

Starting July 8, 2013: California's Prison System Will Be Occupied by the Prisoners

STRIKE ~~THE~~ PRISONS



Thousands on hunger strike
Prisoners issue collective demands
System-wide work stoppages

Rebellion against isolation

This freedom struggle
requires our active support

Elizabeth Knato

CALIFORNIA'S SOLITARY CONFINEMENT POLICY IS A 'HUMAN RIGHTS DISASTER'

In 2011, thousands of California state prisoners engaged in a hunger strike to end long term solitary confinement and to demand changes to the way that prisoners are assigned to these torturous units, known as SHUs (security housing units). The corrections department (CDCR) agreed to make changes, which it rolled out in November, 2012. CDCR's public relations strategy is to persuade lawmakers, judges and the general public that its new program is a vast improvement. However, the new program keeps most of the objectionable elements of the old program and adds some new elements which make it even worse.

The Step Down Program: Under the old rules, the only way to get out of the SHU was to "parole, snitch or die", or be found "inactive" as a gang member or associate (a rare finding). The new policy offers a new way out: the Step Down Program, a 4 step program which takes a minimum of three or four years. The first 2-3 years are spent in solitary confinement, with no education or other programming. The prisoner is required to demonstrate "progress" by, among other

things, filling out workbooks showing changed attitudes. The one workbook we have seen is condescending and judgmental. Lifetime solitary confinement remains possible.

Coerced secret evidence: The hated "debriefing" program remains alive and well. SHU prisoners can get out of the SHU by confessing his/her own gang involvement and identifying other prisoners' gang involvement. This information is used to place other prisoners in the SHU or retain them there. Targeted prisoners are not entitled to know who has named them, or the specifics of the accusation. It is almost impossible to defend oneself against secret charges.

Guilt by association: Under the old policies, prisoners were assigned a six year SHU term for simply being affiliated (as a member or associate) with a prison gang. The prisoner did not have to break any prison rule. Prisoners were validated for possessing art work or political readings, signing a greeting card, exercising with other prisoners or saying hello to another prisoner. Under the new rules, this same evidence can be used to prove a pris-

oner is a member, and membership alone justifies a SHU term.

New disciplinary program: Under the old rules, possessing certain artwork or literature was used as evidence of gang association. Prisoners and advocates objected, saying that SHU placement should only be for gang behavior. CDCR's responded in its new program by labeling such evidence as gang "behavior" in its new rules. Guards can now cite prisoners for rules violations for possessing these items and punishment can be imposed.

Widening the net: Under the old policies, a prisoner could be placed in the SHU for affiliation with any of seven prison gangs. Under the new rules, any grouping of three or more prisoners can be added to the list as a "security threat group", membership in which can result in a SHU term. The expansion of the SHU-eligible population is of grave concern.

Rubber-stamping: Although CDCR has inserted a new stage of review for SHU placements, this review is still within the confines of the prison system, where the dominant culture is to rubber-stamp the gang unit's decisions. CDCR has not changed its culture. Independent oversight is necessary to curtail CDCR's excesses.

Re-evaluations of current SHU prisoners: As part of the resolution of the 2011 hunger strikes, CDCR agreed to re-evaluate the SHU placement of current SHU prisoners, using its new criteria. CDCR is reviewing associates first and reports that over half of its initial reviews are resulting in assignments to general population. This reclassification is a huge victory and is proof of the unfairness of the old SHU policies, but is no proof of fairness of the new policies.

STOPTORTURECA.ORG

FROM THE PRISONERS: 'Our Demands'

- 1 Eliminate Group Punishments
- 2 Abolish the Debriefing Policy, and Modify 'Active/Inactive' Gang Status Criteria
- 3 Comply with Recommendations of U.S. Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons (from 2006)
- 4 Provide Adequate Food
- 5 Provide Constructive Programs and Privileges for Indefinite SHU Inmates.

On July 8th, 2013, thousands of prisoners in California's solitary confinement system started a system-wide hunger strike. The vast majority of hunger strikers come from the SHU, or Special Housing Units, windowless hellholes for long-term solitary confinement. They are calling for a system-wide shut-down, with prisoners in the general population going on a work strike. Without prison labor, the prisons can't function. The prisoners demand humane conditions and to be treated as human beings, not slaves.

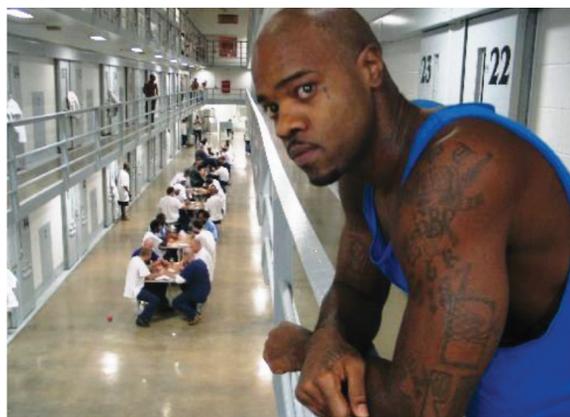
THIS IS A UNIQUE HISTORICAL EVENT.

