



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for January 20th

3 Jan - 61 charges dismissed in the Cop City RICO case

On Tuesday, December 30, after two years of local pressure and national support, a Georgia judge issued an order dismissing RICO charges against 61 activists who protested the construction of Cop City.

MORE:

The ruling comes just months after the charges of three activists wrongfully charged with money laundering in connection to the administration of the Atlanta Solidarity bail funds in 2024 were also dropped due to a flimsy legal argument and increasing pressure from the community.

In his order, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Kevin Farmer said that the attorney general did not have the authority to bring Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act charges and had to seek permission from the governor to do so but did not in this case. "The attorney general acknowledged that no prior authority was granted by the governor to bring RICO charges," Farmer wrote in his order.

Legal experts have pointed out that the indictment, which groups the activists together in what the state tried to deem as an organized criminal conspiracy, was an overreach in power by the attorney general's office.

"Judge Farmer correctly dismissed the indictment because the prosecution did not follow the law when filing these charges," attorney Amanda Clark Palmer said in a statement on Tuesday calling the state's case a "bloated, tortured and overblown prosecution."

The RICO indictment orchestrated by state Attorney General Chris Carr, who is planning to run for governor, was the culmination of a massive wave of repression in the face of the Stop Cop City movement. The movement, made up of activists, community members and a coalition of organizations in Atlanta, saw all forms of attack by the state over the last two years.

In 2023, in the months following the police murder of activist Manuel Paez Teran, known as Tortugueta, in the Weelaunee Forest at the construction site of Cop City, 69 protesters were indicted on bogus charges: 61 activists on state RICO charges, five activists on domestic terrorism and arson charges, and three on money laundering charges.

While the state has not dropped the domestic terrorism charges, the RICO and money laundering charges being dismissed reveal a pattern of failure and weakness in the larger efforts to intimidate people into silence and criminalize mass resistance to the militarization of the police.

This victory highlights not just the weakness of the regressive forces in power but the true strength of the people and the power of bold and courageous solidarity.

January 16th - What's Happening with the Cop City Domestic Terrorism, RICO Charges?

by Matt Scott (*Atlanta Community Press Collective*)

Dec. 30, 2025, was a busy day for Cop City-related court battles, with two rulings issued in Fulton County and a motion to dismiss filed in DeKalb.

A Fulton County judge dismissed racketeering charges against 61 people alleged to be members of the Stop Cop City Movement. In a second order, the same judge declined to dismiss domestic terrorism charges against five people that were filed in the same indictment as the racketeering charges.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Kevin A. Farmer officially dismissed the racketeering charges against the 61 individuals after defense attorneys argued in September that the attorney general's office had failed to seek a letter of permission from the governor to bring the racketeering indictment.

Prosecutors motioned for immediate appeal of the judge's decision, which Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr called "dangerously misguided."

While the defense is happy with Judge Farmer's decision to dismiss the racketeering charges, attorney Xavier T. de Janon said that the state's approach to cracking down on Cop City has already had a massive impact on people opposed to the facility, even if it never results in a conviction. He noted that police and prosecutors had brought "hundreds of charges, raids, arrests and intimidation."

He connected what's happening in Georgia to tactics being used against protesters nationwide, particularly those against ICE and Trump's immigration policy.

"The process itself is the punishment," de Janon said. "The government doesn't need convictions to accomplish its goals—charges, raids and years of uncertainty are enough to intimidate and repress."

On Jan. 9, Judge Farmer granted the prosecutor's petition for appeal, and the Georgia Court of Appeals must now decide whether to hear it.

Domestic terrorism arguments failed in Fulton

In September, defense attorneys made two arguments in front of Judge Farmer against Georgia's domestic terrorism statute.

Attorney Michael Schwartz, who represents Francis Carroll, argued that Georgia's domestic terrorism statute is overbroad and vague, violating both the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions. He said the statute leaves unclear what sort of conduct is prohibited and gives too much power to prosecutors to decide whether an action constitutes domestic terrorism.

Ultimately, Schwartz argued, the domestic terrorism statute fails to distinguish between constitutionally protected speech and harmful activities.

Deputy Attorney General John Fowler, who is the lead prosecutor in both the DeKalb and Fulton cases, argued that since the domestic terrorism statute begins with the statement "that an underlying crime has to occur," it doesn't impinge on First Amendment activities.

Defense attorneys also argued in September that the Georgia General Assembly violated Georgia's Constitution when passing the statute in 2017. That year, the House of Representatives voted down SB 1, the Senate's version of the domestic terrorism bill. Days later, the House voted in favor of the House version, HB 452, which had been amended in the Senate to include the same language as SB 1. Georgia's constitution requires that a bill that previously failed in one chamber must be approved by a two-thirds majority when reconsidered.

Judge Farmer rejected both arguments in his decision on the motion to dismiss the domestic terrorism charges. In his two-page order on the issue, Judge Farmer wrote that the General Assembly "passed the Domestic Terrorism statute in accordance with all laws, rules and procedures," and that the statute prohibits felony violations of state law intended to intimidate a government entity.

On Jan. 6, defense attorney Michael Schwartz filed a motion for an immediate appeal of the domestic terrorism decision on behalf of Francis Carroll, which Judge Farmer granted.

Three challenges to domestic terrorism charge in DeKalb

In neighboring DeKalb County, de Janon filed three motions to dismiss a domestic terrorism charge against Priscilla Grim, a New York-based activist.

Grim's is the second challenge to Cop City-related domestic terrorism charges in DeKalb County. In August, DeKalb County Superior Court Judge Gregory A. Adams dismissed the charge against Jamie Mariscano, who had argued that a years-long delay in prosecuting the charge violated her due process and speedy trial rights. de Janon also represented Marsicano.

One of Grim's motions argues that she faces similar constitutional violations from the delay in prosecuting the DeKalb charges.

