

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2011/08/26/locked-up-and-left-behind-new-yorks-prisoners-and-hurricane-irene/>

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | August 26, 2011

We are not evacuating Rikers Island, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said in a [news conference](#) this afternoon. Bloomberg announced a host of extreme measures being taken by New York City in preparation for the arrival of Hurricane Irene, including a shutdown of the public transit system and the unprecedented mandatory evacuation of some 250,000 people from low-lying areas. But in response to a reporter's question, the mayor stated in no uncertain terms (and with more than a hint of annoyance) that one group of New Yorkers on vulnerable ground will be staying put.

New York City is surrounded by small islands and barrier beaches, and a glance at the city's [evacuation map](#) reveals all of them to be in Zone A (already under a mandatory evacuation order) or Zone B, that is, save one. Rikers Island, which lies in the waters between Queens and the Bronx, is not highlighted at all, meaning it is not to be evacuated under any circumstances.

According to the New York City Department of Corrections [own website](#), more than three-quarters of Rikers Island's 400 acres are built on landfill which is generally thought to be more vulnerable to natural disasters. Its ten jails have a capacity of close to 17,000 inmates, and normally house at least 12,000, including juveniles and large numbers of prisoners with mental illness not to mention pre-trial detainees who have yet to be convicted of any crime. There are also hundreds of corrections officers at work on the island.

We were not able to reach anyone at the NYC DOC for comment but the [New York Times City Room](#) blog reported: According to the city's Department of Correction, no hypothetical evacuation plan for the roughly 12,000 inmates that the facility may house on a given day even exists. Contingencies do exist for smaller-scale relocations from one facility to another.

For a warning of what can happen to prisoners in a hurricane we need only look back at Katrina, and the horrific conditions endured by inmates at Orleans Parish Prison in New Orleans. According to a [report produced by the ACLU](#):

[A] culture of neglect was evident in the days before Katrina, when the sheriff declared that the prisoners would remain where they belong, despite the mayor's decision to declare the city's first-ever mandatory evacuation. OPP even accepted prisoners, including juveniles as young as 10, from other facilities to ride out the storm.

As floodwaters rose in the OPP buildings, power was lost, and entire buildings were plunged into darkness. Deputies left their posts wholesale, leaving behind prisoners in locked cells, some standing in sewage-tainted water up to their chests.

Prisoners went days without food, water and ventilation, and deputies admit that they received no emergency training and were entirely unaware of any evacuation plan. Even some prison guards were left locked in at their posts to fend for themselves, unable to provide assistance to prisoners in need.

UPDATE (Saturday midnight): In his final news conference of the day, Mayor Bloomberg defended his decision not to evacuate Rikers Island, [stating](#): It is higher than the Zone A areas and its perfectly safe. Representatives of the mayor have made further statements to [New York Magazine](#) (see update at end) and the [Wall Street Journal](#), also specifying that no part of Rikers Island is in Zone A. Deputy Mayor Howard Wolfson [went on Twitter](#) to say the same thing. To our knowledge, the mayor's office still has not clarified what zone, if any, Rikers Island is in, and has not responded to questions regarding the lack of any evacuation plan for the jail.

UPDATE (Sunday 4 p.m.): The evacuation order for Zone A has ended, with the storm having considerably less impact on New York City than anticipated. The mayor's office has [issued further statements](#) about Rikers, confirming that it is not in evacuation Zone A and comparing it to Roosevelt Island and City Island, which also were not evacuated. Critics have noted, however, that these other islands are in Zones B and C, while Rikers Island, according to the evacuation map, is not in any evacuation zone at all. Advocates also remain concerned about the admitted lack of any evacuation plan for the city's island jail. The [Center for Constitutional Rights](#) issued a statement on the matter, and [CCR spokesperson Jen Nessel said](#): The maps I've seen all leave Rikers off the Zone scale, but even if it isn't in Zone A where the mandatory evacuations are taking place, the fact that the Department of Corrections admitted there wasn't even a hypothetical plan for 12,000 people who can't exactly evacuate themselves if the situation worsens is disturbing.

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

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Oh well dont do the crime if you cant do the time.

You have quite the interesting opinion. This is a fair statement until you realize how easy it is to end up in jail. A little bit of weed in your pocket? Were you driving 25mph over the speed limit? It is a lot easier to become a criminal in this country than you realize. You dont realize how shitty the conditions are until you become a criminal. But once you are a criminal, no one gives a fuck what you have to say about the topic.

Seems like we are not much different from the England of the 1600s. Need I say more???

Now why does everyone seem to think evacuation means letting people loose on the streets? Thats the most ridiculous idea Ive ever heard- all these zoo analogies and talk of rapists roaming New York. Cmon guys- if and hopefully when they build an evacuation plan it would be to transport the prisoners to other established holding centres. With 12,000 prisoners I can see why theyve had trouble figuring it out, but what kind of state allows a prison with such high capacity to be built without any contingency plans?

Ludicrous.

A NYC student activists has created a petition telling Mayor Bloomberg to create an emergency evacuation plan for Rikers Island. It can be signed here: <http://www.change.org/petitions/mayor-of-new-york-city-create-an-evacuation-plan-for-rikers-island>

ok i live in ny state and we lost power at my home why i at grammy now lol and i mean we up in the mountens like schary or how ever you spell it lol but we for two day where stuck at home with no power still out that i know of at my home and oh yes the water flooding kept us from going over roeds to get out anywhere ok we in the dam mountens and we got stuck still and your telling me this dam govment dumm anuff to let the poor inmates stay in rikers in low land when we in the mountens got massusly scewed by the storm i got one thing to say to the mayer or who ever made the call WTF are you thinken oh wate you wert thinking if you where you never would have left the poor inmate thare well i hope your hoe got hit hard to then ok no i dont home that but i hope you have to deel with something like they did thats so not cool to make them stay in a storm that your geting others out of even the keys tried to get as meny as they can of thare inmates out when new orleans got hit yes the one jial did not make it but they got as meny as they could get out out so your makeing the state look harles and dummer then it should be so ples nexst time a nuther one hit if it is so safe where the inmates where left how bout you join them for the nexst one may thare be light in the darknes of justice

The amount of clearly selfish, ignorant, judgmental, shallow, media-fed, close-minded responses here is very disturbing. Your blind and reckless lack of concern for other beings is sick. Now, I know starting with that wont get any of your attention without pre-judgement and negative reaction, and its not the best way to spark healing, but damn, its just really sad, and Im full of passion.

Look deeper than me, than tv, youll start to see, how everything connects, the usual suspects, they never change, because you never change, just sit back and estrange. Get up and find new things, theres so much more this life brings, yet you let your choices block you from love, its not from up above, its from in you, it is you, its everything, its everywhere. Hear this cipher and start to decipher how that man became a lifer, hes the same as you, but you never put on his shoe, did you? No, you didnt, you keep your love hidden, I wanna see it, start spittin, whatever in you, let it come out, lose the doubt, thats not what its about.

Its about love, not these rules or laws or the fit of a glove. If you dont connect to how were all the same, these things you hate will never change. But hate is fear and fear is a gun, and shoot, why cant you just let love come. Its already here, just draped in fear, pull it back, let it be clear.

With the overwhelming feeling of being again in solitary confinement due to the pending doom according to the mainstream media outlets, the sense of hopelessness stood around the corner knowing very well how New York Corrections operates, I've decided to search through my social networks for more information in an attempt to shield my three year old son from such reported doom and step son who is currently in Rikers Island.

Realizing I wasn't in solitary confinement and the emotions must be from the scars of so many years spent keep-locked and or in solitary confinement and maybe I can assist others. I've posted this question to reporters via twitter and am overjoyed you've listened in and responded accordingly so that the world can question practices within DOC.

As a member of Rights for Imprisoned People with Psychiatric Disabilities it hasn't been an easy journey righting a lot of wrong within the Dept. of Corrections, nor within the NYPD in our pursuit towards alternatives to incarceration.

But, your response along with so many others has opened a much needed dialogue, demonstrating the complete disregard towards other humans who come in contact with the Dept. of Corrections.

Keep Up the Great and Much needed Work!

Thank You All,
Carlos S.

How can they do that? Even if they are in jail, prisoners are still humans and the officers on duty shouldn't have gone through what they did when hurricane Katrina hit

The overwhelming majority of people that have committed crimes in this country, have never been accused of crimes, never been prosecuted, never been jailed, have been rewarded in various ways, and have never been considered criminals.

Fact: Wall Street's foundation was selling slaves in 1714 (white, but mainly black), and the United States was founded on slavery, racism, sexism, and class oppression. Most of the original inhabitants of this country were massacred, enslaved, had their lands stolen from them, and were placed into concentration camps called reservations. George Washington owned more slaves than anyone else after the Revolution, and was also the biggest landowner (stolen property). The Constitution was the product of a small group of privileged white males (55 were invited) that met in secret behind locked doors with armed guards, in the Spring of 1787 in Philadelphia. No women, poor whites, Indians, people of African ancestry were present.

White soldiers that fought in the Revolution were not allowed to vote in the first elections because they did not have property. About 1% of the female population was able to vote, but after 1807, women were not allowed to vote. This country was founded on horrible crimes that included: rape (that is the major reason for the varied complexions, whites were raping black women and Indian women throughout US history, and it has not ended). Lynchings were a popular pastime from the end of the Civil War up to the present day. On December 3, 2010, a 26 year old black male was lynched in Mississippi (research it on the internet. Many thousands were lynched in this country's racist history, and 99% of the lynchings were never punished. Up to about 1914, it was legal to kill Indians. The state of California was paying bounty hunters for killing them and bringing their scalps or heads to a payment center. After the Civil War, the US Army used many former black soldiers who fought in the war, to protect whites who were moving west to settle on land stolen from Indians. At the same time tens of thousands of blacks and many white allies, were being slaughtered in the Southern states. The Mexican War of 1846 to 1848, stole more than half of Northern Mexico, and now racists are calling Mexicans illegal immigrants. The US massacred hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in order to colonize and rob it. Hawaii had its government overthrown and taken over by US corporations. Over five million South East Asians were murdered by the US from during the war against Vietnamese independence. Here are a few books for those that desire an education:

A People's History of the US, by Howard Zinn, The Robber Barons by M. Josephson, White Cargo (about white slavery in America) by D. Jordan and M. Walsh, Slavery by Another Name by D. Blackmun, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee by Dee Brown.

This is a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. The real criminals are the tiny minority that own and control the wealth, land, corporations, their government, and their political parties. On the internet, check out: Information Clearing House, Truth Out, Smedley Butler, Democracy Now, and Common Dreams.org. Those are a few places where those that desire it can begin to get a real education. Also, enter: <http://vimeo.com/18611069>, and see me in 1968 on the William Buckley Show when I was a candidate for Vice-President. I no longer belong to that organization, but am still very active against any and all forms of oppression and discrimination nationally and internationally, as I approach my 77th birthday in October. Also, I served 3 days on Rikers in 1959, for traffic tickets until I could pay them. I worked for 59 years at many and varied occupations: public school teacher, taxi driver, real estate agent, porter, educational sales, and a tutor, I retired last year.

Deb wa, don't be so quick to judge, you never know what could happen to you or someone you know or love. Don't Judge people until you know the facts

Paul, yes there are detainees there, but there are some who have been sentenced up to a year. Over a year they go upstate

Dave,

Rikers Island is for people awaiting trial. They are innocent until proven guilty (or plead guilty) in a court of law.

The amount of ignorance surrounding this topic is disturbing.

All you bleeding hearts need to pay attention to the facts. RIKERS ISLAND WAS NOT AT RISK FROM HURRICANE IRENE.

Any attempt to compare to Katrina is disingenuous at best. Get a grip, people. This isn't some great human travesty. THEY WEREN'T AT RISK.

THIS IS FUCKEDDDDD UPPPPPP CAN YA HEAR US????

Jail is suppose to be a punishment, adding a little natural disaster scenario should be an additional incentive to be a honorable law abiding citizen. Quite frankly prisoners are treated with a high quality of care and get free medical coverage every other day of their sentence. How many Americans can say that they are being housed, hospitalized and fed for the entire year without charge? So if the defenders of the constitution out there, god bless them, wish to make jail even more appealing to the impoverished by touting that they

need an evacuation plan. Be wary of the irony that makes imprisonment as a punishment for a person struggling to, oh let's say, get a necessary operation, or a crown.

Jesus, this IS an over-reaction. It'd take 10-times the manpower and probably 100 times the cost to move a prisoner rather than an ordinary citizen. Criminals choose to give up their rights the moment they choose to do the crime. Some would say they shouldn't be part of the line at all but if they're on it, they're at the end!

OH MY GOD A HUGE STORM IS COMING LET'S TRANSPORT ALL THESE PRISONERS SOMEWHERE ELSE AT A HUGE EXPENSE/RISK Typical overreaction by the media. New Orleans= below sea level Cat 3 possibly 4, New York= Above/at sea level and Cat 1 possibly 2 not the same at all. Also hurricanes move very slowly and if it had been upgraded there was plenty of time to evacuate the prisoners at a later time.

You bet your ass if the mayor gets caught with drugs or having an affair he will be the first one begging forgiveness like all the others, yet I hear that some people in Rikers are not even convicted or haven't had a trial yet how quick he is to JUDGE!

Have any of you ever witnessed treatment of prisoners in any other country? Prisoners here are living in a lap of luxury. If you just want even ONE good example, watch the movie MIDNIGHT EXPRESS (based on TRUE STORY) if you want to know how people are treated in the rest of the world. Maybe people shouldn't break the law, and they wouldn't end up in Rikers Island anyway. Those politicians probably wish that place would go down with Irene. Sure it would be a tragedy and folks would be in an uproar for a little while, but it would give jobs to rebuild it and would alleviate a large drain on the economy of the state. Prisoners are the only citizens of the US that get 100% medical care at no cost, not even to mention food, housing, etc. Well no cost to THEMSELVES. a huge cost to tax payers.

I doubt if any of you will actually take action about this matter.

Loose some, leave some in a time of immediate danger you want to SORT people?

They supposedly ok. I spoke with my close person there, who is cleared of charges and is waiting for almost a month to process to get out of there. The all jails but one where my dear close one is got some way flooded but not seriously.

yes they r ok. spoke to my loved on today. God was with them

Does anyone know what happened? Are they ok?