The California prison system is a racist conveyor belt that targets the poor, the uneducated, and heavily the Black and Latino. Once in the system, the prisoners are largely segregated by race. Intense, violent racial hostilities are encouraged by the authorities in classic "divide and conquer" tactics. Since 2012, a "non-aggression pact" has emerged between prisoners of different nationalities. This precious, fragile effort has created a new situation - where prisoners are able to unite in a common struggle for human rights and self-determination.

This fight is initiated by those who the state tells us are the lowest of the low. These are people who we are supposed to be afraid of. No matter what they have done in life, they are right to demand what we all expect: to be treated with basic dignity.

There is a spirit of rebellion in the world, and from Guantanamo to Istanbul to Brazil - people are fighting for their right to live - not as robots, not as slaves, not as chattel. It is not just about the prisoners. The overpopulation of California's prison system not only exerts a lifelong effect on prisoners, but also tears apart whole communities who bear the burden of mass incarceration.

And in fighting for themselves and their families the prisoners are transcending the prison. It's a struggle for democracy in its most basic meaning. We support them. We embrace them. Power to the people.



Solitary confinement, especially for extended terms, is quite literally soul damning or the states way of killing without killing. I've seen men mutilate themselves, cut their necks, their throats, all because the mind killing boredom drove them out of their skulls. There's a reason the United Nations special rapporteur calls solitary a form of torture if one is held that way over a few weeks, because it is. That's why guys across California staged hunger strikes, as did men in Georgia and in Ohio, because solitary was killing them and by starving themselves to death they could determine their own destiny.

From imprisoned nation this is Mumia Abu Jamal



Josh MacPhee

WHY STRIKES MATTER

How can oppression continue? It continues because you are alone and powerless. It continues because you are invisible and your suffering is unknown. Injustice lives in the darkness. But there suddenly come moments, when people band together. We raise our voices in one message. We stop absorbing mistreatment, and instead confront our abusers. We become actors in a scene we, ourselves have written.

When people together walk off their jobs together – that is called a strike. Work-stoppages that are illegal and unapproved are called wildcat strikes. When groups of prisoners stop eating, it is called a hunger strike. The prisoners are saying “We would rather die than continue being mistreated.”

When people unite together, they start to have power. One person standing up to injustice can more easily be ignored or crushed. Everyone acting together is powerful. Suddenly you are not alone or invisible. This strength is called solidarity. It is often the beginning of a new way of looking at the world. It is the birth of movements and change.

Sometimes people say: If you strike you only hurt yourself. They say when workers strike, their families suffer. They say that hunger strikes only hurt the strikers, and the authorities don't care. These same people are saying you are better off “looking out for

yourself” and “making your own deals” with the authorities. This thinking will leave you a slave forever. When workers strike it directly hurts the employer. Production stops and their profits stop. The whole world can often see their grievances. That is why employers often give in to the demands of workers on strike.

Hunger strikes are like a scream in the night. People sit up and ask: Who was that? What is going on? Many people understand how desperate you must be to stop eating.

Not all strikes win. Some strikes are broken. Authorities bring in their thugs to beat people. Sometimes guards force-feed hunger strikers – which is torture. The authorities try, with tricks and bribes, to corrupt our leaders and divide the people. They use media to portray strikers as greedy troublemakers and dangerous criminals.

So winning takes struggle: Strikers need to stand

together and take risks. Honest people on the outside need to spread the message and show up to support.

We live in a society full of dog-eat-dog thinking. We need to change this. We need waves of solidarity — where people back each other as brothers and sisters. If we suffer together, we need to fight together. When other people fight, we need to support them.

Whenever people stand up, there is something that cannot be taken away. We have learned how to unite. We have started to find allies in the rest of society. We have built new networks of power and action.

And we can start to plan something even bigger together. We can dream of ending all oppression, freeing everyone, everywhere, forever. Our solidarity today can be one step to our liberation tomorrow.

There can be light in the darkness. There can be power in the dungeon. There can be hope at the bottom. There can be freedom in our future.

BY MIKE ELY



81,622
Number of prisoners in solitary confinement across the country in 2005, the last year for which the federal government released data

11,730
Number of inmates held in isolation in California prisons today

7
Percentage of California inmates who are in isolation

39
Percentage of inmate suicides that happen in isolation units

78
Percentage of Security Housing Unit (SHU) inmates not classified as gang “leaders” or “members”

\$12,317
Extra annual cost to taxpayers for each prisoner in the Pelican Bay SHU

11'7" x 7'7"
Dimensions of a SHU cell at Pelican Bay

51
Percentage of Pelican Bay SHU inmates who have spent at least five years in isolation

89
Number who have been in solitary for at least 20 years

1
Number who have been there for 42 years

INDEX: RYAN JONES
[MOTHER JONES]

SEIZE THE TIME



On every continent, people are in motion. The world is on fire.

Call it a crisis, call it rebellion. Everywhere common people stand up together, that very act is justice. The powerful can't rule in the old ways. The institutions and elites have no legitimacy, and there is no reason to accept it. When we see each other, across oceans and through prison bars — we are making a new world.



