



Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed and/or attached an article I wrote entitled: "Voices from the Tombs of HCON". It is my hope and the hope of the other 95 inmates on HCON, that you will publish this article. Please help us to bring our struggle to the public's eye. The conditions we are forced to endure and suffer are nothing less than torture. Please help us **STOP THE TORTURE** and **PUBLISH THIS ARTICLE**.

We thank you in advance for publishing the article! Please keep us in your prayers.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Saiyd Muhammad  
#0295512  
HCON/Super-max  
P.O. Box 2500  
Butner NC 27509

**STOP TORTURE!**



Voices from HCON 1

# Voices from the Tombs of HCON

---

By NC Polk Correctional Institutional Inmate

(HCON - high security control unit)

**STOP TORTURE IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**



Saiyd Muhammad # 0299512  
PO Box 2500  
Butner NC 27509

**STOP TORTURE!**



## Voices from the Tombs of HCON!

If prison is considered the “Belly of the Beast”, then surely the prison’s solitary confinement units are its bowels. I am one of approximately 96 inmates currently being held in North Carolina’s Super-maximum Security Units. These units may also be known as High Security Control Unit (HCON), solitary confinement segregation, “the hole”, and others. I however, as a result of enduring mistreatment and cruelty from certain prison personnel, choose to refer to North Carolina’s super-maximum security units as the N.C. Dept. of Public Safety TORTURE CHAMBERS! Yes! State sanctioned torture!!

Torture: “...the act of inflicting excruciating pain, as punishment or revenge, as a means of getting a confession or information, or for sheer cruelty.” ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com), 2012). This is the only word that I can find to accurately express the horrific inhumane treatment I endure here on a regular basis in HCON. Unlike NC’s death row unit in Raleigh where men and women wait for a possible execution by whatever means the state and federal courts declare humane, here on HCON at the Polk Correctional facility in Butner, NC, we are executed psychologically every moment of everyday. The 96 men are confined in what can only be described as a concrete box much like a mausoleum tomb. It is like being in a tomb, a stone building for en-tomb-ment of the dead above ground! Yes! A mausoleum best describes the 96 concrete boxes they call cells to house its inmates. Concrete vaults! They hold us locked in 24 hours a day; only unlike an actual mausoleum that houses the dead, these concrete vaults house the living!

Imagine that!!! We have absolutely NO access to outdoor and outside activities. We receive absolutely NO fresh air. Absolutely NO direct sun light (a basic human essential I would add!). We have absolutely NO human contact (another basic human need). The showers are in the cells that are controlled by the staff electronically from the officer’s booth. Not only are the showers controlled by guards, so are the toilets. The toilets are programmed to flush twice every hour. So not only do they control the time we wash, but also when we relieve ourselves! (A basic human need). The inmates’ only means of communication with one another on HCON is through the filthy ventilation system. One would have to speak, then pause a moment, wait for the echo to pass and then continue. This is unnecessary torturous treatment of inmates, who do have rights to at least be treated humanely!!

**STOP TORTURE!**



We are however allowed non-contact visits (through glass) but we are forced to wear handcuffs, shackles, and chains. We do not have permission to place a hand on the glass as a way of expressing to our loved ones affection for them; even though by virtue of such separation, there is no possible way to touch them! So while we are not on the death row, we are really dying a substantial death inside: emotionally & internally from the lack of humane treatment and the lack of other basic human essentials. This is why I refer to our confinement in these concrete boxes as mausoleums. These are truthfully tortuous conditions, undeniably!!

When I have the rare occasion to hear other victims (inmates) of this torture, I can hear their broken spirits. There is nothing sadder than to hear the broken spirit of an adult human being, except to hear the broken spirit of young adults, boys. There should be NO QUESTION that this in-human treatment is a slow but sure psychological death sentence. It is even more likely with the young men who are erroneously referred to and wrongfully cleared for isolation (HCON). I know of at least two young men, 23 & 25 years young, who tried to kill themselves. One swallowed ten (10) AA batteries. The other young man swallowed dozens of psychotropic pills, i.e. drugs like Therozine (Chlorpromazine) and Tegrator (lithium carbonate), etc. etc.

Obviously these are very potent mental health medicines. These young men should never have been cleared for housing in solitary (HCON) per North Carolina Dept. of Corrections Policy & Procedure Title: High Security Maximum Control (HCON) chapter – C Section 1700, 1701(b) (3). Essentially, this passage of the policy states that no inmate with a significant mental health history should be housed in isolation (HCON). Not only did the two young men I speak of have a very significant mental health history, but they also had a well-documented history of attempted suicides and self-mutilations. There are also several other inmates with a well-documented history of suicides also had been wrongfully cleared for HCON. Most of them attempted suicide only after a few months of HCON. Some had even committed vicious acts of self-mutilation too graphic to describe in this article.

