

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | February 2, 2014



The following roundup features noteworthy news, reports and opinions on solitary confinement from the past week that have not been covered in other Solitary Watch posts.

In its latest set of proposed rule changes, California prison officials announced that gang validated individuals [will now have a process to wipe that classification off their record](#). It will take gang associates about ten years to qualify, and gang leaders at least 14 years. Many advocates and people on the inside consider the procedures for validation arbitrary and inadequate despite its substantial consequences, like being put in solitary confinement for years and years.

In a [letter to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice](#), the states largest prison guard union requested a partial end to the use of solitary confinement on death row, stating that both guards and individuals on the inside would benefit from the change.

The *San Francisco Bay View* has [printed a letter](#) from someone inside Corocans SHU claiming that coercive journaling has been required for some people to step-down from solitary into general population. According to the author, the self-directed journaling amounts to a systematic and progressive brainwashing initiative with the ultimate aim of character invalidation.

In *The Nation*, civil rights attorney Pardiss Kebraie outlines why solitary confinement is as much a human rights issue as the more visible kinds of torture that occurred at Guantanamo Bay: The image of [Fahad Hashmis] torture is not that of a person being led around an interrogation room on a dog leash, or held in a stress position with heavy-metal music blasting. It is a person sitting still in a small cell, slowly deteriorating in a modern prison on the outskirts of a small Colorado town.

Also in *The Nation*, Jeanne Theoharis and Sally Eberhardt contrast President Obamas pledge to end waterboarding and shutter CIA black sites, with the other manifestations of torture he has condoned notably the extreme conditions of isolation endured by individuals prosecuted for terrorism on US soil.

Bonnie Kerness and Jamie Bissonette Lewey, both of the American Friends Service Committee, published *Race and the Politics of Isolation in U.S. Prisons* in the [Atlantic Journal of Communication](#).

The Sacramento Bee published an editorial condemning the death of Joseph Duran in Mule Creek State Prison this past September. Duran, who had been placed in isolation in a mental illness crisis cell, died after guards used the food slot to dose his cell with pepper spray. After the spraying, a prison doctor requested that Duran be extracted from his cell and his breathing tube cleaned, but guards refused and Duran was found dead several hours later.

People with mental illness are increasingly populating the states administrative segregation units, according to the [Texas Civil Rights Project](#). The organization learned through a public information request that while the overall population in administrative segregation has decreased by 14% since 2011, the number of individuals with mental illness in administrative segregation has increased by 17% people with mental illness now make up 32% of the administrative segregation population.

Bret Grote and Dustin McDaniel from the Abolitionist Law Center talk about mass incarceration and the case of long-term solitary

resident Russell Maroon Shoatz on the most recent [Jurist](#) podcast.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. Shes written for the New York Times, Wired, BuzzFeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her [@stahlidarity](#) and at [stahlidarity.com](#).

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

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

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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