From left: #occupyGEZI Resisting the government's plan to turn one of Istanbul's few public parks into a shopping mall, millions of people challenged the government and won. #closeGITMO Protesters in New York's Times Square dressed in the orange jumpsuits of the prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay prison camp. Inmates are on hunger strike now, after years of being held without charge, subject to torture. #PORTOAKLAND Occupy Oakland strikes at the port, with tens of thousands asserting the power of the people against the political and economic establishment in the Bay. #occupyWALLST In a city where the billionaire mayor calls the notoriously racist NYPD his “personal army” — the big banks and financial elite were held to account by the people they called irrelevant. The fight isn't over. We are in the middle of it.

The United States in the only republic in the world with a constitution that to this day enshrines slavery upon its subjects, making slavery and conditions of slavery protected. This is a little known fact, with profound implications for prisoners.

A Racist Prison System

Seemingly an afterthought to the 13th Amendment, this clause reserves slavery and “involuntary servitude” as punishment for violating the law. This pro-slavery clause has been supported and more firmly instituted by rulings at all levels of court, up to the Supreme Court. It is practiced and enforced by treating prisoners like slaves, with every kind of brutality, inhumanity and vileness — a virtual green light to treat us as less than human, degrade us and strip us of our sense of self-worth.

The 13th Amendment may be cloaked in anti-slavery language, but we prisoners are slaves and exist in slave status, and this makes it right and permissible, even laud-

able, to deny prisoners normal human rights possessed by others and to treat us as less than human. Prisoners are reminded of their slave status day-in-and-day-out by the way in which we are treated by guards, medical personnel, and others in the prisons. When prisoners rise up such as they did during the Attica Prison Rebellion in New York in 1971 and demand to be treated like human beings they are punished severely and even massacred as they were at Attica.

Prisons are seething with frustration and anguish in an environment of unprecedented violence and terrifying realities. Suicide is common. In spite of our misery they take more away from us such as visiting

time, conjugal visits, reading material, property, medical treatment, access to foods and products, religious practices, grooming practices, and access to courts and the press, denying to prisoners what is lawfully ours.

Prisons are a reflection of what has been taking place in society by degrees: the steady erosion of fundamental human rights, restrictions on movement and privacy and possessions, and naked tyranny camouflaged in civil rhetoric. The day-to-day unbearable existence of prison life will eventually befall all of society, absent the dissolution of government.

— SISTER AMAZON,
CORCORAN STATE
PRISON (AD-SEG)

Sleep deprivation techniques used on prisoners in advance of hunger strikes

Less than a month before state-wide hunger strikes are set to resume, the California Department of Corrections has instituted a new policy at Pelican Bay State Prison which has resulted in chronic sleep deprivation for prisoners in solitary confinement.

Both guards and prisoners complained to lawyers conducting legal visits last week about a new policy requiring prison guards to conduct “welfare checks” every thirty minutes on prisoners isolated in the prison's Security Housing Units (SHU). Normally, prisoners in the SHU are counted every three to four hours by guards who patrol each unit, ensuring prisoners are in their cells. Each prisoner must be observed physically moving or showing skin. The frequency and method of these counts have already been challenged in a Federal lawsuit, Ashker v. Brown. Experts claim the sleep

deprivation caused by the counts violate prisoners' 8th Amendment rights.

The directive applies to over 1,100 prisoners who are in solitary confinement in Pelican Bay.

“This is torture,” says Azadeh Zohrabi of the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition. “This intensified sleep deprivation adds to the long list of human rights violations endured by thousands of prisoners held in solitary for prolonged and indefinite terms, some for decades.”

Lawyers and advocates have also received demands from prisoners who plan to go on strike in San Quentin, High Desert, and Corcoran State Prisons. Prisoners have been clear that the strike could be called off if Governor Brown engaged in good-faith negotiations. Brown's office has not responded to their request.

BY ISAAC ONTIVEROS

“The prison system is a concentrated expression — a microcosm — of the class, racial and gender contradictions symptomatic of capitalist society.”

— CHAD LANDRUM, PRISONER AT PELICAN BAY

PRISONS ARE THE

California's prisons are designed to house a population under 80,000, but the current number of prisoners in the system is about double that. Psychologists conducting experiments with mice found that overcrowded living situations caused numerous aberrant behaviors, including cannibalism. We look at the violence inside California's prisons they blame — that's like blaming the mice instead of the psychologist.

Prisoners have 20 square feet of unobstructed floor space often divided between two or more people. State law requires a primate at the zoo be given 100 square feet of unobstructed space for every 100 pounds of the animal's body weight. We give humans any less?

The fault for what is wrong with the state's prison lies at the doorstep of the California Department of Corrections (and its phony “R” for Rehabilitation). Studies have found that preventable suicide and medical neglect cause the death of at least one inmate a week in California and despite court orders to reduce the over-crowded conditions have not eased. According to the government, they also have a 70% recidivism rate.

Prisons are and always have been schools of crime. It's far cheaper to send the offender to Harvard and make

June 20 Statement

From Pelican Bay Short Corridor Collective!