"She lost her entire career," de Janon said. "She lost her health insurance. She's lost teeth. She's developed PTSD. The intensity of the prejudice is really large, and all because the now almost three-year old charges."

Between December 2022 and March 2023, 35 people were charged with domestic terrorism in DeKalb County. The Attorney General's office is the sole prosecutor after DeKalb District Attorney removed her office from prosecuting the charges.

Grim's other two motions mirror the arguments defense attorneys made in September before Judge Farmer.

Judge Farmer's decision on those motions may have little impact on a Judge in DeKalb, de Janon said, because it offered no rationale.

A hearing has not yet been scheduled for Grim's motions in DeKalb. Those motions are not expected to be heard by the same judge who dismissed Mariscano's charge, de Janon said.

6 Jan - Letting prisons jam contraband phones is a bad idea

"Jamming will block all communications," including 911 calls, the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association tells the Federal Communications Commission.

MORE:

by Jon Brodtkin (*Ars Technica*)

A Federal Communications Commission proposal to let state and local prisons jam contraband cell phones has support from Republican attorneys general and prison phone companies but faces opposition from wireless carriers that say it would disrupt lawful communications. Groups dedicated to Wi-Fi and GPS also raised concerns in comments to the FCC.

"Jamming will block all communications, not just communications from contraband devices," wireless lobby group CTIA said in December 29 comments in response to Chairman Brendan Carr's proposal. The CTIA said that "jamming blocks all communications, including lawful communications such as 911 calling," and argued that the FCC "has no authority to allow jamming."

CTIA members AT&T and Verizon expressed their displeasure in separate comments to the FCC. "The proposed legal framework is based on a flawed factual premise," AT&T wrote.

While the Communications Act prohibits interference with authorized radio communications, Carr's plan tries to sidestep this prohibition by proposing to de-authorize certain communications, AT&T wrote. "This legal framework, however, is premised on a fundamental factual error: the assumption that jammers will only block 'unauthorized' communications without impacting lawful uses. There is no way to jam some communications on a spectrum band but not others," AT&T wrote.

Previous FCC leaders recognized the problem that radio jammers can't differentiate between contraband and legitimate devices, AT&T said. "As explained above, there are no technical workarounds to that limitation with respect to jammers," AT&T wrote.

"Jammers block all wireless communications"

In 2013, the FCC explained that jamming systems transmit on the same frequencies as their targets in order to disrupt the links between devices and network base stations and that this process "render[s] any wireless device operating on those frequencies unusable. When used to disrupt wireless devices, radio signal jammers cannot differentiate between contraband devices and legitimate devices, including devices making 911 calls. Radio signal jammers block all wireless communications on affected spectrum bands."

That apparently hasn't changed. The FCC's new proposal issued in September 2025 said the commission's "understanding is that jamming solutions block calls on all affected frequencies and... are unable to allow 911 calls to be transmitted." But the proposal indicates this may be an acceptable outcome, as "some state DOC [Department of Corrections] officials have indicated that correctional facilities typically do not allow any calls from within, including emergency calls."

If the FCC adopts its plan, it would "authorize, for the first time, non-federal operation of radio frequency (RF) jamming solutions in correctional facilities," the proposal said.

Carr said in September that previous FCC actions, such as authorizing "contraband interdiction systems" and letting wireless carriers disable contraband phones at a prison's request, have not been enough. "Contraband cellphones have been pouring into state and local prisons by the tens of thousands every year," Carr said. "They are used to run drug operations, orchestrate kidnappings, and further criminal enterprises in communities all across the country."

Carr said that prisons and jails will not be required to install jamming systems and that the FCC "proposes to authorize targeted jamming. Jamming technology can be precise enough that it does not interrupt the regular communications of law enforcement or community members in the vicinity." The FCC proposal asks the public for comment on "restrictions that might prove necessary to ensure that jamming solutions are limited to this targeted use, and to mitigate the risk that these solutions are deployed in contexts other than a correctional facility environment."

Jamming has support from 23 state attorneys general, all Republicans, who told the FCC that "inmates routinely use smuggled phones to coordinate criminal enterprises, intimidate witnesses, and orchestrate violence both inside and outside prison walls." More jamming support came from the state Department of Corrections in both Florida and South Carolina.

Prison phone companies like jamming

Prison phone companies that would financially benefit from increased use of official phone systems also support jamming cell phones. Global Tel*Link (aka ViaPath) called the plan "one more tool to help combat the serious problem of contraband wireless devices in correctional facilities."

NCIC Correctional Services, another prison phone firm, said that jamming to create "'dead zones' within correctional facilities would permit smaller jails to restrict contraband device access where it is not cost-effective to install managed access systems." Detection Innovation Group, which sells inmate-tracking technology to prisons and jails, also urged the FCC to allow jamming.

Telecom industry groups say that limiting the effect of jamming will be difficult or impossible. The harms identified over a decade ago "remain the same today, although their effects are magnified by the increased use of wireless devices for broadband," said the Telecommunications Industry Association, a standards-development group. "If an RF jamming solution is deployed at a correctional facility, such deployment

risks not only interfering with voice communications but disrupting vital broadband services as well within the facility itself as well as the surrounding community.”

Verizon told the FCC that the Communications Act “requires more restrictive use of jamming devices than the NPRM [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking] proposes.” The CTIA argued that jamming isn’t necessary because the wireless industry already offers Managed Access Systems (MAS) as “a safe and effective contraband interdiction ecosystem.”

A Managed Access System establishes “a private cellular network that captures communications (voice, text, data) on commercial wireless frequencies within a correctional facility, determines whether that exchange is coming from or going to a contraband device, and, if so, prevents those communications from connecting to the wireless provider’s network,” the CTIA said. “At the same time, MAS allows communications to and from approved devices to be transmitted without interruption, including 911 and public safety calls within the correctional facility.”

