

Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier (JUST)
PO Box 93
Bible School Park
New York 13737
Email: justice.southern.tier@gmail.com



For Immediate Release

November 4, 2019

Contact: Andrew Pragacz, Core Member JUST, Phone: 651-747-6316, Email: ajrpragacz@gmail.com

Or: William Martin, Core Member JUST, Phone: 917-340-0468, Email: wgmartin1@gmail.com

Community Organizations Hold Public Hearings on Abuse and Deaths in the County Jail

Public Forum: The Broome County Jail on Trial, Voices from Inside

Thursday, November 7th, 6:00-7:30pm, Broome County Library, 185 Court Street, Decker Room

(Binghamton, NY) On November 7th at 6pm. community organizations are holding a public hearing at 6pm at the Broome County Library on the abuse and deaths at the Broome County Jail. As both state officials and family members report, conditions within the county jail are appalling, with at least 10 people dying in recent years—a rate six times the norm. Consider these few cases:

- In 2011, Alvin Rios died “face down and shaking” in his cell. His family filed and won a wrongful death lawsuit against the County and the private provider Correctional Medical Care (CMC)
- In 2014 the New York State Attorney General sanctioned CMC’s operations across the state
- In 2015, Salladin Barton, developmentally disabled, died after telling his family: “The guards are going to kill me.” On August 21st 2019 a Federal Court judge issued a [blistering judgement](#), holding Sheriff Harder personally responsible for Salladin’s death
- In 2018, the Sheriff and the County [lost a class action](#) suit filed by Legal Services of Central New York (LSCNY) which revealed that youth were being pepper-sprayed, placed in a restraint chair, stripped naked, and left untreated in the medical unit
- In January this year the death of Robert Card in mysterious circumstances is leading to another lawsuit.

These deaths are the outcome of the daily denial of basic medical care, constant abuse, and human rights violations. The vast majority suffering these conditions are not convicted of anything but poverty, being unable to make bail. African-Americans are especially targeted, suffering extraordinarily high incarceration rates. By the Sheriff’s own account over 80% of those inside suffer from mental and substance use disorders and disease, and are unable to get treatment in the community. The jail represents, in short, the heart of a brutally costly, mass incarceration system.

We demand better. On November 7th at this public hearing, families of the incarcerated, the formerly incarcerated, and community members concerned with social justice will be presenting personal experiences that back an indictment of these conditions. A list of long-term objectives and immediate demands will be issued to local and state officials who fund and are responsible for the jail.

Co-sponsors: Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier, Citizen Action, Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow, Truth Pharm.