

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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## Mass Incarceration-Torture-Extrajudicial Killing

The U.S. runs, as we know, the world's largest prison system, containing 1.6 million people. The human rights group, *Human Rights Watch*, published its annual *World Report* at the end of January. The following information is taken in large part from this report.

The report states that practices contrary to human rights principles, such as executions, juvenile life-without-the-possibility-of-parole (JLWOP) sentences, and solitary confinement are common and often marked by "racial disparities." These harsh sentencing practices are contrary to international law. Common sentencing practices include disproportionately long prison terms, mandatory sentencing without parole, and treating youth as if they were adults.

What the *Report* refers to as "the massive use of over-incarceration" includes a growing number of elderly people whom prisons are "ill-equipped to handle." In addition, there are an estimated 93,000 youth under age 18 in adult jails and another 2,200 youth being held in adult prisons. There are approximately 2,600 people with JLWOP sentences for convictions from events that occurred when they were underage. Hundreds of children are subjected to solitary confinement.

As an example of disparate treatment of people of color, while "whites," African Americans and Latinos have comparable rates of street drug use, African Americans are arrested for street drug offenses, including possession, at three times the rate of white men. At 13% of the U.S. population, African Americans make up 28.4% of all arrests. African American motorists were three times as likely as "white" motorists and twice as likely as Latino motorists to be searched during a traffic stop.

Another example is the outrageous "stop and frisk" policy in New York City. Of those stopped, 86% were African

American or Latino, even though they make up only 52% of the population. And 89% of those stopped were found to be completely innocent of any unlawful activity.

It is U.S. society's most vulnerable folks--people of color, low-income people, immigrants, children, and the elderly--who are most likely to suffer from the injustices of the police, court and penal system. For example, U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) deported a record 396,906 people in fiscal year 2012. There are approximately 25 million non-citizens in the U.S. The government estimates that 10.8 million of them are in the country without authorization. As a result of current U.S. policies and practices, there is now a nationwide immigrant detention system that includes more than 250 prisons, many of them for profit.

Both the current administration and congress have supported abusive counter terrorism laws and policies, including detention without charge at Guantanamo Bay, restrictions on the transfer of detainees held there and prosecutions in a "fundamentally flawed" military commission system. Attacks were carried out by U.S. drone (remotely directed) aircraft not only in a number of different countries, but drones were also used along the U.S./Mexico border.

The government has taken no steps toward accountability for torture or other abuses committed by U.S. officials. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has produced a 6,000 page report detailing the CIA's rendition, detention, and interrogation programs, but it has not been released. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was signed and renewed by the president. Among its provisions are indefinite detention of those considered to be terrorism suspects, including civilians both in the U.S. and abroad.

*Human Rights Watch*, 350 Fifth Ave -  
34th floor, New York NY 10118.

## **POLICE PART IN PROSECUTORIAL MISCONDUCT**

"Thousands of people plead guilty to crimes every year in the United States because they know that the odds of a jury's believing their word over a police officer's are slim to none."

["For the prison system to warehouse human beings, prisoners must cease, in the minds of the public, to be human beings...The system works best when no one--judge, prosecutor or even defense lawyer--can imagine his or her son, nephew or brother as the defendant."]

"Police officers have an incentive to lie. A former San Francisco Police commissioner wrote: 'Police officer perjury in court to justify illegal dope searches is commonplace. One of the dirty little not-so-secret secrets of the criminal justice system is undercover narcotics officers intentionally lying under oath...Police officers know that in a swearing match between a drug defendant and a police officer, the judge always rules in favor of the officer...Criminal defendants are typically poor and uneducated, often belong to a racial minority, and often have a criminal record. Police know that 'No one cares about these people.'"

"In 2011, hundreds of drug cases were dismissed in New York City after several police officers were accused of mishandling evidence. (Yet) police departments have been rewarded in recent years for the sheer numbers of stops, searches and arrests. Police officers' tendency to regard procedural rules as optional and to lie and distort the facts has grown as well...."

--Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, in the *NY Times*, Feb. 2013  
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To receive the Newsletter each month, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address) --up to 12 at one time.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests, in order to receive the yearly holiday card/new calendar.

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. We have discovered that some resource lists give the wrong address.

Remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS.

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.realcostofprisonsproject.org/coalition.html> This is a GREAT site!

We continue to appreciate and depend on readers' donations of stamps & checks.

## **COMPLEJO INDUSTRIAL-MIGRACION**

Hoy tenemos el establecimiento de un complejo industrial--centrado alrededor de la industria de la detención de migrantes. Una variedad de políticas durante los últimos 25 años ha resultado en la criminalización de migrantes--a pesar de estado de legalización--y el aumento masivo de centros de detención para alojarlos.

El promedio diario de población de migrantes detenidos se ha expandido desde 9.011 en 1996, a 20.429 en 2001, a 33.330 en 2011. Este crecimiento ha ocurrido junto con el récord de deportaciones durante la administración Obama con 391.953 individuos deportados en 2011 comparado con solamente 280.974 cinco años antes. Con tal crecimiento y demanda para instalaciones de detención, cada vez más el gobierno federal ha contratado centros de detención para migrantes al sector privado.

Entre una variedad de corporaciones cuales han beneficiado del negocio de alojamiento de migrantes detenidos y prisioneros en general, ninguna ha tenido más ganancia que la Corrections Corporation of American (CCA) y el GEO Group, Inc. Hoy la CCA posee y maneja 66 instalaciones cuales alojan 91.000 camas mientras el GEO Group tiene 65 instalaciones y casi 66.000 camas. Además, en 2011, CCA declaró ingresos totales en la cantidad de \$1,7 billones mientras GEO generó ingresos totales en la suma de \$1,6 billones.

Igualmente, individuos influyentes son asociados con cada una de estas corporaciones, sirviendo en varias actividades como inversionistas, miembros del consejo, y cabilderos.

Ha habido una letanía de quejas con respeto al abuso de migrantes detenidos en centros de detención así como prisioneros en instalaciones penitenciarias manejadas por corporaciones privadas.

Cuando hay tantas entidades poderosas --personas en los sectores gubernamental, empresarial, y de justicia penal/ejecución migratoria-- beneficiándose generosamente de las actuales políticas migratorias, es difícil realizar reformas migratorias. Ciertamente, muchas personas poderosas quienes son parte del complejo industrial-migración ganan económicamente de la presencia de migrantes indocumentados. Tales ganancias e intereses económicos aseguran que el complejo industrial-migración prospere y crezca con migrantes indocumentados representando la carne de cañón de avaricia.