

“The Prison within the Prison”: Lockdown and Social Distancing in America’s Prisons

By [Prison Radio](#)

Global Research, November 22, 2020

Prison Radio

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Science and Medicine](#)

Our people inside are robbed of privacy, autonomy, safety, and human contact; why would their health in a pandemic be any different? Because of the poor standards and oversight of prison conditions in the U.S., each facility is largely responsible for implementing its own COVID-19 safety measures. All have proved inadequate.

According to the Prison [Policy Initiative](#), only about 50% of states require correctional officers to wear masks. These officers are bringing in the virus from the outside; as they are in direct contact with our people inside, they inevitably infect people.

As [Christopher Trotter](#) states, “At this moment, the facility is on lock-down due to COVID-19. A upkick in cases as a result of staff transferring it inside to prisoners. Again, as a result of staff transferring it inside to prisoners.” Regardless of the word of the State, it is clear that our people inside are not being protected from COVID-19.

[Ivan Kilgore](#) explains, “...What the [California prison] department is doing is they’re issuing memorandums to the public...basically saying that they are providing us with social distancing, soaps, infectants...which someone who’s been incarcerated for over 20 years and actually in prison reading this stuff, I’m like, okay, where is this stuff? They weren’t passing out none of that.”

Sergio Hyland sent us a letter describing his experience with COVID-19:

Just wanted to update u and everybody over there at prisonradio that I’m in the prison infirmary, due to being hit with Covid-19. I’ve had some really painful days and nights, but hopefully on the road to recovery. I’m on steroids to help my breathing and oxygen levels come back to normal. Pretty weak and tired most of the time, but I’m used to fighting, so... Thank u Noel, and everybody else over there. I’ll be back in no time. Be safe and careful. This thing is no joke! My elder and mentor, Alvin Joyner – who is one of Maroon’s people – passed away on 11-02-20, from Covid-19. I walked and talked with him EVERY SINGLE DAY since we met. I feel so numb from his passing. The world lost a great, great man. – S

We need a reliable way to understand the atrocities that our prison industrial complex creates, and that a pandemic intensifies, is to hear it from people who experience it firsthand. Our work does that.

Today we are launching our [Winter Fundraiser](#). We need the resources to keep our phone

lines running to amplify the voices of those most silenced through these unprecedented times. We need your help in order to print the last of Mumia's opus trilogy, *Murder Inc: Perfecting Tyranny*. We need to completely overhaul our outdated website to make it easier to navigate the influx of commentaries we've been receiving.

As of November 10th, there have been at least 182,776 people who are imprisoned who have tested positive for COVID-19, and at least 1,412 deaths, according to [The Marshall Project](#). There is no time to waste; our people inside are continuously and purposefully left out of the narrative, with COVID-19 being no different. As [Travis Nettles "Seven"](#) said, "You know, we always on the last of the totem pole." Join us in fighting for the people who are subjugated to the worst of the pandemic, and [donate now](#).

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