



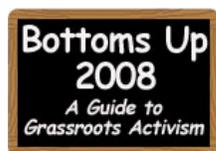
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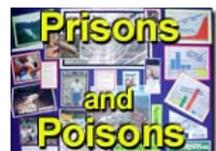
PRESS RELEASE:

Government Study Confirms Systemic Sexual Violence in Detention

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Highlights Serious Under-Reporting of Such Abuse



LOS ANGELES- International human rights organization [Stop Prisoner Rape \(SPR\)](#) welcomes the release today of the [third annual statistical report on prisoner rape](#), issued by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).



The BJS study, which analyzes administrative reports of sexual violence behind bars, found that 6,528 official complaints were filed about such abuse occurring in 2006, or 2.9 allegations per 1,000 inmates. In 2004, the first year for which the BJS published these data, the number of complaints was 5,386.



While offering important insights into the patterns and dynamics of the sexual violence in detention that is reported to corrections officials, the study reveals only a small fraction of the overall problem. The BJS itself is in the process of conducting the first-ever large-scale, nationwide, anonymous inmate survey about sexual violence.



In the pre-testing of its survey tool last year, the BJS found that 4.4 percent of inmates had experienced sexual abuse in the preceding 12 months - a rate 15 times higher than that captured in today's analysis of official administrative reports.

"We know for a fact that very few survivors of prisoner rape ever file a formal complaint. By comparing today's report with the early results of the BJS' inmate survey, it becomes clear that serious attempts to understand the problem of sexual violence in detention must go well beyond an analysis of formal reports of abuse," said Lovisa Stannow, Executive Director of SPR. "Survivors contact SPR every day, the vast majority of whom are too afraid or ashamed to report the abuse they have endured."

Today's BJS report also reveals a shocking failure on the part of corrections officials to respond appropriately to the sexual abuse of inmates.



The report found that, even in substantiated cases of staff sexual misconduct and harassment of inmates, 76 percent of the survivors were offered no medical treatment or mental health counseling. SPR believes that all survivors of sexual violence in detention should be offered such services, to ensure that physical injuries, acute trauma, and the long-term psychological effect of sexual abuse are addressed.



"Corrections facilities must, as a matter of urgency, make sure that all inmates who have been sexually abused are given an opportunity to begin the healing process, especially when the abusers are the very people charged with protecting them," said Ms. Stannow.



"This is not only a matter of human rights, it's about public health. Some 95 percent of inmates eventually return to their communities, bringing with them the full range of their prison experiences, including learned violent behavior, psychological trauma, and infectious disease."

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The BJS report, which is based entirely on information provided by corrections officials, also found that officials concluded that "abuse of power" was a factor in only five percent of substantiated cases of staff sexual misconduct.



"It's disheartening to see that corrections staff still do not recognize that there is an inherent abuse of power involved in every single one of these cases," said Ms. Stannow. Sexual contact between a corrections official and an inmate is illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



SPR is the only non-governmental organization in the country dedicated exclusively to eliminating sexual violence against men, women, and youth in detention. SPR was instrumental in securing the passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in 2003, which mandated the BJS to publish today's report and to undertake the anonymous inmate survey currently underway.

Stories from behind

For a copy of the BJS report, "Sexual Violence Reported by Correctional Authorities, 2006," please go to www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/svrca06.htm



For more information, contact Lovisa Stannow of Stop Prison Rape at 213-384-1400 (ext. 103) or see www.spr.org.



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