

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Lisa Dawson](#) | July 14, 2013



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.

According to the [tally](#) kept by *The Miami Herald*, 81 of the 166 men held captive at Guantanamo are now hunger-striking, with 45 being force-fed and three hospitalized. *The New York Times* [reports](#) that, while a federal judge ruled that she had no power to order the military to halt the force-feeding of a detainee, the judge urged President Obama to address the hunger strike.

MSNBC [reports](#) on the use of isolation in U.S. prisons, stating that [s]olitary confinement is not a punishment only the most hardened and dangerous criminals have to endure. In the United States, more than 81,000 people are being held in isolation cells, sometimes for years on end.

The Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) and Jails Action Coalition [announce](#) that activists in New York are participating in a rolling fast to express their solidarity with the thousands who are on hunger strike at Pelican Bay and other California prisons. The fast began on July 8, on the same day as the California hunger strike, and will continue as long as the prison hunger strike continues. Solitary Watch reports on the hunger strike [here](#) and [here](#).

Following the launch of the mass prison hunger strike in the state of California, *ProPublica* [reports](#) on the issue of force-feeding on U.S. soil, stating that [a]s lawmakers call for an end to the force-feeding of Guantanamo detainees, the California strike serves as a reminder: inmates on U.S. soil can ultimately be given the same treatment.

In a [recent piece](#) on the ACLU's blog, Raphael Sperry, President of Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility, writes on the meaning of the prison hunger strikes from the perspective of an architect. Sperry writes, Frankly, there are some buildings that never should have been built: buildings that constitute human rights violations by their very existence. Prisons intended for prolonged solitary confinement should also never be built.

Democracy Now! [reports](#) on the statewide prison hunger strike in California, stating that hunger strike participants are calling for an end to long-term solitary confinement, improved food quality and increased access to education programs and healthcare services. Guest Shane Bauer discusses inhumane prison conditions from California to Iran.

The Nation [reports](#) on the mass hunger strike in California, launched July 8 by tens of thousands of people incarcerated throughout the state, noting that hunger strike participants are calling for an end to prolonged solitary confinement and inhumane conditions in prison.

Los Angeles Times [covers](#) reports of retaliation by corrections officials following the launch of the California prison hunger strike. According to the story, State prisoners said Wednesday evening that corrections officials are threatening to search their cells, seize their food stashes and possibly move them to solitary confinement if they continue their meal strike.

National Radio Project [reports](#) on solitary confinement in a show featuring firsthand accounts of life in solitary confinement from nine formerly incarcerated people who describe what it's like not to talk to or touch another person, for years at a time.

The Colorado Independent [reports](#) that prison officials in Colorado acknowledge that the murder of corrections chief Tom Clements is connected to solitary confinement policies. The article states, If nothing else, Clements' death is more evidence that solitary confinement

isn't just an abstract ethical and legal question about torture and the evolving standards of human decency as defined by the 8th Amendment. It is, as Clements argued, an issue of immediate public safety.

Lisa Dawson served as an assistant editor, social media manager, and contributor at Solitary Watch. She continues to support prisoners and their family members who need help navigating re-entry. She is on Twitter [@endsolitary](#).

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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P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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