I don't even know what to say to this. Completely insane, yet this is the norm. I'm shining the Bat signal, and calling Ghostbusters, cause we don't need you in any form. You will fall hard from your penthouse pedestal, and probably find a bullet on the way down, cause these people (yes, they are people, my brothers and sisters) are not okay with your deeds and your bullshit crown. Then your soul will go through many a millennia of intense love that burns your broken being, until you've learned, until you're seeing. But I guess you're right, that guy who was growing plants and sharing and healing only needs a four walls, a floor, and a ceiling.

How many times has NY thought they had everything under control. When they suddenly found themselves unprepared. Evacuation is not any easy thing to be done and not the first plan of action. However there may come that time. There has to be a plan.

The inmates are human beings. They are there to be punished for what they have done wrong. After doing so they are free to move on and hopefully become decent citizens.

However while incarcerated the city is responsible for their safety.

So many people think it's best if we leave the prisoners behind, and let them die. After reading some of these comments it's become obvious that some of these commentators are animals themselves. I know a family that has a 15 year old son on Rikers. He's awaiting trial after being caught trying to steal a set of hub caps off a car that was on a dealer's lot. So you people that said let them die have shown us you're closer to being an animal than many of the prisoners that were left behind. You're guilty of a crime much worse than those committed by many of those prisoners. I guess if your house gets flooded we shouldn't send any one to your aid

Thank you David, hurricane or no hurricane, the inmates of the island are not properly in my opinion. I myself as a visitor am not treated properly so can you imagine how the inmates are treated behind closed doors.

I would ask one question to all those who said things like let 'em rot or they deserve it: if you feel that way, do you advocate that all those or any other prisoners at any level should be killed right now?

We have a system to treat those convicted fairly and appropriately. Natural disasters should not have any negative effect on that system.

Some of these comments here are barbaric and disgusting!

Apparently a lot of people don't understand what a prison sentence really is. It's a loss of liberty, that's all. If convicted of a crime, you lose the right to go where you want for a set period of time. That time does not include being tortured, frozen, starved, drowned, ignored, denied medical attention, denied shelter, etc. These are the laws and the system that our country has created. If you have a problem with the fact that our penal system isn't supposed to be CRUEL to our incarcerated, then you will have to go about changing the laws on the books and our entire prison system, (which at its best is way overcrowded). Better start writing your congressperson about how criminals don't deserve any protections. Maybe they will just let them out then.

I bet Mayor Bloomberg's response would have been different if Dominique Strauss-Kahn (DSK) was still imprisoned at Rikers Island.

@Dexter Morgan Some monsters don't deserve to live.

You mean like people who can't make bail? Those sorts of monsters? Why do we even bother with trials when there are people like you

who will decide on the guilt or innocence of arrestees?

Sorry 1,000, not 100,000

Hey, its like Jim Carreys line to the repeat offender in Liar Liar: STOP BREAKING THE LAW, ASSHOLE!!!

@Leno How is it possible to safely and securely evacuate this many people without putting corrections officers that would have to transport them or the public in general in harms way?

So the state of NC can move a 100,000 prisoners in preparation for a disaster, but for NYC that sort of thing presents an insurmountable logistics problem? BS.

@Mark P. Kessinger Wow, thank God the only possible reason for ever needing to evacuate a jail is a hurricane, huh? Good thing nothing bad ever happens on a grand scale in NYC

You need to do your own homework. The outrageous thing here is not so much that Rikers wasnt evacuated, but that it CANNOT be evacuated because the authorities havent bothered to come up with a plan any plan to evacuate prisoners for any reason whatsoever terrorist attack, some other natural disaster, nothing.

The zones A, B, & C are flood zones on designated FEMA maps Also there is a V (velocity zones) which were not described in the article. The A, B, & C zones are designated based the the elevation of the site above the expected flood levels based upon a 100 year and 500 year flood levels. These levels are calculated based upon real data.

In the case of Rikers Island, it is not in either an A, B, or C flood zone and therefore was not in danger of being flooded. Therefore there was no chance that the facility would be flooded by this hurricane as its elevation was well above the anticipated flood level and the possible storm surge from the hurricane.

The other islands in the New York area that are in the low lying areas (Flood zone A) which was at the level of the anticipated flood level and storm surge were evacuated. To evacuate all areas including those which were not anticipated to be flooded would be a logistical impossibility.

The Mayor did the responsible thing and only evacuated those people in danger and thus avoided unnecessary inconvenience for other folks not in danger. The people on Rikers Island were not in danger and were inside of structures that were more than adequate to survive a direct hit by the hurricane.

Title: Evacuation plan needed

The city has no evacuation plan for Rikers Island, despite its low elevation and its nearly 13,000 prisoners. Please do not let these individuals, or the ones at the nearby floating Vernon C. Bain Correction Center, suffer.

They say you can judge a society by how it treats its prisoners, and we fail as a society. Anyone who thinks that we should just let them all die is a childish, uneducated, unsympathetic, angry person. Im not surprised, but am sickened by some of the comments from people here. Ethics and morality are on their deathbeds.

The lack of a plan isnt disturbing. Its pretty horrifying. Heads should roll, metaphorically speaking. This ought to end somebodys career.

There are human tragedies and inhuman tragedies.

The treatment of Rikers Island inmates falls in the inhuman category.

A city the size of New York creates its own unique problems, like the need to have a facility to house 12,000 people either charged with or convicted of crimes, many of which are violent offenders. How is it possible to safely and securely evacuate this many people without putting corrections officers that would have to transport them or the public in general in harms way? And where do you put this many detainees while the storm passes? Yes many are awaiting trial and havent been convicted yet but they have still been arrested for a crime. I see a lot of people with sympathy but no one seems to have a solution about what to do and how to safely do it I wouldnt want to have to be the one to evacuate the worst of the people there, the ones facing the possibility of losing the rest of their life to a prison cell and may feel they have nothing to lose by taking advantage of the situation, or worse yet a bunch of them deciding that this is a chance to make their break together. If anyone thinks that all these people would be thankful for an evacuation and not create a problem youre thinking is misguided. Yes there may be some, but not those who feel they have nothing to lose. Im just thankful that this responsibility doesnt rest on my shoulders, its a damned if you do damned if you dont scenario I guess the city should have considered a possible evacuation scenario of Rikers before now.

God forbid you are ever accused of something you didnt do and are awaiting trial only to be found as guilty as so many of the replies have found these peopleI sure dont want to be in the room when judgement day comes for them. People, this is the United States of America, not Afghanistan! We believe innocent until proven guilty. Are you also missing the part where there are juveniles and mentally ill persons there? Clearly they need to be evacuated to a safe and secure alternativenot left to die or starve! And its no wonder there is so much violence in our societyas this kind of hate only begets more hate! Wake up and think! This is no only inhumane, it is not wiseremember people, what goes round comes roundin both directions!

Well, the storm is over. How are the prisoners. Alive? Then shaddup, you whining bunch of ninnies.

Love how so many folks use the old adage. well, they deserve to drown or prisoners get wonderful healthcare, vision.etc. What The *** ever! Listen tards, been there done that for years. Learned my lesson, and returned to your Utopian society and to this day wander amongst you. Many a rotten apple in the Prison systems, but also just as many folks who screwed up and hope to live a better life someday. Careful how you pass judgement. Dont be so quick to point out the splinter in anothers eyes, while u have a log in your own.

I am always amazed at peoples self righteousness. Micah-justice is served? Are you the jude jury and executioner? Youre ignorant as hell.

What give us as masses the right to take away someones rights? There are people on that island, detained not convicted of a crime, guards, as well as people that work there and have led good lives.

What if you had made the choice to be a guard or social worker? Fighting for the greater good and we decided to leave YOU to the throws of a storm. Some people are ridiculous!

This is not right. and there no pretending it is. We are not upholding our constitution nor treating people in a humane way. Makes me sick.

And its unfortunate people of such little substance worm their way into positions of power.

I honestly think the US would be better off if Wall Street and Congress were ran by the inmates of Rikers Island. Im not even joking.

I still cannot believe that there is no evacuation plan for Rikers Island inmates. Being a former inmate and being incarcerated while 9/11 hit i know the fear that comes upon a human being lock up. But thats just it, once someone is incarcerated they are no longer looked upon as a human being, as someones mother, father, brother or child not to mention that in the female jail on Rikers there is a nursery with infants that live with their mothers. This is not the first disaster to hit and im sure it will not be the last with the way things are happening my question is what happens next time?

Im no law & order type, nor is Mayor Bloomberg my favorite politician. And if there were any substance to what is being alleged here, I would be the first to be outraged by it. But it is sensationalist bullshit. Rikers Island has an average elevation of 26 feet (or about 8 meters) above sea level. (Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/f?p=gnispq:3:2928471596165466::NO::P3_FID:962524). As such, it is perfectly appropriate that it is not included in evacuation Zone A. In fact, there are plenty of residential neighborhoods that sit at a lower elevation and also border a waterway in NYC that have not been evacuated (Long Island City, to name but one).

In addition, the complex has many buildings that are at least 10 stories tall. The projected storm surge is 4 to 8, and thus is not projected to present any significant risk to the Rikers prisoners.

Here is a topographical map as well: <http://www.trails.com/topo.aspx?lat=40.79065&lon=-73.88096&s=50&size=s&style=drgrs>

Its easy to fall for this kind of thing, but it pays to do your own homework.

What right does Bloomberg have making this decision on their lives? What I hear about him these days.. he is not a person I would want to be running the NYS anyway.. I do hope they boot him out very soon..

As a Christian, God does not kill. This is a test on humanity. How we react to this situation shows God who is still faithful to Him. God forgives and knows we can save the prisoners. Justice should prevail without the use of manslaughter. God help us be better beings with your love.

Does anybody know of an online petition to an relevant official to denounce this tryannical risk to human life?

I wonder if the Mayor had a relative or close friend pending trial at Rikers would he react differently?

Some monsters dont deserve to live.

@Left Behind Victim of Murder

Get your facts straight! Rikers is a jail NOT a prison.do you even know the difference. The vast MAJORITY of people on Rikers have not been convicted of any crime. They are awaiting due process trial, that ishave you heard of that, you ignoramus! Incarceration is the punishment our society has chosen for people accused of crimesNOT torture, not starvation, not death by drowning.all of you vindictive commenters need to move somewhere else where the government authorizes and carries out cruel and unusual punishmentthe people on Rikers are being punished by being on Rikersits called the 8th amendment to the US constitutionor are you sadists only interested in the Constitution when it protects you.

I am ashamed that you exist in my socieity.

Why do officials require the public to evacuate during a storm, especially in a place like NY? A majority of people are renters and have no control over their property, whether it is boarded, and secure. People who stay behind and require emergency assistance, put an unnecessary drain on an already taxed response system. And, a lot of people dont always know what is best for their own safety, particularly I a region that only sees a hurricane once in 25 years.

None of these things are a factor at Rikers. It is a facility that is most likely to weather the storm without incident. Medical and emergency services are readily available within the facility itself. And the safety of inmates and building are within the control of the State already.

It isnt an inhumane decision, it is a prudent one.

While I agree with most of you let them rot I do not want the Officers there to suffer the same fate. We have enough issues with the public not realizing what we do and how hard we work in the system they only see the bad things that happen and are blown out of proportion most occasions. BUT maybe someone should get a hold of the slosh zone map that was created after the last hurricane and how much of Rikers Island would really be under water. Yes the inmates are inmates but we are charged with saving their lives. The preservation of life is first and foremost in the department heads eyes..

Just because you have not been caught, I bet everyone commenting here is GUILTY of some crime or another and yet you talk so

negatively about these prisoners. I tell you this. I would take 10 prisoners in my home, before taking you people that say die scumbags. At least I know what their crime is. Yours is that YOU are the one that should be treated like the animal you sound like.

I wonder if the victims of these criminals (you know, the ones that have been assaulted, or robbed or raped) or the families of those killed by some of these men in prison would see it that way? If these men wanted their rights protected, maybe they shouldn't have done something to land them in prison, don't you think?

Because he knows not what it is to be human to have faults and know what it is like to spend a night behind bars if he was next to me I would pry his *&^\$ eyes out.

Let's be realistic for a moment. Are you willing to put some up in your living rooms? Where were they supposed to put them? Is there a spare prison somewhere? How about a couple thousand hotels? Or I know, a couple thousand high school gyms, and several thousand extra guards who should be home with family? The prisons and jails are overcrowded. This isn't a humanity issue in any sense. It's a matter of logistics, staffing, guard safety, your safety.

meh, nothing to see here. Just media rats trying to dig some panic from a story, followed by masses of sheeple falling for it.

Which people are the most mistrustful? Those who are dishonest, cunning and wicked. They can't believe there are honest, sincere and good people. They judge others by their own values, and that is why they are always suspicious. As for those who are noble and unselfish, it is difficult for them to see wickedness, betrayal and treachery, for they too see others through the prism of their own qualities.

Human beings can only see through their own eyes, and they fashion what they see with their own thoughts, feelings, desires and tendencies. When you meet people who talk only of others' faults, know that on the whole they are telling you about themselves, for, if they were noble, kind, honest and, above all, loving, they would find all these good qualities in others, too.

Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov

Would've been nice if the question the reporter asked had been stated in the article. Also the headline of the article suggests the prisoners are there alone, locked up. So did the guards leave or what? Badly written article. Looking at the picture it looks like sea level to me and I don't think being locked up in a cell that could flood with a human being in there that could drown is a brilliant idea!!!

My son is currently incarcerated and the majority of the young men where he is had committed small offenses that through some miracle of science or creative interpretation had their crimes upgraded into felonies. Seeing what goes on in the system I realize that we have a serious problem, Houston. While our young men in lower income brackets get felonies in trumped up legal theatre wall street criminals have given themselves bigger and bigger bonuses. No one has even looked their way. Let's stop pretending that there isn't something incredibly wrong.

Someone said what gives him the right to do this I will tell you what gives him the right. The American people who do NOTHING when the people in charge screw us. It has been happening, especially 2010, with the republican assault on Americans. They get away with it because we allow it. We are fat, lazy, and sit in front of the TV, then we wonder where our rights went. If we continue to do nothing, as we probably will, our country is gone. We think we are so special but look at all the other countries that have stood up for themselves, as we have done nothing. America is almost over. The corporations run it all and we allow it. So when we wonder how it happened, we need to look into the mirror. When the kids and grandkids ask what we did to protect them, we can say Well, I clicked a lot of like buttons

We get the country we deserve, sadly our kids will be so controlled it will be that much harder to revive America. We can never say we will do anything to help our kids. Most won't get off the couch to help them.

