

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | March 13, 2016

A report written by a Los Angeles volunteer probation department monitor found deplorable conditions inside the city's Central Juvenile Hall, with conditions similar to a Third World country prison. According to the [LA Times](#), the report alleges that children were sent to solitary for reasons that violated departmental policy, including in one instance for sharing food.

A coalition of civil liberties groups and faith leaders have [sent a letter](#) to the Department of Justice, asking them to investigate the alleged overuse of solitary in Florida's prisons. ACLU's Florida director Howard Simon said that about one in eight prisoners in the state are being held in solitary confinement, where we know people are being beaten, gassed, sexually assaulted, and even scalded to death.

Advocates in North Carolina are worried there are [insufficient resources](#) being directed to solitary confinement reform in the state's prison system. The 2015-2017 budget for the establishment of more mental health treatment units has been halved, which arguably means fewer beds and inadequate therapeutic treatment for people who are currently in solitary, or might end up there.

The New Jersey Senate's Law and Public Safety committee [voted](#) 3-1 to approve a bill that would limit the use of solitary confinement in the state's prisons. I think we should talk about not only what is best for the inmates & but we also must protect those staff members who are inside the institutions, said a union representative for the state correctional officers.

A bill [being considered in Nebraska](#) would require juvenile detention centers to track and report their use of solitary confinement, along with other provisions intended to better protect the rights of juvenile offenders. The legislation has survived the first round of approval in the state's legislature.

[The Real News Network](#) interviewed two anti-solitary advocates, Bernadette Rabuy of the Prison Policy Initiative and Alan Mills of the Uptown Peoples Law Center, about what they think led to Obama's policy changes on solitary confinement.

[Salon](#) interviewed former prisoner and now-author Shaka Senghor, who spent four and a half years in solitary while he was beyond bars. Solitary confinement is by far one of the most barbaric and inhumane aspects of our society, he said.

The Bureau of Prisons [has agreed to pay \\$175,000](#) to the family of a man, Robert Knott, who committed suicide at ADX Florence after the BOP allegedly failed for decades to appropriately treat his mental illness. [The Marshall Projects](#) Andrew Cohen wrote about the significance of the settlement. The lawsuit that would have brought his case and his cause the national attention it deserves has ended with a quiet wire transfer to a bank.

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez again [urged](#) the United States to allow him to visit domestic maximum-security prisons and interview prisoners in private. My request to visit the United States of America has been pending for five years over the terms of reference in order to obtain access to all places of detention, he told the U.N. Human Rights Council.

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

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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I am not surprised by the conditions of L.A.s Central Juvenile Hall.

I wrote this about Central when SW first began this site.

Los Angeles Central Juvenile Hall was/is a dreary imposing structure with its once white stone-block walls now covered with smoggy soot, mildew and graffiti. One of its exterior walls faces the adjacent railroad tracks another towards the sprawling county hospital. This hospital was the only other structure of significance in an otherwise desolate area of rundown single-story industrial buildings.

Central as we simply called it back in the spring of 1962 was already 50 years old by the time I first arrived to its entry point at the ripe old age of ten. Central's grimy windows barred with rusting iron gave little away as we approached it early in the evening. The police car transporting me drove past the guard shack overlooking the drive-in entrance that was unmanned at night, then through the iron door and stopped a few feet from the entrance.

The officers got out of the car opened my door and without saying a word reached in and grabbed me under one of my arms that were still handcuffed behind my back.

Fifty four years have passed so I can only imagine that the condition of the structure has declined further.

The real surprise is the amount of money they claim it takes to house these kids.

Read more, including about one, of several stays, that I served in Solitary while I was housed there. Here:

<http://solitarywatch.com/in-solitary-at-las-juvenile-hall/>

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