NC DOC has knowingly and wrongfully employed psychologists and psychiatrists who are biased against inmates. Staff knows that these doctors will wrongfully clear mentally ill inmates for isolation, even without regard for their ethical responsibility or for the HIPPO- laws or their oaths to practice medicine with the best interest of their patients above ALL ELSE! Most inmates with no prior mental health issues will certainly have mental health concerns after HCON (“Super-max”), no

**STOP TORTURE!**



matter how strong an individual is, as a result of the inhumane treatment and torturous conditions of HCON or any Super-max Units in the U.S., he will have post-traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.) concerns thereafter.

Inmates who tend to seek mental health counseling are more often than not PUNISHED for pursuing care. For example, if an inmate tells the so-called psychologist here at HCON that he's having thoughts of suicide the psychologist will have that inmate placed in so-called observation cell under video surveillance by officers in the control booth whom of which are usually females. He is then stripped naked with nothing to cover his private areas. He is then placed in a totally bare cell with no mattress and no covers. He isn't given toilet tissue, wash clothes, nor is he given soap. NOTHING! In essence, he is placed in increased torturous conditions as a result of seeking help!! This treatment sends the message to other inmates as a way of discouraging the act of seeking help! After all, it is the very psychologist who is responsible for his well-being that maliciously betrayed the inmates' trust! To be placed in a bare, cold, in some cases freezing cell NAKED, is not intervention...its TORTURE!! Prison psychiatrists and psychologists are some of the coldest, uncaring people I've ever met. Not all...but most...especially in this environment at HCON.

*It is well established that isolation, sensory, and deprivation can aggravate or even cause a variety of psychiatric symptoms. Human rights watch noted in a brief that: prisoners subjected to prolonged isolation may experience depression, despair, anxiety, rage, claustrophobia, problems with impulses control and impairability to think and remember simple things.*

*Dr. Stuart Grassian, a psychiatrist of Harvard University Medical School is well known for his expert testimony on the subject of isolation. In an article titled Psychiatric Effects of Solitary Confinement, he discusses the implications of solitary confinement. He is quoted saying: "the courts have recognized that solitary confinement itself can cause a very specific kind of psychiatric syndrome which in its worst stages can lead to an agitated, hallucinatory, confusion psychotic state often involving random violence and self-mutilation, suicide behavior [and other] agitated fearful and confusional kind of symptoms."*

*Dr. Grassian visited a super max unit and was shocked at what he found: "that inmates were so ill that they all tended to be ill in very similar ways and that they were so frightened of what was happening to them that they were tending to minimize it. To deny it. They were scared."*

The large majority of HCON staff is extremely abusive and corrupt. CRIMINALLY CORRUPT! From the brutal beatings of inmates who are in full restraints, to bringing inmates both threatening and non-threatening contraband such as cigarettes, illegal drugs, iPods and often cell phones. All for profits! All of this is logged and photographed immediately following institutional

**STOP TORTURE!**



searches and shakedowns. IT IS ALL A MATTER OF RECORD! So I'm not revealing any secrets that could be in anyway classified as snitching. As I said, it is all on record. More often than not, HCON superintendents Mr. Reid and Mr. Ryan Jr. know who's doing most of the dirt but because it's happening on their watch, it is in their best interest and in the best interest of the Department to cover it up. Especially as far as protecting the staff. However, they don't hesitate to punish the inmates.

Both Reid & Ryan are corrupt superintendents themselves to the point of perhaps being sadistic. You see, they suspected an inmate of being in possession of a cell phone. They had this particular inmate put in a literal concrete box, naked, in the cold of the winter, this so-called cell had NOTHING in it! No bed nor mat, no toilet nor sink...NOTHING! They left him this way for over 72 hours. That case is currently being litigated in the U.S. District Court for at least clear Eighth Amendment violations under the U.S. Constitution case file #5:11-ct-3272. There were so many incidents involving excessive use of force cases resulting in serious bodily injury that attorneys for those incidents had to file a CLASS ACTION in the U.S. District Court also for Eighth Amendment violations. There is an inmate at HCON who wrote the above cases that were later picked up by licensed attorneys. For now, I will exclude that inmate's name for his personal protection. He has been enduring unimaginable retaliations. Such as: tampering with his food and excessive unconstitutional search and seizure of all of his legal property. Yet superintendents Reid and Ryan practice what is called in legal terms: WILLFUL BLINDNESS!! To protect themselves from blame, they [act] as though they don't see while secretly condoning the abuses.

