

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 42-yy, No. 9

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

September 2017

ABOUT THE DANGERS AND THE FIGHT BACK

The state prison incarceration rate is the number of adults out of every 100,000 people who are being held in the prisons of each state. The state with the highest rate is Louisiana, at 1,420 human beings imprisoned for every 100,000 in the state population as a whole. Second is **Oklahoma**, at 1,300 out of every 100,000. Third is Mississippi, at 1,300 [statistics based on 2013 figures]. (The lowest rate of incarceration is in Maine, with 350 people out of every 100,000 being held in state prisons.)

Oklahoma is outstanding in some other respects. Among them are: the highest rates of incarceration of both women in general and of African American men in particular. In addition, between 2001 and 2014, there were 13 killings per 100,000 Oklahoma prisoners. In the same period, there were 2 homicides per 100,000 prisoners in New York and 5 homicides per 100,000 prisoners in Louisiana.

And the Fight Back in Oklahoma? For example, the *AllInOneProject* (200 N Harvey, #208, Oklahoma City OK 73102). It is a grass-roots membership organization which advocates for individuals doing long-term prison sentences to ensure that they are treated fairly and receive meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation and release. Membership includes those currently doing life sentences, their loved ones, lifers groups and those with parole terms equivalent to life sentences.

The AllInOne Project has filed a *federal lawsuit* in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma (Case Number CIV-17-908-D) initially requesting that the Court: > order appointment of a Special Master for the calculation of the appropriate capacity in the Oklahoma prison system based on all relevant factors, > order the Governor of Oklahoma, the defendant in the suit, to catch up on the backlog of parole hearings, > order a Special Master to provide monthly reports on the parole board during litigation, > declare the 98% occupancy guarantee rates with for-profit prisons be dissolved, and > release all prisoners held on ICE detainers to those detainers, not prison.

And then: **Texas** prisons during and after Hurricane Harvey. People being held in the Ramsey I, Terrell and Stringfellow Units (all in Brazoria county), which number about 4,500, were evacuated. Those held in the federal prison complex in Beaumont, totaling 2,067 people, were not evacuated as of August 23, nor were those Texas prisoners in the three prisons in the heavily flooded city of Beaumont, east and north of Houston. By August 27, Mandatory Evacuations were ordered by the County Judge of Brazoria County for "all residents living west of state highway 288 and south of state highway 6." We cannot be sure of which imprisoned people fit this description exactly, but the maps we do have show that the area described covers a big chunk of Brazoria county. We have no reports of Clemens, Darrington or Scott Units, all in Brazoria county, being evacuated.

An example of the Fight Back on this? The *DE-NJ NLG* (Delaware-New Jersey National Lawyers Guild) Prisoners Legal Advocacy Network (*PLAN*) on September 13, served TDCJ with notice of the reports of unconstitutional conditions of confinement received by prisoners and their loved ones. A class action suit will be filed on behalf of prisoners who have suffered harm due to TDCLJ's apparent failure to take reasonable steps to maintain safe and humane conditions following Hurricane Harvey.

More than two weeks after that hurricane made landfall, reports continued that there were still a serious lack of toilets (at Gist, Leblanc and Stiles Units) and of showers, with some units reporting a continuing shortage of food and water as well as disruptions to mail delivery and other communications. Also, reports of suspended dispensation of prescription medications immediately after the storm.

Mismanagement of evacuations included people being sent to facilities that were already overcrowded, and of 600 medically vulnerable prisoners sent to the Wallace Unit, in violation of a court order.

Resource: c/o Prison Law Project/NLG
132 Nassau St, Ste 922, New York NY 10038

Tras el paso de Irma

Porqué los cubanos tienen quince veces menos probabilidades de morir durante un huracán que los estadounidenses--y fue una de las islas caribeñas más afectadas por el huracán Irma. Diez personas murieron --Irma se abatió sobre la costa norte de Cuba como una tormenta de categoría cinco.

Fue el peor huracán en dicho país desde el año 2005, cuando 16 personas murieron como consecuencia del huracán Dennis. Hace mucho tiempo se considera a Cuba líder en materia de preparación contra huracanes y recuperación. Mientras tanto, Cuba ya mandó más 750 trabajadores de la salud a Antigua, Barbuda, Saint Kitts, Nevis, Santa Lucía, Bahamas, República Dominicana y Haití.

(Para saber más de este tema, tiene que leer el artículo proximo en ingles--lamentablemente.)

To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address).

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests in order for us to maintain the mailing list for the January holiday card/ new calendar as accurately as we can.

Also, note that the only address to be sure to reach us is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. Some resource address listings are incorrect in this regard.

And still: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; for our protection, please do not mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter free on-line for downloading and distribution. It is at: realcostofprisonsproject.org/html--this is a GREAT site!

Alliance of Incarcerated Canadians/ Foreigners in US Prisons, (AIC/FAP)

Has a new address, it is:
AICAP/AIFAP, c/o G Leclair, 75015-20 Bloor St E, Toronto ON M4W 3G7, Canada.
Postage is \$1.15 U.S., for the first ounce.

A FEW NUMBERS

Jurisdictions with for-profit prisons:

28 states and the federal system.

Number incarcerated in them:

126,272, 8% of the total prison population.

* * * Black Lives Matter * * *

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

One of the Caribbean Islands hardest hit by Hurricane Irma was Cuba, where 10 people died. Irma hit Cuba's northern coast as a Category 5 storm. It was the deadliest hurricane in Cuba since 2005, when 16 people died in Hurricane Dennis. Cuba has long been viewed as a world leader in hurricane preparedness and recovery. A person is 15 times more likely to be killed by a hurricane in the United States as in Cuba. Meanwhile, Cuba has sent more than 750 health workers--as they have done similarly in the past--to Antigua, Barbuda, Saint Kitts, Nevis, Saint Lucia, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In contrast, authorities have warned that parts of Puerto Rico could be without electricity for up to six months.

Hurricane Irma hit Cuba on its north side (facing the U.S.) and traveled along the coast, coming near to Havana and then headed north (to the Florida Keys). The worst affected was the area of Camagüey. In Havana itself, waves came up over the sea wall, reaching about 32 feet, with horrific flooding that went over six blocks in many places. In some areas, people were up to their shoulders in water.

However, in Cuba, there is an extensive government program of preparedness. Children learn from an early age that disasters will happen and they know what to do when they do. Enormous numbers of lives are saved with massive evacuations. This time they evacuated a million people or so (out of a total population of 11 million). The focus is on saving lives.

All neighborhoods are mapped. So it is known exactly who lives where. Who is elderly and otherwise vulnerable is known. A couple of days before an expected hurricane hits, all are evacuated. People with infirmities and pregnant women are hospitalized. Others get taken to shelters or to be with family or friends whose housing is deemed to be adequately secure. Those in shelters this time will probably be there for quite a while. Everybody in Cuba knows what they're going to do if a hurricane hits--everybody knows the plan. And it is tightly organized.

This time, emphasis is on restoring the tourist infrastructure, largely located on the north coast, because of its importance to the economy.

Meanwhile, the U.S. president's administration is moving forward with its plan to stop the closure of the Guantanamo prison. The Pentagon is proposing spending \$500 million in new construction there, where the U.S. is currently imprisoning 41 people--indefinitely.