

CRITICAL RESISTANCE

DECEMBER 2023

Dear friends and supporters of Critical Resistance,

2023 marks 25 years since the founding conference of Critical Resistance (CR), and we are proud to have steadily held the spirit and vision of that conference across our decades of work. In this momentous year, CR has forged ahead building the movement for prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition in our campaigns, projects, and organizing tools - and your support has made this ever-growing work possible! We achieved campaign wins with coalition partners; created and distributed organizing tools; hosted events, workshops, and trainings; strengthened connections with imprisoned comrades and movement partners; and

hosted an anniversary celebration where we reflected upon the past 25 years of CR's ceaseless organizing. As the connections between our interwoven liberation struggles - and the role of the PIC in upholding systems of oppression - become clearer than ever, we remain committed to our work to dismantle the PIC in all its forms, change common sense and the ways our collective resources are distributed, and build toward abolitionist horizons.

Your generosity is crucial to our campaigns and projects, correspondence across prison walls, the organizing tools we create and distribute, and our power building alongside allied organizations. Will you continue to support CR's organizing for PIC abolition? With your help this year, we have:

- Collaborated with California coalition partners to confirm the closure of one state-owned prison and one privately-owned prison - bringing our closure total up to 4 prisons since our campaign to close 10 prisons by 2025 began.
- Organized with New York coalition partners to build up community resistance against immigrant detention and gained support for the Dignity Not Detention Act from four state representatives.
- Corresponded with thousands of imprisoned comrades through our mail programs and phone lines, sharing resources, information, and political dialogue to strengthen organizing across the walls.
- Shared The Abolitionist newspaper Issue #39 on Reproductive Justice with 4,700 people inside prisons, jails, and detention centers for free, and with hundreds of paid subscribers and movement partners. Issue #40 on Control Units is coming this December!



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CR's work in the fight for liberation remains as urgent as ever. The past 25 years of our organizing to dismantle systems of imprisonment, policing, and surveillance were made possible by the people power of thousands offering their time, effort, and resources. In this era of increasing flashpoints and escalating crises, CR remains steady in our movement to abolish the PIC. **Will you continue to support CR in our work toward abolitionist horizons?** We invite you to donate what you can to sustain our organizing, this year and the next. You can give online at bit.ly/CR2023yearend - and more - all options listed on the last page.



Resisting Imprisonment

The CR Oakland and CR Los Angeles chapters have been organizing alongside our coalition partners in Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) in the Close California Prisons campaign, which aims to close ten prisons in California by 2025. This year, CR continued to support this essential work by doing in-person and virtual outreach to build broad bases of local support, developing legislative strategies and tools, strengthening media and press tools and outreach, and connecting imprisoned comrades with the campaign through CR's prisoner correspondence programs. Due to the coalition's powerful organizing, two additional prisons have been confirmed for shutdown: Chuckawalla Valley State Prison will close by March 2025, and California will move to end its contract with California City Correctional Facility by March 2024. That brings us to four prisons closed or named for closure since our campaign began! Additionally, the state's Legislative Analyst Office is now recommending that a total of nine prisons be closed in the next few years, which is a tremendous increase from their 2020 recommendation

of five prisons. Please join us in continuing to organize against prison closures and grow the movement across California. **Your consistent support makes this prison closure work possible and powerful.**

CR New York City and our Abolish ICE New York-New Jersey coalition partners continue to advance the New York Dignity Not Detention (DND) campaign's goal of ending New York state collaboration and contracts with Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE). CR NYC chapter members have continued outreach and media efforts to bolster support for the campaign, as well as inside-outside organizing to advocate for releases not transfers. This year, CR NYC helped drive weekly phone and email zaps to state legislators to urge them to pass the NY Dignity Not Detention Act, fundraised for people currently or recently in immigrant detention, and accompanied our movement partners to rallies at county jails and the state capitol. These combined efforts have resulted in four state representatives naming their support of passing the Act. We are that much closer to getting the Dignity Not Detention Act passed! **Your contributions foster our strong campaign organizing against the caging of immigrants.**



Building Across the Walls

This past year, CR members have strengthened our connections and organizing with thousands of imprisoned people by sharing resources, strategies, and political dialogue across walls. We produced two issues of the *The Abolitionist* newspaper this year to distribute to over 4,700 imprisoned readers for free, supported by hundreds of paid subscriptions of community members and movement partners on the outside. With your support, we have also strengthened our processes and infrastructure, including the creation of a new online tool and database that has helped streamline and centralize our mail programs and phone lines across the organization. Our bolstered infrastructure has allowed us to build deeper political relationships with folks inside, strengthen the inside-outside organizing in our campaigns and projects, and uplift calls for support coming from inside. Along with these infrastructural additions, intentional volunteer recruitment and onboarding have increased the capacity of our programs. We now have many volunteers skilled up in all aspects of these programs including logging and responding to mail, updating facility addresses for our comrades inside that get transferred or released, and responding to phone calls. CR chapters continue to host biweekly or monthly mail nights, virtually and in person. Our prisoner correspondence programs are fantastic ways to get plugged into CR's abolitionist organizing - sign up for your nearest [mail program](#) or our [phone line solidarity program](#) today! **Your contributions of time and funds are crucial to supporting these vital programs and resources, and uplifting the voices, demands, and possibilities of our comrades inside.**