Wi-Fi and GPS groups warn of jamming risks

More opposition came from the Wi-Fi Alliance, a tech industry group that tests and certifies interoperability of Wi-Fi products. The FCC proposal failed to “address the potential impact of such jamming on lawfully operating Wi-Fi and other unlicensed devices,” the group told the FCC.

The FCC plan is not limited to jamming of phones on spectrum licensed for the exclusive use of wireless carriers. The FCC additionally sought comment on whether contraband devices operating on Wi-Fi airwaves and other unlicensed spectrum should be subject to jamming. That’s concerning to the Wi-Fi Alliance because Wi-Fi operates on unlicensed spectrum that is shared by many users.

“Accordingly, declaring that a jammer on unlicensed spectrum is permitted to disrupt the communications of another device also operating on unlicensed spectrum is contrary to the foundational principle of Part 15 [of FCC rules], under which all unauthorized devices must cooperate in the use of spectrum,” the group said. “Moreover, authorizing the use of jamming equipment in unlicensed spectrum pursuant to Part 15 would undermine decades of global spectrum policy, weaken trust in license-exempt technologies by providing no assurance that devices using those technologies will work, and set a dangerous precedent for the intentional misuse of unlicensed spectrum.”

Letting jammers interfere with Wi-Fi and other unlicensed devices would effectively turn the jammers into “a de facto licensed service, operating with primary status in bands that are designated for unlicensed use,” the Wi-Fi Alliance said. “To achieve that undesirable result, the Commission would be required to change the Table of Frequency Allocations and issue authorizations for operations on unlicensed spectrum (just as it contemplates for the use of cell phone spectrum in jamming devices). That outcome would upend the premise of Part 15 operations.”

The GPS Innovation Alliance, another industry group, warned that even if the FCC imposes strict limits on transmission power and out-of-band emissions, “jammer transmissions can have spillover effects on adjacent and nearby band operations. Only specialized, encrypted signals, and specialized receivers and devices designed to decrypt those signals, are jam-resistant, in contrast to how most commercial technologies work.”

Now that public comments are in, Carr has to decide whether to move ahead with the plan as originally written, scrap it entirely, or come up with a compromise that might address some of the concerns raised by opponents. The FCC’s NPRM suggests a pilot program could be used to evaluate interference risks before a broader rollout, and the pilot idea received some support from carriers in their comments. A final proposal would be put to a vote of commissioners at the Republican-majority FCC.

7 Jan - Women Are Sent to This Prison for Dialysis. They Say It’s Killing Them.

Patients at FMC Carswell medical prison in Texas describe unsanitary conditions, missed treatments and substandard care.

MORE:

by Kaley Johnson (*The Marshall Project*)

Evangelina Perez lost count of the number of times her mother, Martha Perez, called her from federal prison, gasping for breath because she had missed dialysis treatments for her kidney failure.

At 59, Martha Perez also had diabetes and congestive heart failure. She had been in various federal prisons since 2005 on money laundering and drug convictions. In 2018, the Bureau of Prisons sent her to the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, the country's only federal medical prison for women.

The bureau houses some of the sickest women at Carswell, and it's the only federal women's prison with in-patient dialysis — a critical, life-sustaining treatment for people with kidney failure.

But in court documents she filed pleading for release, Perez described her worsening health and her fear of dying at Carswell. In May 2022, another incarcerated person had to help her write a final request because of her poor vision. Just over a year later, Perez died in a Fort Worth hospital. No family was with her.

"I understand the circumstances, but initially, like there is a care that they should have been providing," Evangelina Perez said. "It got to the point where she started retaining fluid on her chest, and she ended up passing away from a heart attack."

Perez had serious illnesses that required consistent care. But Carswell does not adequately provide the dialysis care that the Bureau of Prisons claims it does, according to lawyers, medical experts, former bureau officials, along with court and medical records. Women at Carswell describe missed treatments, poor education for patients, dialysis machines that break down mid-treatment or that lacked enough clean water, and other routine problems.

Doctors who reviewed the women's court filings and allegations say the problems described would put dialysis patients in serious danger. Legal filings by prisoners, medical records and expert court testimony raise flags about preventable — and potentially fatal — conditions arising from substandard care. The Bureau of Prisons, which is supposed to fix those problems, operates with little to no external oversight over its medical care.

A federal judge overseeing a dialysis patient's compassionate release case said testimony from seven women on dialysis was "concerning," but said he could not approve the release. Doing so, the judge said, could imply the entire Bureau of Prisons provides ineffective dialysis care.

Michele Deitch, director of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab at the University of Texas in Austin, said people in prison "have a constitutional right to receive medical care for their serious medical needs. And dialysis is certainly an example of that."

If the federal government "cannot take care of people and meet their needs as required by the Constitution," Deitch said, "then we have no business locking them up."

The Bureau of Prisons declined requests for an interview. In answers to emailed questions, spokespersons wrote that the agency provides adequate dialysis care, including sufficient staffing and education for patients.

"At present, there have been no reports or claims concerning the quality of the dialysis care being provided at FMC Carswell," wrote spokesman Donald Murphy.

Carswell has been the subject of numerous investigations calling into question its treatment of incarcerated people. In 2020 and 2021, women at the facility described negligent medical care and malicious treatment as COVID spread through the prison. In 2023, a *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* investigation highlighted a pattern of sexual abuse by staff. In response, a state representative called for a congressional inquiry into the prison, though none were launched.

When she died in June 2023, Perez was one of about 15 women at Carswell receiving dialysis. The treatment uses a surgically-installed port to connect a patient to a machine that filters their blood, removing toxins the kidneys no longer can process, before pumping the cleaned blood back into the patient. The process takes 3 to 5 hours and is usually needed three times a week — or patients may risk serious complications and death.

Kidney failure can be caused by a multitude of issues, most commonly diabetes, high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease. Perez had all three. In June 2021, Perez started dialysis after she had a stroke.

