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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Valerie Kiebala](#) | December 3, 2017

The *Connecticut Law Tribune* [reported](#) the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit to reverse the \$62,650 reparations originally awarded to Almighty Supreme Born Allah, a man from New Britain, Connecticut, for the violation of his constitutional rights and psychological trauma inflicted by solitary confinement. Allah was subjected to solitary confinement on two occasions, the second of which occurred while he was a pre-trial detainee at Northern Correctional Institution in Somers. The article notes that Allah spent 23 hours a day in isolation and was forced to shower in shackles wearing his boxers. Based on the due process clause of the 14th Amendment, the U.S. district court in Bridgeport had awarded Allah \$175 per day for 358 days in solitary confinement, but the U.S. Court of Appeals has now reversed this decision, based on qualified immunity for corrections officials.

The U.S. Justice Department recently released a report exposing conditions at the only womens prison in Alabama, Julia Tutwiler Prison, concluding that repeated abuse has occurred for at least the past 18 years. [According](#) to *Cosmopolitan*, the report explains that women face solitary confinement for reporting the abuses and sexual misconduct, which include daily sexual harassment, sex in exchange for basic needs, excessive use of force, and rape, which has produced at least one child. Clinical psychologist Larry F. Wood, who quit after two months of working at Tutwiler prison, recalled, I've worked in prisons for most of 30 years, and I've never seen anything like this.

The family of 35-year-old Janene Wallace, who committed suicide two years ago at the Delaware County prison in Pennsylvania, settled a lawsuit with the private prison company Community Education Centers (CEC) for \$7 million. The Wallace family's lawyer [recounted](#) to the *Delaware County Daily Times* Wallace's severe struggle with mental illness and subsequent mental deterioration after being placed in solitary confinement for 52 days. In addition to the staff's neglect of the policies and procedures in place for the safety of mentally ill individuals, the guard on duty reportedly told Wallace to go kill herself before leaving for lunch. Wallace was found an hour later, having hanged herself in her cell. The prison's report left out the facts of Wallace's solitary confinement and the testimonies of individuals who witnessed the guard's provocation.

The *Des Moines Register* [reported](#) that Disability Rights Iowa and Children's Rights, Inc. have filed a lawsuit against the state's Department of Human Services (DHS) administrators and the superintendent of Iowa State Training School for Boys in Eldora, calling for adequate mental health services and an end to the use of solitary confinement on juveniles in the facility. The lawsuit states that a 16-year-old boy at risk of suicide and diagnosed with mental health issues was subjected to 1,000 hours of solitary confinement, on at least 53 different occasions. The article highlights the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors' conclusion that solitary confinement and restraints can cause serious injury or death, re-traumatization of people who have a history of trauma, and loss of dignity and other psychological harm.

Computer Weekly [reported](#) that the legal team of Lauri Love, a 32-year-old British citizen accused of hacking into departments of the U.S. government, says that Love would face medieval conditions if extradited to a prison in the United States. Love's lawyer Edward Fitzgerald argued that Love's struggles with Asperger's syndrome, depression, and severe eczema present a high risk of suicide in the inhumane conditions at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC), a federal jail in Brooklyn. He presented testimony from an individual previously held at MDC detailing a damning report of the use of solitary confinement and revealing that there was only one psychiatrist for 2,461 people. Those on suicide watch, according to previously incarcerated Pedro Espada, wear a velcro bodysuit, and are given no mattress, no undergarments, and no pillow or blanket. Love is contesting a ruling from a British district judge last year that permitted his extradition.

The Leonard Lopate Show on public radio station WNYC published a [podcast](#) with award-winning psychiatrist, author, and professor emeritus of psychology Terry Kupers discussing the lack of mental health services in U.S. prisons, the psychological and physical effects of solitary confinement, and rehabilitative alternatives to the solitary confinement that 100,000 individuals currently endure in the United States. Kupers's book [Solitary: The Inside Story of Supermax Isolation and How We Can Abolish It](#) was published earlier this year.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) [reported](#) on a hearing that began this week regarding a lawsuit filed by SPLC and the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program three years ago against the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC). The suit challenges mental health services and staffing in ADOC prisons, which U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson called horrendously inadequate in a ruling in

June. The hearing is set to occur over the course of the upcoming months, and will cover the ADOCs plan to fix constitutional violations occurring in its prisons, address the widespread use of solitary confinement, and increase access to mental health care.

Valerie Kiebala was a contributing writer and editorial and project manager for Solitary Watch, and is now the media director of Straight Ahead, which is building a decarceration movement throughout Pennsylvania. Her work has also appeared in The Root, Truthout, the Chicago Reporter, and Shadowproof.

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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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