

Human Rights Day 2013

Solitary Confinement in an Age of Mass Incarceration Statewide Action across New York State

*Join the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) and
National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)
in Confronting Solitary Confinement as Torture this Human Rights Day, December 10.*

What You Need to Know About Solitary in NY

Solitary Confinement is Inhumane, Counterproductive, and an Extension of Mass Incarceration

People in isolated confinement spend 22 to 24 hours a day locked in a cell the size of an elevator, alone or with one other person. They may be permitted one hour to exercise alone in a cage. They do not receive any meaningful programs or therapy, and cannot make phone calls. The sensory deprivation, lack of normal human interaction, and extreme idleness can lead to intense suffering and severe psychological damage.

People of Color are Disproportionately Held in Solitary Confinement

On any given day, as many as 4,200 men, women, and children are in solitary confinement and other forms of extreme isolation in New York State prisons. Thousands of others are in solitary in other local city and county jails across the state, as well as in Federal prisons and immigration detention centers in the state. Black and Latino men, women, and children are held in isolation at even more disproportionate rates than in the general prison population. The vast majority of people in isolation are there because of alleged non-violent conduct.

People are in Solitary Confinement for Months, Years, and Even Decades

New York places **no limit** on time in solitary confinement. Most people sent to isolation spend months or years there. Some individuals have been in solitary confinement in New York's prisons for more than two decades. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has denounced solitary confinement exceeding 15 days.

Even Particularly Vulnerable Groups are Subjected to Solitary Confinement

Children or people with mental illness fare even worse in "the box"—yet they are disproportionately likely to end up there. Even pregnant women, elderly people, and people with severe physical disabilities are held in isolation in NYS. Members of the LGBTQI community have suffered additional staff abuse by being placed in solitary confinement.

What CAIC Demands that Our Officials Do

- **Fundamentally transform the response to people's needs and problematic behaviors**, from deprivation and isolation to additional support, programs, and therapy. The response, both in prisons and our communities, must be one that is humane and effective.
- **Stop placing people in solitary confinement.**
- **At a minimum, ensure no person is ever held in isolated confinement beyond 15 days**, and drastically restrict the criteria that can result in such placement.
- **Never place particularly vulnerable people in solitary for even one day**, including the young, elderly, or pregnant, those with a disability or mental health need, or who identify as LGBTQI.

What You Can Do and Can Encourage Others to Do on Human Rights Day

LEARN the facts about solitary and other forms of prison isolation in New York at:

www.nycaic.org

www.boxedinny.org

www.solitarywatch.com

www.nycjac.org

www.correctionalassociation.org

www.nreat.org/ny-prisons

JOIN the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement at www.nycaic.org. CAIC holds monthly meetings in person and by teleconference and engages in action, vigils, workshops, and advocacy. Please sign up for our monthly email newsletter at www.eepurl.com/CjxOv, or join a working listserv by sending an email to ny_caic-subscribe@lists.riseup.net. You can also follow CAIC on Twitter www.twitter.com/nycaic or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NYCAIC.

SHARE a story on your Facebook from CAIC's Facebook page www.facebook.com/NYCAIC.

SHARE a narrative on CAIC's Facebook/website about how solitary confinement has impacted you or a friend or family member. You can email such narratives to Suzanne Koneschusky at SKoneschusky@urbanjustice.org.

WRITE to your state legislators and to the following officials demanding an end to the torture of isolated confinement. Please incorporate your own experiences and choose two or three of the above facts and/or demands to incorporate as well:

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Mr. Thomas P. Abt
Deputy Secretary for Public
Safety
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Mr. Anthony J. Annucci
Acting Commissioner
NYS DOCCS
1220 Washington Avenue,
Building 2
Albany, New York 12226

JOIN OR ORGANIZE A VIGIL to end the torture of solitary confinement in NY prisons & jails:

- Come out for a CAIC vigil in New York City on the evening of Dec. 10. For more details, contact Suzanne Koneschusky at SKoneschusky@urbanjustice.org or 646-459-3044.
- Come out to a CAIC vigil on Long Island. For more details, contact Claire Deroche at CDeroche@uucsr.org or 516-472-2977.
- Organize or join a vigil in other parts of the state. If you are interested, please contact Suzanne Koneschusky at SKoneschusky@urbanjustice.org or 646-459-3044.

PREPARE a Sermon, film screening, or Discussion Group at your congregation during the weekends before/after the 10th. NRCAT has prayers and resources available at www.nrcat.org/human-rights-day.