

Stop the Torture

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Co-Sponsors

Abolitionist Law Center, ACLU of Northern CA, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Anti-Racist Action-LA, California Families Against Solitary Confinement (CFASC), California Prison Focus, Coalition for Effective Public Safety (CEPS), Critical Resistance-Oakland, Direct Action Monterey Network, Dramastage Qumran, Fight for Lifes West, Inc., Food Not Bombs, Freedom Outreach Ministries, Global Women's Strike, Human Rights Coalition Philly/Pittsburgh, Human Rights Pen Pals, Incarcerated Nation Corp., Justice for the Dallas 6 Support Campaign, LA Laborfest, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC), National Lawyers Guild-SF Bay Area, New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC), Oakland Alliance (OA), Payday Men's Network, Peoples' Action for Rights & Community (PARC-Eureka), Prison Activist Resource Center (PARC-Oakland), Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition (PHSS), Project: Pollinate, Santa Cruz Resistance Against Militarization (SCRAM!), Sin Barras, Student Alliance for Prison Reform (SAPR), Women & Trans Prisoner Defense Committee, Women of Color/Global Women's Strike, Youth Justice Coalition

Endorsers

ACLU Pasadena/Foothills, ACLU of Southern California, Ramona Africa & The MOVE Organization, Dr. Nancy Arvold PhD MFT-member Psychologists for Social Responsibility, Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC), Black and Pink-San Diego, Cabrillo College Justice League, Cafe Intifada, Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB), California Peace & Freedom Party, Center for Constitutional Rights, Children's Defense Fund of California, Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action (COPA) Restorative Justice Institutions, Critical Resistance-LA, Darrell & Karen Darling, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, FACTS Education Fund, Fair Chance Project, Family of Frank Alvarado Jr. [killed by Salinas Police, July 10, 2014], Freedom Archives, Free Our Minds- Free Radio Santa Cruz, Rabbi Borukh Goldberg, Interfaith Communities United for Justice & Peace, Justice for Palestinians- San Jose, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Santa Cruz County, National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), Dylcia Pagán- former Puerto Rican Political Prisoner held in US prison, Rabbi Philip Posner, Leonard Peltier Support Group Silicon Valley, Progressive Christians Uniting (PCU), Public Works Improvisational Theater, Queer Strike, Redwood Curtain CopWatch, San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper, Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism (SCCCCOR), South Bay Committee Against Political Repression (SBCAPR), T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, United Against Police Terror-San Diego, US PROstitutes Collective, Donna Wallach, Women's Council- CA Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers



We honor Peter Collins who was a long-term activist incarcerated in Canada. He drew this Pelican for the CA Prisoner Hunger Strikes. Peter died from cancer Aug. 13, 2015, having been refused compassionate release. He was an astute social critic of the structures of violence in the world around us (colonialism, racism, sexism, ableism, imperialism, transphobia, misogyny etc). Peter was a writer, artist, cartoonist, activist, scholar & organizer with a great sense of humor and humanity. He was a staunch animal rights advocate. A vegan, Peter believed in principles of 'do no harm' to others.

Statewide Coordinated Actions To End Solitary Confinement (SCATESC)

"We want to consider the idea of designating a certain date each month as Prisoner Rights Day...our supporters would gather in locations throughout California to expose CDCR's actions and rally support efforts to secure our rights."

*Pelican Bay State Prison SHU Short Corridor Collective
Human Rights Movement November 2013*



We are here today and on the 23rd of every month to bring attention to the 23 or more hours every day that people are kept in solitary confinement.

The Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity coalition (PHSS)- originating in the San Francisco Bay Area and made up of grassroots organizations, family members, formerly incarcerated people, lawyers, and individuals- formed in 2011 to amplify the voices of CA prisoners on hunger strike striving to achieve their Five Core Human Rights Demands. The coalition continues to work in solidarity with CA prisoners and their families to amplify prisoners' voices and end the torture that is solitary confinement.

Prisoner-Led Human Rights Movement

After decades of writing legislators, courts, & media, prisoners in Pelican Bay State Prison SHU made 5 basic human rights demands of California Dept of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCr) in 2011 & informed CDCr that failure to meet the demands would result in a hunger strike. CDCr refused, denying the most basic human rights. Prisoners also contacted prisoner rights & anti-prison organizations, announcing the hunger strike & requesting support to ensure their voices & demands to end torture were heard & acted on-- outside prison walls.

Hunger Strikes 2011: July 1, 2011 prisoners went on peaceful hunger strike to stop the torture, to protest cruel and inhumane conditions of their imprisonment & to improve treatment of SHU-status prisoners throughout CA. At least 6,600 CA prisoners joined the strike. They did so at risk to their lives from organ failure, starvation, and violent retaliation from prison guards and administration. After refusing food for nearly 3 weeks & entering negotiations with CDCr, prisoners suspended the hunger strike (July 20, 2011) to give CDCr time to implement what even CDCr called "reasonable" demands. CDCr made no substantial changes. In Sept. 2011, more than 12,000 CA prisoners resumed the hunger strike.

Agreement to End Hostilities: In 2012, some of the same prisoners locked in extreme isolation who organized the hunger strikes presented the Agreement to End Hostilities. This historic document is effectively uniting people inside & outside prison walls- many who were divided by race & geography- to struggle together for human rights. While 1000's of prisoners are put in solitary by CDCr employees based on racial identity and accusations of gang affiliation, CDCr refuses to circulate the Agreement and help quell racial & other tensions. Instead CDCr has retaliated against hunger strikers & proponents of the Agreement. Even so, the Hunger Strikes & Agreement continue to positively inspire & unite.

Largest Hunger Strike in World History- 2013: The most recent strike for the 5 demands lasted 60 days- July 8, 2013 to Sept. 5, 2013. Over 30,000 people in CA prisons & 100's of other prisoners, of all genders, young & old, throughout the U.S. participated. The prisoners' courageous & astute actions spotlighting solitary confinement prompted UN & worldwide media attention, legislative hearings, proposed legislation, some CDCr changes & national and international solidarity actions. This human rights movement falls within a long legacy of prisoner-led resistance & is connected to global struggles against inequality and powerlessness, for self-determination and liberation.

Solitary Confinement Is Torture

California locks over 12,000 people in isolated cages and concrete tombs, often for years or decades.

Solitary confinement has been defined as torture by the UN. The U.S. puts *more people* in solitary and *for longer periods* than any other country. The U.S. is the outlier of the world in its use of solitary. CA is the outlier in the U.S.

- locked in a small concrete cell 23 or more hrs a day
- little or no window or access to natural light
- continuous loud noises
- food, lousy to disgusting, rarely warm, is insufficient in calories and nutrition
- substandard medical care, neglect, and outright medical abuse
- CDCr offers virtually no educational, religious, creative, cultural or healthy activity; it blocks access and punishes people pursuing such activity
- no physical human contact, except by guards
- no parole from SHU for people with "life with parole" sentences
- few families can afford to travel to isolated prisons for visits

No acknowledgment by CDCr that this is psychological torture.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT = SHU Solitary Housing Unit·
Ad-Seg or ASU Administrative Segregation Unit·

CMU Communications Management Unit ·

IMU Intensive Management Unit·

PSU Psychiatric Segregation Unit·

BMU Behavioral Management Unit·

RHU Restricted Housing Unit·

AC Adjustment Center·

Involuntary Protective Custody·

the "hole" · segregation

