

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/08/01/north-carolina-prisoners-launch-hunger-strike/>

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by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | August 1, 2012

On July 16th, inmates at Central Prison, Bertie Correctional Institution and Scotland Correctional Institution launched a hunger strike in protest of various prison conditions, including solitary confinement. North Carolina Department of Corrections currently holds over 7,000 inmates out of approximately 36,000 in Close Custody. Among these are inmates are those held in Maximum Control, Protective Custody, Disciplinary Segregation and Intensive Control. Maximum security units are described this way by the [DOC](#):

Inmates confined in a maximum security unit typically are in their cell 23 hours a day. During the other hour they may be allowed to shower and exercise in the cellblock or an exterior cage. All inmate movement is strictly controlled with the use of physical restraints and correctional officer escort.

Prison officials at Central Prison indicated on [July 28th](#) that only seven hunger strikers remained, but that the number fluctuated with inmates joining and stopping. The strikers are all Close Custody inmates and are held in their cell for 23 hours a day in isolation. As many as [100 inmates](#) were reported to have participated since the launch of the strike.

[Demands](#) of the strikers include:

Central Prison in Raleigh was the site of a strike by inmates in December 2011. The inmates were protesting conditions in their kitchen employment. The strike leaders, referred to as the Strong 8 were placed in solitary confinement for launching the work stoppage. According to one of [the strike leaders](#) placed in the Intensive Control unit, I-Con is an intensive form of segregation, typically 23 hours a day in a small solitary cell, with few if any resources available, constantly censored mail, and little recreational activity. Sentences on I-Con often last 6 months or longer.

Central Prison currently holds over 600 inmates in Close Custody. In March, an inmate with a history of self-harm was found [dead](#) in his solitary confinement cell. In North Carolina, self-harm can be punished by up to 30 days in [isolation](#).

According to [local media](#), it is the intention of the DOC to address the concerns of the inmates after the strike ends.

Sal Rodriguez was Solitary Watch's first and most prolific intern. Based in Los Angeles, he served as an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and the Press-Enterprise, and is now the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group.

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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cooperation.

hello my name is Cameron Peoples. Im a 8th grader at riverwood middle. We are doing a nc fair project and I picked Central Prison. I was wondering if you could send me a jump suit.

I know an inmate that survived 14 years in Colorados SuperMax, and before that, a few years at Marion. All of it Solitary. The one free hour a day that he had, he discussed suicide with another inmate. When its finally ruled as unconstitutional, how do you undo the damage? With it now being unconstitutional for children under 17 to get Life Without Parole for ANY crime, how do you give back a man of 60, his youth when convicted at the age of 13? Where does this end? This is destroying our economy and were an embarrassment among nations when we should be a shining example. Look at the familes of these inmates, who never committed any crime. Does their suffering count for nothing? I know my inmates family quite well and I know his history. In 26+ years of incarceration, never an altercation with any staff member or another inmate. One minor write-up. He never killed or hurt anyone but hes classified as high-max. He suffers from PTSD. Right now, hes in Coleman II in Florida and they keep throwing him in the SHU to break him down. You cant believe what they do to him in there. Hes refusing to take a cellmate because hes protecting his family and his sanity. Coleman allowed a security breach when they put someone else (a drug addict) in his cell against his will who then got my inmates visitation list with names, addresses and phone numbers of family members and friends. This inmate had already lost his mother to a former cellmate, a drug addict, who got out, tracked down his mother, and bludgeoned her to death with a claw hammer. This family has been through enough. Coleman keeps turning up the heat on him, hes determined to protect his family (and himself), and Coleman keeps making huge mistakes with who they attempt to put in as his cellmate. Colemans response? Oh, well, no big deal. The sad thing is, this is one story out of thousands out there, and Prisoner help organizations in the U.S. are swamped.

So, what kind of punishment did the inmate receive for killing himself? I wonder.

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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