Federal medical prisons, despite their name, are not hospital-like facilities: They keep incarcerated people with medical needs, but in many cases, do not provide all of their care in-house. Carswell, which houses approximately 1,200 people, contracts with the University of North Texas Health Science Center for much of its medical care. The Health Science Center, in turn, subcontracts dialysis services to the private provider U.S. Renal Care of West Fort Worth, according to the Bureau of Prisons. Under Carswell's contract with the Health Science Center, the bureau is still responsible for providing all dialysis equipment.

U.S. Renal Care confirmed it provides dialysis at Carswell, but did not respond to several interview requests and other emailed questions about its services there.

Dialysis is only part of the treatment for people with kidney failure. They also need a strict diet and water intake monitoring, and blood work to closely check various chemical levels. A patient's port must be kept extremely clean to avoid sepsis, a life-threatening infection.

According to Bureau of Prisons mortality reviews from 2015 to April 2020, at least three women undergoing dialysis at Carswell died in that time period. All three women had been transferred to Carswell specifically to receive medical treatment, and all three developed sepsis prior to their death, according to the mortality reviews. Reason Magazine obtained the documents through a records request and provided them to *The Marshall Project*.

Sepsis is far less common if staff follow the proper contamination protocols for dialysis machines, said Dr. Charles Howard, who has served as medical director at two federal prisons for over two decades.

There are no publicly available records of deaths in federal prisons. The Bureau of Prisons has yet to fulfill records requests for mortality reviews or the number of dialysis patients who have died at Carswell.

When asked how many Carswell dialysis patients have died since 2020, a bureau spokesman initially said "zero." When asked specifically about Perez, who died in 2023, spokesman Scott Taylor said that no one "had passed away as a result of their condition that required dialysis." Regarding Perez's death, Taylor said "there was no correlation between the need for dialysis and the cause of death."

Five current or former dialysis patients at Carswell spoke with *The Marshall Project* and also detailed in court records the dialysis conditions there. Four others described dialysis treatments in compassionate release pleas or other court records. The women said their treatment included severe cramping during dialysis, treatment sessions cut short or missed, and poor machine maintenance, such as broken parts, discolored tubing, and machine settings that were set incorrectly. Four women said pipes in the water room would break frequently, and the machines would sit in puddles of water.

“The truth lies in the consistency of the women’s statements,” said Amber Rabon, a lawyer in one of the women’s cases, who has been a federal criminal defense attorney since 2008.

Evangelina Perez, Martha Perez’s daughter, said her mother told her she frequently missed dialysis treatments prior to her death in 2023.

“I can’t even keep track of how many times that occurred where they wouldn’t complete the dialysis on them. And that was an issue, and she would call me, she would call me panicking because she knows how she would get if she skipped one,” Evangelina Perez said. “She would be so short of breath that her stomach would be tight from all the fluid she was retaining.”

She said her mother would tell staff that something was wrong, but they “said ‘She was fine, she’s fine,’ until there was fluid literally coming out of her belly button,” Perez said.

Missing a dialysis session is dangerous for patients, said Dr. Rebecca Ahdoot, a kidney specialist at the University of California Irvine. Without rigorous dialysis, toxins can build up, and the person can die.

Alicia Elliott, who was on dialysis at Carswell for 15 months while incarcerated on drug charges, said in court records and interviews that she was forced to miss appointments or had her treatment cut short multiple times. In late 2022 and twice in early 2023, Elliot emailed Carswell’s associate warden for medical to complain about being taken off dialysis early. In one case, she said staff wanted to leave early because of ice on the roads.

Sanjuana Garcia-Ramirez started dialysis at Carswell in November 2023. She said she had been on dialysis for two years before incarceration; comparatively, she said treatments at Carswell are less consistent and the machines are poorly managed.

“I have four kids I have to get back home to, and it frightens me that I might not make it out of here because of the way they run dialysis,” said Garcia-Ramirez, who is serving a 6-year sentence on a drug conviction.

Successful dialysis goes hand-in-hand with proper nutrition plans, said Howard, the former bureau medical director.

“A patient has to be their own advocate, and they have to be very, very, very much aware of what they need and what they have to do to manage their condition,” Howard said. If they’re not able to do it or they’re not properly educated, he said, “they will not do well on dialysis.”

But Stephanie Williams, who said she was on dialysis at Carswell for 11 months, said women would start dialysis and get no education on nutrition. Some women did not know that people with kidney problems have to monitor their potassium, sodium, fluid and phosphorus levels, for example, or they risk possibly fatal complications.

“Them girls, when I said phosphorus, they said, ‘What is phosphorus?’ And [I was] like, ‘What are you doing?’” Williams said.

She also said in interviews and court records that women were not told how to keep their port clean — or the importance of doing so. Women would shower without covering up their ports and get them wet, which increases the risk for infection, she said.

“It’s a lack of education. It’s not the girls’ fault. But it’s killing them.”

While U.S. Renal Care oversees dialysis treatments and a nephrologist — a kidney specialist — visits once a month, patients rely on Carswell staff at all other times for medical needs. Doctors, lawyers and the

Bureau of Prisons' own budget proposal this year questioned whether Carswell has the ability and resources to provide that care.

Understaffing and a depleted budget have sapped federal prisons of resources over the last few years. In a 2024 report, the Office of the Inspector General identified providing adequate medical care as one of the primary challenges the bureau faces.

In the bureau's 2025 budget submission to Congress, the agency lamented its difficulties in hiring and maintaining medical staff. The budget cited a 2016 Office of Inspector General report, which declared recruitment of medical professionals to be "one of the Bureau's greatest challenges."

Carswell is no exception. In 2022, Carswell then-staff union leader Jennifer Howard filed a whistleblower complaint about COVID-19 guidance and staff shortages at the facility. At the time, Howard told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* that staffing levels were "unacceptable for a medical facility."

Despite understaffing, the bureau may face further cuts. In February, the agency announced it would reduce or eliminate retention pay for correctional officers, a decision that American Federation of Government Employees said would "exacerbate staffing shortages and make working conditions less safe."