Is Bloomberg at the cracking point where he can't deal with the situation and can't take any more stress? His job is to look after the needs of everyone in the City of New York. Not having a plan for Rikers Island is a poor example of city management. He is NOT DOING HIS DUTY! Yes, he's human and yes, he can be in over his head; but there is no excuse for leaving people in harm's way. No one was sentenced to that.

uh, isn't EVACUATING PRISONERS different than just turning them loose? And with the odds of being in the legal system at some future point in your life, I'd think twice about condemning anyone. You could be next. The legal system is BROKEN.

I just think if you're going to cry save the inmates it's inhumane to not save the inmates why can't you just say save the people of Rikers Island??? I don't want to see any of the humans in Rikers parish in this hurricane the officers, the children or the inmates. I think it's inhumane to not show support for all that is stuck on that island I want them all to be safe no one.. officer child or inmate should be left in this situation.. my heart goes out to the families that have loved ones on that island and I hope that they all are safe, and the hurricane doesn't hit too bad.

Awww! Look at all the whiney even baby rapers have rights Liberals on here! No wonder this country is going to hell in a hurry. They are PRISONERS people! They are there for a REASON! If you don't want to be stuck in this situation, don't commit crimes! I say good for Bloomberg!

To Mr Rich white kid. You said you were glad you were not a poor black kid who could not afford bail. That's a terrible thing to say. My son is there. Guess what, He's a poor White Kid who can't afford bail.

a hard lesson when something really goes wrong

The alternative would be to evacuate the prisoners from Rikers Island. However, this is a dangerous plan to execute. Realistically, where are they to be relocated that would keep them under control, and the general population safe? The possibility of one or more of the prisoners escaping during the mayhem is a real cause for alarm. Is it worth the risk?

Sara JB , Yes there are mentally challenged inmates , They should not be in there. I've seen it and it's sad.

wow, the posts also nclude saftey for the COs, and its anoy all about evacuation. its SAFTEY and not being IGNORED

To Dee, children dont always listen no matter how hard you try . You cant blame the parents all the time

Justice is served.

There is always a slew of people waiting in line to criticize those who imprison criminals, but rarely someone who will stand up for the victims rights. There are those of you who will argue that prisoners are treated unfairly, while your tax money is being used to give these men/women cable television, internet access, three meals a day, and exercise facilities. We afford these CRIMINALS more than many of our own, hard-working citizens are even able to earn. Is that right?

Inmates cant lose their home, their job, their food, etc. No, instead, they are able to sit at a fixed means, healthy and well, while the majority of OUR OWN PEOPLE among which are the victims of the crimes for which the prisoners are serving sentences continue to suffer through economic roller coasters and politicians empty promises, keeping us forever at bay from the peace of mind that our own children will be fed THEIR 3 meals a day. Is THAT just?

Recently, another post stated that this instance demonstrates the mentality of the people who think it necessary to imprison a human being at all. My guess is that this person has never witnessed or been the victim of a serious crime, and the same of his/her friends or loved ones. Is it more logical, then, to allow murderers to roam free; free of consequence, inhibition, and the fear of capture? Is it more practical to allow one man to rot in prison (under rather plush conditions in many cases) than for many victims to suffer at his hands? Is it righteous to allow thieves to plunder what they will?

This is the sort of far leftist drivel that makes me sick. You have an appetite for defending convicted (yes, I understand some of these have yet to be, officially) criminals, but not the welfare of innocent children. Youll stand up and fight for the assailants rights, but not the victims. When will you see that the laws we have in place, regarding crime, are well-known and long-standing? When a person commits a crime, they are FORFEITING their rights to live among free people. Depending on the crime, they are forfeiting their life. Its not my belief that any man has the right to take another mans life, but Ill be the first to put my finger on the trigger for the sake of the greater peace. There IS such a thing as the lesser of two evils. Is it worse to kill one man or idly watch 5 die at his hand?

Perhaps Im wrong. Maybe Im being too brazen and old-fashioned. I should show them more compassion In fact, now that I think of it perhaps the lesser of two evils IS to give inmates more rights and freedom, yadda yadda. Heres my proposal:

To everyone who feels inmates are treated unfairly, and that imprisonment is barbaric and wrong: Instead of locking criminals away, where they cant hurt innocent people anymore, YOU should host them in your homes! YES! Splendid! YOU will feed them. YOU will clothe them. YOU will provide them with shelter. YOU will decide their punishments when they do wrong, and likewise, YOU will be held accountable for their actions when you cannot control them. Host a criminal. Let the world know how it works out. Any takers? :-)

What about the boat if that thing gets loose and floats away then theyd have a hell of a problem

I have to say it is interesting to unmask the public like this. I am not surprised by those in support of the inmates nor those that are willing to let them die.

It doesnt matter if the institution is in an evacuation zone or not to accomplish this.

I as an ex-inmate I have read truth on both sides of this issue here but neither has the whole truth.

There are evil people held there that could do the public harm precisely because of the let them die mentality and I speak about both the guards and the inmates. Why should an escaped con care about those that react to their life and death issues so self-righteously and negatively? Would you?

On the other hand to not recognize that some of these inmates are damaged possibly beyond repair is to be delusional.

That said as I sat those long hours in that cell it was the one most reoccurring fear I had, as a California inmate I feared being buried in the rubble of an earthquake with no one interested in saving me but hey drowning is not my cup of tea either.

The point is when the system takes away your liberty they are responsible for your safety.

Oh and for you law and order crowd. My offenses for my incarceration were such things as run away, and disturbing the peace. I left the system served 6 years in the military at the end of Vietnam, finished college using the G.I.Bill and raised four healthy well adjusted children and put them all though college.

People make mistakes and given a chance many reform themselves. The system did nothing for me.

Just thought at least one ex-inmate should speak out.

Really this is a hard call~yet I agree for the fact that if one (MANY WOULD HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE COMPASSION ~yet they showed no compassion in their crimes)chose to escape that would put others in danger~maybe some not yet convicted could have been moved~it is a difficult call but there are many levels to consider~would you want an escape breaking into your space threatening your family and fiends `YEA..THATS HOW IT WORKS..JUST SAYING

Theyre safe as long as there isnt a fire of some sort. If theres a fire not one of the guards would try to get the prisoners out or even think about getting them out. It would be every man with keys for himself. Scary if youre in there. Flooding they can handle and I doubt the winds will blow down the walls of the prison. Its built to withstand a good pounding.

PEOPLE!!!!!!There is a wealth of information right at your fingertips; please access actual FACTS before you comment. Rikers does

house pretrial inmates as well as inmates sentenced up to 3 YEARS. Thats why it is called a correctional facility. All the hyperbole about the severity of the storm and the crimes of the inmates is not necessary. Ignorance is bliss, Im sure. Those of you who have convinced yourselves of these ominous people lurking and waiting to rob, rape, and murder you, please knock it off. There but for the grace of God go I. NOBODY is innocent. Im sure more than a few of you have not reported income on your taxes before. Have had a couple glasses of wine and still felt ok to drive. Have bought a used car and lowered the price on the bill of sale to avoid high DMV taxes. Thats called Presenting a false document for filing and is a class E felony! Had your luck been bad enough, you might be right out there with these same people you are looking down your righteous noses at. Let he among you who is without sin cast the first stone. All this uninformed apathy makes people look stupid as individuals and as a whole. Get it together please and stop sensationalizing with words like pedophiles and rapists and murderers. Some of those people are JUST LIKE YOU.

The right thing to do would be to move them to another facility, but when the shit hits the fan thats when decision making gets tough, do they let the prisoners ruff it on their own and risk them committing more crimes? or leave them locked up to their death

Rikers Island is also a Jail and not a Prison which means most of the people their are not sentenced. The constitution states they are innocent until proven guilty but reality states they are not.

HEY GUESS WHAT! Maybe if any ONE of those prisoners were there because they hurt you OR your family OR your business, you would be thinking differently! If those people want to be treated fairly, maybe they should have thought about that before they landed their PATHETIC existence in prison! Im glad they didnt evacuate, it keeps the people who work there from being exposed to the chaos presented by moving 17,000 potentially dangerous people. This is really hilarious to me. My mother is a correctional officer. If any of you people knew what those inmates put correctional officers through, ha! You would leave them right where they are as well! Id like to see any of you doing the work it takes to move people like armed robbers, murders, and child molesters. ALSO, I cant BELIEVE why anyone would be outraged at what happened in Katrina! If I were an officer, I sure as hell wouldnt be risking my life to save anyone! Makes total sense, who knows what inmates would do to an officer that let them out in that chaos! If anyone remembers correctly, people off the street were committing crime during the storm, what makes you think inmates that got out of there wouldnt be! Ridiculous!!!

@ Lisa

All do respectWhat is your 16 year old child doing in Rikers Island (THE HELL HOLE) in the first place? Your concern seem to be a misplaced and too little too late. Im just saying.

the prison is probably safer than most dwellings on the mainland

While I agree it isnt sound to leave these people on the island in unsafe conditions, rikers island isnt in a perilous situation. Where it is located is not being evacuated. None of the areas surrounding it or near it are. The south shore of Queens, Brooklyn and Long Island are in danger and have been cleared out. Rikers Island is off the North shore of Queens, closely surrounded by land and has a high elevation. There may be some flooding, but not significant in order to require evacuation. It has no zone, there are 3: A,B, and C. If you dont have a zone it means you are at a high enough elevation to not warrant one.

If people did not act like animals then they would not be treated like this. This is just another effect of getting yourself caught in the system when you do wrong.

While I sympathize with the human rights aspects of this issue the fact is that evacuating 12k plus potentially dangerous men in a manner which guarantees both their safety and the safety of the general public is not possible. Where do you take them? How do you get them there? How do you protect them from one another in the process? The best bet is to ship in extra food, water and generators and ride out the storm in situ.

I love ya Michael, but we cant evacuate these prisoners! If we do the Joker will put bombs on both the boats and make them decide whether to blow each other up!

It would be unthinkable to leave dogs in kennels! Since when do we treat people who have made errors in judgement less humane than we treat animals? Since when do we leave employees to fend for themselves?

I, for one, find this whole thing nauseating. I will tell you I do not know the answer, but someone best figure this out.Third world countries treat people like this! It does not paint a very humane way of looking at us!

America has up to 7 times as many prisoners per head of population as most english speaking countries including australia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_incarceration_rate)

ie 6 out of 7 US prisoners would not warrant a prison sentence in those other countries so how dangerous can they be. To leave any prisoner to fend for themselves in a disaster is immoral but USA needs to think about why they have so many prisoners which leads to the lack of funding for the basic planning for emergencies.

The people complaining about not setting the prisoners free will be the first to complain if one of them gets out and murders someone, rapes someone or kidnaps some child.

I hope the Mayor is saying his prayers in hopes that no one gets killed inside that prison.

Its a sad state of affairs when in 2011 we dont give a damn as to whether or not people get killed or injured or even put in harms way while at the mercy of the state.

I cannot believe some of these PEOPLE in Rikers are mentally ill prisoners and people who havent been tried yet and they are treating them like this! The mayor should be spending the night on Rikers! He is a criminal, they only reason he is getting away with this is because there is an emergency but he better hope and pray they are really going to be okay. The emergency wont last forever! This wont be forgotten!

Those stating the prisoners deserve to rot have failed to take on board that many inmates are pre-crime, that they have yet to actually be convicted of any crime at all.

This could mean that potentially you have many hundreds of innocent people in there. How is that justice? Would you be so quick to condemn if someone you loved was in there and you knew to be innocent?

Innocent BEFORE guilty!

Why is it so many knee jerk their reactions to revenge?

Eye for an eye makes the world go blind.

The real criminals in this world are very rarely on the inside of a cell and often they are in offices of high power and you are but an ant to them, as evidently displayed in the lack of thought and provisions made to these poor buggers left to rot in their cells!

Im curious to know what a flood map says about Rikers Island especially in comparison to other Zone A Identified areas.

Lol it doesnt matter whether you believe they should die, are less than human or not, or even if the majority of the people deserve it in your opinion. America is supposed to stand for something, weve lost that and this is just one of many instances that proves it. If you feel someone should die regardless of their transgressions, then youre not an american and you should get out of my country. Its not how were supposed to do things here. Go to another country please. Are you people really that fucking insane?..

@jurrasicpork: Then leave. No one is making you stay. Its a free country.

Sucks for anyone who may be innocent, but welcome to life.

Nobody who thinks this should be allowed to vote, breed, or interact with other living things.

there are a whole bunch of morons here!! i spent 3 days on Rikers because i got stopped at a check point and didnt have id or my license. after 72hrs i was released got a duplicate license sent to me from florida and retrieved my car from impound. i was there, am i a animal or menace to society, i think not i am a college grad who just got caught up!!! so some of you guys should think before you run your mouths, and rikers is nowhere near a maximum security facility!!!

I guess that since most of these Inmates can not vote, the Mayor does not care. It is sad that the mayor should only listen to people that he believes have a voice.

Ok Kids and personel need evacuated no matter what. Less serious offenders should go too if possible. But, the murderers, child molesters, rapists, and other serious felons considered their victims life to be worth less than that of a dog. So, dont forget that. Oh and do you want to hang out with that group of evacuated people? Do you want to walk down your street when during the evacuation several hundred escape into your town? Why not put them up in your house if you care so much about the serious felons? Or, do you know of another place to put them and a way to securely transport them? As this is the problem with the time constraints they have.

Americans can be so cruel and inhumane. I was once an inmate at Rikers Island, at the tender age of 18, who was falsely accused of a crime that I knew nothing about. Fortunately I am not a poor Black American kid. I was at College and had a rich father who was able to post bail and pay for a lawyer instead of the public defender who was already advising me to plea bargain to a lesser charge. If not I would most likely have been found guilty and my life taken away from me. According to many posters here I too would have been deserving of death for being locked up at this hell on earth so called jail. Glad to be out of that dog eat dog society. America still has a lot to learn from western Europe when it comes to human decency.

70% of prisoners in California spent time in foster care, I wonder the percentage for this prison..we create this mess

I believe there is ONE JUDGE and that is GOD, please correct me if Im wrong. What goes around, comes around. I say again, WHAT WOULD JESUS DO??

Send all the politicians to zone A!

