

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IS TORTURE

Help End it in New Jersey

Sunday, June 12th • 1-3:30 pm

(light lunch will be served from 1:00-2:00)

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
67 Church St., Montclair**

Panel Discussion and Art Installation

Headline Speaker:

NJ State Senator Raymond Lesniak – sponsor of S.51 restricting solitary confinement and co-sponsor of other criminal justice reform measures.

Panel Speaker:

Bonnie Kerness, Director of Prison Watch Program of American Friends Service Committee and advocate against mass incarceration

Panel Speaker and Artist:

Ojori Lutalo, former U.S. political prisoner and inmate in NJ solitary confinement unit for 22 years. He is also a recognized social commentary artist.

View Ojori's compelling collages created while in solitary confinement and experience what it feels like to be inside a solitary confinement cell by spending a few minutes inside our replica cell.

Co-sponsored by UUC Montclair's Undoing Racism Committee, UU Legislative Ministry of NJ, and BlueWaveNJ.

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National Religious Campaign Against Torture

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a membership organization of religious organizations committed to ending torture that is sponsored or enabled by the United States. Since its formation on January 16, 2006, more than 320 religious organizations have joined and over 67,000 individual people of faith have participated in our activities. Members include representatives from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Catholic, evangelical Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox Christian, mainline Protestant, Quaker, Sikh and Unitarian Universalist communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and congregations.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), a coalition of religious organizations grounded in the core values of our diverse religious traditions and sharing a deep compassion for all humanity, believes that: All persons, whether friends, strangers, or enemies, possess a basic human dignity and inherent rights to the support of community and the protection of law and therefore should in no instances be subjected to the threat or practice of torture.

Why should people of faith care about the use of prolonged solitary confinement?

The diverse religious traditions that comprise the National Religious Campaign Against Torture share a recognition of the inherent dignity of each human being and humanity's capacity for redemption and restoration. The torture of solitary confinement desecrates a person's inherent dignity, denies the essential human need for community, and is antithetical to rehabilitation.

How does the United States use of solitary confinement compare to other nations?

The United States has become a world leader in holding prisoners in prolonged solitary confinement. The United States reportedly has five percent of the world's population, 25 percent of its prisoners, and the vast majority of prisoners in long-term solitary confinement. Experts estimate that at least 80,000 people in the U.S. criminal justice system, including youth and individuals with severe mental illness, are held in solitary confinement.

What does 'prolonged' solitary confinement mean?

For the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), the term 'prolonged solitary confinement' is equated to torture — the point when the use of solitary confinement results in severe mental or physical pain or suffering. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, has stated that more than 15 days constitutes torture, and has called for a ban on the use of solitary confinement for youth and those with mental illness.

Who is held in solitary confinement and why are they placed in isolation?

The criminalization of communities of color has resulted in people of color being disproportionately impacted by mass incarceration and solitary confinement. A majority of incarcerated people placed in solitary confinement are there as a result of non-violent rule infractions. In some prisons, solitary confinement has become a default tool. As a result, many incarcerated people with severe mental illness end up in solitary confinement as a result of difficulty understanding or following such rules, especially when their illnesses go untreated.