

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/01/11/the-guantanamos-next-door/>

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | January 11, 2012

The U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay turns 10 today, and activists are marking the anniversary with [protests](#) and [petitions, reports](#) and [retrospectives](#). A decade after its founding, Guantanamo remains a dark stain on the national soul.

Even today, while the worst [instances of torture](#) may have ceased under the Obama Administration, prisoners are still subjected to solitary confinement and other forms of deprivation and abuse. According to a February 2009 report from the [Center of Constitutional Rights](#): The descriptions of ongoing, severe solitary confinement, other forms of psychological abuse, incidents of violence and the threat of violence from guards, religious abuse, and widespread forced tube-feeding of hunger strikers indicate that the inhumane practices of the Bush Administration persist today at Guantanamo.

Then there's the fact that the prisoners at Guantanamo have been deprived of their liberty without any semblance of due process. Over the last decade, 779 prisoners have been held at Gitmo; 171 remain. Only six have ever been convicted of a crime.

When it comes to depriving people of their human and civil rights, Guantanamo stands as an unprecedented extreme. But it is far from the only place where these things happen. Today, in our cities and towns, in every state in America, there are places where individuals are incarcerated without trial, and where they suffer deprivation and abuse. They are our local jails.

Take the issue of pre-trial detention. According to the [Pre-Trial Justice Institute](#), a full 61% of U.S. jail inmates—nearly half a million in all—have not yet been convicted of any crime. Many have not even been *accused* of a violent crime. The majority of them are in jail because they cannot afford the modest bail required for their release. A [2010 study](#) by Human Rights Watch looked at defendants in New York City arrested on nonfelony charges. Most were accused of nonviolent minor crimes such as shoplifting, turnstile jumping, smoking marijuana in public, drug possession, trespassing, and prostitution. It found that 87 percent were incarcerated because they were unable to post the bail amount at their arraignment, even though bail had been set at \$1,000. These defendants faced weeks, months, or years in pre-trial confinement for no reason other than poverty.

While awaiting trial, these individuals face appallingly [overcrowded](#) conditions, [inadequate food](#) and far worse. On New York City's [Rikers Island](#), nearly one in twelve prisoners is held in solitary confinement at any given time; the jail maintains two isolation units specifically for inmates with mental illness, and another for juveniles. Pre-trial solitary is routinely used on underaged inmates, to separate from the adult jail population; [one report](#) out of Texas found juveniles in the Harris County Jail spending a year or more in complete isolation. In the most extreme cases such as that of [Syed Fahad Hashmi](#), pre-trial detainees are held under Special Administrative Measures that constitute acute sensory deprivation.

Solitary confinement is not the only form of torment that detainees face in local jails. A [recent report](#) by the ACLU's National Prison Project showed a pattern of brutal abuse, carried out by sheriffs' deputies, in the Los Angeles County jail system: In the past year, deputies have assaulted scores of non-resisting inmates. Deputies have attacked inmates for complaining about property missing from their cells. They have beaten inmates for asking for medical treatment, for the nature of their alleged offenses, and for the color of their skin. They have beaten inmates in wheelchairs. They have beaten an inmate, paraded him naked down a jail module, and placed him in a cell to be sexually assaulted. Many attacks are unprovoked. Nearly all go unpunished: these acts of violence are covered up by a department that refuses to acknowledge the pervasiveness of deputy violence in the jail system.

America's criminal justice system has deteriorated to the point that it is a national disgrace, said Senator Jim Webb, using a phrase that has often been applied to Guantanamo Bay. But just as it has thwarted any attempts to close Gitmo, the U.S. Congress has [blocked](#) all of Webb's attempts to propel the kinds of domestic criminal justice reforms that might have kept local jails from remaining Gitmos in our own backyard.

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 [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

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http://rockcenter.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/02/08/10354553-israel-teams-with-terror-group-to-kill-irans-nuclear-scientists-us-officials-tell-nbc-news

Israel teams with terror group to kill Irans nuclear scientists, U.S. officials tell NBC News.

The Iranians see what's happening as terrorism and hypocrisy by the United States. They have forwarded documents and other evidence to the United Nations and directly to the United States, they say.

I think this is very cynical plan. This is unacceptable, said Larijani. This is a bad trend in the world. Unprecedented. We should kill scientists to block a scientific program? I mean this is disaster!

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/12/12/v-fullstory/2631593/the-greening-of-guantanamo.html>

So they are still enhancing the site, so it seems very unlikely that they are closing.

And then there is the finding of copy of the Al-Qaidas magazine Inspire to inspire greater scrutiny to legal mail bound for alleged terrorists held at Guantanamo.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/01/18/2595669/al-qaida-magazine-discovered-in.html>

Why would anyone send something like that? Sounds like an episode of Rubicon.