OK THE MAYOR SAID HES NOT DOING ANYTHING FOR RIKERS ISLAND AS FAR AS THE EVACUATION IS CONCERNED WELL WHAT DOES THE C.O.B.A. HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THAT, LETS SEE WHAT KIND OF RESPONCE MR NORMAN SEABROOK HAS TO SAY ABOUT THAT FOR HIS MEMBERSHIP, THE OFFICERS THAT HOLD RIKERS ISLAND TOGETHER, OR WILL HE JUST SIT IN HIS OFFICE WITH HIS BOARD MEMBERS AND PLAN FOR A BBQ WHEN THE STORM BLOWS OVER RIKER ISLAND, OR MAYBE TELL THE MAYOR I WILL PLAY NICE IN THE SAND BOX NOW CAN WE BE FRIENDS AGAIN MIKE ? I NEED THIS BECAUSE IAM GOING TO LOOSE THE ELECTION NEXT YEAR MIKE

The only ones that should be removed should be those that are yet to receive there day in court. For the rest to hell with them. If im not mistaken they all had the same rights and freedoms you and I have when the where born and they chose a path of crime, drugs, murders, rapes etc. Should they be treated as less then humans like animals, why yes, they decided to act like them then why not treat them as such. And am I going to get narrow minded people comment on this of course. But ill ask you this, if one of those guys killed your 80 year old grandfather, or rapped and tortured your 75 year old grandmother, or maybe got your 12 year old son addicted to drugs. I dont think you would be so sympathetic. These people have proven to be less then human so treat them as such. You clowns that want all these rights for these low life scum would be the first to try and sue McDonalds because you spilled hot coffee on your leg but would complain if it wasnt that hot. Some serving time should be lucky that they have not yet met there maker and are given the opportunity to live on our dime. This is the reason the world is going soft. Hey I think I have a solution for the overpopulated prisons, maybe once convicted put each criminal in TIME OUT for 1 minute for each year of life and then let them know what they did wrong and tell them to not do it again.

You would think that someone in the government could have at least put in the time and effort to plan emergency procedures regarding prison evacuations. We should have learned lessons from Katrina, lessons on how to make hurricanes safer for everybody involved. Instead we have leaders who are responsible for evacuating New York and ensuring the safety of its residents not even considering not even considering the prisoners and staff of Rikers. If they didn't have the time to consider evacuating Rikers, what else didn't they have the time to plan out? What else got shortcut, skirted around? Residence would almost be better off evacuating themselves might be rather than deal with the apathy of this country. It might be safe to say that not a hell of a lot of people in the government are in it for anyone but themselves.

No concern for Rikers Island because Hurricane Irene is an induced man made disaster implemented for practice and training in killing innocent people by regions:

<http://knol.google.com/k/ms-snyder/nyc-earthquake-and-hurricane-irene/20jtp2r68qkfx/16#view>

This article is somewhat deceiving, as they did not capture at the beginning of the article the full quote from Mayor Bloomberg, which I heard, listening this afternoon to the press conference. He said we are not evacuating Rikers Island because we've classified it the same as zone c so it doesn't need to be evacuated. I'm not quoting exactly but it was pretty much words to that effect. Elevation wise this would be reasonably accurate. Nothing terrible happened during Gloria back in 1985, so this one is really a non-issue and the reporting should have reflected that. Shame on Jean Casella and James Ridgeway.

We did not misquote the mayor. If you will look at the date you will see that our article was written yesterday and in yesterday's news conference Mayor Bloomberg said nothing about what zone Rikers Island might be in; he simply stated that it would not be evacuated. We quoted his words accurately, as did several major news organizations. Any subsequent clarification was made only after thousands of people wrote, called, and tweeted about this matter. Our understanding is that the mayor's office has now stated that Rikers is not in Zone A the zone which has been evacuated. It still has not stated what zone, if any, Rikers Island is in, or why, according to the Department of Corrections, no hypothetical evacuation plan for the roughly 12,000 inmates that the facility may house on a given day even exists.

Thank you George, that's exactly what I've been saying for the past five thousand posts that no one fucking reads. and @ people hating on Sara, obviously something has happened to her in the past to cause her to say that.

Though the government takes the motto better to let ten guilty men walk free than to let one innocent be sentenced wrongly, I completely DISAGREE. If I were incorrectly sentenced to a term in prison along with thousands of murderers and rapists and pedophiles, and someone wanted to liquidate the prisons, kill everyone in them, I wouldn't mind dying if it meant the thousands of murderers and rapists dying along with me.

Some of the comments above sound like the party line of a totalitarian government that believes that if you can't or won't completely obey and produce and consume you're simply garbage waiting to be taken out. That ruthless, inhumane attitude is unfortunately held by many of the people who run this country and only feeds the hatred the world feels for us. As a country we are first and foremost out for ourselves, but as history proves time and again, you can only manipulate and exploit others for so long before they finally tire of being abused by a mean, selfish bully.

Die in a hurricane kinda falls under cruel and unusual, and everyone is protected against that kind of punishment in the Bill of Rights. But if you're not concerned about the criminals, then try to care about the innocent people who work there or are awaiting trial or are wrongly convicted.

I think that is bullshit. I mean yes some of the people in prison are there for committing terrible crimes. I am not saying they should be free but damn at least take them to another prison or something and let them serve their time. I mean they are still human beings.

Bloomberg is a rich idiot, and this sort of stupidity is rather typical of him.

To all of you who think this is so horrible . raise your hands and volunteer to take an inmate into your home until the storm passes. If you have children, request a pedophile or a serial rapist. Hogwash!

And of course you can guarantee there is a percentage of prisoners who are innocent. No criminal system gets it right 100% of the time. Spare a thought for those wretched souls. And the US criticizes China over Human Rights. Pfft! First take the plank out of your own eye and all that.

Although this is a typical response it does not make it an ethical or humane response. Bloomberg and anyone else responsible for the neglect and murder of so many human lives should first be held accountable and immediately required to evacuate these people in prison.

My prayers are with all these prisoners that have to suffer and live the agony of being forgotten. Also for the parents and kids that are home in fear and worries because of the absurdness of our judicial system. These prisoners are actually left to die, God forbid, due to the lack of acknowledgement from our Governor.

@anti-too-much-cafeine:

People there are awaiting trial, yes there are also people there already convicted and found guilty. By the way, did you miss the part about the Island being so far above sea level? Did you miss the part about Irene being Category 1 and lessening as you read with your tunnel-vision?

Wow. This is news to me. I hadn't thought that there would be a load of people on vulnerable ground, to not be evacuated. I really hope things go okay. This was a very worthwhile post thanks.

Sadly, it does not surprise me that Bloomberg and other officials are neglecting those incarcerated on Rikers Island. Prisoners are treated as badly as vermin. Sure, there are some downright evil people in who are imprisoned, but that does not give us the right to take away their fundamental rights. I sincerely hope that everyone who reads this blog decides to write to Bloomberg and other top officials in

NYC. Also, as a side note, I highly encourage people to support prisoners in other ways, like donating books to prisons and writing letters to prisoners. Solidarity!

@ Sara that what you just said Shoot them all would be considered a threat or some type of hate crime something as simple as that you can be in jail for these days now would you deserve to be harmed or locked in a jail bc of something so stupid as that? I mean be for real people I pray for all of you too its so sad

Rikers Island is NOT a maximum security prison, you dumb, callous fuck. Its the jail for people AWAITING TRIAL. They havent been found guilty of anything. But then facts dont matter to people who think its ok to deny the humanity of others and support Bloombergs declaration that he will let Irene be thousands of prisoners death sentence.

Its too bad we couldnt use this as an excuse to exchange the people on Rikers with the people on Wall Street.

I see a lot of people talking about rapist and murderers okay i dont think anybody would want them running loose of course not, but we have loved ones there that are not rapist or murderers including the officers! I wish them well and will pray for them tonight. Sad to see how cruel so many people can be especially our Mayor go figure! I really think god forbid for future weather conditions they should come up with an emergency evacuation routine.

Michelle, My prayers are with you . Also with all the other families of everyone either on the boat or island, I have a loved one at rikers.

To be fair, if you look at the citys website, only zone A is considered a threat (and is under an evacuation), and according to this post, Rikers is in Zone B, which according to the city information is considered at threat for hurricane storm surge in a Category 2 or higher hurricane. So they are actually following protocol. If this were a higher category hurricane, and Zone B was under mandatory evacuation, and they STILL didnt evacuate, that would be a different story. Can you imagine the nightmare of trying to evacuate the whole island? Oh my. Where would you take them? How would you transport everyone?

SARA, you obviously dont have a loved one there. I pray to god you dont ever have to experience it. If you do then you will know how the ignorant statement you made feels

First off Hurricane Katrina isnt analogous to Hurricane (wont be by the time it hits NY) Irene. Katrina was mostly an infrastructure problem with a levy that wasnt up to code. On top of that the governments inept ability to handle a disaster of that size. The town failed to evacuate everyone. The state didnt not have the manpower to deal with Katrina before or after it hit Louisiana. Finally, the post Katrina aid and rebuilding was quite pathetic when it came to the response of the Bush administration.

Second off, by the time Irene hits NY it will be a tropical storm and they will probably be the safest inside the prison. If this were an ACTUAL disaster, then perhaps I could see the big deal here. Instead, this piece that was written by Jean Casella and James Ridgeway seems to be intended to rile up people for no good reason. If there was a total disaster, like the tsunami and earthquake in Japan for example, then I could see us all bleeding our hearts for the prisoners and should demand that the prisoners be taken someplace that is safer.

So I dont see the point of this article really. Am I supposed to feel bad for the prisoners?

If we want to talk about mandatory minimums, the war on drugs, or the privatization of prison systems..I will protest with anyone about those issues. A little rain storm coming to New York? Gimme a break.

Dear Jean and James:

Thank you very much for writing this and getting everyone all fired up. After reading 90% of the blogs on here and doing some Google-ing myself chances are PRETTY damn good Irene (she barely registers as a hurricane at this point) will damage any of the Island with it being so high above sea level. Ladies and gentlemen: this storm will not wipe them out and become Armageddon for Rikers Island inhabitants. Lets everyone calm down and switch to decaf. Stop comparing her to Katrina, Katrina was Category 3 when she made landfall (Irene is currently Category 1)

My unborn childs father is on the boat, yes he did get caught doing something he should not have done but the only reason he is still there is because bond was not paid. he hasnt even been sentenced. My thoughts and prayers goes out to him and the rest that are in his situation. If he only knew how much we needed him here.

every time I think that Americans have grown up enough to be trusted with the burdens of moral leadership, democracy, and the right to judge others by those standards, I look on the Internet and see the few small, still voices of reason being drowned out by the bloodthirsty howling of their fellow citizens, calling for the abandonment and terrible deaths of children and the mentally ill because dealing drugs or being sick is apparently grounds to toss away someones human rights.

And this abuse, mind you, is in response to the idea that there even SHOULD be plans to move them.

If youre going to presume to punish people for murder, theft, and neglect, you should probably reconsider the idea that it is ok to dehumanize them and call for their deaths or just let them roam the streets again, because you cannot take on the privilege of moral superiority and the right to judge and punish if youre not ready for the responsibility of being the moral and ethical example you want your prisoner to become.

Period.

This is a human rights atrocity. It should never be allowed. They should be protected on humanitarian grounds. An ordinary citizen protects himself. Why should that right be taken away from Rikers prisoners?

Smfh @ focus not all are felons lol at how much you kno Mr. Speaking facts sound so ignorant

First off who are we to judge who gets saved or not? Secondly those people are family members of many. Some have done nothing wrong some have but is death really the right thing? I think not. All you cold hearted people are the animals and should be locked up. if it was your family member you would be outraged to. Smh what has the world become of when humans turn their backs on humans just because they've committed a crime in which some are innocent. That could be your child husband wife brother or sister.

thank you sam, sara, focus and nico.

You make it appear as though it should have been evacuated and wasn't when that is not the case.: Mayor Michael Bloomberg said this week that there is no plan to evacuate prisoners on Rikers Island, the city's main jail complex on 400 acres of land in the East River.

With Hurricane Irene heading toward the city, the Bloomberg administration reviewed Rikers Island, as it examined every section of the city, and determined no part of the jail complex falls in the high-risk Zone A category, said Marc LaVorgna, a spokesman for the mayor. Bloomberg ordered a mandatory evacuation of all people in the low-lying Zone A category, as well as the entirety of the Rockaways in Queens.

Rikers Island does not touch the Atlantic Ocean and, like Manhattan Island, Roosevelt Island and City Island, it does not need to be evacuated, Mr. LaVorgna said.

We are focused on the areas where real dangers exist, the spokesman said.

A full Corrections Department staff will remain on Rikers Island during the storm and, according to Mr. LaVorgna, the jail is a fully self-sustaining facility prepared to operate and care for inmates in extended emergency conditions.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2011/08/27/hurricane-irene-rikers-island-no-evacuation-at-citys-main-jail/>

Rikers island is safe. Its way more above sea level than the other coastal areas. I know many of you are looking for a good excuse to bitch and moan about bloomberg and Im sure many of you are looking to scream racism ,etc. So with that being said about the felons being safe, THEYRE FRIGGEN FELONS! They lost their rights when they committed felonys! There is no danger to them so why in hell would the island be evacuated!??

Given NY budget woes, leaving them to drown might actually work out well for the city financially.

take em out back and shoot them all.waste of space and tax dollars as it is.

The day we have to choose who to save is the day we have failed as a society.

The day we give up on a human is the day we lock him away. The day we stop caring for a human is the day we become inhuman.

Rikers Island is shown on the New York City Hurricane Evacuation Zone

(http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/downloads/pdf/hurricane_map_english.pdf) map as No Zone. This designation is indicated as,Residents who do not live in a hurricane evacuation zone are unlikely to experience storm surge flooding from a hurricane,

Pick your battles people and lower your expectations there will be some casualties and not everyone can be accounted for in a disaster. Amazingly not one of the people criticizing the lack of a plan thought enough of these prisoners before the storm to work with Senators and Congressional representatives to develop a plan before the disaster.

The mayor is responsible for everyone and he did a really great thing by initiating a plan to take care of the helpless in the hospitals. Along with his very capable staff he also initiated a plan to protect those who can and will vote on Election Day. We now recognize a problem after the storm we can all work with the mayor to develop a plan. Today the immediate need is to keep our families safe and dry.

alright, all you people who want to move them to a safe place, why dont you consider this. lets say if it were possible to take 10 murders, rapists, thieves, and burglars into your OWN home, would you? DEFINITELY NOT!

Put them in your housesYou all need to grow up. The people who made the decision to leave them in prison need to find where to evacuate them obviously not you.

Thank you ,Clarence D

evacuation is not the answer. There should be a plan if a problem occurs. The inmates and staff are all human beings. All need to be protected .

