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Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | October 25, 2015

[The Hartford Courant](#) examined the significant decrease in the use of solitary confinement at the Connecticut's maximum-security prison, Northern Correctional Institution from 244 people held in isolation in 2003 to 53 held in isolation in mid-October 2015. Hope Metcalf of Yale Law School said, From a numbers perspective, Connecticut is doing much better than it was. The current leadership [at the Department of Correction] understands that solitary should be a last resort and for the shortest period of time that is the biggest change.

[Gothamist](#) offered continue coverage of proposed rule changes at Rikers Island, which would allow the Department of Corrections to waive existing limitations on placement in solitary.

A 21-year old Minneapolis man facing terrorism conspiracy charges is in 23-hour solitary confinement and has been prevented from seeing his family, [reported the Star Tribune](#). If this continues, he will suffer mentally, said the mother of Guled Omar. This confinement is inhumane and the way they're treating him, it's something that's beyond punishment.

The [ACLU filed a lawsuit](#) alleging that people held in solitary confinement in Pennsylvania sometimes wait more than a year to receive court-ordered mental health treatment. Lead lawyer David Gersch said, There's no question that our clients are incompetent, need treatment and need it promptly. They shouldn't be in jail for months and years, much less in solitary confinement without treatment.

A [report](#) released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that in 2011-2012, 20% of people in state and federal prisons and 18% of those held in local jails spent some time in solitary confinement. The report's results were based on a survey of about 91,000 people held in prisons and jails across the country (reported by [the Guardian](#), [Newsweek](#) and others).

Seven individuals incarcerated in South Carolina [have received a combined total of nearly 20 years in solitary confinement](#) for making a music video which was later uploaded to WorldStar. It's hard to believe that South Carolina prison officials don't have better things to do than troll the internet looking for prison videos, said David Fathi of the ACLU's National Prison Project.

[Fusion](#) spoke to Shaka Senghor about what it's like to spend four and a half years in solitary confinement. I went four and a half years straight without physical contact, without a hug, without being able to touch my child. The first time I got a visit in solitary, I had to see my child while I was shackled up and handcuffed up, and then still have to see him through bulletproof glass. That does something to you on the most basic human level.

New York's Onondaga County [has announced](#) that all children will now be held at the Justice Center in downtown Syracuse, instead of the Jamesville Correctional Facility. While at Jamesville, many kids were held in 23-hour solitary confinement, and had to choose whether to exercise or shower for the single hour they were let out.

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

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by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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