



For Immediate Release

The Government Must Act to End Abusive Solitary Confinement

OTTAWA, ONTARIO (November 30th, 2021): Today is the two-year anniversary of the implementation of the Structured Intervention Units (SIUs) in federal Canadian prisons. The implementation of the SIUs was meant to mark the end of solitary confinement in Canada – but these past two years have shown otherwise. Solitary confinement continues in Canada. Two years on, a coalition of organizations and academics continue to call for the elimination of abusive solitary confinement in Canada. Today, they also release a report with insights from respected and recognized advocates, scholars, lawyers, and politicians on the ongoing practice of solitary confinement in Canada.

The implementation of the SIUs has received considerable public criticism over the failure of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to cooperate with the independent oversight committee, an unwillingness to engage external stakeholders' concerns and – most critically – a lack of meaningful change from the solitary confinement units they were intended to replace.

"It is disturbing that the same harms of isolated confinement that our courts found were cruel and a violation of prisoners' Charter rights persist both inside the Structured Intervention Units and elsewhere in the federal prisons." said Catherine Latimer, Executive Director of the John Howard Society. "The rule of law must be respected, and abusive solitary confinement must be prohibited."

Two years after the implementation of the SIUs, The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, the John Howard Society of Canada, Prisoners' Legal Services, and Dr. Adelina Iftene continue to call on CSC and the Federal Government to take immediate action to:

- end the practice of solitary confinement wherever feasible - and prohibit prolonged use of solitary confinement in its entirety;
- provide real alternatives to the SIU other than return to maximum security, including transfers to lower security, healing lodges and treatment centres;
- implement effective, independent oversight for the SIUs;
- grant public access to information from CSC on the operation of SIUs;
- address the lack of access to SIU inmates by non-government service providers;

“Without transparency, effective oversight and real alternatives to SIU and placement in maximum security, CSC will continue to treat people with cruelty behind closed doors,” said Jennifer Metcalfe, Executive Director of Prisoners’ Legal Services.

Today a report will be released that offers an in-depth look at the issue of solitary confinement. This report *BY ANY OTHER NAME: A 15 Day Spotlight on Solitary Confinement in Canada* summarizes a 15-day spotlight from November 2020 which brought to light all the ways in which the practice of solitary confinement continues to persist in Canada, just by any other name: SIUs, Restrictive Movement Routines, Mental Health Monitoring, Medical Isolation, Lockdowns, and Dry Ceiling. Daily events included panels with some of Canada’s most respected and recognized advocates, scholars, lawyers, and politicians – and featured the critical voices of individuals with lived experiences of incarceration and community groups.

“This report is an essential resource on the ongoing practice of solitary confinement in Canada.” said Emilie Coyle, Executive Director of CAEFS. “While a year has passed since we hosted these panel discussions, the content remains – unfortunately - as relevant as ever. After engaging with this resource, I don’t think there will be any doubt that the practice of solitary confinement must be abolished to protect the human rights of all people in prison.”

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