

THANK YOU, JDI SUPPORTERS, for showing your extraordinary compassion for survivors of prisoner rape. Your holiday greetings — more than 11,000 overall — changed people's lives. So many survivors wrote us to say how your words restored their feelings of self-worth and dignity, and gave them the strength to keep living.



The need for all of us to keep fighting for the basic rights of inmates was made painfully clear in February, when the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)

named Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca "Sheriff of the Year." Yes, that's right; NSA has chosen to give its highest honor to a sheriff who is infamous for turning a blind eye to rampant physical and sexual violence in his jails, and for refusing to take responsibility for atrocious abuses committed by his own staff.

Worse still, Sheriff Baca serves on NSA's Board of Directors — the governing body of the very organization that has proclaimed him the best in the country! For all the sheriffs across the country who are principled, and who are working hard to uphold inmates' right to dignity, this is a slap in the face.

I hope you will join the petition launched by JDI Survivor Council member Frank Mendoza (see page 2), who was raped by one of Sheriff Baca's deputies, asking NSA to rescind this award.

Lovisa Stannow
Executive Director

Your Words, Their Hope

The Kindness of JDI Supporters — Included in 11,000 Messages of Hope — Inspires Prisoner Rape Survivors

EVERY YEAR, JDI supporters share holiday greetings with prisoner rape survivors — gifts of hope that mean the world to those who receive them. This holiday season, thanks to many of you, JDI sent more than 11,000 messages to survivors who are still behind bars, an unprecedented outpouring of compassion.

Participating in the *Words of Hope* holiday card campaign is a powerful act of solidarity with the countless men and women who have been sexually abused in the government's custody. Boa Smith, who

was released from prison in November, explained, "Getting a card might not seem like a big deal, but to people who are locked up, it means everything."

More than a few survivors credit these simple messages with saving their lives. One such survivor is Dwight, a gay man who was raped repeatedly by other inmates at a Texas facility. Dwight has struggled with severe depression; at his lowest point, he contemplated suicide. But today, drawing hope and courage from holiday messages, he has resolved to keep fighting for his rights. He wrote:

See Messages of Hope, continued on page 3



JDI Survivor Council member Boa Smith, who served 29 years in prison before her release in late 2012, knows first-hand how messages from JDI supporters can change an inmate's life.

Lee Baca, “Sheriff of the Year”? Not on our Watch

JDI HAS LAUNCHED A petition urging the National Sheriffs’ Association to rescind its decision to name Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca as its “Sheriff of the Year.” Under Sheriff Baca’s watch, abusive conditions, such as sexual assault, have been allowed to thrive in the county’s detention facilities. Giving him this honor shows an utter disregard for the human rights of inmates — and denigrates the countless sheriffs nationwide who work hard to uphold these rights.

Advocates, journalists, and prisoners themselves have documented hundreds of cases of abuse committed by Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department officials against inmates. Some of the worst crimes were carried out by gangs of sheriff’s deputies, which used rape and excessive force against inmates to instill a climate of terror.

JDI Survivor Council member Frank Mendoza has direct knowledge of the brutal treatment of detainees by jail officials; in 2006, Frank was raped by a deputy at the Twin Towers Jail. When he tried to get help, staff ignored him. “The Los Angeles County

Sheriff’s Department obviously failed in its duty to protect me,” said Frank.

Sheriff Baca has faced extensive criticism for failing to keep inmates safe. In September 2012, the Citizens’ Commission on Jail Violence placed the blame firmly on his shoulders, citing a “failure of leadership.” What’s more, a federal grand jury is reviewing whether department officials blocked an FBI investigation into the violence at the county’s jails.

By any standard, Sheriff Baca does not deserve his profession’s most prestigious honor. Fortunately, the National Sheriffs’ Association has time to do the right thing — the award ceremony is not until June 2013. Please join survivors like Frank Mendoza in signing JDI’s petition demanding that it reverse its decision. Visit www.justdetention.org/not-on-our-watch.



Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca

Photo: AP/Reed Saxon

Survivors Show Leadership at Trainings

JDI SURVIVOR COUNCIL MEMBER Nicole Garza is one of the country’s top experts on inmate peer education. Nicole is also an inmate herself, serving time at the California Institution for Women (CIW). Amazingly, serving time didn’t stop her from appearing



Nicole Garza, a JDI Survivor Council member

as a guest speaker at a recent national training for corrections staff. The training was part of a groundbreaking series led by JDI and sponsored by the National PREA Resource Center.


“Nicole earned the respect of everyone who heard her speak — not just for her courage, but for her expertise and leadership,” said Lt. Frank Esqueda, the PREA Coordinator at CIW.


“During the webinar, I didn’t feel like I was in prison — I felt like I was part of a panel,” said Nicole. “It was incredibly important for me to share what I know about sexual abuse prevention — and even more important that everyone listened.”


The Truth about Prisoner Rape


THANKS TO ADVOCATES and survivors, national awareness around sexual abuse in detention is growing. Yet the gulf between the reality of life behind bars and public perception of it remains vast. JDI believes that this lack of understanding is an obstacle to ending the crisis of sexual violence. Throughout April, in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, JDI will feature dynamic infographics that present the facts — and shatter the myths — about prisoner rape.


THE FACTS:

1 **HALF** of all sexual abuse is perpetrated by staff members. 

2 **ONE IN EIGHT** youth behind bars is sexually abused. 

3 Women are **THREE TIMES** more likely than men to be sexually abused by another inmate. 

4 LGBT inmates and survivors of sexual abuse in the community are the **MOST VULNERABLE**. 

5 Sexual abuse behind bars is **PREVENTABLE**. 

For more information, visit www.justdetention.org.



