

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Lisa Dawson](#) | June 15, 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*, 104 of the 166 men held captive at Guantanamo are now on hunger strike, with 44 being force-fed and two hospitalized. *The Miami Herald* also [reports](#) that the House of Representatives, disregarding a White House veto threat, has passed a \$638 billion defense bill that would block President Barack Obama from closing the military prison.

PBS Frontline [reports](#) on the abusive use of solitary confinement in the United States, citing the recent critical [findings](#) of two separate investigations by the DOJ (covered by Solitary Watch [here](#)) and the GAO (covered by Solitary Watch [here](#)), noting that both reports mark an historic level of scrutiny of the use of isolation.

Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity [reports](#) that California's new solitary confinement policy is a human rights disaster, stating that the new program keeps most of the objectionable elements of the old program and adds some new elements which make it even worse.

Cell-Out Arizona [reports](#) on AFSC Arizona's response to a statement made by Charles Ryan, Arizona DOC Director, claiming that solitary confinement doesn't exist in Arizona prisons. The story states that this claim demonstrates either a misunderstanding or deliberate obfuscation on Director Ryan's part of what constitutes solitary confinement.

Cell-Out Arizona [reports](#) on racial disparities and prejudice in Arizona supermax prisons, stating that not only are people of color more likely to end up in prison, but once in an Arizona prison the chances of ending up in long-term isolation are also higher!

BBC News [reports](#) on steps that people held in solitary confinement can take to mitigate the potentially psychologically devastating effects of isolation, concluding with the words of a man who experienced solitary firsthand: And smile and be happy and don't be afraid of anybody.

Huffington Post Live [discusses](#) the recent exposures of inhumane conditions in prisons around the country with noted criminal justice and prison reform advocates, including Lois Ahrens of the Real Cost of Prisons Project and Peter Wagner of Prison Policy Initiative.

San Francisco Bay View [reports](#) that, with weeks before statewide hunger strikes are set to resume, the CDCR has implemented a new policy at Pelican Bay State Prison which requires guards to conduct welfare checks on people held in SHU every 30 minutes, resulting in chronic sleep deprivation for prisoners in solitary confinement.

ArchDaily [reports](#) on Roman Mars' recent [discussion](#) on the ethics of architects taking on jobs that call for the design of prisons to hold people in solitary confinement or that contain execution chambers. Solitary Watch covers the *Alternatives to Incarceration / Prison Design Boycott Campaign* in a [guest post](#) by Raphael Sperry.

CounterPunch [reports](#) on judicial ignorance and bias in the case of Ahmed Abu Ali, currently held in government-imposed Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) at ADX, the notorious federal supermax in Colorado.

The Associated Press [reports](#) that advocacy group The Promise of Justice Initiative has filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of three people held on death row at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, stating that the men are forced to live in poorly-ventilated cells that lack air conditioning, and average temperatures exceed 95 degrees during the summer.

The Atlantic [reports](#) on the recent revelations on the systemic abuse and neglect of inmates, and especially mentally ill inmates in prisons.

around the country, concluding that in our zeal to dehumanize criminals we have allowed our prisons to become medieval places of unspeakable cruelty so far beyond constitutional norms that they are barely recognizable.

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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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