The principal prisoner representatives from the PBSP SHU Short Corridor Collective Human Rights Movement does hereby present public notice that our nonviolent peaceful protest of our subjection to decades of indefinite state-sanctioned torture, via long term solitary confinement will resume on July 8, 2013, consisting of a hunger strike/work stoppage of indefinite duration until CDCR signs a legally binding agreement meeting our demands, the heart of which mandates an end to long-term solitary confinement (as well as additional major reforms). Our decision does not come lightly. For the past (2) years we've patiently kept an open dialogue with state officials, attempting to hold them to their promise to implement meaningful reforms, responsive to our demands. For the past seven months we have repeatedly pointed out CDCR's failure to honor their word — and we have explained in detail the ways in which they've acted in bad faith and what they need to do to avoid the resumption of our protest action.

On June 19, 2013, we participated in a mediation session ordered by the Judge in our class action lawsuit, which unfortunately did not result in CDCR officials agreeing to settle the case on acceptable terms. While the mediation process will likely continue, it is clear to us that we must be prepared to renew our political non-violent protest on July 8th to stop torture in the SHUs and Ad-Segs of CDCR.

Thus we are presently out of alternative options for achieving the long overdue reform to this system and, specifically, an end to state-sanctioned torture, and now we have to put our lives on the line via indefinite hunger strike to force CDCR to do what's right.

We are certain that we will prevail... the only questions being: How many will die starvation-related deaths before state officials sign the agreement?

The world is watching! Onward in Struggle and Solidarity.

Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos
Ronald Dewberry, aka Sitawa

FROM THE PRISONERS: 'OUR FIVE CORE DEMANDS'

1 ELIMINATE GROUP PUNISHMENTS

This is in response to PBSP's application of "group punishment" as a means to address individual inmates rule violations. This includes the administration's abusive, pretextual use of "safety and concern" to justify what are unnecessary punitive acts. This policy has been applied in the context of justifying indefinite SHU status, and progressively restricting our programming and privileges.

2 ABOLISH THE DEBRIEFING POLICY, & MODIFY 'ACTIVE/INACTIVE' GANG STATUS CRITERIA

The debriefing policy is illegal and redundant. The Active/Inactive gang status criteria must be modified in order to comply with state law and applicable CDC are rule and regulations as follows:

- Cease the use of innocuous association to deny an active status,
- Cease the use of informant/debriefer allegations of illegal gang activity to deny inactive status, unless such allegations are also supported by factual corroborating evidence, in which case CDCR-PBSP staff shall and must follow the regulations by issuing a rule violation report and affording the inmate his due process required by law.

3 COMPLY WITH RECOMMENDATIONS OF U.S. COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND ABUSE IN AMERICA'S PRISONS

CDCR shall implement the findings and recommendations of the US commission on safety and abuse in America's prisons final 2006 report regarding CDCR SHU facilities as follows:

- End Conditions of Isolation. Ensure that prisoners in SHU and Ad-Seg (Administrative Segregation) have regular meaningful contact and freedom from extreme physical deprivations that are known to cause lasting harm.
- Make Segregation a Last Resort. Create a more productive form of confinement in the areas of allowing inmates in SHU and Administrative Segregation the opportunity to engage in meaningful self-help treatment, work, education, religious, and other productive activities relating to having a sense of being a part of the community.
- End Long-Term Solitary Confinement. Release inmates to general prison population who have been warehoused indefinitely in SHU for the last 10 to 40 years.
- Provide SHU Inmates Immediate Meaningful Access to adequate natural sunlight and quality health care and treatment.

4 PROVIDE ADEQUATE FOOD

Cease the practice of denying adequate food, and provide a wholesome nutritional meals including special diet meals, and allow inmates to purchase additional vitamin supplements.

- BSP staff must cease their use of food as a tool to punish SHU inmates.
- Provide a sergeant/lieutenant to independently observe the serving of each meal, and ensure each tray has the complete issue of food on it.
- Feed the inmates whose job it is to serve SHU meals with meals that are separate from the pans of food sent from kitchen for SHU meals.

5 PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMS AND PRIVILEGES FOR INDEFINITE SHU INMATES.

- Expand visiting regarding amount of time and adding one day per week.
- Allow one photo per year.
- Allow a weekly phone call.
- Allow two annual packages per year. A 30 lb. package based on "item" weight and not packaging and box weight.
- Expand canteen and package items allowed. Allow us to have the items in their original packaging. The cost for cosmetics, stationary, envelopes, should not count towards the max draw limit.
- More TV channels.
- Allow TV/Radio combinations, or TV and small battery operated radio
- Allow Hobby Craft Items — art paper, colored pens, small pieces of colored pencils, watercolors, chalk, etc.
- Allow sweat suits and watch caps.
- Allow wall calendars.
- Install pull-up/dip bars on SHU yards.
- Allow correspondence courses that require proctored exams.



STRIKE THE PRISONS: California has filled its prisons with the ranks of the poor, jobless, and hopeless. At one point many California prisons were over 200% capacity. Moving prisoners from state prison to county jails can't hide that the system would rather criminalize the poor then see them lifted up.

