

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | July 24, 2016

[United Nations](#) representatives and human rights experts are calling on governments to implement the Revised Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules. The revised rules have more specific provisions on solitary confinement, defining it as the confinement of prisoners for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact; restricting the scope for application of solitary confinement; and defining prolonged solitary confinement as solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

[The Center for American Progress](#) issued a short post about mass incarceration of people with disabilities, including the use of isolation. Many inmates with disabilities are held in solitary confinement reportedly, in many cases, for their own protection, due to a lack of appropriate alternative accommodations.

A New York teenager has [filed a lawsuit](#) against the Auburn County Jail, after being sentenced to 50 days in solitary for throwing items and making spitballs made with wet tissue paper. Placing him in solitary confinement is inhumane, cruel, shocks the conscience and is disproportionate to his alleged offense, wrote public interest lawyer Josh Cotter, from Legal Services of Central New York. His client, Jermaine Gotham, is 16.

[Slate](#) published a short film about solitary confinement. Filmmaker [Cali Bondad](#) and reporter [Gabrielle Canon](#) spoke to some of the men at supermax [Pelican Bay State Prison](#) in Crescent City, California about their experiences in solitary. It's not to the point where you want to commit suicide, says one prisoner, before breaking down into tears and admitting there are times that he wishes he had received the death penalty.

The New York Times published [an editorial](#) supporting the recently-announced plans to move 16 and 17-year-olds off Rikers Island to a dedicated jail in the Bronx. Many young people have spent long periods of time in isolation on Rikers Island, including Kalief Browder, whose experiences of solitary at the jail and eventual suicide brought the issue onto the national stage.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. She's 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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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