

# 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](#) | June 26, 2016

Judge Esla Alcala, a member of Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, [filed an opinion](#) expressing great concern about the use of the death penalty in the state, including automatic placement in solitary on death row. I have gone to death row and I have seen those cells, and I cant fathom living in a situation like that. So I think it is facially plausible that that can rise to the level of cruel and unusual if you have essentially been living in a little box for 20 or 30 years.

[Medium](#) published a video and accompanying article about solitary confinement, called Our Voices Are Rarely Heard.

People held in immigration detention in the Essex County Correctional Facility in New Jersey are [being punished with solitary confinement](#) on an inconsistent and excessive basis, according to a recently released [report](#). In 2013, according to the study, 39 percent of all incidents leading to solitary confinement were related to frustration over jail conditions whether it be concerns over food, language accessibility, television policies, or desire to speak with federal immigration officials.

Writing for [Truth-Out](#), Victoria Law examines the fight against solitary both inside and outside of prison and the aftermath of isolation for those who have experienced it long-term. Brian Nelson spent 23 years in solitary, and is now a prisoners rights coordinator for the Uptown Peoples Law Center in Chicago. I get paranoid. I cannot be in a crowded room. I rip my fingernails off until they bleed, he said.

Nebraska is due to see [new rules](#) with regards to solitary confinement come into effect on July 1. Ombudsman Marshall Lux recently told the Department of Correctional Services Special Investigative Committee that the new policy had some positives changes, but that it doesnt go far enough. Once they get that label that theyre a risk, its very hard for the inmate to get that erased that has not changed.

The Justice Department has [reached a deal](#) with Mississippi that will for the first time require a local government to take steps to reduce mass incarceration. Measures incorporated into the agreement with Hinds County include a shift away from solitary confinement.

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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