

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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**March 8: International Women's Day**

## **WOMEN IN PRISON--A FAST GROWING POPULATION**

There are now more women behind bars than at any other point in U.S. history. Women have borne a disproportionate burden of the war on drugs, resulting in a monumental increase of women who are facing incarceration for the first time, overwhelmingly for nonviolent convictions. This rampant incarceration has a devastating impact on families--most incarcerated women are mothers. Following the introduction of mandatory sentencing to the federal drug laws in the mid-1980s, the number of women in prison has risen by 400%. The percent of females incarcerated on street drug convictions now surpasses that of males. Years ago imprisoned women occupied small units within men's prisons. Public pressure which called for facilities specializing in women's needs helped spur the development of women's prisons --which then needed to be filled with ever-increasing numbers of women prisoners. An example of this is in New Mexico where, in 1972, there were a total of 18 women imprisoned in the "women's unit," which was on the grounds of the NM state pen in Santa Fe. Now, with women prisoners held at a for-profit prison in Grants NM, there are approximately 600 incarcerated women.

Prisons, as well as being increasingly recognized as the "new Jim Crow," also preserve and continue the historic oppression of women. Women prisoners are often survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault on the outside, and once inside, they are targeted for similar attacks. Invasive body searches continue in prisons across the country, often based on at most flimsy, and often nonexistent, security rationals.

There is a terrible irony in the experience of incarcerated women: the lives of abuse and subordination that contribute to their being in prison are often repeated behind prison walls. Women's experience of prison as a place of abuse, violence, psychological

deprivation and physical harm is a human rights tragedy as well as a searing indictment of the U.S. police, court and penal system. Institutionalized sexual abuse is an all too common experience for incarcerated women. The abuse takes the form of rape, but also includes verbal harassment, improper groping during pat-down searches, improper visual surveillance while women bathe and perform personal hygiene tasks, and "consensual" sex for protection and conditions improvements.

In 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed by Congress. It called for the development of binding national standards for the prevention, detection, response, and monitoring of sexual violence behind bars. The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC) was established to develop these standards. They were finally submitted to Attorney General Eric Holder in June 2009 and were to be adopted within a year. However, they still are not finalized.

Research done on specific conditions of confinement for incarcerated women, focusing particularly on prenatal care; shackling during transportation, giving birth and postpartum recuperation; and family-based treatment as an alternative to incarceration and/or prison nurseries reveals common abysmal treatment. Only one state, Pennsylvania received a grade of "A." There were 38 states without adequate prenatal care, 36 states did not adequately limit shackling and 17 states had inadequate access to family-based treatment. In addition, 38 states do not offer prison nursery programs.

### **Resources**

ACLU *Blog of Rights*, 915 15th St NW  
#700, Washington DC 20005  
National Women's Law Center & The  
Rebecca Project for Human Rights:  
*Mothers Behind Bars* Report, October 2010  
Just Detention International, 3325  
Wilshire Blvd, Suite 340,  
Los Angeles CA 90010

# IN MEMORIAM

In 2010, 46 people were murdered by U.S. state governments. Their names are:

01/07/10	Vernon Smith	OH
01/07/10	Kenneth Mosley	TX
01/07/10	Gerald Bordelon	LA
01/12/10	Gary Johnson	TX
01/14/10	Julius Young	OK
02/04/10	Mark Brown	OH
02/16/10	Martin Grossman	FL
03/02/10	Michael Sigala	TX
03/11/10	Joshua Maxwell	TX
03/16/10	Lawrence Reynolds	OH
03/18/10	Paul Powell	VA
03/30/10	Franklin Alix	TX
04/20/10	Darryl Durr	OH
04/22/10	William Berkley	TX
04/27/10	Samuel Bustamente	TX
05/12/10	Kevin Varga	TX
05/13/10	Billy Galloway	TX
05/13/10	Michael Beuke	OH
05/19/10	Rogelio Cannady	TX
05/19/10	Paul Woodward	MS
05/20/10	Gerald Holland	MS
05/20/10	Darick Walker	VA
05/25/10	John Alba	TX

Of these people. 13 were African American and eight were murdered by the state of Ohio.

05/27/10	Thomas Whisenhant	AL
06/02/10	George Jones	TX
06/09/10	Melbert Ford	GA
06/10/10	John Parker	AL
06/15/10	David Powell	TX
06/17/10	Ronnie Gardner	UT
07/01/10	Michael Perry	TX
07/13/10	William Garner	OH
07/20/10	Derrick Jackson	TX
07/21/10	Joseph Burns	MS
08/10/10	Roderick Davie	OH
08/12/10	Michael Land	AL
08/17/10	Peter Cantu	TX
09/09/10	Holly Wood	AL
09/10/10	Cal Brown	WA
09/23/10	Teresa Lewis	VA
09/27/10	Brandon Rhode	GA
10/06/10	Michael Bengé	OH
10/14/10	Donald Wackerly	OK
10/21/10	Larry Wooten	TX
10/26/10	Jeffrey Landrigan	AZ
11/04/10	Phillip Hallford	AL
12/16/10	John Duty	OK

## Mujeres encarceladas hoy en dia

Hoy en dia hay mas mujeres tras las rejas que en cualquier punto en la historia de los EE.UU. Las mujeres cargan en peso en la guerra con las drogas resultando en el incremento de mujeres encarceladas por la primera vez. Este rapido incremento tiene efectos devastadores afectando muchas familias. Ya de que muchas de estas mujeres son madres de familia. Bajo las leyes usandatorias de gobierno federal de drogas en mediados de 1980s el porcentaje de mujeres encarceladas aumento al 400%.

Las convicciones de mujeres sobre crimines de droga ahora pasa mas que los de las convicciones de los hombres. Años atras mujeres en prison ocuparon pequenas partes entre las mismas prisiones de los hombres. Con presión del publico pidiendo instalaciones especialmente para mujeres, aumento la necesidad de que estas instituciones sean mas usadas. Esto diciendo que deben estar mas llenas. Un ejemplo esta en el estado de Nuevo México en 1972 habia un total de 18 mujeres en prision en la "unidad de mujeres" en que era la misma penitenciaría en Santa Fe. Ahora las mujeres tras las rejas son detenidas

para beneficio de un compania particular en Grants en Nuevo México donde ahi aproximadamente 600 mujeres tras las rejas.

Mujeres en prision son victimas de los mismos abusos como afuera de las prisiones--violencia domestica y sexuales.

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A copy of this Newsletter will be included in all correspondence se send out. To receive our monthly issues regularly, send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope (with the CPR return address--up to 12 at one time.

Please continue to send us address changes and renewal requests in order to receive the year-end holiday card/new calendar. This is especially important for those in California and Texas.

Also, please note that the ONLY address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>. It is an excellent site!

We remind our readers that none of us at the CPR are lawyers or legal workers.