The Call

BY MUTOPE DUGUMA
(S/N JAMES CRAWFORD)
PELICAN BAY, CALIFORNIA

This is a call for all prisoners in Security Housing Units (SHUs), Administrative Segregation (Ad-Seg), and General Populations, as well as the free oppressed and non-oppressed people to support the indefinite July 1, 2011 peaceful Hunger Strike in protest of the violation of our civil/human rights, here at Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit (PBSP-SHU).

It should be clear to everyone that none of the hunger strike participants want to die, but due to our circumstances, whereas that state of California has sentenced all of us on Indeterminate SHU program to a "civil death" merely on the word of a prison informer (snitch).

The purpose of the Hunger Strike is to combat both the Ad-Seg/SHU psychological and physical torture, as well as the justifications used of support treatment of the type that lends to prisoners being subjected to a civil death. Those subjected to indeterminate SHU programs are neglected and deprived of the basic human necessities while withering away in a very isolated and hostile environment.

Prison officials have utilized the assassination of prisoners' character to each other as well as the general public in order to justify their inhumane treatment of prisoners. The "code of silence" used by guards allows them the freedom to use everything at their disposal in order to break those prisoners who prison officials and correctional officers (C/O) believe cannot be broken.

It is this mentality that set in motion the establishing of the short corridor, D1 through D4 and its D5 though D10 overflow. This mentality has created the current atmosphere in which C/Os and

prison officials agreed upon plan to break indeterminate SHU prisoners. This protracted attack on SHU prisoners cuts across every aspect of the prison's function: Food, mail, visiting, medical, yard, hot/cold temperatures, privileges (canteen, packages, property, etc.), isolation, cell searches, family/friends, and socio-culture, economic, and political deprivation. This is nothing short of the psychological/physical torture of SHU/Ad-Seg prisoners. It takes place day in and day out, without a break or rest.

The prison's gang intelligence unit was extremely angered at the fact that prisoners who had been held in SHU under inhuman conditions for anywhere from 10 to 40 years had not been broken. So the gang intelligence unit created the "short corridor" and intensified the pressure of their attacks on the prisoners housed there. The object was to use blanket pressure to encourage these particular isolated prisoners to debrief (i.e. snitch on order to be released from SHU).

The C/Os and administrative officials are all in agreement and all do their part in depriving short corridor prisoners and its overflow of their basic civil/human rights. None of the deliberate attacks are a figment of anyone's imagination. These continuous attacks are carried out against prisoners to a science by all of them. They are deliberate and conscious acts against essentially defenseless prisoners.

It is these ongoing attacks that have led to the short corridor and overflow SHU prisoners to organize ourselves ourselves around an indefinite Hunger Strike in an effort to combat the dehumanizing treatment we prisoners of all races are subjected to on a daily basis.

Therefore, on July 8, 2013, we ask that all prisoners throughout the State of California and elsewhere, who have been suffering injustices

in General Population, Administrative Segregation and solitary confinement, etc. to join in our peaceful strike to put a stop to the blatant violations of prisoners' civil/human rights. As you know, prison gang investigators have used threats of validation and other means to get prisoners to engage in a protracted war against each other in order to serve their narrow interests. If you cannot participate in the Hunger Strike then support it in principle by not eating for the first 24 hours of the strike.

I say that those of you who carry yourselves as principled human beings, no matter you're housing status, must fight to right this and other egregious wrongs. Although it is "us" today (united New Afrikans, Whites, Northern and Southern Mexicans, and others) it will be you all tomorrow. It is in your interests to peacefully support us in this protest today, and to beware of agitators, provocateurs, and obstructionists, because they are the ones who put ninety percent of us back here because they could not remain principled even within themselves.

Our demands are all similar to what is allowed in other super max prisons (e.g. federal Florence, Colorado, Ohio and Indiana State Penitentiaries). The claim by CDCR and PBSP that implementing the practices of the federal prison system or that of other states would be a threat to safety and security are exaggerations.

The names of representatives of all major races listed as co-signers. The prisoners say they are "All races Whites; New Afrikans; Southern Mexs, and Northern Mexs."

D. Troxell B-76578
T. Ashker C-58191;
S.N. Jamaa-Dewberry C-35671;
A. Castellanos C-17275;
G. Franco, D-46556

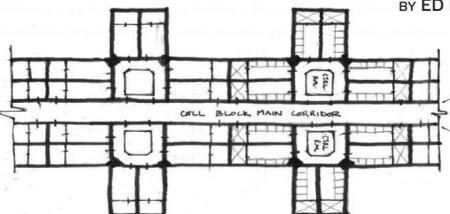


CRIME

physicist of her than to keep that person in prison. Simply put, you don't get good things from doing bad things to people. You put a dog in a cage and poke a stick in at it day in and day out, week after week, year after year, and surprise — you have an angry animal on your hands.

