

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence

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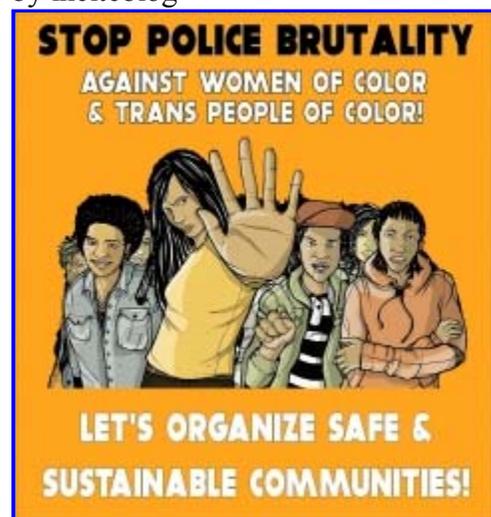
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Reports Confirm Sexual Violence in Prisons Systematic & Largely Under-Reported

March 29, 2010

tags: [prison industrial complex](#), [sexual violence](#), [young people](#)

by inciteblog



INCITE! anti-law enforcement violence project; art by Cristy C. Road

The [Atlantic Wire notes](#) that the New York Review of Books recently published a 2-part series on sexual violence within US prisons, including juvenile detention centers. They write:

This problem, according to authors David Kaiser and Lovisa Stannow, is both systemic

and widely under-reported. Drawing on an impressive breadth of studies, Kaiser and Stannow conclude that **the vast majority of sexual violence is committed not by fellow inmates but by prison staff**, and that a deeply entrenched culture of silence smothers victimized prisoners. They also offer a number of recommendations for increasing transparency and making it more difficult for such abuses to take place. [emphasis added]

Kaiser and Stannow [investigated the current crisis of sexual violence in juvenile detention centers](#), in which incarcerated young people are targeted by prison staff without any recourse for safety. They write:

Reporters in Texas, in 2007, discovered that more than 750 juvenile detainees across the state had alleged sexual abuse by staff over the previous six years. That number, however, was generally thought to under-represent the true extent of such abuse, because most children were too afraid to report it: staff commonly instructed their favorite inmates to beat up kids who complained. Even when the kids did file complaints, they knew it wouldn't do them much good. Staff covered for each other, grievance processes were sabotaged and evidence was frequently destroyed. Officials in Austin ignored what they heard, and in the very rare instances when staff were fired and their cases referred to local prosecutors, those prosecutors usually refused to act. Not one employee of the Texas Youth Commission during that six-year period was sent to prison for raping the children in his or her care.

The articles from the NYRB series are available here:

- [The Crisis of Juvenile Prison Rape](#) David Kaiser and Lovisa Stannow, The New York Review of Books
- [The Rape of American Prisoners](#) David Kaiser and Lovisa Stannow, The New York Review of Books
- [The Way to Stop Prison Rape](#) David Kaiser and Lovisa Stannow, The New York Review of Books

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