



California Public Defenders Association Condemns CDCR's Statewide Lockdown Measures as a Human Rights Crisis

Sacramento, CA — The California Public Defenders Association (CPDA) condemns the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) for imposing sweeping and indefinite lockdowns, under the guise of a so-called “Modified Program” across nearly two dozen state prisons. Implemented on June 12, 2025, CDCR’s program targets all men housed in Level III and IV facilities, citing an increase in violence, overdoses, and contraband. CDCR’s action, in practice, is a blanket deprivation of fundamental rights and a human rights crisis.

Under this “Modified Program,” all phone calls, tablet communications, and in-person visits have been suspended. Movement is severely restricted, including access to showers and programming. Further, meals are delivered directly to cells in Level IV facilities, and some Level III residents eat under surveillance. Recreation, rehabilitative, religious, and educational programming have all been halted. These extreme restrictions are being applied indiscriminately, to all individuals in these facilities, regardless of individual conduct and without any clear end date or meaningful external oversight.

“This is collective punishment, plain and simple,” said **Kate Chatfield, Executive Director of CPDA**. “By cutting off communication with the outside world, CDCR is isolating people from their families, attorneys, and communities, and doing so indefinitely. That’s not correctional safety, that’s institutional cruelty.”

While CDCR claims an internal review is underway, no details have been shared about what prompted the lockdown, who is conducting the investigation, its scope, or when it will conclude. Without transparency or external accountability, this process cannot be trusted to protect the fundamental rights and wellbeing of incarcerated people.

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CPDA calls for the immediate restoration of access to communication, family visitation, programming, and basic movement for all impacted individuals. We request that the Governor, the legislature, and independent oversight bodies step in now to ensure transparency, accountability, and humanity in California's prison system.

The California Public Defenders Association (CPDA) is a statewide organization representing over 4,000 attorneys and staff working to protect the rights of individuals accused of crimes and to advance a fair and just legal system.