

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 45-B, No. 5

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

May 2020

Lack of Basic Human Rights

Michelle Alexander, *New York Times*:

Our nation has spent trillions on endless war and systems of mass incarceration and mass deportation; yet basic human rights such as a living wage, health care, housing and quality education are routinely denied on the grounds that we – the richest country in the world – cannot afford to provide to all of our people what citizens of many other nations are granted as a matter of right...Our governments have been willing to shut down our entire economy, sparing only those sectors deemed "essential." Shouldn't we also consider whether it is truly "essential" for millions of people to be caged? The real cure for our woes is an affirmation of the inalienable entitlement to life for people in prisons and jails... Failure to aggressively decarcerate could add 100,000 fatalities to the overall U.S. death count.

John Wester-Archbishop of Sta.Fe NM

The pandemic reveals that immigrant workers, who dwell on the margins of society, are present on the front lines of this battle, risking their own well-being to serve the nation at a time of crisis... There are more than 15,000 immigrant-owned businesses in New Mexico. They pay \$393 million in state and local taxes a year. In New Mexico, two-thirds of immigrants live in mixed-status families. Rather than relegating them to a hidden underclass, we should bring them out of the shadows by putting them on a path to citizenship. They have earned it.

Healing Justice, AFSC-Prison Watch
89 Market St.-6th fl. Newark NJ 07102

We need to come together. We need to protect our most vulnerable. We need to unite in our communities and in our common humanity...The simple, vital precautions we take every day to stay safe from COVID-19, like sanitation and social distance are unavailable to those trapped inside the prison system...People are dying every day. They were never supposed to be sentenced to death. But that is what is happening.

Countries with top 10 death rates

<u>Country</u>	<u>Deaths/million population</u>
Belgium	795
Spain	598
Italy	537
United Kingdom	536
France	432
Sweden	389
Netherlands	338
Ireland	321
United States	292
Switzerland	220

(out of date: downloaded May 23, 2020)

More Resources

Perilous Chronicle

P.O. Box 381

Tucson AZ 85702

Is a digital research project that seeks to document all acts of prisoner unrest across the US and Canada from 2010 through the present. It believes this current wave of prisoner organizing constitutes a nation-wide social movement and their goal is to track this movement comprehensively. Their archives include information on more than 200 incidents over the past 9 years. Information to help expand their data base is welcome.

Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
(GLAHR)

7 Dunwoody Park-Suite 110

Atlanta GA 30338

Educates, organizes and trains the Latino community in Georgia to defend and promote its civil and human rights.
Recursos durante la pandemia del covid-19.

Prison Policy Initiative (PPI)

P.O. Box 127

Northampton MA 01061

The non-profit, non-partisan PPI produces a variety of substantive research to reveal to harm of mass criminalization and to encourage advocacy campaigns to create a more just society.

Poor People's Digital March on DC, June 20

Rev. Dr. William Barber

Stay at home. Stay alive. Organize.

La clase multimillonaria aumenta

Mientras millones de estadounidenses pierden sus empleos, la clase multimillonaria del país aumenta su patrimonio en 434.000 millones de dólares durante la pandemia. Nuevos datos de la Oficina del Censo de Estados Unidos revelan que casi la mitad de todos los adultos estadounidenses afirman que ellos o un miembro de su hogar han perdido ingresos laborales desde mediados de marzo.

Sin embargo, no todos los estadounidenses han sufrido. Un nuevo informe halló que el patrimonio de los multimillonarios del país ha aumentado en 434.000 millones de dólares, un 15% desde que comenzó la pandemia.

Desde el 18 de marzo, 38,5 millones de personas han presentado solicitudes de prestaciones por desempleo. Durante ese breve período de dos meses, el patrimonio de los multimillonarios en Estados Unidos, en general, aceleró su crecimiento en los últimos dos meses. Incluso el patrimonio combinado de Jeff Bezos (de Amazon) y Mark Zuckerberg (de Facebook) ha aumentado en 60.000 millones de dólares desde el 18 de marzo.

To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope for every month's issue you want sent (up to 12 at a time) Put the CPR return address in the upper left-hand corner of each envelope.

Keep sending address changes and renewal requests in order for us to have our *only* permanent mailing list—the one for our January holiday card/new calendar—be as accurate as possible.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS. To maintain our best possible access to our prison-based readers, please do NOT mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail". Do not send us any legal papers. Despite our best efforts, we may not be successful in getting them back to you.

If you wonder why we do not have a web site in our name, it is because we are a small (single digit at any one time) group of volunteers and simply do not have the resources to maintain one in a timely fashion. We operate, at the level we do, with practically no time or money margin.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons project for posting our Newsletter monthly on-line for free downloading and distribution. All issues since 2009 are there at: www.realcostofprisons.org—this is a GREAT site! THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT *****

What Has Changed and What Has Not

I. A former contract psychologist for the CIA expressed no regrets or contrition for the torture of a Palestinian prisoner, one of five charged as conspirators in the September 11 attacks, who has been held without trial since 2007 at the U.S. military base, located despite Cuban opposition at Guantánamo, in Cuba. The prisoner has been water boarded, sleep deprived, held in a coffin sized box and slammed into a wall. The psychologist stated he considered it his moral patriotic duty to personally implement these techniques he had devised.

The two psychologists who had devised these methods of torture went on to setup a lucrative business. It provided guards and interrogators to work at the secret overseas prisons—some of which were in Thailand—set up after the 2001 attack, where the torture took place. The psychologists received \$81 million for the contract, from the U.S. government.

The 40 prisoners who continue to be held at Guantánamo have been increasingly isolated during the pandemic. It costs \$13 million per year per person, or \$540 million for the 40, to keep the prisoners at Guantánamo.

II. Some big U.S. cities have seen a significant decrease in "street crime" during the pandemic. Thirty different jurisdictions were compared in March and April of 2019 and 2020 for reports of "violent crime." There was a 33% drop in San Francisco, a 25% drop in New York City and a nearly 25% drop in Los Angeles. There were 21% increases reported in Denver, and 12% in Houston.

III. The cost of mass incarceration continues. The U.S. has had 40 years of a legal system that's been crafted with the effect of making it extremely hard to provide any kind of meaningful constitutional relief for people...The fragmentation of the U.S. police, court and penal system — a decentralized bureaucracy with thousands of jurisdictions and power-holders — has long served to hide the full cost of mass incarceration...The country's more than 3,000 jails operate under the authority of thousands of local officials...Only a few jail systems are making coronavirus data readily available to the public...There are nearly 200,000 incarcerated people over the age of 55. About 40% of people in prison have at least one chronic health condition. Source: Sharon Dolovich, UCLA Covid-19 *Behind the Bars Data Project*, UCLA School of Law, 385 Charles E. Young Drive East, 1242 Law Building, Los Angeles CA 90095.