

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/09/29/amnesty-international-releases-report-condemning-california-prison-isolation-units/>

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by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | September 29, 2012

On Thursday, September 27, Amnesty International published its report on the conditions of California's supermax units, entitled *The Edge of Endurance: Conditions in California's Security Housing Units*. The Security Housing Units (SHUs), which currently house over 3,000 inmates in predominantly single-cell isolation, hold inmates in small cells for at least 22 1/2 hours every day. The report notes that hundreds of inmates will spend over 10 years in these isolation units, where they are prohibited from participating in group activities including religious and rehabilitative programs. The report primarily focuses on the SHUs at Pelican Bay State Prison and California State Prison, Corcoran, though it also touches on the use of the SHU in women's prisons.

The report covers the conditions of the standard SHU units, the long-term effects of isolation, the criterion used for SHU placement, mental health treatment, and offers recommendations.

The report also cites the October 24, 2011, suicide of Pelican Bay inmate [Alex Machado](#), who was being housed in Pelican Bay's Administrative Segregation Unit, an isolation unit that often serves as an overflow of the SHU pending SHU cell openings. Machado was put in the ASU despite exhibiting psychotic symptoms and previously attempting suicide. According to the report, between 2006 and 2010, 42 percent of California prison suicides occurred inside one of the many isolation units.

Among the recommendations are:

The full 68-page report can be read [here](#).

Solitary Watch's extensive coverage of solitary confinement in California, including the voices of prisoners in isolation, can be accessed [here](#).

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

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

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Thank you for this information. I have been following it on the media. It is a cruel and inhuman treatment that violates the essential rights of a human person. I appreciate the information.

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