

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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USA: Immediate and meaningful reforms needed to alleviate inhumanity in California's Security Housing Units

Amnesty International today released an open [letter](#) to California authorities calling for immediate measures to address ongoing grave concerns in the living conditions of prisoners in the state Security Housing Units (SHU), in particular in Pelican Bay State Prison. The letter is addressed to Governor Edmund Brown and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Secretary Jeffrey Beard.

In September 2012 the organization issued a [report](#) on its findings from a tour of three of the state's SHU's the previous year. Since then, over 4000 people remain confined to cells for 22-24 hours a day with no significant improvement to their conditions. These include hundreds of prisoners who have spent more than a decade – many longer than 20 years – in conditions of severe isolation and environmental deprivation at Pelican Bay SHU.

This year prisoners across the state engaged in a two-month long hunger strike to protest the gruelling conditions in the units, as well as the means by which they are assigned and released from them. At its peak, over 30,000 prisoners across the state were engaged in this peaceful protest. This was the third such strike in the past two years.

In September, the hunger strike was brought to a close after state legislators committed to hold hearings on conditions in the units and the use of long term isolation. The first of these was held on October 9th.

“Meaningful change is needed now” says Angela Wright, “To date, reforms introduced by California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) fall far short of what is required to ensure that conditions in segregation facilities meet international standards for humane treatment”.

USA: Open letter to California authorities: Continuing concerns and recommendations regarding conditions in California's Security House Units

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR51/082/2013/en>

USA: The edge of endurance: Prison conditions in California's Security Housing Units

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR51/060/2012/en>

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