

Beaver Creek Institution

Salomonie Jaw

My name is Salomonie Jaw from Nunavut Territory and I have been a federal prisoner for the past 16 years. I have served all of my time behind bars in Ontario. When an Inuk person from Nunavut is convicted and sentenced for a term longer than two years they are sent down to southern Canada to serve it. That is because there are no federal penitentiaries in Nunavut. As the Nunavut population is growing, I think it is time the federal government start considering to build a federal penitentiary there if it will not put in place viable alternatives to incarceration for Indigenous peoples as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau mandated Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould to look into.

The things that I would like to see done by the federal government, which in my view are very much possible to implement, are the following:

1. Assist our families and loved ones to visit us, providing an escort so that they will be safe and not get lost during travels. Presently, many Inuit prisoners do not get to see or spend time with their loved ones the whole time that they are incarcerated, which undermines their reintegration.
2. Allow Inuk prisoners to attend the funerals of their relatives. It is mentally straining both to the prisoners and survivors of death when the former is denied this opportunity.
3. Reinstate the two-year wait for a parole hearing after a prisoner has been denied parole.
4. Restore prisoner work pay to where it was before. We prisoners started paying more for our own food and accommodations some years ago and as a result our take home pay was considerably decreased.

Thank you for this opportunity. I sincerely trust that you and others will seriously look into these very important points.