Movement Building

This year, CR collaborated and deepened relationships with movement partners across many organizing sectors. Whether it was when CR members went to Atlanta to support with community canvassing to Stop Cop City; joined our movement partners at a Bay Area port to delay a US military vessel from making its way to Israel; or hosted a workshop on PIC abolition and anti-imperialism as part of organizing efforts against the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); CR has worked to deepen the connections between all our liberation struggles and strengthen movement relationships. We have hosted numerous workshops and trainings for movement partners to share PIC abolitionist analysis and strategy, engaged in mobilizations and strategy sessions, given testimony to decision-makers to propel our campaigns, made statements to media outlets to shift common sense and narratives toward PIC abolition, participated in panels, and hosted volunteer trainings to strengthen our collective capacity. Additionally, [The Zachary Project](#), a community fund of CR Oakland, distributed over \$11,000 to organizers in need over the past year. **Your steady support enables CR to continue showing up, even during moments of escalating crises, to strongly build the movement for PIC abolition alongside our partners and community members!**



New Tools and Resources

Here are a few highlights of tools CR created or contributed to this year for campaigns, projects, and movement-building. Please visit criticalresistance.org to explore more.

- We released two issues of *The Abolitionist* newspaper! [Issue 39 on Reproductive Justice](#) had an accompanying [webinar](#) tying together struggles for PIC abolition, reproductive justice, queer liberation, abolishing family policing, and more. Issue 40 on Control Units is on its way to the printers now!
- CR and *The Abolitionist* Editorial Collective launched a new collaboration with the [Beyond Prisons Podcast](#): a special episode series on each forthcoming issue of *The Abolitionist* newspaper called “[Over the Wall: The Abolitionist Hour with Critical Resistance](#)”.
- CR organized a [webinar on Abolition and Palestinian liberation](#) where we and our movement partners discussed how our organizations and people

everywhere can mount effective resistance to genocide against Palestinians, and how we can use abolitionist strategies to do so.

- CR’s Close California Prisons organizers developed a new workshop as a political education resource for cross-sector movement building, focused on the intersections between [labor struggles](#) and the PIC to explore why prison closure is an urgent workers’ struggle in CA.
- CR’s Close California Prisons organizers contributed to the [CURB Prison Closure Roadmap](#) which outlines a concrete strategy for timely and safe prison closure in California that would support the communities impacted by imprisonment and the towns where prisons will be closed.
- CR hosted a [Building and Winning Abolitionist Campaigns](#) webinar that brought speakers together to discuss the importance and impact of campaigns against prisons, jails, and policing across the country, and to share powerful and invaluable insights into their successful campaign organizing.

Your support bolsters our ability to create spaces and organizing tools to strategize toward PIC abolition!

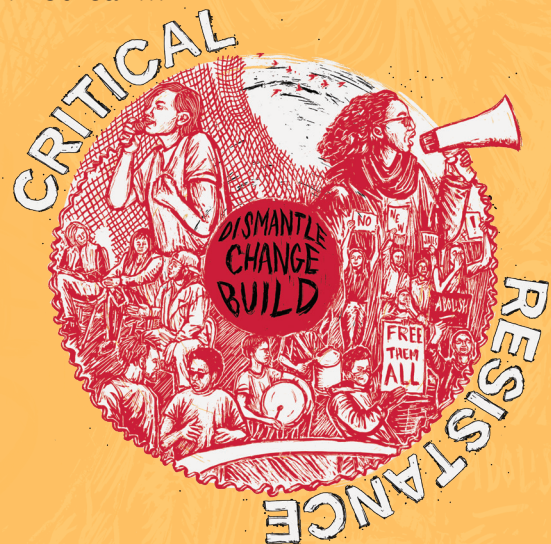
OUR ASK

Will you celebrate **25 years of CR’s organizing** and make a gift to support CR this month? We are majority grassroots-funded, and gifts of \$15, \$25, \$50, and \$500 will keep us thriving for future decades of PIC abolitionist organizing. We are also looking for major donor gifts of \$5,000-\$50k+! Every size donation keeps us thriving on the daily – monthly sustainers and major gifts allow us to invest in the longevity of our campaigns and organization. You can...

- **Donate generously** – You can give online at bit.ly/CR2023yearend or send us a check in the mail. Do you have a donor-advised fund or similar? Email Donors@Criticalresistance.org for giving details.

👉 **#SustainCR** - Become a monthly sustainer, by check or online at bit.ly/CR2023yearend

- **Host a fundraising party with your community** to spread the word about PIC abolition and energize your folks to sustain our work. Helpful planning tools can be found at CriticalResistance.org/ways-to-give
- **Subscribe to *The Abolitionist***, our bilingual newspaper that we send to imprisoned people for free.
- **Make a gift to [The Zachary Project](#)**, a fund to support organizers in need.
- **Spread the word!** – Share about PIC abolition with loved ones, post on social media, and encourage people to support CR.
- **Contribute to our campaigns!** Boost our calls to action, join us at mobilizations, and stay up to date for the latest information.
- **Volunteer** with our chapter mail programs and our prisoner phone lines.



Every gift helps us advance PIC abolition. Thank you!
Toward liberation,

Mohamed Shehk, Shirley Leslie, and Woods Ervin,
CR National Co-Directors