It is time for people to start talking about true justice. It's also time to start holding correctional officials responsible for their actions or, in the case of medical neglect, inactions. Prisoners should have their right to life, the pursuit of happiness, given the right to vote, access to computers and a what is necessary to be a part of society, with only their liberty denied them, and then only for as long as necessary. And that freedom denied them must be under conditions suitable for a living human being. Or the entire society becomes a prison. Which is a problem.

BY ED MEAD



It would be like a nuclear

FOR UPDATES AND MORE INFORMATION:

PRISONSTRIKE.WORDPRESS.COM
STRIKETHEPRISONS.COM
PRISONS.ORG
CRITICALRESISTANCE.ORG



'Agreement To End Hostilities'

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN AND ALL CALIFORNIA PRISONERS:

Greetings from the entire PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Hunger Strike Representatives. We are hereby presenting this mutual agreement on behalf of all racial groups here in the PBSP-SHU Corridor. Wherein, we have arrived at a mutual agreement concerning the following points:

1. If we really want to bring about substantive meaningful changes to the CDCR system in a manner beneficial to all solid individuals, who have never been broken by CDCR's torture tactics intended to coerce one to become a state informant via debriefing, that now is the time to for us to collectively seize this moment in time, and put an end to more than 20-30 years of hostilities between our racial groups.

2. Therefore, beginning on October 10, 2012, all hostilities between our racial groups in SHU, Ad-Seg, General Population, and County Jails, will officially cease. This means that from this date on, all racial group hostilities need to be at an end and if personal issues arise between individuals, people need to do all they can to exhaust all diplomatic means to settle such disputes; do not allow personal, individual issues to escalate into racial group issues!

3. We also want to warn those in the General Population that IGI will continue to plant undercover Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) debriefer "inmates" amongst the solid GP prisoners with orders from IGI to be informers, snitches, rats, and obstructionists, in order to attempt to disrupt and undermine our collective groups' mutual understanding on issues intended for our mutual causes [i.e.,

forcing CDCR to open up all GP main lines, and return to a rehabilitative-type system of meaningful programs/privileges, including lifer conjugal visits, etc. via peaceful protest activity/noncooperation e.g., hunger strike, no labor, etc. etc.]

People need to be aware and vigilant to such tactics, and refuse to allow such IGI inmate snitches to create chaos and reignite hostilities amongst our racial groups.

We can no longer play into IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU's old manipulative divide and conquer tactics!

In conclusion, we must all hold strong to our mutual agreement from this point on and focus our time, attention, and energy on mutual causes beneficial to all of us [i.e., prisoners], and our best interests. We can

no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit! Because the reality is that collectively, we are an empowered, mighty force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole and we simply cannot allow CDCR/CCPOA

Prison Guard's Union, IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU, to continue to get away with their constant form of progressive oppression and warehousing of tens of thousands of prisoners, including the 14,000 (+) plus prisoners held in solitary confinement torture chambers [i.e. SHU/Ad-Seg Units], for decades!

We send our love and respects to all those of like mind and heart — onward in struggle and solidarity.

PRESENTED BY THE PBSP-SHU SHORT CORRIDOR COLLECTIVE:

Todd Ashker, C58191, D1-I19

Arturo Castellanos, C17275, D1-I21

Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa (Dewberry), C35671, D1-I17

Antonio Guillen, P81948, D2-I06

AND THE REPRESENTATIVES BODY:

Danny Troxell, B76578, D1-I20

George Franco, D46556, D4-217

Ronnie Yandell, V27927, D4-215

Paul Redd, B72683, D2-I17

James Baridi Williamson, D-34288.

D4-I07

Alfred Sandoval, D61000, D4-214

Louis Powell, B59864, D1-I04

Alex Yrigollen, H32421, D2-204

Gabriel Huerta, C80766, D3-222

Frank Clement, D07919, D3-I16

Raymond Chavo Perez, K12922, D1-219

James Mario Perez, B48186, D3-I24

NOTE: ALL NAMES AND THE STATEMENT MUST BE VERBATIM WHEN USED & POSTED ON ANY WEBSITE OR MEDIA, OR NON-MEDIA, PUBLICATIONS



SOLITARY IN IRAN ALMOST BROKE ME

THEN I WENT INSIDE AMERICA'S PRISONS

It's been seven months since I've been inside a prison cell.

"So when you're in Iran and in solitary confinement," asks my guide, Lieutenant Chris Acosta, "was it different?" His tone makes clear that he believes an Iranian prison to be a bad place. Acosta, Pelican Bay's public information officer, is giving me a tour of the Security Housing Unit. Inmates deemed a threat to the security of any of California's 33 prisons are shipped to one of the state's five SHUs (pronounced "shoes"), which hold nearly 4,000 people in long-term isolation. In the Pelican Bay SHU, 94 percent of prisoners are celled alone; overcrowding has forced the prison to double up the rest. Statewide, about 32 percent of SHU cells—hardly large enough for one person—are crammed with two inmates.

After being apprehended on the Iran-Iraq border, Sarah Shourd, Josh Fattal, and I were held in Evin Prison's isolation ward for political prisoners. Sarah remained there for 13 months, Josh and I for 26 months. We were held incommunicado. We never knew when, or if, we would get out. We didn't go to trial for two years.