A former bureau warden and administrator, Jason Terris, questioned Carswell's ability to care for dialysis patients as part of his declaration cited in a compassionate release case for Feliza Renteria, a 45-year-old dialysis patient at the facility.

Renteria arrived at Carswell in 2021. But the dialysis treatments have made her sicker, she argued in court records. In an interview, she described excruciating pain during treatment. "I did not experience what a cramp was before I was incarcerated — I did dialysis a year before this and never had cramps," she said.

Dialysis patients should not have constant cramping, Ahdoot said. Cramps can be a sign that too much fluid is being pulled out of the body too quickly, she said, and treatment should be adjusted.

Patients "certainly shouldn't be on dialysis and suffering," said Ahdoot, who has been a nephrologist for 12 years. "If you are having crazy cramps all the time, then there is certainly a problem."

Carswell's contract with the Health Science Center says a kidney doctor will be available to patients once a month for up to four hours. Ideally, Ahdoot said, a nephrologist should see patients once a week to ensure the right amount of fluid is being pulled off during dialysis.

In his declaration for Renteria's suit, Terris wrote that he did not know if the staff at Carswell could handle the "logistical and care-related challenges" Renteria's condition presented due to staffing shortages and a lack of resources.

But those statements are part of the reason U.S. District Judge Anthony Battaglia, in California's Southern District, denied Renteria's compassionate release. When he denied the request in a September 2023 hearing, Battaglia said granting her motion could have implications beyond Renteria's case because of the message it would send about the bureau's care.

"I mean, granting relief here, does that mean that every dialysis patient in the Bureau of Prisons should be similarly accommodated because the quality of care is, perhaps, ineffective?" Battaglia said, according to a court transcript. "I'm looking at sort of the greater picture here. Because some of the accounts, from some of the people, is concerning."

Last year, the Ninth Court of Appeals denied Renteria's appeal for compassionate release.

There is no third-party agency currently monitoring dialysis treatments at Carswell. Multiple outside agencies that used to evaluate the Bureau of Prisons' medical care no longer do so.

Carswell's contract with the Joint Commission, which provided the facility's accreditation as a healthcare organization, expired in October 2020 and was not renewed, according to the Bureau of Prisons spokesperson. The American Correctional Association ended its audits of the agency in 2023, after the Office of Inspector General found the Bureau of Prisons was "in effect, paying ACA to affirm [the bureau's] own findings," and as a result, there was "no real certification or action for improvement."

The state of Texas does not monitor Carswell either. Oversight rules are built into Carswell's contract with the Health Science Center, but neither the Sciences Center nor Carswell have responded to requests for monitoring records.

According to its contract with the bureau, the Health Science Center is supposed to send quarterly reports about dialysis treatment at Carswell to a bureau administrator. But Health Science Center spokeswoman Paula Cobler said the hospital does not have those records; she said U.S. Renal Care is responsible for them and provides Carswell with copies. Another Health Science Center spokesman, Andy North, said the dialysis reports include "patient-care specific problems experienced during the quarter," but declined to answer questions about what those problems entailed.

U.S. Renal Care did not provide those records to *The Marshall Project*. The bureau has not fulfilled a records request for those quarterly reports.

The Office of the Inspector General found evidence that the bureau's contracts are not always monitored adequately. A 2023 audit found the bureau's contract evaluations were often untimely, incomplete, or for the wrong time period. This may result in the agency not getting the best services, the report noted.

In 2024, then-President Joe Biden signed the Federal Prison Oversight Act to increase independent inspections of prisons, but Congress has not approved money for the inspections. Deitch, of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab, said the priority now is for the act to be fully funded "to provide the critical oversight role that is needed."

As her fears of dying inside prison grew, Perez filed requests for a reduced sentence or compassionate release five times between 2012 and 2022. A judge had not ruled on her final release request when she died in July 2023.

Compassionate release is a way to address deficiencies in care for some incarcerated people, but it is seldom granted. Judges look for evidence that a prison can't provide the necessary treatment, said Marc Stern, the court-appointed monitor for the State of Arizona Department of Corrections. Without that proof, most motions will be denied. Out of the nine dialysis patients at Carswell that *The Marshall Project* identified, eight filed for sentence reduction or compassionate release since 2022. Seven were denied. In the remaining case, a judge initially denied the request, but reversed the decision and released the woman in 2020, citing "the abominable COVID-19 statistics at FMC Carswell." The judge said the facility's inaccurate data suggested the bureau could not be trusted to care for someone with complicated health conditions.

In a compassionate release request for one woman, who asked not to be named due to fear of retaliation, her lawyer wrote that Carswell frequently missed her dialysis treatments, forcing her to go five to six days without. The woman's former physician wrote a letter in November 2023 in support of her release request, saying that "continued incarceration would be severely detrimental" to her health due to her complex medical issues.

Williams, the former Carswell patient, described Perez's deteriorating condition as "the scariest thing I've seen."

“She was bad off,” said Williams, who was released in November 2023. “The week she died, she said, ‘I need to see a doctor right now.’”

In the days before Perez’s death, her family said, the bureau did not tell them that her condition had worsened or that she was in the hospital. She was admitted to John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth on July 2, 2023, for low blood pressure after a dialysis treatment, medical records show. Her admission records at the hospital indicated she had had a serious heart attack and, on July 6, she was transferred to Medical City Fort Worth Hospital for surgery.

Medical staff tried to reverse the damage and stabilize Perez, but on July 7, she lost her pulse. For one hour, staff tried to bring Perez back. A prison guard finally called the family to ask if they wanted them to continue to try to resuscitate Perez. Her daughter said the decision fell to her father as Perez’s next of kin. He told them to stop.

In a letter to the family, the Bureau of Prisons said Perez died from cardiac arrest; she also had coronary artery disease. Seven months later, Evangelina Perez got her mother’s death certificate from the state of Texas. The cause of death is listed as “pending investigation.”

