

# B A R N O N E

Newsletter of Bar None Prison Rideshare

Winter 2020

Bar None is an abolitionist prisoner solidarity group based out of Treaty 1 territory, on the land of Anishinaabeg (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We view our commitment to prison abolition as related to the dismantling of the ongoing occupation and theft of these lands. The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison.

## Bar None News

### Panel: Justice for all Victims of State Violence

Forty people came out to the MERC on October 6, 2019 to hear from families of victims of police and prison violence, including Chantel Quill, Louise Moose, Justin Pranteau, Yusuf Faqiri, and Erica Thompson. Bar None organized the panel discussion to coincide with Yusuf's cross-country speaking tour about his brother Soleiman's death in an Ottawa jail and his family's fight for justice. "Our personal tragedies have brought us here to work on a collective duty," Yusuf said, "We may be small, but we're resilient, we're courageous, we're passionate, we're guided by a duty bigger than us." The panelists shared similar experiences of being silenced, denied information, given contradictory information, or otherwise shutout by authorities after their loved ones were killed. "Unfortunately, one can expect blocks, barriers, being misled in the wrong direction, but [it is important] to stay strong as family and as community," Chantel said, "They have systems in place to block the truth or make them not be accountable, so continue to support each other...we are our greatest strength, each other." Audience members also shared stories of police violence and mistreatment, as well as tips for helping loved ones survive imprisonment. Yusuf announced plans to organize a cross-country coalition for justice for victims of state violence. "We will be launching, in January 2020, led by the

Faqiri family and by the Ashley Smith family as well, a national coalition in Ottawa, and I would be honoured if any of these families would join us, and any of you who are interested," Yusuf said, "We will put a stop to this."

### Summer BBQ & Half Marathon

A big thank you to everyone who came out to the annual Bar None summer BBQ this past August at Burton Cummings Community Centre. It's always nice to see riders, drivers, and organizers outside of the work of the rideshare, to put faces to names, and relax together a little. Special shout out to the 11 brave souls who ran the half marathon that morning from Stony Mountain to the BBQ, raising \$2,256 in pledges and recruiting six new volunteer drivers for the rideshare. Big thanks to everyone who donated and to Jacquie for organizing the run. See you next summer!

### Alternatives to Calling the Police, February 16

In partnership with Central Neighbourhoods, Bar None is hosting a free workshop to reflect and strategize around alternatives to calling 911. February 16, 1-4pm at Central Hub (231 Isabel St.) Space is limited. Register with [chance@spenceneighbourhood.org](mailto:chance@spenceneighbourhood.org) or 204-451-2455.

### Abolition Convergence, May 4-6

Bar None is planning to attend the 2020 Abolition Convergence, May 4-6 in Toronto. Find out more at [facebook.com/AbolitionJournal](https://facebook.com/AbolitionJournal) or [abolitionjournal.org](https://abolitionjournal.org). The cost to attend is a voluntary donation. Travel subsidies and free accommodation may also be available.



L to R: Yusuf Faqiri, Louise Moose, Chantel Quill, and Erica Thompson at the Justice for All Victims of State Violence panel.

## Police Will Never Make Us Safer

Winnipeg is spending more on policing than ever before. Yet violence in our city only seems to increase. Police say more resources are needed to respond to the current crisis, but with each new investment, our death toll rises. Winnipeg's police budget topped \$300 million in 2018-19: more than 1/4 of all City expenses. This budget has increased by 50% in the past 10 years, while Winnipeg has held the title of "Canada's murder capital." As of December 18, 42 people were killed in 2019: the city's all-time record. This number does not include 7 people who died in the custody of Winnipeg police.

2 of these 7 - Chad Williams (26) and Machuar Madut (43) - were shot to death by police while presenting symptoms of a mental health crisis. There were at least 5 other non-fatal police shootings in Winnipeg in 2019, including a 16-year old boy shot 9 times while exiting a 7-11 on November 21. The other 5 deaths in custody were Sean Thompson (30), Randy Cochrane (30), and 3 men who have not been named. At least half a dozen others were seriously injured by Winnipeg police this year, including a 14-year old girl and boy whose arms were broken, and a 23-year old whose skull was fractured.

Police budgets and police violence are escalating in a context of heightened security and surveillance. The downtown library has introduced search and seizure measures at the front door. Liquor Marts have mandatory ID checks upon entry. Distinctions between private security and publicly-funded police are shrinking: 500 off-duty cops are hired by retailers to deter theft, while a so-called "Downtown Safety Partnership" plans for real-time communication between private security and police. The result is a privatized police state.

Police blame meth for our city's ills, but evidence tells a different story. Police are complicit in a culture of colonial oppression and toxic masculinity that drives a majority of violence in our city. Indigenous people represent 12% of Winnipeg's population but account for 2/3 of those killed by police and more than 3/4 of Manitoba's prison population. The MMIWG inquiry connected the Indian Act and Sixties Scoop to violence against women and girls, describing policing and the justice system as "forms of violence" targeted against Indigenous peoples. Yet in the midst of this actual crisis, Winnipeg police fixate on theft and drugs: the most visible symptoms of poverty and social exclusion, rising as people's options shrink down to taking whatever allows them to survive another day.

80% of calls to Winnipeg police are unrelated to any crime, requesting community assistance or wellness checks. But police are not social or health care workers. While we organize collectively against increasing police budgets and police

violence, one of the most important things we can do as individuals is simply not call them. There are many organizations and groups in Winnipeg doing vital work to prevent and address the roots of violence by focusing on safety, harm reduction and healing, rather than racial profiling, arrest and imprisonment. Wabwung Abinoonjiag, Ndinawe, 13 Moons and the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network are a few examples. The Winnipeg Outreach Network Resource Guide offers many more options to call on when support is needed to address issues related to mental health, substance overuse, gender-based violence or poverty. Being proactive before a crisis has occurred, by strengthening our communities and relationships, will make us all safer.

## Get Involved

Bar None is entirely volunteers. All who dream of a world without prisons are welcome. Many of us have or had loved ones in prison. We encourage current and former prisoners and their loved ones to join us.

### Need a ride to visit a loved one in prison?

- Text or call 204-599-8869 or email [barnone.wpg@gmail.com](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com). We'll do our best to connect you with a free ride.

### Love to drive?

- If you have access to a vehicle and a little extra time, email [barnone.wpg@gmail.com](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com) to volunteer as a Driver. You will be reimbursed for gas!

### Want to organize?

- Come to a meeting at 6:45pm, first Tuesday of any month, 231 Isabel Street between Pacific and Logan. Cab fare, bus tickets and snacks are available. We can provide childcare if you email [barnone.wpg@gmail.com](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com) at least one week before. Meetings are usually two hours, to discuss the ride share and other Bar None projects and requests. If you have used the rideshare, we especially want your involvement. If you can't be there in person, we can arrange other ways to join.

### Write to us!

- Email: [barnone.wpg@gmail.com](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com)
- Post: Bar None, c/o 231 Isabel Street, Winnipeg, MB R3A 1H2



*Runners at the Bar None Half Marathon Fundraiser this past summer.*