What would he say if I told him I needed human contact so badly that I woke every morning hoping to be interrogated? Would he believe that I once yearned to be sat down in a padded, soundproof room, blindfolded, and questioned, just so I could talk to somebody?

"There was a window," I say. I don't quite know how to tell him what I mean by that answer. "Just having that light come in, seeing the light move across the cell, seeing what time of day it was—" Without those windows, I wouldn't have had the sound of ravens, the rare breezes, or

the drops of rain that I let wash over my face some nights. For hours, days, I fixated on the patch of sunlight cast against my wall through those barred and grated windows.

Here, there are no windows. The decision to put a man in solitary indefinitely is made at internal hearings that last, prisoners say, about 20 minutes. They are closed-door affairs. CDCR told me I couldn't witness one. No one can.

Officials say solitary is needed to isolate gang leaders. But very few of the thousands in segregation are classified as gangmembers, let alone leaders. Being associated with a prison gang—even if you haven't done anything illegal—carries a much heavier penalty than, say, stabbing someone. Association could land you in solitary for decades. California officials frequently cite possession of black literature, left-wing materials, and writing about prisoner rights as evidence of gang affiliation.

None of the gang validation proceedings, from the initial investigation to the final sentencing, have any judicial oversight. They are all internal. Other than the inmate, there is only one person present—the gang investigator—and he serves as judge, jury, and prosecutor. After the hearing, the investigator will send his validation package to Sacramento for approval. The chances of it being refused are vanishingly small: The department's own data shows that of the 6,300 validations submitted since 2009, only 25 have been rejected—0.4 percent.

When Josh Fattal and I finally came before the Revolutionary Court in Iran, we had a lawyer present, but weren't allowed to speak to him. In California, an inmate facing the worst punishment our penal system has to

offer short of death can't even have a lawyer in the room. He can't gather or present evidence in his defense. He can't call witnesses. Much of the evidence—anything provided by informants—is confidential and thus impossible to refute.

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak once sent a letter to Tehran to appeal on behalf of my fellow hostage, and now wife, Sarah Shourd. Though Josh and I were celled together after four months, Sarah remained in isolation, seeing us for only an hour a day.

Late last year, Nowak's successor, Juan Mendez, came out with a report in which he called for an international prohibition on solitary confinement of more than 15 days. He defined solitary as any regime where a person is held in isolation for at least 22 hours a day. Anything more "constitutes torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, depending on the circumstances."

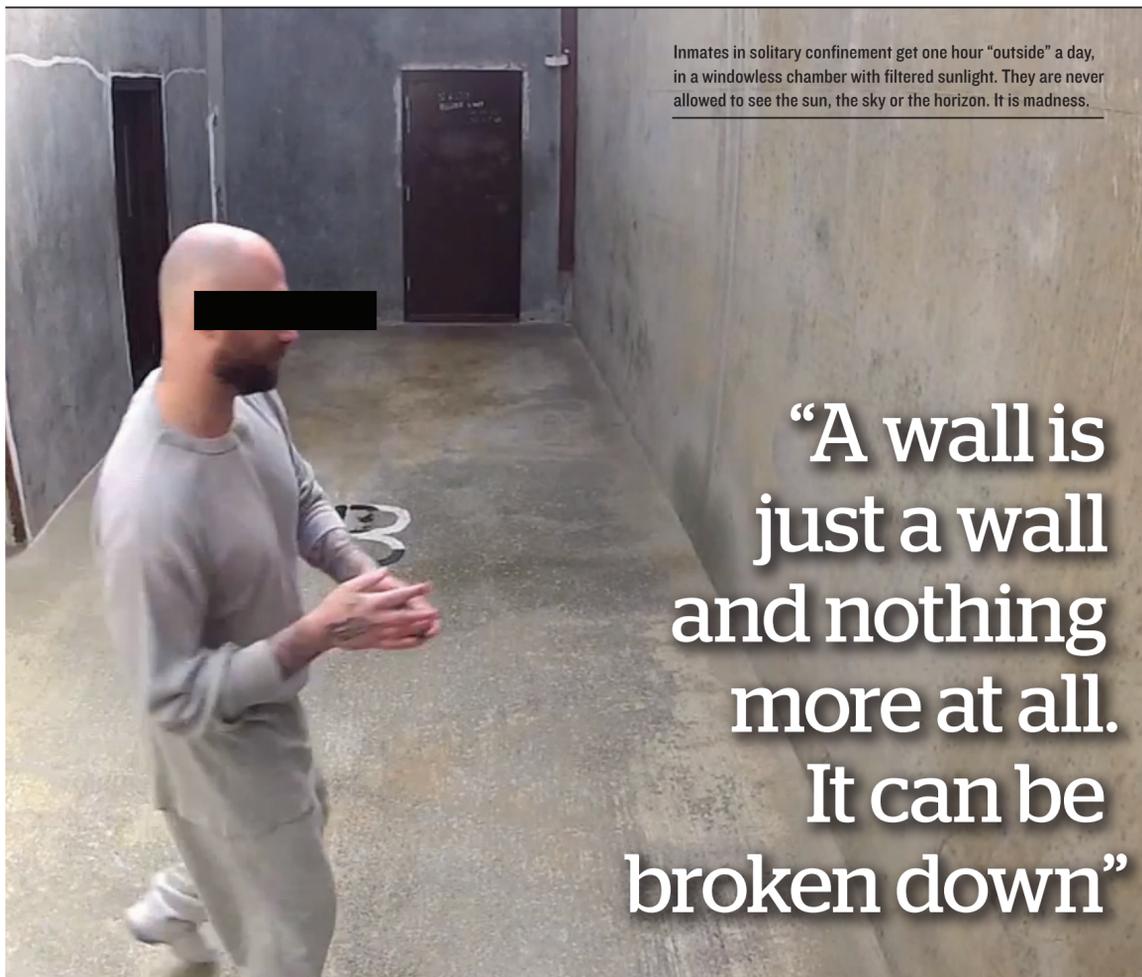
When I called Mendez to ask about the SHU, he said, "I don't think any argument, including gang membership, can justify a very long-term measure that is inflicting pain and suffering that is prohibited by the Convention Against Torture."