For the first time ever in the history of Federal and State super-max units, the U.S. Congress finally held congressional hearings just this past June 2012. They convened to determine if such units violates the U.S. constitution. There should be no question that the horrific conditions I've previously described herein violate the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. More importantly, they violate our God-given human rights. Rights recognized by national and international law certainly under the Geneva Convention. How dare we (Americans) judge and condemn China, Egypt, Africa, and Syria for their human rights violations while we (Americans) quietly allow the violation of rights of our close to eighty thousand men, women, and children that are housed in super-max units all throughout the United States?! STOP THE TORTURE!! Email, tweet, and write your Politicians NOW!

**STOP TORTURE!**



I thank you all for listening to the voices of the living inside HCON a.k.a. the super-max units, the tombs, the torture chambers, etc. We are your fathers, sons, uncles, mothers, sisters, brothers, cousins, etc. **Help us stop the TORTURE!** In the beginning of this article, my intentions were to remain anonymous. Well, I've decided to take the risk! I will reveal my identity...after all, how much worst can it actually get? I'm living inside of a tomb! I don't fear what man can do to me; I put my trust in GOD ALMIGHTY!

If you desire to provide support or advice, or you would like more information, please feel free to write me at:

Saiyd Muhammad #0295512  
P. O. Box 2500  
Butner NC 27509

I welcome and encourage any question the public may have and in closing, I ask that you keep us (inmates) in your thoughts and prayers. Likewise, I pray that GOD richly bless you and your loved ones, especially those enduring these torturous conditions. GOD BLESS!

Resources:

Dictionary.com (2012). *Torture*. Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup> 2012 from:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/torture?s=t>

Grassian, Dr. S., (n.d.). *Control unit fact sheet*. Retrieved July 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 from:

<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hpag/prisons-ddu.pdf>

**STOP TORTURE!**



After reading this article and are compelled to **help STOP THE TORTURE**, you can write the following elected officials pleading with their “God conscious” to CLOSE HCON, North Carolina’s Super-maximum security control unit in Butner. My goal is to make you aware and encourage you to help. Together, we have the power!!! So, please write the following elected officials:

The Honorable James W. Crawford Jr.  
NC House Representatives  
300 N. Salisbury St. Rm: 304  
Raleigh NC 27603-5925

The Honorable Brad Miller  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1127 Longworth HOB  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Doug Berger  
NC Senate  
300 N. Salisbury St. Rm: 516  
Raleigh NC 27603-5925

The Honorable Beverly Eaves Purdue  
NC Governor  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh NC 27699-0301

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Congressman  
217 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

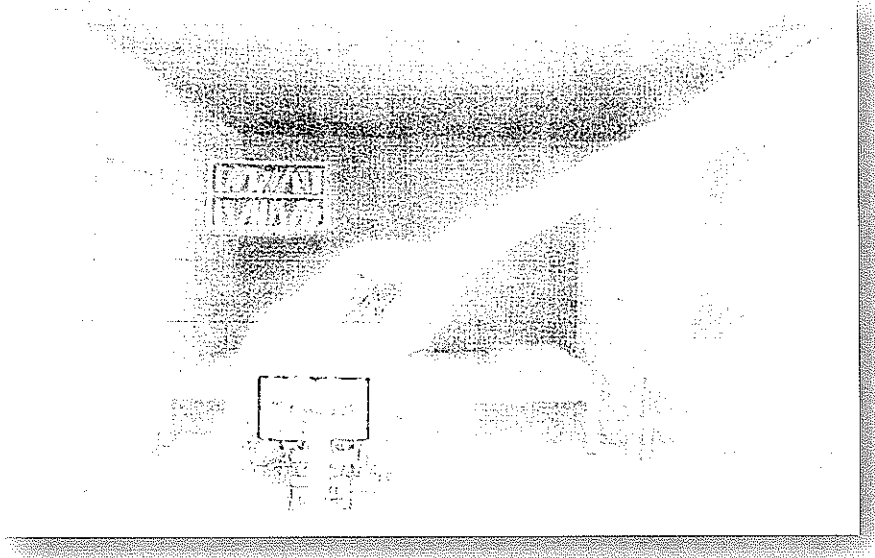
The Honorable Kay R. Hagan  
Congresswoman  
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Please have your friends and family write the above public officials. Your friends and family **do not** have to live in NC to do so. Please feel free to contact me to give advice as to what we can do from the INSIDE to help all those on the OUTSIDE to STOP THE TORTURE!! Please!! We are depending on your prayers!

Saiyd Muhammad #0295512  
P. O. Box 2500  
Butner NC 27509

**STOP TORTURE!**





Drawing is the cover of a book called:

*Sense Consciousness: The Evolution of an Imprisoned Soul. By  
Saiyd's Uncle*

**STOP TORTURE!**

**ON NC PRISON CONTROL UNITS**

Saiyd Muhammad # 0293512  
PO Box 2500  
Butner NC 27509