8 Jan - Weatherford, Texas Woman Arrested in Connection to Prairieland Case, Bringing Total to Nineteen Defendants

Lucy Fowlkes Arrested and Charged with Hindering Prosecution of Terrorism in What Supporters Say is an Effort to Pressure Her to Cooperate With the State

MORE:

Police arrested Lucy Fowlkes at her family home in Weatherford, TX, yesterday. They took her into custody at Johnson County Jail. Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation accompanied local police during the arrest on Monday evening, though she was charged under state, not federal law. Johnson County prosecutors have charged Fowlkes with Hindering the Prosecution of Terrorism and have set bond at \$5 million. Similar to Daniel Sanchez Estrada, Janette Goering, and Dario Sanchez, Fowlkes is not known to have participated in the July 4, 2025 protest at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center.

Lucy Fowlkes faces charges in another ongoing case stemming from an incident at a drag brunch in 2023, where she was charged alongside Chris Guillot and Meghan Grant. In that case, authorities allege that Fowlkes and others unlawfully defended the family event from violent antagonists.

Supporters of Ms. Fowlkes say in the weeks prior to her arrest she had been approached by law enforcement encouraging her to engage in an interview regarding the July 4th protest. “The extension of this charge, ‘hindering the prosecution of terrorism’, to more and more defendants is increasingly absurd. I can only assume that this is some sort of wildly unacceptable intimidation tactic,” said Lydia Koza, friend of the defendant.

Fowlkes’s arrest and apparent intimidation by Johnson County officials comes just four months after Johnson County Sheriff Adam King was arrested and charged with intimidating a witness, sexual harassment, and perjury. Despite violating his bond conditions numerous times, Sheriff King remains in his position while his criminal case is ongoing.

The allegations against Fowlkes remain unknown, causing multiple friends and acquaintances to express confusion when told of her arrest. “This is really shocking,” said Shelby Donahue, a friend of the accused. “Lucy has been keeping to herself, and been focused on her case this whole time,” she continued. “I don’t see how she could be involved in any of this. It doesn’t seem possible.” Others expressed sorrow at her incarceration.

“She’s an incredibly funny and kind person, and it truly breaks my heart to see her harassed and jailed like this,” says Stephanie Shriver, a friend of Ms. Fowlkes. “The state is trying to scare her into saying things that aren’t true. That has to be illegal.”

The sprawling *Prairieland* case is significant in a nationwide landscape of increased protest activity against ICE and its immigration raids. Experts believe the outcome of this case should be concerning to those exercising their rights. “Millions of people across the country are joining protests against injustices happening around us,” said Xavier T. de Janon, Director of Mass Defense at the National Lawyers Guild. “If the federal government can snatch protesters for months, with no quick recourse, then we are all in danger.”

The *Prairieland* cases, involving both state and federal charges, stem from a noise demonstration in solidarity with detainees at the *Prairieland* ICE Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas, on July 4, 2025. After the protest, an officer with the Alvarado Police Department allegedly became involved in an exchange of gunfire soon after arrival. The officer allegedly sustained minor injuries, and was reportedly released from the hospital shortly afterwards. Authorities have still not provided hospital records to justify these claims, six months later. Alvarado police arrested ten people in the area, and a manhunt ensued in the subsequent days for another defendant. Eight more defendants were arrested in the days and weeks following the protest.

Prejudicial and sweeping statements related to these cases have been made repeatedly by officials at the highest levels of government, polluting the perceptions of the public from which the jury will be drawn and undermining the defendants’ ability to get a fair trial. The Trump administration has publicly claimed that the *Prairieland* case is the first legal case against “Antifa,” widely considered to be an informal set of anti-authoritarian beliefs, but recently designated as a domestic terrorist organization. On September 25, the White House released the National Security Presidential Memorandum-7 (NSPM-7), which ordered all federal law enforcement agencies to prioritize combating Antifa as a domestic terrorism threat. FBI director Kash Patel has called the defendants “Antifa-aligned anarchist violent extremists,” sharing Fox News coverage of the case on X.

January 10th - Amid Trump’s War on Antifa, Activists Face Arrest for Zines and Group Chats

by Brit “Red” Schulte (*Truthout*)

I’ve been making zines since I was 14 years young. I’ve been distributing them since I was 16. I’m now 37 years old and pursuing a doctorate in art history studying communities of zine makers.

In recent years I’ve seen a notable increase in people talking about zines, making them, and attending zine fests — it’s been heartening and wild to witness! I’ve watched what felt at times like this niche and nerdy part of my life blossom into something much more expansive.

When working with my students, or hosting community zine making workshops, I often define zines as small, independently published objects that are amateurish in the best way — they’re free or cheap to get copies of, contain typed or handwritten text, and depending on what zine you find, they’re filled with collage, art, poetry, political history, personal stories, recipes, health advice, quite literally everything you can think of. Zines are an embodiment of the “do it yourself” ethos.

Now, the latest targets of President Donald Trump and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott’s agenda of political repression include a diverse group of protesters, jail support volunteers, educators, and, crucially, zine distributors, and print artists. More than a dozen people face criminal charges, including riot; conspiracy to use and carry explosives; the use and carrying of explosives; attempted murder of officers and employees of the United States; discharging a firearm during, in relation to and in furtherance of a crime of violence; and corruptly concealing a document or record. And at the center of their charges is a box of zines and jail support group chats.

From a Typical Noise Demo to a Series of FBI Raids

On July 4, 2025, protesters had gathered at the Prairieland Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Alvarado, Texas, to oppose immigration enforcement practices and show support for detainees, using fireworks and noise-making as their demonstration method — a traditional form of protest in solidarity with incarcerated people. When local police responded to ICE’s call to remove the protesters, an officer reportedly suffered a neck injury that authorities attributed to a gunshot. Prosecutors have only identified two individuals as alleged shooters despite the broad scope of arrests. Following the demonstration, federal authorities launched an extensive investigation that resulted in charges against 16 individuals known as the Prairieland Defendants, and harassment of their extended friends, families, and neighbors.