There is no excuse to leave anyone behind! Preparations should be made beforehand. Be responsible!

What about the prisoners who are wrongfully accused?? Why should they have to suffer?? This act of neglect towards our own human race is a disgusting disgrace you should be ashamed of yourselves! Regardless, I will still pray for the safety of each and every person in there. Only GOD can judge.

Wow This is tragic. Have we come to the point where we will abandon people, whether they are in the right by our standards or not?

Thank you CWG, for some factual information as to why its unnecessary to evacuate. For all the rest of you whining about how inhumane the treatment is, why dont you propose a safe place that can house 12,000 17,000 prisoners securely at the drop of a hat without threatening the welfare of the rest of society? How could we even move that many people securely? Impossible. Shame on you for pitying prisoners who have caused indescribable pain to so many people including their families. Get real.

Im not sure what the commenter above meant by a one-year wait for a public defender. Anyone accused of a crime is entitled to a lawyer under the state and federal constitutions, and if you cannot afford a lawyer, one is appointed for you as soon as you are arraigned in

criminal court.

The other thing I'd like to say, as a former public defender, is that it is easy to distance oneself from people who are accused of crimes (or who are serving less than one-year sentences, as is the case at Rikers), if you haven't had any experience with them. But in actuality they are people, many of whom are scared teenagers, or drug addicts, or the mentally ill. The main thing is that they are people, with parents and family and friends, just like all of us, and it is really scary to see how some of the commenters here refer to them.

These are human beings. We are supposedly a first world country. It would not be that hard, considering we are comfortable spending billions on weapons, to dedicate money to make sure these prisoners were at least transferred immediately to a safe facility.

Those who hold the authority to determine whether or not to evacuate the prisons that are in the path of any natural disaster that have forewarned that a potentially devastating event is headed their way and choose to evacuate the citizens of that area and NOT evacuate prisoners are indeed committing a crime! You have juveniles that are also detained in places such as Rikers Island, and with failure to act or blatant disregard on the part of those who make that decision, that's Endangering the Welfare of a Child, and Child Neglect. For those over the age of 18 being held in prisons that aren't evacuated (such as it was with Hurricane Katrina), that is attempted second-degree murder (which by definition is a killing caused by dangerous conduct and the offenders obvious lack of concern for human life), provided that there are no deaths associated with being stuck in jail and left there during all of this. At the least it should be involuntary manslaughter (aka criminally negligent homicide) since that is defined as an unintentional killing that results from recklessness or criminal negligence, or from an unlawful act that is a misdemeanor or low-level felony.

Some of those held there haven't even been convicted of a crime yet! And we all know that the police don't always get the right person the first time around. There's plenty of people who have been found not-guilty or were held and then released once the police figured out that the person they were detaining was not the one responsible for whatever crime they were being held in suspicion of.

so @beyond disgusted so would you take in some inmates to your home until the hurricane is over? knowing full well that they're rapists, murderers, possibly serial killers?

omfg

I don't care what they did. Nobody, but nobody, deserves this kind of abandonment. As hard as it may be to believe, yes, they are still human.

those people are some one's mother father or child it's not right how the mayor is treating them I personally have a sister in the women's facility and it's really sad!! now what's going to happen when something happens to them

are you guys KIDDING me? these men committed crimes. how many of these inmates are actually innocent? how many are killers, rapists, burglars, thieves? do you guys think where would these people be transported to? 17,000 people. where will you put them? and if we set them free, what will stop them from looting the city? from recommitting those crimes they were locked up from

Reading these comments & wondering why everyone is acting like a drama queen. The area they are in is an area that does not warrant evacuation. Bottom line. And why not be worried about the guards who are taking care of them! Not one person who was complaining about the inhumane treatment once commented on the guards. Are they less deserving? And to complain on his (Bloomberg) response to the media? Dear God!! Do you not think he has enough to worry about with the people that HAVE to be evacuated? The details of the closing of transportation systems etc. I am quite sure if the track, intensity etc of this hurricane was higher they would be. Everyone is basing this on an assumption. There are residential areas that are not being evacuated in that area. Take a deep breath everyone & relax.

To all of the high and mighty who have posted here, I ask: WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? I'm not one to post bible verses on FB or anything close to that. My relationship with God is private and is MY BUSINESS. However, may you always remember, what goes around comes around! GOD will bless ALL on that island, whether they are guilty or innocent, have been convicted, or are awaiting trial; whether they are a compassionate guard or a corrupt one. Just sayin

Sorry, but all of you need a reality check. The city deemed the hurricane a crisis and they need to take adequate measures to prevent people HOWEVER, I think they should be focusing on the innocent men and women of the public, NOT worrying about how to transport CRIMINALS (i.e.: for you ignorant people, Rikers Island is a maximum security prison filled with hate mongering murderers, child molesters, and people who commit much human-on-human crime. I wish them no ill-will in respects to injury at the hands of a hurricane, however I think it is RIDICULOUS how people are complaining about inmates rights in this scenario. The city has LIMITED resources, and since you geniuses all seem to know what's best, why don't you tell us how the city will (A) work on evacuating the non-d*uchebag population of its city whilst (B) evacuating a MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON that will ALSO require HUGE police presence?

I'll patiently wait however instead I'm likely to just see more self-righteous, utopian bullsh*t responses that have no basis in reality.

Jimmy you do not know the individuals posting here personally. Therefore do not speak as if you do.

Hurricane pop corn fart Irene is a dud as far as hurricanes go. A little wind, a little rain and lots of hype so the media can keep us all tuned in. It's the Katrina effect. Silly little hurricane and everyone has their panties in a twist. Grow up.

I understand people being upset about the prisoners being left behind, but for everyone of you who thinks it's terrible, I have some questions: how do you evacuate 12,000 prisoners, many of whom are violent offenders? Where do you put them? In another, likely already overcrowded prison? Do you want them to spend the night at your place (just for safety's sake, of course)? If you can figure a way to solve this problem and answer these questions, maybe you should run for public office and fix everything.

Diane,
Neglect is abuse also.

There are two important words that the parents of most of the prisoners should have been taught early on; Birth Control.

The percentage of TRULY innocent people in Rikers must be a fraction. And Im not talking about the prisoners whos delusional family members and supporters have turned into victims of a cruel society.

Lets not forget the victims of the crimes as a lot of people here seem to live their lives doing.

Ok Holdem up one Second Please !! I leave in Oklahoma and even Mccalster or Huntsville would not let The HUMAN LIFE Just Die without a causeok think about it ..the ppl are there for a reason (of course) But you are Innocent Intill Proved Guilty ..so if they are not on Death Roll or up for the The damn thing , Then that means they are Housed in a STATE PRISON which has All the HUMAN Right in the US to PROTECT THESE MEN !!! They are Still HUMAN no matter what They have done , and it would be on Someones Head if No Civil Precussion are made ..POINT BLANK !! You Can Not be JUDGE and JURY If you are looking at a Diseaster That would harm HUMAN LIFE!! And Here In OKLAHOMA at Least these Guys have Shelter For a ER of anykind. They are just saying that about Riker because The East Coast Doesnt even have a PLAN for their Own Civil PPL , Street PPL, Gma, Gpa n Others , it s a known fact ,They are not Built for a Major Ne thing ?? so Thats all Folks ..Think about it and the PPL that Lives in the STATE OF NEW YORK shld put their action to where their mouth is and Govern Something ..at LEAST Pelican Bay ,california Has a Escape Route for Their PRISONERS In Case of a Major Diseaster Earthquake Fire ??? COME on NOW !!!! GET IT TOGATHER Before you lose more than the so called scum bags, not only that what about the Employees at Rickers? The Guards and everyone else or they also goina Sink with the Ship.umm ok Titantic !!!

I dont know what you expect the city to do with the prisoners. Maybe they can stay at all of your houses. Why Dont you call the mayor and offer to take at least one of them in? They can stay in your childs bedroom with them. I understand what people are saying that they deserve to be protected because we are more humane and have a moral compass, something that I am sure a lot of them dont understand, but what do you suggest we do to ensure the safety of the rest of the city (if they escape)? I live in NY state and I know if these animals escape they will be all over the state and country, then you will be on here saying how irresponsible it was to let them move to another place after your family membe is raped or killed. So please post some solutions, instead of sitting on a high horse.

jimmy, Do actually know all the parents of the people incareated at Rikers Island? How can possibly make such a statement

Finallu some good will come out opf Irene. Hopefully all of rikers will be submerged and we will have removed people from the bottom of the barrel of the genetic gene pool. Rikers houses tru animals who are nothing but parasites on society. To those who have loved children in Rikers than you Failed as a parent and should not have any more kids in the name of humanity

Its all of you crying family members who are to blame for causing them to be criminals in the first place. You abused them when they were young, and now you enable their criminal behavior by defending them. You should be in the flooded jail with them, cuz yer all scumbags.

It is worth remembering that, as Rikers Island is a city jail, a number of the prisoners there are people who have been accused of a crime, could not make bail, and are currently on the one-year plus waiting list for a Public Defender in New York (often longer than the sentence would be for the original crime, even if a conviction results). In other words, many have never been convicted of anything. Rikers Island is also a huge dumping ground for mentally ill people who could not function after being forced out of closing state hospitals (remember when that was touted as a great miracle made possible by modern medicine?). They may have done nothing more serious than to be annoying to someone or were picked up by authorities as the result of homelessness.

Rikers Island ought to be a national scandal as it is. The fact that we expect people to remain there in the face of possibly life-threatening conditions verges on atrocity.

There should at least be an evacuation plan: secure warehousing on slightly higher ground, public housing which has just been evacuated, something. I work with prisoners; their daily circumstances are indifferent if not cruel. Basic human and US rights apply to them; plenty of thought goes into keeping them down when incarcerated. At least something should be done to keep them from freezing, drowning or living in water up to their chests.

Im sorry but people shouldnt really be comparing this to Katrina, its not even close

The lord is only one we have to believe in to take care of our loved ones. The city obviously is not going to count them as a loss

Anyone who wishes death upon the prisoners on Rikers Islandor on anyone else in the worldis morally no better than the worst criminal in the world. I bet some of you even call yourselves Christians, when youre violating the most basic principles of Christianity by posting what youve posted here. Youre almost certainly morally worse than the vast majority of people on Rikers, who have not been convicted of anything.

If I thought like you people did, Id be wishing that Irene would drown you all. But I dont think that way, so I will be hoping for the safety of everyone. However, I have a sneaking desire that at some point in your life you get falsely accused of a crime and locked up on Rikers for awhile, as a friend of mine was. It might teach you a lesson, even if you dont happen to be locked up there and abandoned by the city while a hurricane approaches.

All that said: thanks to those who have provided actual information about the safety of the island; thats reassuring. It doesnt sound as if theres much chance of a post-Katrina-like situation there.

Be safe, all. And I mean all; no human being deserves to be treated as if theyre subhuman, no matter whether theyve committed a heinous crime or posted an inhumane comment on a blog.

Quick question for everybody saying evacuate the jails on Rikers. Where are they supposed to take them? And how would they get them there? Unlike New Orleans these jails are high enough to be away from the surge and they will likely stay dry. Can many of the

corrections officers that have to man the jails say the same?

naturally you cant evacuate them. but some kind of measures should be taken to make sure everyone is safe . Mayor Bloomberg is just totally ignoring them ad his city employees. I dont think I will ever work for NYC

people are still people. The city put them there , they need to be responsible for them.

Ah, thanks for the correction. Ive seen so many pieces lifted wholesale from magazines and blogswith bylines included!that I jumped to conclusions. I apologize.

No problemts happened to us, so we understand!

<https://publish.nyc.indymedia.org/en/2011/08/115861.html>

Mayor Says F*ck You to Prisoners and their Familes:Were not evacuating Rikers

The NYC Department of Corrections has stated that Rikers Island has no evacuation procedure for any of the 12,000+ prisoners located on the island, regardless of the fact that is surrounded by either a mandatory or suggested evacuation zone. Also Rikers Island is partially built on an old landfill making it more high risk for flooding.

Call-in to NYC FEMA office 212-680-3600 (press 1 for regional representative) or NYC Department of Corrections Information Line 718-546-1500 (follow the prompts for a representative) starting at 3pm TODAY 8/27! Keep in mind FEMA is a federal agency. Be safe!

I dont see anyone offering to house these criminals? If theyre such good people, why not offer to take them into your house for the night?

No thanks. Not a fan of rapists, murderers, drug addicts/dealers, thieves.

This was originally published at Mother Jones:

<http://motherjones.com/mojo/2011/08/rikers-island-prisoners-irene>

You should link to them rather than plagiarizing the story from their site.

Actually, WE wrote the story on Mother Jones same byline, if youll just take a look. And it went on Mother Jones site AFTER it was posted on Solitary Watch. Theres no plagiarism going on here just the same authors posting on two different sites to get the story out.

Flat out ridiculous. Not in line with recent Supreme Court ruling to keep prisoners safe and have their basic needs met. Something else could be figured out, such as a transfer to other facilities. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and have their safety met, if we choose to incarcerate, than we have the obligation to keep those incarcerated safe.

I keep reading comments where people are saying they should not be released to the streets. That is a given folks use a bit of the sense you should have. The question is will they be evacuated to some other facility.

To the person who says that because of elevation they should be okay this would be true if these elevations were not mostly created by landfill.

We should be calling the mayors office. And the Governors office. The demand should be made that there be emergency evacuation plans made both for the safety of the workers and those who are incarcerated there.

So, this is the de facto death penalty for anyone arrested and awaiting trial, innocent people, teenagers and those who are guilty of crimes such as drug possession, petty theft, etc? I still remember the address of Rikers Island 1212 Hazen Street. I used to write to a prisoner. I grew up with quite a few young men who spent some time there. They did not deserve to die and certainly not like this. This is not Alcatraz or Sing Sing, with more hardened criminals. How can we do this? How can the federal gov allow this under our Constitution? If this isnt cruel and unusual punishment, what is?

>>May God protect those locked away.<<

Too bad God didn't protect the victims of the crimes that got these criminals sent to Rikers Island in the first place.

One man, drunk driver murder, high bail set, high bail paid free.

Another man, routine traffic stop bad day, argument with police officer, arrested for resisting arrest and disturbing the peace. Bail set cant pay. Jailed, stuck.

Whos the real animal here?

For all of you ignorant people who have nothing better to do than troll and spew hate upon those less fortunate than you:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prisoner_rights_in_the_United_States

All prisoners obtain the basic rights which are needed to survive, and sustain a reasonable way of life (meaning they have the necessities), despite their imprisonment.

