

Riots and escape attempts reported in U.S. juvenile jails as coronavirus spreads



New York, April 30 (RHC)-- The Associated Press reports riots are breaking out inside juvenile jails across the United States, and some youths have attempted to escape as coronavirus cases mount. One teenager imprisoned at the Bridge City facility near New Orleans described a SWAT team pepper-spraying a group of children who had kicked down their cell doors.

Criminal justice and children's rights advocates are demanding youths be allowed to serve the remainder of their time at home amid the pandemic.

In New Jersey, The Intercept reports nearly 30 imprisoned people have died of COVID-19. Only 184 New Jersey prisoners have been tested for the virus — less than 1% of the state's incarcerated population.

In Arizona, families and allies of incarcerated women held a car rally and prayer vigil outside Perryville prison, continuing demands for the release of incarcerated people as COVID-19 rapidly spreads through Arizona prisons.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has confirmed the first COVID-19 death of a female prisoner. Andrea Circle Bear had given birth to her child while on a ventilator four weeks prior. She had been transferred from a jail in South Dakota to Texas. Circle Bear was a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and was 30 years old.

In related news, an Iranian scientist imprisoned in a U.S. immigration jail, who for weeks has been pleading for his freedom, has contracted COVID-19. Sirous Asgari often spoke about his fears of the coronavirus spreading inside crowded Immigration and Customs Enforcement jails, and about the unsanitary and inhumane conditions inside the Winn Correctional Center in Louisiana, where he is being held.

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