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## Statement

### Correctional Investigator Sounds Urgent Alarm: It's Well Past Time to Correct Corrections

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

OTTAWA, Thursday, February 10, 2022—The government must end CSC's pernicious lawlessness. As the [Correctional Investigator](#) is yet again chronicling, practices and conditions of torture continue not only to persist, but, particularly during this pandemic, to proliferate, in Canadian prisons. The situation for Indigenous Peoples, African Canadians, women and those with disabling mental health issues is worse still.

In 1990, the government committed to implement the [recommendations of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women](#) for community-based, low security approaches for women.

In the annual report he released today, the Correctional Investigator underscores that, for more than 30 years, these recommendations have been prescribed by successive governments, yet the situation is worse than ever. Numbers of Indigenous and Black women prisoners [continue to skyrocket](#). Despite representing low risks to public safety, overall they are more likely to be classified as higher security and have more limited access to programs, community supports and conditional release.

The Correctional Investigator also noted a profound lack of correctional accountability and independent monitoring. This includes systemic lack of data collection with respect to the role that racial bias plays in use of force and isolation of prisoners, which disproportionately affects Indigenous prisoners.

[Bill S-230](#), currently being debated in the Senate, could remedy these issues and more. It would require judicial oversight of decisions to isolate prisoners and encourage community-based alternatives to prisons in particular for those with mental health issues, women, Indigenous, Black and racialized prisoners.

To meet its commitments to address discriminatory treatment of Indigenous and Black Peoples in the criminal legal and prison systems, the government must also amend Bill C-5, government legislation on mandatory minimum penalties, to include the provisions introduced by Senator Jaffer in her [Bill S-213](#). In place of a piecemeal approach to mandatory minimums that risks amounting to a performative gesture, Bill S-213 would allow judges to do their job, take into account the reality of system racism, and exercise structured discretion to not impose mandatory minimum penalties in every case where doing so would result in an injustice.

Parliamentarians have a duty to exercise their rights of access to prisons in order to draw attention to systemic violations of human rights and try to hold correctional authorities to account, but we also have a moral and legal imperative to act to remedy these wrongs.

Further delay is not an option.

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- Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator: <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20202021-eng.aspx>
- Backgrounder on the recommendations of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, judicial oversight of corrections and alternatives to segregation and incarceration: attached

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