Guidelines issued by the White House in September detail how the Trump administration will target and pursue anyone it deems to be motivated by “anti-Americanism, anti-Capitalism, and anti-Christianity” as domestic terrorists. Trump has also designated “antifa” as a domestic terrorist organization. Those of us who are anti-fascist know that “antifa” simply refers to a collective sense of being anti-fascist and believing that fascism is ultimately a real and present threat to all life. It is not a unified entity or organization. Antifa is a rallying cry, a politic, a historical reference that connects one to a legacy of fighting Nazism in Germany, and fighting other fascists in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere in the 1930s.

Texas resident Des Revol, in particular, is being targeted by the Trump administration under these guidelines. He did not attend the July 4 demonstration in Alvarado, Texas, but he was arrested two days afterward after he had a phone call with his wife, who was detained at the noise demonstration. FBI agents stopped him for a traffic violation in Denton, Texas, and took him into custody at gunpoint. Authorities charged him with evidence tampering constituting obstruction of justice as well as conspiracy, alleging he “transported a box that contained numerous Antifa materials” from his residence to another location. This literature — pamphlets and zines commonly found in activist spaces — became the basis for his prosecution. Despite having no connection to the original demonstration, Des faces potential federal imprisonment and additional risks from both immigration enforcement and hostile right-wing groups that have publicly identified him online.

When we spoke, Lydia Koza, the wife of Prairieland Defendant Autumn Hill, plainly stated what’s happening: “At the most abstract level, I believe the Trump administration and the state of Texas know in some collective-unconscious way that authoritarian, grasping models of power are unsustainable and require ever-greater levels of escalation; and that models predicated on care and equity are both more natural and more sustainable. Solidarity and compassion therefore become threats.”

Meanwhile, Prairieland Defendant Savanna Batten has lost more than 30 pounds since her incarceration in September of 2025, according to her sister, Amber Lowrey. When we spoke about her mounting concerns, Lowrey said:

When an individual becomes a target of state repression, it harms everyone within their orbit. Everyone who was taken from the Prairieland protest has lost, at very least, their employment. Many lost their homes or vehicles, and some owe huge repair bills as a result of violent raids that left their dwellings badly damaged and exposed to the elements. At least two minor children said goodbye to their parents as they left to go to a protest five months ago, and they never came back. Pets have had to be rehomed ... State repression is violent. It is extreme. It is incredibly isolating, and that is by design. This has been, by far, the most traumatic experience of my life — and I wasn’t even the target.

Likewise, when the FBI began raiding the home of Autumn Hill and Lydia Koza, “I wondered if I was going to die or be taken to a rendition site,” Koza said. “At that moment, I had resigned myself to losing everything I cared about. Every ounce of ideological opposition to police violence, to state terror, to incarceration, suddenly became viscerally relevant.”

Are Zines a Threat?

I myself have copies of most, if not all, of the zines that Des Revol had in that box. Those zines were free or cheap to get, and are filled with history, free thought, anarchist political analysis, discussions of shared

struggle, and hope. I have many such titles, and yes, I believe they are at once paper and ink and also incendiary devices. I reject the framing of innocence and crime being used to describe zines and those who make or share them.

“Zines could be called the atomic unit of free speech — the simplest possible, highest-impact pamphlet; the most entry-level way of disseminating ideas that can’t find footing in mainstream discourse,” Koza told me.

Two other Prairieland Defendants had previously established a small, independent print shop and literature distribution to support local book clubs as well as anarchist and socialist reading groups, and had only just begun tabling at book fairs and zine fests. These artists’ and writers’ arrest and subsequent incarceration has shuttered this local resource, ending access to affordable and free printing and breaking up print communities — an outcome the Trump administration is all too happy to execute.

Zines are often sources of great inspiration and personal conviction. If being against a regime that deports, kills, silences, poisons, and cages is criminal, then we must abandon the nonsensical concept of innocence. Political literature should make you feel, think, learn, and act. Zines have been criminalized before our current moment, and at times their creation and circulation was made punishable by death — in revolutionary France, in the post-revolutionary United States, and in Nazi Germany, just to name a few. Nothing about the Trump administration’s tactics should surprise us; we are sure to see more zines, pamphlets, leaflets, and other print culture be labeled “domestic terrorism materials” in the future.

Even still, there is solidarity everywhere. In October, I traveled to Athens, Greece, and visited La Zone, a beautiful anarchist community space and cafe, with a tremendous selection of zines, books, artwork, and free literature. At the time of writing this, I learned that La Zone hosted a “letter-writing & solidarity evening for the imprisoned Prairieland (Texas) codefendants.” Yes, zines are folded pieces of paper, but they’re also lifelines, histories, and embodiments of hope.

How many of us keep a box of zines, or leaflets, or political pamphlets around the house? Around our offices or apartment? How many of us have visited a public library’s zine rack, or attended a local print fair or zine fest? Under a fascist political regime, all oppositional discourse, literature, art, and life is subject to attack. We must recommit to solidarity, and rise to the defense of those whose lives and actions become criminal by default. The Trump administration wants us to live in ignorance and fear, so we must continue making, thinking, and learning together. Zines will continue to play vital roles in our movement organizing and political education. Keep informing yourself about the calls for support and solidarity with the Prairieland defendants. Keep reading, keep making.

10 Jan - Judicial Harassment Against Anarchist Militant Gabriel Pombo da Silva

Italy: The Italian authorities are continuing judicial repression against anarchist militant Gabriel Pombo da Silva, who was sentenced to two years in prison for “incitement to crime” as part of Operation Scripta Manent, despite the recognition by the Spanish state that he has already served 2 years and 8 months of excess detention.

