

Ashley's death needless, Coralee Smith says

Published On Wed Mar 4 2009

Richard J. Brennan OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA - Nineteen-year-old Ashley Smith died alone in a woman's prison because no one in Canada cared, her distraught mother said today.

Coralee Smith told a press conference that the federal penal system can't be allowed to get away with throwing a teenager into segregation and her subsequent suicide.

"We had no idea the conditions were as horrible as they were," Ashley's mother said.

The family has sent Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan to deal with the "faceless bureaucrats" in Canada's corrections system who made the decisions that led to the death.

"Someone has to be accountable for my girl's death," Smith said.

The family was responding to the release of a report yesterday by Howard Sapers, the correctional

investigator of Canada.

Sapers said the penal system utterly failed the teenager from Moncton N.B.

Toronto lawyer Julian Falconer, acting for the family, said Ashley Smith "lived and died" in inhumane conditions.

Falconer told reporters the system failed Smith at every level.

"CSC (Correctional Services of Canada) has repeatedly ignored warning that the federal prison system is failing women," Falconer said.