To all the people who say let em die! thats what they deserve who are you to override the decisions of the judges, juries, prosecutors, etc in short *the justice system* as to the punishment these prisoners face? Why should someone is serving a two year stint in Rikers be upgraded to defacto torture and possibly even death by drowning or being crushed under falling debris if hes unlucky enough for a natural disaster to hit while serving his time?

Why even have trials and juries in the first place to determine sentences? We could just call *you* up and ask what we should do, yeah? That's America, isn't it? Arbitrary punishment based on nothing other than whims and feelings of an individual?

Thanks to the people who are reasonably discussing the practical details of this. What is impossible to ignore are the comments of the people who are saying that all the people there deserve to drown. Considering that some of these are simply people who enjoy stirring things up, it does seem that there are others who simply do not think straight. Do you not realize that there are guards and other people there that are not only innocent but are public servants? That there are some awaiting trial that will be shown to be innocent? That there are others who are guilty of only minor crimes that certainly don't deserve death? That many people now considered great have served time in jail, including Jesus Christ Himself (while He was in Pilate's custody)? Don't you realize that our system is imperfect and injustices occur? You people without empathy or imagination can you not imagine yourself imprisoned by mistake or unjustly? You heartless bastards don't deserve the privileges of civilization, go on and make the Mad Max world you seem to crave.

So, all of you folks mad about this- HOW would you evacuate the prisoners- and keep the general public safe?? Where would you put these people- many of whom are very violent?!!!

How does one think they can transport roughly 12000 inmates off of an island and where do you propose they place them while we wait for a storm that might never come? Seriously. These are criminals. They broke the law and did not care about the consequences of their actions. Ever see prisons out of this country? Our prisons are like mansions compared to other countries. I say leave them where they are at and let the guards go home. They can fend for themselves. Criminals!!

Well, NYC shelters welcome cats and dogs and the shelters even have dog & cat food as well as cat litter. So, it looks like folks in the Big Apple just don't care about prisoners in the BIG House. I care about helpless pets and so does my Mayor.

It's a category 1. I've grilled during one. They'll be fine.

Love,

Gulf Coast Resident

Sucks for anyone who may be innocent, but welcome to life.

Somehow, I suspect the FINE individual Robert who left this comment would change his mind in a hurry if he were the innocent person awaiting trial and left to die.

Some of the people on this board do you honestly believe every single person on Rikers Island is a child molester and/or murderer? Because as has been stated repeatedly, it's simply not true. Do facts mean nothing to you? I wish you could be locked up for stupid.

It seems to me that if there is damage to Rikers Island during the storm (unlikely as it's just a cat-1 in NC right now), that it's more likely that prisoners would escape than be injured. Way to go NYC DOC by treating prisoners inhumanely, you run the risk of letting those prisoners go to continue committing crimes.

Ok, everyone stop freaking out. As was pointed out a number of times, all the areas of NYC are zoned, and Rikers Island is not in a zone that is in danger. The storm surge will not reach heights of 20, and it sounds as if most of Rikers is at or above that level. The most the waves will be hitting is 6-8. Also, landfill island would have bearing if we were talking earthquake (anyone freak out about them then? Probably not, and it sounds as if they were fine). Most of the people at Rikers are not violent criminals, as has also been stated. It is used for pre-trial, teen detention, 1 year or less convictions and transport hub for criminals going to Sing-Sing or other such locations upstate. That means most of the people there are not there for violent crimes at all. Yes, we get that things like drugs and alcohol can kill, to whoever said that, but they are not violent, pre-meditated crimes, which makes them distinguishable from such crimes as rape and murder. Also, please go look up what this storm is and why people are actually afraid of it, all of you. It's not that it is a hurricane, but rather that they aren't sure of how fast, exactly, the winds will be when they hit NYC, potentially causing a fair amount of structural damage (though not to concrete jails, because they're built to withstand worse), but the real fear, and why this storm is particularly bad, is because of the potential for flooding in low-lying areas, the main reason for evacuating Battery Park and Coney Island, but not Rikers OR Roosevelt Island. This article, as well intended as it may have been, is very misleading and getting people upset for no reason. Should there be emergency plans in place on Rikers if things get far far worse? Yes, and there probably are. The article, and a fair number of the readers here, have instead assumed that Mayor Bloomberg is just leaving them to die, when in reality there is no reason to evacuate them in the first place, because they are not in a low-lying area. One commentator had it correct when asking what about the homeless people? They're the ones that are going to suffer because of a storm, as they have no where to go for shelter. Next time, before jumping to reactions, please look into it a bit.

Does the Red Cross know about this? Amnesty International?

OK and what if it was the other way. If it was your child behind bars.

What amazes me are that many/most of these commenters with a let em DIE mentality probably call themselves Good Christians. yet, they take their ideas mostly from the Old Testament (before Christ) not the New. So Sad. I am definitely NOT a liberal when it comes to violent crime. But not everyone is Rikers because of violent crime. Oh, and I do not go around espousing that I am a GOOD Christian either.

Most Gracious & Holy Father, We thank you in advance because you ARE GOD! Lord we know the enemy would like to take out our family members & loved ones during this threatening Hurricane that is soon approaching. Well WE stand in the gap of these inmates who are helpless in this case. We plead The Very Blood Of Jesus Over Them Even Now. By the authority & Power of Jesus Christ OUR loved ones are covered & safe. No harm shall befall them. Your Word says that those who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom 10:13). then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent (place of dwelling Psalm 91:10) (Psalms 121:7) The LORD will keep you from all harm he will watch over your life; satan you are a lie from the pits of hell & we the Righteousness of God

Himself walk in the victory of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ Who bruised YOUR HEAD!!!!!! ON CALVARY you are a defeated foe!!!!!! those that are imprisoned shall surely live & not die & even they shall know that it was ELOHIM YAAKOV (THE GOD OF JACOB), ELOHIM MAHASELANU (GOD OUR REFUGE), ELOHIM EZER LI (GOD MY HELPLER) That saved them from this storm!!! & they will Cry out to Him & He will save them .. & He WILL BE THEIR GOD & THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE IN THE VERY NAME OF JESUS & BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS ! I DECREE & DECLARE IT IS SO & DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS. SAID & DONE IN HEAVEN! IN JESUS NAME AMEN!!!

yes moving them higher is a solution. But they are so over populated , is there room to move them up to a higher floor.

NYC Government doesnt need massive gas chambers to expose how Fascistic it is. It is a continuance of prisoners being Tortured in California, in Georgia, Ohio; in New Orleans, Louisiana, Palestine, and now back to NYC. In essence, and hopefully not in reality, the NYC Government and Department of Corruptions have extra-judicially sentenced these prisoners to Die. For one solid moment imagine yourself in a Lorton prison cell when the water creeps up further and further. If not tortured to death, then one becomes a torture survivor. This obvious national policy is a conspiracy to commit massive genocidal murder sounds like a Koch Bros scheme. Call it what you will (capitalism, fascism, slavery, genocide) the clock is ticking. Today, the premeditated policy in crisis is to FORGET THE PRISONER. It was the same policy in both NYC and NYS during the 1970s Tombs and Attica riots. Whether the weather slams Lorton or not, the set-up for massive death remains; and if we outsiders dont change it then we could be next.

Call me inhumane or insensitive all you want, but, if someone murdered or molested my child or someone I love I, personally, wouldnt care if they were left to rot in a prison cell as the walls crumbled around them.

The politicians that run on ever tougher on crime platforms have box themselves and their constituents in with their lies and exaggerations. They do not care for the safety of the guards any more than the safety of the inmates. Those convicted and imprisoned are still citizens of this country and do have rights even in incarceration. Politicians make anyone convicted of a crime out to be depraved and inhuman. The fact the difference between those of us out here and them is we havent been caught yet, we havent been in the wrong place at the wrong time, we havent been profiled and beaten into a confession, we havent been threatened with spending the rest of our lives behind bars if we dont confess to a crime we did not commit,..and they have. Yes there are some very, very bad people behind bars and they should stay there but Mayor Bloomberg does not have the right to sentence those on Rikers island to the suffering and possible death they are facing. If there are deaths I would hope he would be prosecuted for his negligence.

this is to flabby 101, have you been in rikers island? Even just to visit someone, Its far from a paid vacation.

While working in the tall concrete Metropolitan Correctional Center, San Diego, as an educator some inmates were concerned about being locked up in a skyscraper during an earthquake.

The inmates in New York could be bused to the empty warehouses located inland; armed staff could monitor the exterior walls thereby preventing escape.

I wonder how many of the people who think that merely being detained not convicted means your life is worth less than others, count themselves as good Christians?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matthew 25:40

For all of you who think prisoners should rot in their cells Most prisoners get out of jail at some point. The recidivism rate in New York is as high as 65% and all the latest research has showed that treating people like animals (i.e. oppressing them, beating them, keeping them in lock down etc), no matter what theyve done, increases their desire to become better criminals. When they get out of prison, with a criminal record they are already determined by society to be poverty-stricken So, have the courage to open your minds and hearts to the fact that these are people youre talking about with families, and personal struggles, just like you.

for more information check out: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recidivism>

Just because these people did something they shouldnt have doesnt mean their not human. They have families that they love and love them. Families that will now have to sit and worry about them. All, because the city of New York obviously doesnt care . What about all the city employees, doesnt the city care about them either.

Im praying for my loved one and for everyone else who there and their families. This will be a tough time for us.

Something has to be done they are HUMAN BEINGS TOO

I am beyond tired of ignorant idiots comparing violent criminals and freaks to animals. Dogs are innocent and there is no excuse for a dog to suffer. Pedophiles, rapists, drug dealers who cause a slew of rape, murder and pedophilia and animal abuse in their wake do not deserve to have millions thrown out them to move them to safety. Millions of people are in need of help and you are going to help the criminals? People are right house them yourselves and see how far you get. Sure some may be innocent, but most are not. And comparing humans any human to animals is an insult to the nonhumans out there who are treated like sh*t by indifferent ignorant humans who self-indulge. You have a storm, not an armageddon. And animals (nonhuman) and noncriminal humans deserve the first shakes of retreat and care. Of coures in the ghettos Im sure the first thing that will happen when things are shut down is looting. Unlike in Japan when you saw most people trying to work together.

There is NOW way to safely evacuate and keep the PUBLIC SAFE from this large a number of inmates. All of you would be up in arms and Calling for someones head if even 1 of those inmates escape while being evacuated and committed another crime. If you want to change something you need to change some of the assinine laws that sent people to that island in the first place. You know like the non violent drug users whose only offense was being caught with drugs, or using drugs. The pothead that got busted for their joint. Things like that. But since everyone wants to be tough on crime. You are now seeing the effects of those wishes. Actions have consequences.

Take solace in knowing that these individuals who complain about prisoners being coddled would be the first to start crying like a little child if they were locked up and left behind to die. Its easy to lord over others from their comfort zone. I also know that a few may have been recent victims of a crime and their level of tolerance is low, its understandable.

The people who appear to be the best are capable of the worst and the ones who appear to be the worst are capable of the best. Life will eventually teach us all that lesson.

I predict litigation

this is so horrifying. is there anything concerned readers can do to help?

Theres clearly no way that Rikers will be evacuated now nor could it be done safely at this point, without an evacuation plan. So we dont necessarily advocate calling the Mayors office now (as we know some readers are doing) and demanding Rikers be evacuated today. We understand that some inmates may be moved around on Rikers so that they are on higher ground hopefully this will be enough to keep them, and the officers who guard them, safe. The point is that there SHOULD be an evacuation plan of some kind, just as there is for the rest of the city, and we hope people will make an issue of this after the immediate crisis has passed.

Some people seem to view and treat prisoners as sub-human.

I believe otherwise. I believe all humans have innate worth, even those who have committed crimes, including heinous, evil crimes. And I believe in a justice system, not a punishment system. There is no justice in a prison where people are not protected from physical harm.

The very foundation and philosophy of the justice system in America is a certain respect in our treatment of prisoners and also those accused of crimes. Part of this respect is an understanding that when people are punished with jail time, they are not punished in additional ways (i.e. torture, neglect, etc.) while they are in jail. Placing prisoners in jeopardy like this scenario here undermines the very foundation and values of the United State of America.

All I can say now is, I just hope everyone on this island is okay inmates, workers, convicted criminals, and those being held before trial everyone. If anyone is harmed because of the hurricane, this will be a grave injustice.

Thanks for this comment we hope everyone reads it.

Im sincerely saddened by this prayers for the families of all those unable or unallowed to evacuate. I do pray for the mental state and physical strength of all those in this predicament. I have a brother incarcerated awaiting trial and mentally ill. I pray for him especially as he is part of me. But I also pray for all the concerned loved ones that simply dont know what to do, and do not have faith. May Gods mercy be upon us all.

Hey Cheaper you sound like one solid asshole, I was a inmate in Ohio and I would love to run into you. Take that back know I would not cause then I would be a inmate again. I bet you are one sorry ass COWARD!!

To those saying they deserve to die, i hope you realize you can serve jail time for any manner of things and not all of the prisoners are rapists and murderers. You cant play God and decide that anyone who breaks the law should have a death sentence to drown in sewage and starve. If you are so law abiding you should respect that a Judge gave them the right to life. The death sentence these days is the worst possible thing one can be fated too and even they do not have to slowly die or drown. Grow up.

Ummmm Rikers is a JAIL, people, not a prison. Which means a goodly number of people housed there are awaiting trial and have not been convicted of anything, were too broke to post bail, are serving a sentence for a misdemeanor or maybe, maybe have been convicted of a felony and are awaiting transfer to a prison. Child rapists and murderers? Hardly.

Id like to know more about the reasoning that went into the decision before I weigh in. But basically, when the state assumes custody of a person, it assumes responsibility for their safety and well-being, regardless of what a person did or is alleged to do. To my mind (and with no illusion that everyone at Rikers is an upstanding citizen), our States duty to protect is greatest when it deprives people of liberty, not less.

In New Orleans, the guards and staff evacuated and left the prisoners behind, including those not convicted, but held waiting for trial.

There is good reason to believe that one entire floor was flooded to its ceiling, drowning every prisoner on that floor, and that this was covered up by falsifying prison records.

Let em drown, thats 17,000 less people NY needs to pay to support. They broke the law and now Mother Nature is making the crime a little more serious. I just hope the jail buildings stay okay.

As far as you people with kids in jail, nice parenting fail, maybe teach your kids how to stay within the confines of the law and they would not be in jail.