Morning Joe:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3036789/ns/msnbc_tv-morning_joe/#46038822

you need to at least get in their (Iranians) shoes and say, how does this look? that assassination program, whoever is doing it, you're an expert on this, David, isn't that really wild and off the charts?

>> its extreme covert action. every source i've talked to in the u.s. government has said, were not doing this. there may be a lot of things we are doing but were not going out with motorcycles attaching bombs to the sides of cars in tehran.

>> we are not doing it but someone is doing it. we have to face the fact and i think the secretary of state, clinton, came close to facing it, that this really is a degradation of international affairs.. i think we know who is doing it and i think we have influence and capacity to make it clear it should not be done, point number one. point number two

the iranians have not crossed that line to building a weapon. they are assembling all the pieces they need to build a weapon. the estimates are typically one plus years out to assemble a weapon. the problem with brinkmanship is you have to go to the brink. were all talking about the fact, gee, this looks like the brink. that's the way these negotiations work.

>> dr. brzezinski, did i hear you say three? 1 to 3 years estimate?

>> yeah. 1 to 3 years.

>> that's an estimate. they don't know. if it turns out we discover there are other facilities in iran they didn't know about working on these programs, it's up in the air.

>> Columbia has tabulated since 1984, every year they have predicted it would be the next year.

>> one of these years, they're going to be right.

@Barri sent you an email with respect Carl ToersBijns

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/17/world/asia/thai-police-in-bangkok-seize-bomb-making-material.html?_r=1&ref=todayspaper

the United States Embassy said it stood by its emergency message issued Friday, saying terrorists might be planning attacks against tourist areas in Bangkok in the near future.

The case appears to center on a Lebanese man, identified as Atris Hussein, who was arrested at Bangkok's main airport on Thursday evening as he tried to leave the country. The Thai authorities said his arrest came after a tip from Israeli intelligence agents, who warned that a group of people who appeared to be from Hezbollah were planning to strike tourist sites in Bangkok in mid-January.

Thai officials said Mr. Hussein was himself a member of Hezbollah, the Iran-backed group based in Lebanon that the United States and Israel consider a terrorist organization. Hezbollah denied that he was a member.

The treat is real! But what is the motive?

Targeted assassinations of Iranian citizens, cyber attacks, or the false evidence planted by Israel that make it seem that we support Jundallah a terrorist group that is targeting Iranians? Or all of the above?

Where will such terrorist operators end up? Guantanamo?

False Flag
by Mark Perry

Israel is supposed to be working with us, not against us. If they want to shed blood, it would help a lot if it was their blood and not ours. You know, they're supposed to be a strategic asset. Well, guess what? There are a lot of people now, important people, who just don't think that's true.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/13/false_flag?page=full

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2002/01/10/v-fullstory/277564/a-new-alcatraz-rises-guantanamo.html>

the Joint Task Force will add more buildings to accommodate up to 2,000 high-security prisoners an inexplicably large number, considering that by Wednesday reports from the region showed only 364 Afghan, Taliban and al Qaeda prisoners held by U.S. forces.

But not inexplicable if they plan to house terrorists that would respond to any attack on Iran. Tensions are rising daily in the region, enough so that the US had to warn Israel against attacking Iran according to today's WSJ article.

Carl I have a friend in ADX, could you email me so as I can put you in touch: barri.john@ntlworld.com

Congress should have the courage to look into these symptoms of a flawed justice system and take action through careful reforms that prevent this kind of abuse and neglect in our prisons as well as all local jails. They have ignored this problem too long now and too many are suffering at the hands of those who abuse their authority to incarcerate

Reblogged this on [nigh](#).

I think it is not the same in our shu units at all.

Gitmo prisoners have much better access to health care, group worship, group exercise, stimulation to help prevent mental breakdowns and higher quality food.

The Gitmo prisoners are treated much better than our own citizens and we justify it as those shu inmates are the worst of the worst.

They are people and they deserve humane treatment by those in charge of their care.

To hear that inmates are beaten, starved, humiliated and otherwise abused makes me wonder why we allow this to continue to happen while turning a blind eye.

Many in jails have not even been convicted of anything and may be there for no-violent offences.

What if it were your loved one suffering abuse and nobody cared?

In my experience and research I find there is sufficient Abu Ghraib DNA in many of our state and local prisons/jails because of cultural biases, abuse and neglect that are being deliberately ignored and unspoken because of society's insensitivity to such topics or matters. Look at the LA Jail and the Maricopa Jail and see a reflection of Abu Ghraib. Those who say no are in denial and will never face the truth. Kudos to this website for it brings all the horrific and tragedies together for us to benefit from and learn how government has changed into circles of abuse rather than the justice it was designed to provide for all of us per the constitution. (not capitalized on purpose as its meaning has been downgraded to be self-serving to government officials and not individuals lately)

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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