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Press contact: Madeline Batt 781-540-1520  
[madeline.batt@ylsclinics.org](mailto:madeline.batt@ylsclinics.org)

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Stop Solitary CT welcomes the [recent statement from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture](#), Nils Melzer, who publicly condemned the Connecticut Department of Correction's (DOC) use of isolation and restraints.

“The DOC appears to routinely resort to repressive measures, such as prolonged or indefinite isolation, excessive use of in-cell restraints and needlessly intrusive strip searches,” the expert said. **“There seems to be a State-sanctioned policy aimed at purposefully inflicting severe pain or suffering, physical or mental, which may well amount to torture.”**

Melzer's statements were made in response to [an allegation letter submitted to him by the Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic at Yale Law School](#). The letter documents the DOC's reliance on isolation and chaining at Northern Correctional Institution. The letter details how people incarcerated at Northern must spend at least 23 per day locked in their cells, which often exacerbates mental health and behavioral issues.

The letter also describes DOC's practice of using restraints on incarcerated people, including those with serious mental illness. Prisoners are shackled at the hands and feet, with a tether chain connecting the two chains, and left like this for 72 hours, some for as long as a week. “The shackles prevent the men from being able to stand up straight, wipe themselves after using the toilet, or even lift food to their mouths,” said Iva Velickovic, a former member of the Lowenstein Clinic who took a significant role in drafting the report. “Some men told us they had no choice but to dump their food out on the floor and eat it like a dog.”

The allegation letter submitted to the Special Rapporteur also included direct testimony from 15 men who have experienced solitary confinement within DOC facilities. Stop Solitary CT, along with a growing coalition, are calling for the legislature or the governor to close Northern.

Leighton Johnson, Outreach Coordinator and Steering Committee Member of Stop Solitary CT, submitted testimony to the Special Rapporteur during his incarceration at Northern. In his testimony, he described solitary confinement at Northern as “dehumanizing” and “soul-crushing.”

“International recognition for the inhumane conditions and treatment inflicted on prisoners here in Connecticut is incredibly important and long overdue. Anyone who experienced the never-ending cesspool of despair that is solitary confinement knows the DOC is torturing people. I hope the Special Rapporteur's statement will open people's eyes to the extreme injustice happening in this state,” Johnson said.