

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/03/01/national-and-international-events-challenging-use-of-solitary-confinement/>

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by [James Ridgeway and Jean Casella](#) | March 1, 2012

Following is information on two important upcoming events that examine and challenge the practice of solitary confinement, both in the United States and internationally.

The first will take place in New York on Thursday evening, and is sponsored by the Human Rights Committee of the New York City Bar Association:

SUPERMAX CONFINEMENT IN U.S. PRISONS:

A NECESSARY PRACTICE OR TORTURE?

March 1, 2012

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

The Association of the Bar
of the City of New York

42 West 44th Street

SPEAKERS:

Juan E. Mendez

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture

Martin Horn

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Michael Mushlin

Pace University Law School

Moderator: David Stoelting

Committee on International Human Rights

Sponsored by the Committee on International Human Rights, Stephen L. Kass, Chair

This program will examine whether the widespread use of extended solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, affecting tens of thousands of federal prisoners, is a necessary administrative measure or whether, despite the absence of physical abuse, supermax detention amounts to torture or other human rights violations and, if so, what changes should be made in current U.S. practices.

This program is free to members of the bar and the public. Advance registration is suggested, but not required, at <http://www.abcnny.org/>

The second event, the first of its kind on this subject, will be held next Tuesday at the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland:

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND ITS HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Tuesday, 6 March 2012

11.00 13.00

Room XXIV, Palais des Nations

Every day tens of thousands of prisoners and detainees are held in solitary confinement worldwide. Usually in isolation for at least 22 hours a day and denied all meaningful human contact, these prisoners and detainees are frequently held for months, years, and sometimes decades. They are held in conditions that the Special Rapporteur on Torture has found can amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and even torture. In a global study of the practice published last year at the General Assembly and in his statement to the 19th session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur called on all countries to ban solitary confinement except in very exceptional circumstances and for minimal time periods. This briefing will examine the detrimental impacts of solitary confinement, the research that finds it to be a human rights violation, and the disproportionate impact of its use on mentally disabled persons and youth. The briefing will also offer concrete recommendations for future action to increase protections and effective safeguards from abusive and prolonged solitary confinement.

Prof. Juan Mendez, Special Rapporteur on Torture

The global practice of solitary confinement

PANELISTS:

Amy Fetting, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

The practice of solitary confinement in the United States

Dr. Sharon Shalev, University of Oxford & International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS)

European practices of solitary confinement and its use during pre-trial detention

Dorottya Karsay, Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC)

Persons with disabilities in solitary confinement

Justice Renate Winter, Appeals Chamber of the Special Court of Sierra Leone

Juveniles in solitary confinement

Andrea Huber, Penal Reform International (PRI)

Solitary confinement of death row inmates/ lifers and the lack of international
safeguards against solitary confinement

Moderator: Jamil Dakwar, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

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

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good to see them take on this needed talk hope it teaches many the harm of solitary may there be light in the darkness of justice

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