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Audrey Martin

[AMartin@legal-aid.org](mailto:AMartin@legal-aid.org)

**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***Statement in Response to Reporting on NYC Department of Correction Forcing  
Incarcerated New Yorkers to Languish in Makeshift Solitary Confinement***

***LAS Condemns DOC for Depriving Vulnerable Incarcerated New Yorkers Access  
to Medical Care***

***Attorneys Threaten Litigation for this Egregious Violation of Incarcerated New  
Yorkers' Rights***

(NEW YORK, NY) - Tina Luongo, Chief Attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society, released the following statement in response to [reporting](#) on the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) forcing incarcerated New Yorkers with mental illness to languish in makeshift solitary confinement and depriving them access to critical medical care:

“This report has us seething. To condemn one of the most vulnerable populations at Rikers Island - people diagnosed with mental illness - to makeshift solitary cells, while depriving them of essential medical care, is downright cruel.

“For anyone who still takes City officials at their word that DOC has ceased to employ solitary confinement, today’s troubling reporting should clear any confusion. The City continues to default to isolation instead of care, even in specialized units that claim to treat mental illness. Solitary is torture, and its continued use is both illegal and immoral.

“Over the last three years, we have litigated a class action lawsuit against DOC over its failings to provide medical care to people in custody. Since our [initial filing](#), conditions have [only worsened](#), as today’s reporting demonstrates.

“At the moment, we are considering all litigation options to protect our clients who have been subjected to this inhumane treatment.

“The cascades of horrors that plague our incarcerated clients, whether that’s DOC’s well-established inability to administer basic jail function, or the Department’s complete indifference expressed towards the people in its care, one thing is absolute: the City cannot manage its jails safely and a federal receivership is necessary. While Rikers Island must be closed forever, the culture of abuse that pervades daily operations in our jails must end today.”

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>*