Sucks for anyone who may be innocent, but welcome to life.

On the other hand, it could be that they are moving them, but they dont want anyone to know this. Can you imagine the pandemonium that would ensue? Bad enough having to deal with the storm to begin with. But in a situation like this all the attempts at break outs would be crazy. I dont think that Mayor Bloomberg wanted to publicly announce it. Thats why he was irritated with that question.

Boo Hoo I wont be able to sleep tonight

Rikers Island is on high ground and Irene is a Category 1 hurricane (currently) and may weaken to a tropical storm.

It seems like a shrewd decision *not* to evacuate Rikers. I have to assume and maybe Im naive that there is some emergency evacuation

plan for a Category 3+ hurricane.

Can you imagine what it would be like to try to evacuate 12,000 hardened criminals, many rapists and murderers? Some would undoubtedly get out what they are doing may not be fair to the inmates, but it IS in the best interests of the citizens who arent locked up. Im sorry but they DONT deserve the same treatment as the rest of society hence their being in maximum security prison.

As someone that has had family members in jails, i wouldnt evacuate them either. It is no different than opening the cages of a zoo, and letting all the wild animals out to prey on the regular population.

As someone else pointed out, evacuating isnt the same as setting free not by a long shot. Rikers also houses people who have only been arrested and charged it could be you.

I have mixed feelings about this. Yes, its terrible that they will be left behind, however, how do you evacuate 17,000 criminals? The logistics are impossible in the time frame given. How do you keep them secure so they dont escape and harm the public? How would you transport them? Where would they house them? At another overcrowded prison?

Who are you to speak wide Eyes wide close? See above. Eyes and Ears wide close..CHECK again one day, when you will know people, who get there and read over and over till something would sink to your head!

What a lose/lose situation. Its terrible to leave them there and it sounds like a giant disaster trying to relocate them. Thats a huge number of inmates. I would think the best solution might be to bring in as many extra supplies and protection as possible. Not a perfect solution, but something?

They cant say they didnt know: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina: Prison Emergency Preparedness as a Constitutional Imperative (2008): http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/facsch_lawrev/67/

As someone that has had family members in jails, i wouldnt evacuate them either. It is no different than opening the cages of a zoo, and letting all the wild animals out to prey on the regular population.

Evacuating isnt the same as setting free.

(1) Think about cities in which almost everyones been given evacuation orders. These people are *already* free and if they stay in the city instead of leaving then theyre *not* evacuated.

(2) Think about how prisoners get moved from one prison to another. Surely its possible for the Rikers inmates to be made inmates of somewhere inland instead of set free or left in the storm

Lets seeIf you dont choose to kill, rape, child-molest, devastate communities with drug and gang violence (and this only what they get caught doing)then you get to be treated like a human.act like an animal get treated like one.

I have just been reading a book about Argentinas brutal military dictatorship and some of the comments here go a long way toward answering my question: how could ordinary people let that happen? How could people approve of a regime that disappeared people without trial and administered punishment far out of proportion to the crime?

Some commenters here seem to think that people whove been arrested but not convicted, or people doing 6 months in jail due to possessing a tiny amount of weed, are basically equivalent to murderers and rapists and deserve to die. Wow. I dont begin to understand these people, but I suspect the torturers and killers of Videlas dictatorship would have.

Sweet fucking Jesus, how I hate this country. I have never seen this country so mean-spirited and Michael Bloomberg only proves my long-standing theory that theres no such thing as a former Republican. This man is a cold-blooded psychopath and I cannot wait to see him out of office. And I dont even live in NYC, anymore.

Dont really care. These people are criminals and as such, deserve to be left where they are. Actions have consequences.

Be concerned about:

1. the tent-like structures near the shore, especially on the west side.
2. access to the island via the single causeway to Manhattan, which crosses the East River. Even though the LaGuardia runways almost touch the island and would provide a safer crossing for evacuation, theres no access there.
3. the lower floors of buildings build at 10-20 feet above sea level, and so presumably susceptible to flooding. Now, most structures have multiple stories, so it should be possible for most prisoners to ride out the storm on upper floors.

Be less concerned about:

1. comparisons to Katrina: the guards will be just as stuck on the island, (the parking lot is practically at sea level!), and were NOT going to see days of chest-deep flooding.
2. Landfill: Im really not sure what your concern is here. LAnd fill is ground weve moved, instead of land glaciers moved. It makes a difference when youre talking about earthquakes, and maybe well see more trees down on the island, but there arent that many trees there to begin with, and the buildings there will be as stable as most of those elsewhere in the 5 boros.

And Mayor Bloomberg, what a lousy response. Least you could do is say, Staff at Rikers Island have contingency plans for consolidating prisoners in safe locations, and will enact those if necessary. I dont know if its true, but Id be very surprised. As recently as this spring, a bunch of prisoners had to be moved because of a fire. Im thinking there are plans, somewhere.

Sounds like you know the island well. Thanks for sharing this information.

i hardly think we see prisoners as less than human when they get three meals a day, dental, optical and health benefits that more than

most hard working Americans cannot even afford for themselves let alone their families. Besides, prisons are built to withstand escapees, which seems they will have a far better chance to be unscathed. do you want that population in your neighborhood or in some Red Cross evacuation center w/ vulnerable people and children?

@ Eliza Syou say There is no need to move the prisoners on Rikers Island, because it is not in the evacuation zone. There is no problem here. But isnt Rikers Island in the path of the Hurricane? I hope the prisoners will not be harmed.

What about the babies in the nursery?

Heck, they evacuated the prisoners in Gotham

a whole lot of judgment and not near enough activism when theres not a threat on the horizon. how easy it is for many of you to sit there in your righteous indignation when before this new article appeared, you wouldnt have given these incarcerated men and women another thought at any other time.

and as has been mentioned a few times, you sit here and cry over the prisoners, but what about the staff who will be abandoned with them? they have families that are evacuating most likely and yet they are staying at their post and will have to deal with their own worries, worries about their families as well AND in keeping what may grow to be a hostile and dangerous prison population safe from the storm AND EACH OTHER -if- the storm situation should pan out to be worse case scenario?

do something before disaster strikes, when things are calm. this back seat driving on the verge of a disaster, which as been pointed out may not even strike, is unproductive and frankly, hypocritical.

Bottom line, there will be lots of rain and lots of wind but Irene is already at a Cat 1. The prisoners will be fine, better than most Id imagine. I am concerned for the homeless ppl who use the transit tunnels for homes since they will be forced out Im sure. Bloomberg didnt handle the question well but can you blame him? Those ppl are in there for a reason.

This surprises you all? Mayor Bloomberg has turned his back on the innocent animals being tortured and killed NEEDLESSLY at our local SHELTERS (and how dare they call them sheltersthey are prisons) and you think he might protect prisoners? IN my opinion, these people need no protection when they had little respect for whomever's innocent lives they destroyed to get themselves locked up. I for one have no sympathy for these horrible monsters when no one cares about their victims and all the other innocents that will suffer thru this stormhomeless people,,,stray animals.

In my opinion, when they committed their crime they gave up their rights.

Akin to a death sentence. The arrogance of our elected officials scare me to no end. No wonder there is sooooo much hate in this country.

I AM CONCERN ABOUT MY HUSBAND AT THE VERNON C.BAIN CENTER LOCATED ON THE WATER THE BIG PRISON BARGE. I MEAN OMG. THERE ON THE WATER!!!!

Some of the comments here are rather shocking. people are protesting allowing criminals to run riot on the street to attack normal people. But nobody is suggesting these prisoners should be released to evacuate themselves. The most sensible option I can see is to load them up on buses (handcuffed, of course), get them to the main land, and take them to other prisons nearby that arent in the high risk areas. Not release them that would be stupid but dont leave them there to die if everything goes to hell in a handbasket.

Rikers Island IS NOT a maximum security prison. Its a jail. 75%-80% of inmates are there waiting trial because they cant afford bail (fact). Meaning that at least 35%-40% are innocent and will be freed by the law. These inmates are human beings. Even the worst criminals as good Christians we should care and moved them to another jail not free them. There is enough time and enough money in NY state to relocate all inmates but we prefer to pay wars and others. Remember we are not living in what is called DEMOCRATIC country (please do your political system research takes only 2mins online or its just common sense) we live in what is called a semi democratic country which means non direct where the PEOPLE has no power or word to say. We dont directly vote for our president, we dont vote for our laws, we cant propose a law or go against a law (true and correct facts) instead of voting for human rights laws such as protecting our peoples. They politicians votes for gay marriage which not necessary at all since we already have domestic partnership. And if we are true to our values and respect equality and justice for all then this law opens doors to polygamy and marrying our own grandfathers grandmothers nieces cousin dogs or tables. I hate killers, child molesters and other criminals they kill our society but I wouldnt kill them because all of them on death row just want to die asap so let them not die and suffer in jail for the rest of their lives life in prison is a very good punishment good they dont like it they wanna die if we killed them they suffer only for less than 60 second and its over. And I dont support any type of killings but I do support torture for killers and child molester and rapist. We live in the best country for opportunity so lets take the opportunity to talk and stand. Dont forget that we are the best nation on earth with the greatest peoples. For your information the peoples in rikers are safe including the guards who will work at least 2 shifts and will have to bed there. Irene is now only category 1 the walls there are way tall enough. They say dont do the crime if u cant do the time. I would say dont do the crime cause its not worth the time. PEACE

Murderers, Rapists, Sexual Offenders, Armed Robbers Oh My!

I doubt they had much sympathy for those they afflicted their torture on or killed. But there will always some out there like all of you who think of such people. And because of it there will always be people like them.

They put themselves in prison, so let them drown like bloody rats!

Sucks to be them. Gives them time to think about what they did to belong there.

did he say he wasnt evacuating it because they were not worth evacuating or he is he not evacuating it because it is not in a danger zone? seems to me, he didnt say.

do they deserve a death sentence, no. Do I want them at my house, no. do I want them on the street, no.

again, why should he evacuate them if they are not in a danger zone?

for those outraged by people reading/writing on this blog it is all over the internet and hence asking us to read it. no where does it mention that I am reading a blog about prisoners rights which I think are too many (btw i am a bleeding heart liberal).

some people mention drugs as no big deal drugs kill sadly, they to often kill people ho dot use them.

someone mention driving under the influence as no big deal. tell that to my friend oh wait, you cant. hes dead, killed by a drunk driver.

i am all for redirecting these people with education (wish we would o this for ALL our citizens), but why spend ta payer money to move them if they are not in danger?

Ah well!! People should loose all rights when they go to prison including getting evacuated to be safe! They put people in danger and we should care for them because??? My wonderful tax dollars pay for these idiots to have Internet access, work for DMV behind bars, get pumped up, watch TV, play ball, etc. Please that sounds like a paid vacation to me.

Susan Swope its all down to what weather people are used to. You may have lived through many hurricanes, but most folks who live in the NE corner of the US probably havent. The parts of the country that are used to hurricanes almost totally grind to a halt when theres a sprinkling of snow. Not everyone has lived everywhere and you should cut them some slack.

Mayor M. Bloombergs is:

1.) going after MONEY and convenience sneaking through Americans / citizens law and turning it against many.

2.)Bloomberg is INHUMANE and I feel discuss to see, what nation is he shaping those who care for themselves only

3.) I feel DISCUSSED to be called CITIZEN on US in above problem

4.) Mayor M. Bloomberg possibly thinks, that natural (Hurricane Irene) disaster could in a smart way fix a little the financial economy .do not go there Bloomberg there could be a HUGE lawsuit against your words about RICKEYS ISLANDS 12000-17000 against you from associated families and friends or even business related people to ALL inmates and __! juveniles to NOT evacuate them under ANY circumstances like you said!

5.) I think this country is getting rotten lot faster than a decade before

to wish dead to those Citizens, who are majority NON violent, just waiting for a trail not having enough money (since all higher classes have them from their taxes!)

-Bloomberg declared its most likely OK (!) to dye for majority of 12000-17000 non violent juveniles, inmates

-how many people died in WTC on 9/11..? and we all regret that but as humans we are NOT OK to let politics rules over more or less 12000+ lives to perish in 2 nearest days, because Mayor Bloomberg said itd be OK!

-other counties are accepted as 51st state of USA, but bring more of unknown violence etp they were accepted to do what more money to build stronger economy?! <<<<SEE IT FROM THAT ANGLE

***.) Problem, that Mayor M. Bloomberg does NOT EVEN ATTEMPT to have ANY plan to evacuate a small Rickey's Island like one of the commentators @KurtLove666 said above in a comment

() "ANYONE arrested in the 5 boros of NYC can and usually does end up in Rikers Island, regardless of the severity of their crime. And once convicted of a crime, they MUST be taken to an upstate facility WITHIN 7 DAYS OF BEING SENTENCED. If you take the time to research reality, 82% of arrests fail to end up getting convictions, and 75%+ of those convictions are misdemeanors. So there are a LOT of people on Rikers that arent violent criminals, and there are a lot of people there that will not even get convicted of the crimes they are charged with. And, subsequently, a lot of people that have NOT done something so terrible that they belong there ()"

Anyone watch the Dark Knight? Kinda reminds me of that movie. Only the Joker wins in this one.

Man, Eliza S. I so hope your are right. this really could be a popcorn fart in the wind, to bring the ratings up for media coverage. Dont you just hate how everything is about money these days?

You all make no sense Who cares about them.. If they moved they out and the escape and kill people u will blame them for moving them out so get over it!!

I hope God is listening.

my fiance and best friend are in RIKERS awaiting trial, these two are innocent men caught in the wrong place wrong time. I dont believe Mayor Bloomberg has a heart but its ok, Ive always been taught the Devil is among us. My Prayers to all the innocent inmates awaiting trial & serving time for a evil deed they never committed. I Love my husband and pray to GOD that safety will be served to those in need.

Theres a huge difference between Katrina in New Orleans and Irene in NYC (if she gets there) It should be one helluva rainstorm, with likely flooding in some low lying areas. And in that much wind and rain really, where would you rather be in a solid built prison or a public bus?

Sure, there are a lot of people in jail who shouldnt be and even among those who are rightfully locked up there are horrible abuses of prisoners. Irene is one tempest that wont fit in a teapot, but I rather think this particular issue would.

I grew up on the east coast and weathered many hurricanes worse than what Irene is expected to deliver. I dont understand why there is such angst about this hurricane, unless I am misunderstanding its strength and threat.

As a category 1 or even category 2 hurricane, I dont understand the need to evacuate much of New York City, with or without Rikers Island. What am I missing?