No part of my experience—not the uncertainty of when I would be free again, not the tortured screams of other prisoners—was worse than the four months I spent in solitary confinement.

CDCR, like correctional departments around the country, does not consider the SHU solitary confinement. Inmates have TV, and they have contact with staff when they bring them their food, officials told me.

Our interrogators in Iran said the same thing.

BY SHANE BAUER



Inmates in solitary confinement get one hour "outside" a day, in a windowless chamber with filtered sunlight. They are never allowed to see the sun, the sky or the horizon. It is madness.

"A wall is just a wall and nothing more at all. It can be broken down"

FIND THE MOVEMENT ONLINE

PRISON STRIKE!

prisonstrike.wordpress.com
It started in 2011 with pelican bay Security Housing Unit (SHU) prisoners going on hunger strike. The hunger strike spread to thirteen prisons throughout California, peaking at just under 12,000 prisoners participating and lasting three weeks. Prison authorities failed to keep the promises that led to the end of the hunger strike.

In 2012 SHU prisoners issued an agreement to end all gang and racial hostilities. That declaration continues to hold. Pelican Bay SHU prisoners have called for all administrative segregation and SHU prisoners to stop eating and all mainline

(general population) prisoners to stop working on July 8. They are also asking for solidarity from prisoners across the country, and support from us on the outside.

CALIFORNIA PRISON FOCUS

prisonfocus.org
California Prison Focus works to abolish the California prison system in its present condition. We investigate and expose human rights abuses with the goal of ending long term isolation, medical neglect, and all forms of discrimination. We are community activists, prisoners, and their families educating and inspiring the public to demand change.

CRITICAL RESISTANCE

criticalresistance.org
Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the prison industrial complex (PIC) by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. The success of the movement requires that it reflect communities most affected by the PIC. Because we seek to abolish the PIC, we cannot support any work that extends its life or scope.

FREE US ALL

freusallnw@gmail.com
Free Us All is a campaign in Washington State to support, aid, and project the July 8th 2013 prison strike.

THE JERICHO MOVEMENT

thejerichomovement.com
Jericho is a movement with the defined goal of gaining recognition of the fact that political prisoners and prisoners of war exist inside of the United States, despite the United States' government's continued denial ... and winning amnesty and freedom for these political prisoners.

Letter from a daughter

I am the oldest of six children. We were all present the day of my dad's sentencing. Nothing prepared me for the feeling of violent separation that followed my dad being removed from court and brought somewhere—unknown to myself and my family, for days. The moment the judge made an existential rendering of my father's life and actions and mandated a sentence in language I could barely understand, I felt the most natural, human, compassionate urge to embrace my dad with my brothers, my mom, my family.

As it happened, my dad was wrenched from me, unable to be contacted by his support, his people. No phone, no visitors, no location, no contact. When my dad was finally located in the electronic system, and by his lawyers, the only

humans who were allowed to visit, it became clear that everything had changed.

I would no longer be able to touch my dad. Our visits, like his with my mom, were between hard plastic dividers separating our contact, making it feel like an elaborate, high tech zoo. Our phone calls, moderated by an expensive, privatized, for-profit security company, could only occur if I could afford to set a system up to receive calls from "an inmate." My mail from my dad, the letters that he said were his lifeline, are stamped in bold red ink with "INMATE MAIL" all over the back of the envelope.

Every attempt I make at human connection with my father, who is in prison, there is a barrier. A procedure, a corporation, an organization, profiting from my desire to maintain a connection with my loved one. His seven year sentence looms over me, a daughter, a sister, a woman, a friend. BY JENNIFER C.

STRIKE THE PRISONS

EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION

Jed Brandt
Allison Burtch
Ish Daniels
Nat Winn
Liam Wright

COVER ART

Elizabeth Knaflo

SPECIAL THANKS

Occupied Media
Free Us All
kasamaproject.org

DOWNLOAD THE FULL PDF

strikeetheprisons.com

CONTACT THE EDITORS

info@strikeetheprisons.com