MORE:

via *Abolition Media*

Refusing to recognize this excess sentence or to grant any alternative measure, the Turin court activated a European Detention Order based in particular on the absence of “repentance”.

On December 7, Gabriel was arrested in Spain after presenting himself at the Vigo police station following notification of this OEDE, before being released provisionally by the National Court of Madrid (see our article), which judged the request illegitimate because it was based on an “crime of opinion”. It nevertheless remains subject to strict judicial control, while a long legal battle begins against this transnational repression.

11 Jan - Large Noise Demo Against ICE Crashed by Police Who Arrest 30

Over a thousand protesters visited two hotels in downtown Minneapolis on Friday night, equipped with loud noise makers, in an attempt to disrupt the sleep of any ICE officers who may be staying in the hotels.

MORE:

by Niko Georgiades, Akičita Šunja-Wakaŋ Ska, & Dan Feidt (*Unicorn Riot*)

More than four hours into the roving noise demo, a large intra-agency state police response led to a reported 30 arrests of people who refused to leave after dispersal orders were given.

The noise demo came two days after ICE agent Jonathan Ross fatally shot Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old white American who was participating in a rapid response network, driving her car and following federal immigration operations and attempting to warn community members.

While this was not the first noise demo targeting ICE agents, this was the first public one to be held in Minneapolis and by far the largest. Activists used real and makeshift instruments to generate audio to almost ear-damaging decibels in some pockets of the crowd. People handed out earplugs and hand warmers to protesters.

Starting at the Canopy by Hilton and going to the Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel and the Residence Inn by Marriott, protesters were equipped with full drum sets, pots, pans, whistles, speakers, fireworks, and other noise makers. They were flashing lights inside of windows and pounding on them at some hotels in attempts to be as disruptive as possible to ICE agents presumed to be inside.

Graffiti with slogans against ICE was sprayed onto the windows of a hotel called The Depot and the walls of nearby businesses. Corporate property faced some vandalism at various locations and at multiple points during the night. Several protesters streamed into the hotel before coming back out and tipping over multiple sculptures.

About three hours into the protest, hundreds of state riot police descended onto the streets, formed a skirmish line, and announced dispersal orders. Activists were seen trolling the Minnesota DNR Conservation Officers and MN State Troopers that formed the line with flags and even musical performances.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety account on X noted that they sent the Minnesota State Patrol Mobile Response Team and officers from the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to respond “after receiving information that demonstrations were no longer peaceful and reports of damage to property.” Minnesota State Patrol and Minneapolis Police officers also responded with large numbers and each brought their Lenco armored Bearcat vehicles.

A reported 30 people were arrested after they refused to leave the area following dispersal orders. A roving march continued through downtown after the police response until around 1 a.m. as snow came down.

13 Jan - Updated Call-in Information for Xinachtli

Xinachtli has been temporarily moved to TDCJ's Young medical facility, but he's still experiencing medical neglect and suffering inside a cell without any working toilet or running water.

MORE:

It's up to us to keep up the pressure to meet his demands, primarily to restore his access to water and commissary. TDCJ has begged campaign organizers to stop the onslaught of call, so we must show them that there will be no rest and no peace for them until Xinachtli is FREE!

Sign up for a phone blast slot this week and check out our tips for calling Texas prisons:

bit.ly/xphoneblast

| instagram.com/freexinachtlinow

15 Jan - Urgent update on health situation of Eat and Dena

Indonesia: We received the information that imprisoned anarchist comrades Eat (Reyhard Rumbayan) and Dena (Maditya Dena), are still held in the West Java paramilitary police compound in the fabricated 'Chaos Star case,' and that they have badly declined in health.

MORE:

via *Dark Nights*

In the case of Eat, severely. Both comrades have HIV+ diagnosis and are struggling to receive adequate healthcare, food and nutrition for their serious condition. Eat is suffering constant extreme pain from atrophy in his arm which is paralyzed.

Eat's condition is in an advanced stage and we call for increased attention and pressure on his case. We remind that Eat is long-known anarchist who was imprisoned and took responsibility for the incendiary attack against a bank as part of revolutionary solidarity to Luciano Tortuga's situation, after the latter was injured in an attempted bombing in Chile, 2011. We will never leave our comrades alone inside the prison and we will seek our vengeance.

We hold the Indonesian regime responsible for the abuse, the torture, the lives of our comrades.

After the uprising in August 2025, the anarchist movement is being blamed for causing the unrest, but this conceals the fact that the mass popular insurrection did not belong to the anarchists, it belonged to everyone. From Iran, to Indonesia, to the USA, we will fight back!

25 Jan - Disengineering Society Vape Mic Workshop

WHAT: Workshop

WHEN: 2:00pm, Sunday, January 25th

WHERE: P.I.T. - 411 South 5th Street, Brooklyn

COST: \$20-30, recommended donation

MORE:

Build a microphone out of a disposable vape! In a world of products planned for obsolescence, disposable vapes reign supreme as pieces of modern technology that are almost never properly recycled. While the Frozen Lush vape juice may run out, the battery, sensor, and sturdy housing are still perfectly usable...

In this completely beginner friendly workshop, participants will be guided through the reassembly of disposable vape components and the addition of a microphone element to make their very own Vape Mic (patent pending). Vapes will be provided but don't hesitate to bring some (or many) that you collect between now and the workshop!

27 Jan - "A Picture of My Father"

WHAT: Film Screening

WHEN: 6:30pm, Tuesday, January 27th

WHERE: Virtual (RSVP at bit.ly/jan27screening)

COST: from \$17.85

MORE:

resource generation/rg + RAPP present an online screening of a 22-minute film centering on Danielle, the estranged daughter of John McKenzie, whose decades-long imprisonment shaped her life and the lives of countless incarcerated people. Released in 2025 at the DOC NYC festival, A Picture of My Father was directed by Jon Miller & Zach Russo.