Evacuation does not mean setting prisoners loose on the streets. I mean really, the few who voiced this concern-use a little sense. Gee

whiz.

Another blatant disregard for the Eighth Amendment the families of the prisoners should sue the Mayor for his stupidity!!!!

It seems as even if this doesn't harm the prison this time, it is just a matter of when it will happen and harm the island and prisoners. It seems very inhumane to leave people locked up with no way of fending for themselves. Not only is it inhumane, you will have legal trouble from now on. Besides, how can you just look the other way? They are prisoners, but geez, where is your compassion for living humans?

I'll say it again. There is no need to move the prisoners on Rikers Island, because it is not in the evacuation zone. There is no problem here. Nobody in any zone 2 which includes Rikers Island and many other areas has to move. It's considered sufficiently safe for all residents, prisoner or not. This is a made-up issue. Interesting that everybody just wants to condemn Bloomberg or curse all prisoners. It's simple enough. Rikers Island will not be evacuated because it is not in the evacuation zone. No issue here, folks. Move right along.

Wait, what? Our world renowned justice system did not hand most of these prisoners a death sentence. Their sentences are in accordance with their crimes. How does the governor suddenly have the power to issue a blanket death sentence to all of them? Pot growers, probation breakers (including failure to pay fines), Driving under the Influence all grouped in with murderers? God help us. According to the Christ this Christian nation follows, we should care for the least among us, and Visit the imprisoned. Now would be a good time.

Oh my should we let them go? Should we spend tax payer money on having them jetted off to another locale? Maybe we should give them a week vacation and tell all of them to just check back in at the prison in 2 weeks. Maybe even give them a few grand spending money. They can fend for themselves on their Island. Yes they are human but the government is not responsible for the individuals. The individuals make up the government. You have it wrong in thinking the Government is responsible for everything and then you complain about taxes and the Government. If it's such a tragedy then open up your homes and take responsibility for them by allowing to stay with you during the storm and if they take off then you return to the prison in their place. Ridiculous how so many Americans think they are entitled and so are the poor criminals. Nobody is entitled. Nobody. Work for what you have and for your freedoms and share with whom you chose not who you told to make sense?

Oh my should we let them go? Should we spend tax payer money on having them jetted off to another locale? Maybe we should give them a week vacation and tell all of them to just check back in at the prison in 2 weeks. Maybe even give them a few grand spending money. They can fend for themselves on their Island. Yes they are human but the government is not responsible for the individuals. The individuals make up the government. You have it wrong in thinking the Government is responsible for everything and then you complain about taxes and the Government. If it's such a tragedy then open up your homes and take responsibility for them by allowing to stay with you during the storm and if they take off then you return to the prison in their place. Ridiculous how so many Americans think they are entitled and so are the poor criminals. Nobody is entitled. Nobody. Work for what you have and for your freedoms and share with whom you chose not who you told to make sense?

Allow me to share a thought. If the prison is hit and something happens where lives are lost, aside from the civil suits that will follow. Think about what it will do psychologically to regular folks. They'll have even less regard for human life since they were left behind. I'm not talking about the sick and pathological criminals, but the ones caught with a sack of weed, shoplifting expensive pair of tennis shoes cause their friends have one. A warden in Oklahoma once said, We can't make prisoners better against their will, but we sure as hell can make them worse. I hope the NYC families will do a massive protest at the Mayor's office and demand he step down. This will not make him a hero, in fact he is no better than the people he apparently despises. I'm just a little ticked about this.

It's quite surprising how many Kill em all people are here on a blog that informs people about prison conditions. Clearly they have no real purpose in life if they are here taking the time to blog on an issue they don't care about. That's pretty pathetic. That's why this country is going to hell, because people will pause from their busy day just to kick a guy when he is down. It must feel good! Blog masturbation. Go help an old lady across the street if you're so Holier Than Thou and perfect.

And talking about soft- I bet you all wouldn't last 10 minutes in Rikers without having your breakfast taken from you.

The taxpayers pay enough into the corrections industry. They should have plans in place; if not, they should be held accountable. That said, if the worst-case scenario occurs a la Katrina, we'll be sure to repeat the same lethargy and ignore planning until the next tragedy/travesty. And again, no one will be held accountable.

Clearly, this is called population control. God's way.

All of the bleeding heart liberals here should open up their homes to a prisoner or two so these poor unfortunate human beings have somewhere to go.

Lost for words with this.

criminal scumbags let em rot ! ESP MUDERERS,,, !!

these people are someones loved ones , no matter what they have done they should not be treated like animals. Their day will come before a Judge or God

@Left behind victim of murder

Clearly you have NO CLUE what you are talking about. ANYONE arrested in the 5 boros of NYC can and usually does end up in Rikers Island, regardless of the severity of their crime. And once convicted of a crime, they MUST be taken to an upstate facility WITHIN 7 DAYS OF BEING SENTENCED. If you take the time to research reality, 82% of arrests fail to end up getting convictions, and 75%+ of those convictions are misdemeanors. So there are a LOT of people on Rikers that aren't violent criminals, and there are a lot of people there that will not even get convicted of the crimes they are charged with. And, subsequently, a lot of people that have NOT done

something so terrible that they belong there.

You said Its no wonder the country is going down the toilet with every one so soft and sad for the people who add to its destruction. and I say the problem with this country is people that overreact and are oversensitive and have a personal agenda or vendetta against someone or something and use public forums to further their cause. Make sure you know what you are talking about BEFORE you open your mouth next time.

Its a very tough decision to make and I will not judge Bloomberg for making it. I can only pray that all human beings are kept safe through out this storm.

Despite our feelings toward the EVIL that resides behind prison bars, there are others who are NOT evil. Those who made a mistake and those who have yet to be convicted, including children.

I am by NO means condoning EVIL acts and behavior, but the death of a thousand for the crimes of a few is no way to run things. Hopefully an evacuation plan can be addressed so that this doesnt happen again.

If they would stop putting people in Jail for drugsand only for violent crimes/robbery/sex crimes/corporate crimes.then I would be all for thisand all for advertising how inhumane things can be.

How do you geniuses propose safely moving 17,000 prisoners?

I hope they all drown. Criminal scum.

Bloombergs doing the smartest thing he can. What other option does he have? Moving tons of murderers and child molesters is a very dangerous task. Maybe they wont be safe out there as the storm passes, but us law-abiding citizens are going to be safer without a possibility of a handful of murderers with an opportunity to get loose in NYC in what is expected to be a bad aftermath of the passing storm.

Just another example of how the elitists minds work. They dont care for those that are lower in the economical stance. Im appalled that they would do such a thing to fellow citizens, in prison or not!

sorry.. but i would hate to have the killers, pedophiles, mentally unstable etc released to the streets again.. to kill and rape more innocent people in your family and mine!.. let those convicted stay there so that we can continue to be granted some measure of safety from them. did they treat their victims humanely?

Just because some of these people committed crimes, were tried, convicted, sentenced , and sent to Rikers Island, does not mean they are less deserving of basic human decency. Two wrongs never make a right. Revenge and justice are not one and the same. Please, Mayor Bloomberg, show basic human decency and evacuate these people and get them out of the line of fire.

Well not much to say about the state of the human race.I do agree with the one comment indeed we are all animals and the only species that kills,neglects and abuses it own kind.

To treat people inhumanly only enhances the underlying ills and creates further hostility.

Truly deeply ashamed to be equated with these neanderthal gene carrying sub-species.

Forgive them for they know what they do is wrong

Rikers Island is in zone 2, which is not in the evacuation zone. There are other islands in zone 2, such a Roosevelt Island, which are also not evacuating. The Mayor did not say that his administration would not evacuate Rikers Island if the conditions grew dangerous enough to warrant it. The fact that Rikers Island is not highlighted on the map does not indicate that it isnt to be evacuated under any circumstances. Rather, it means it is not a residential place, with people freely living there that need to make the decision to stay or get out.

There are juveniles there & people just waiting for trial that havent been convicted of anything at all. There is also petty criminals there for things like drugs & theft. Not to mention the people that work there. I can understand people being less than sympathetic towards violent offenders, but that is only a small portion of the people there.

I know someone who is pretrial and detained on Rikers right now, so of course I am worried. Thank you, CWG, for your research, it makes me feel better. The person I know has never killed or raped anyone and would do better with a compassionate (but firm) rehabilitation program than being sent to criminal college (as he calls it) again and again to meet more partners in crime. I dont pretend to know all of the answers, and I think it would take a massive movement to change the punitive system we have here in America, but it would be nice to know that people have taken the time to at least come up with some kind of evacuation plan. Maybe multiple-tiered leaving the most difficult (due to behavior, not medical issues) to be evacuated last. But thats just my two cents.

Rikers Island is absolutely not a maximum security prison, as some ill-informed commentor stated above. It is a jail, which is a very different story. A jail does not house anyone convicted of a felony with a sentence of more than 12 months. Further, the vast majority of inmates are awaiting trial there because they cant afford bail. Even if you harbor no compassion or have any care about inmates rights to safety, at least get your story right.

As someone that has had family members in jails, i wouldnt evacuate them either. It is no different than opening the cages of a zoo, and letting all the wild animals out to prey on the regular population. They are there because they deserve to be there. And as someone that has been a victim of violent crime i can tell you this, the inmates have more rights than the people they victimize, i agree with bloomberg, let them drown, then we wont have to continue to pay for them.

Granted many of the prisoners are there for a reason, they broke the law. BUT what about those that have been accused, but not convicted and awaiting trial? What about the corrections officers that will be stuck there for who knows how long? As for those in there serving time, regardless of what crime they committed, how can they be treated less than humane? The city needs to have some kind of plan to put them in another facility! And no I am not a bleeding heart liberal, but I do believe in humanity!

Hey, if you cant do the time, dont do the crime and the time may include having to endure the ineptitude of the people running the prison system

I just checked the topographical data for Rikers and the National Hurricane Centers storm surge risk profile, and it seems that in the worst-case scenario (if NYC took a direct hit from a category 3 hurricane), parts of Rikers island would flood, but the vast majority of structures would not be at risk. The bulk of the island is about 25 above sea level, with the eastern part reaching heights of >60. In a direct hit under a category 3 storm, the island would be at risk of 22-24 surges. While thats not a great safety buffer, both the track of the storm taking it directly over the east river, and the strength of the storm maintaining cat. 3 winds that far up the coast are highly unlikely. That said, its very disturbing that the city does not have an island-wide evacuation plan as the unthinkable is (remotely) possible.

Thank you for this valuable information!

THEY DESERVE TO DIE!

My 16year old son sits on Rikers Islandwith Juvinelle Diabeties and petrified that he will die on the hell hole Rikers island. When i called and spoke with a Rikers employeeshe simply said oh we good over here. There is no love or concern for inmates we have yet to be more outraged about this and rise up

If I had a son or daughter in prison as many mothers do, I would be filled with huge rage. I am an activist for abolishing capital punishment, partly on principle and partly because I have come to know someone on death row who is more full and whole a human being than many people I could name. But what hope is there for acknowledging the value of the life of a death row inmate in the light of a blatant affront like this?

May God protect those locked away. May God grant the mayor sense to move the prisoners out of harms way. God heal hearts, minds & spirits so that we may move in your righteous way & not look down at people because they are prisoners. But treat them like the human beings they are. Amen.

He is the epitome of arrogance!

Awww. Such a shame for the prisoners. So many people are standing up for them. Comparing them to being treated like animals. Poor, tough luck.

They ARE mostly animals and there is one in side those walls I hope does drown in his own shit filled cell. Get a grip people. Its RIKERS ISLAND! The majority of people there are there because it is a MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON and they have done some thing so terrible that they belong there. It isnt a vacation and it isnt somewhere they put petty larceny or silly non violent criminals.

Its no wonder the country is going down the toilet with every one so soft and sad for the people who add to its destruction.

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So Bloomberg could in effect be giving these prisoners a death sentence.I am highly upset by this news. How dare he and what gives him the right??

I am reading all these comments worrying about the inmates and how inhumane this is, but not one comment about the correction officers. Did we forget that they will also be there? Did we forget that some of them will work double or triple shifts, because the city is shutting down public transportation at 12pm on Saturday. Yes, it is wrong to have no plan, but not just for the inmates, but also the men and women who work there. Maybe a little concern for them as well.

leave any convicted of rape, child abuse or murder..remove the rest!!

Well I hope no one escapes from there then we have more problems than we can handle especially if that hurricane hits New York but I wish to believe in the best so lets believe that it wont hit.Take precautions though anything can happen

Lets just let them all loose to run away,for their safety,of course.

We will sue them to death if anything happens to our loved ones.

Lawsuit in the making.

Thank you for posting this. I have been sitting here wondering what is going to happen to inmates if Irene actually produces the chaos that people think it will. What happened after Katrina? To the inmates that suffered? Were they able to file suits against the prisons for leaving them?

How is it possible that there is no legislation in place that protects inmates during events like this? I wish I could say this treatment shocks me. I wonder what advocates need to do in order to prevent situations like this from happening in the future. Getting legislation passed that protects inmates during natural disasters seems like a very important thing to add to the itinerary.

Inhumane.

this would never be an ethical or moral choice no matter the offense of the inmate, but in reality, the majority of those in prison have yet to even be convicted and are in fact awaiting trial. so no one can write off these people as scum or deserving of this fate.

This is shocking, these people are still human. Treating them in this way is not a positive move forward for anyone involved in the correctional facilities, either prisoners or staff. The fear and anger that will be created will only exacerbate existing problems.

There is no end to the inhumanity of our nation.

This is horrible and outrageous, but somehow that doesn't surprise me. People don't consider prisoners any better than animals. My prayers are with everyone effected by this hurricane but especially those that are left locked up with no way of escaping what could be their deaths.

I think that what we're seeing is the state of mind necessary to keep people in prison at all.

It is sad to have to witness a public figure aggravatedly dismiss the interest in the welfare of those imprisoned. They have families and are citizens of this state. For our government to publicly acknowledge that there are people vulnerable to the catastrophe who could be killed if the impact is as bad as expected and do anything about it, is committing a crime as well. Mayor Bloomberg's arrogance toward another possible tragic experience makes me wonder whose best interest does he really have in mind.

This is the standard response to prison hazards in a nation that regards prisoners as less than human and less deserving of care or respect than stray dogs. When an earthquake struck our local jail, cracking concrete walls and ceilings, the entire staff, guards and all, fled the building without a thought for the prisoners they left behind.

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