees. Murdough was in isolation on the newly opened mental health units. His death was [first covered by AP](#).

In [his most recent piece](#), Center for Investigative Reporting journalist Cole Goins responded to reports of surging violence in NYCs jails by exploring an important question: Is solitary confinement contributing to rise in violence on Rikers Island?

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and the American Civil Liberties Union have jointly [submitted a plan](#) to the courts to fix ongoing problems at the states juvenile detention centers, part of an ongoing settlement of an ACLU lawsuit filed in 2012. The proposal would ban the use of solitary confinement for disciplinary reasons.

A [Texas State Senator has warned](#) Department of Criminal Justice officials that it must do more to curb the states use of administrative segregation or risk intervention from a federal judge when and if a civil rights suit is filed. There are more than 7,100 individuals in solitary confinement in Texas state prisons.

California State Senator Loni Hancock [introduced legislation](#) to reform the states use of solitary confinement. Among other things, the bill would prohibit the placement of people with mental illness in solitary confinement and require the Office of Inspector General to conduct regular reviews of all individuals serving indeterminate SHU terms.

In their latest piece, the Juvenile Justice Information Exchange [examine](#) the growing number of states moving away from juvenile solitary confinement.

Writing for VICE, Annie Waldman [explores](#) Americas Little Guantamos the two Communication Management Units (CMUs) currently operating out of federal prisons. About 70% of those placed in CMUs are Muslim. People incarcerated in CMUs face very strict limitations on their communication with the outside world, [so much so that the units have been called](#) an experiment in social isolation by the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Sarah Shourd, Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal three Americans who endured many months of solitary confinement in Iran after being captured hiking near the Iraq-Iran border have released a memoir detailing their experiences, A Sliver of Light. The team was interviewed by several outlets, including [The Guardian](#), [MSNBC](#) and [Democracy Now](#), and spoke out not only about their own experiences but the plight faced by the tens of thousands of individuals held in solitary confinement across the United States.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. Shes written for the New York Times, Wired, BuzzFeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her [@stahlidarity](#) and

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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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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