Messages from JDI supporters have touched the lives of many prisoner rape survivors, including (clockwise from left): Rodney (raped by inmates at two facilities); Cynthia (sexually abused repeatedly by staff); Ophelia (sexually assaulted repeatedly by inmates and staff); Joe (raped by his cellmate); and Harold (sexually abused by staff).

Messages of Hope

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“Honestly, my life is owed to you, JDI’s supporters. Knowing that you’re thinking about my plight, about my welfare, inspires me to never give up.”

Dwight was hardly alone in expressing his deep gratitude for JDI supporters. Rodney, an openly gay inmate who has been raped many times at two Louisiana prisons, wrote: “The holidays are extremely tough in prison. It is especially rough for those of us who have no one. It meant everything to me to receive the cards and well wishes. The abundant value of a kind word was apparent in my tears. I appreciate the words and the hope. You are a reminder that there is still so much of it.”

Cynthia, a survivor of repeated sexual assaults by staff at an Oregon facility, wrote: “Thank

you for your love and support during the holiday season. It is very easy to get caught up in the loneliness and isolation of prison. I just want to thank everyone involved with JDI for your heartfelt reminders that it takes all of us to band together to make a difference in the fight against injustice and inequality!”

Harold, an inmate in a Pennsylvania facility who was sexually abused by staff, told us: “Thank you and all of the supporters at JDI, as well as supporters worldwide, for the great cards! I was simply floored when I received all those cards. Thank you all again, it really lifted my spirits.”

These men and women will continue to face obstacles as they heal from abuse. Thanks to you, however, they won’t have to overcome them alone.

THE FIGHT TO STOP PRISONER RAPE WORLDWIDE

Prisoner rape is a global crisis. As such, it requires a global response. JDI works with advocates and policymakers in Botswana, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Mexico, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom — in addition to its major programs in the U.S. and South Africa.

In January, JDI released an international summary that outlines why sexual abuse happens in detention facilities worldwide — and how it can be stopped. The summary is currently available in eight of the world’s major languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Visit www.justdetention.org/international_summary to download this document in your language.

Now is the Time to Protect Immigration Detainees



Photo: Pamela Kemp

Esmeralda Soto, a JDI Survivor Council member, survived sexual abuse while in an immigration detention facility.

ONE YEAR AFTER she arrived in the U.S. to seek asylum, Esmeralda Soto was raped in an immigration detention center. A transgender woman, Esmeralda had fled Mexico, where she was sexually assaulted many times, including while in jail.

At the U.S. facility, the man who raped Esmeralda was also the man responsible for her safety — in this case, someone who worked for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Later, Esmeralda said, “It was difficult to comprehend how a federal employee could abuse his authority in such a flagrant and appalling manner.”

Esmeralda’s ordeal happened at the end of 2003 — nearly a decade ago. Since then, Esmeralda has remained committed to fighting for the human rights of immigration detainees. It has often been an uphill struggle. Yet Esmeralda pushed forward, sharing her story with policymakers and members of Congress, attempting to persuade them to change course.

At last, Esmeralda’s calls are being heard.

In December, in response to a landmark presidential directive — which was largely the result of significant pressure from JDI, Esmeralda, and other advocates — DHS released draft standards to eliminate rape in all of its immigration detention and holding facilities. After a public comment period, the standards are now back with DHS, which is under pressure from both the White House and Congress to issue final regulations quickly.

The DHS draft standards are strong overall, including many of the basic provisions that JDI has insisted upon for years. They also have several weaknesses, however. Most notably, the draft allows many contract facilities — where most immigration detainees are held — to delay implementation for decades, or indefinitely. The draft also fails to give detainees adequate protection from retaliatory deportation and from sexual abuse during transportation.

JDI spelled out these concerns and others in its public comments, submitted with a group of allied organizations. Many JDI supporters sent their own comments to DHS, asking that it keep intact the parts of the draft that are strong — and fix the parts that are weak.

“By issuing strong draft regulations, DHS has shown that it is serious about preventing sexual violence in its facilities,” said Lovisa Stannow, JDI’s Executive Director. “But the final standards must address the concerns raised by JDI and its allies. If DHS does not make the necessary changes, hundreds of thousands of people will remain at grave risk for sexual abuse.”

“When I was in a DHS facility, it wasn’t the case that immigration detainees were safe from sexual abuse — and, sadly, it’s still not the case today,” said Esmeralda. “Right now, DHS has a chance to do the right thing and commit to protecting the people in its custody.”

JDI Welcomes New Survivor Council Members

JDI’S COURAGEOUS Survivor Council members help lead the fight against prisoner rape by working with JDI to share their experiences publicly, train corrections officials, and advocate for meaningful policy reforms. With the addition of three new members — Joe Booth, Michelle Norsworthy, and Boa Smith — the Council is poised to become an even stronger force for protecting the safety of people behind bars.

Joe Booth, a survivor of repeated sexual assaults by his cellmate, is an outspoken champion for the human rights of inmates. An openly gay man who lives with HIV, Joe has written about his experience behind bars for national media outlets and helped train corrections staff.

Michelle Norsworthy is a transsexual woman who was assaulted while incarcerated at a men’s prison. She was one of the first PREA inmate peer educators at her prison and, after being transferred, helped launch a peer education program at her current facility.

Boa Smith, who served 29 years in prison before her release in late 2012, survived sexual abuse and harassment prior to and during her incarceration. While behind bars, Boa was a PREA and HIV/AIDS peer educator, teaching inmates about their right to be free from sexual violence.

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