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City says homeless report blasting St. Pete is yesterday's news



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ST. PETERSBURG-- On the heels of a glowing write-up in the Boston Globe--- the latest in a string of national and international kudos touting St. Petersburg--- comes a spotlight that backdrops the city in a markedly different hue.

A report presented to the United Nations characterizes the city's treatment of the homeless as a criminal travesty.

The national report, written by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, was submitted to the UN Committee on Torture in September. A section is devoted to St. Petersburg's policies, including its Safe Harbor project.

The takeaway? " Under this plan, homeless people in St. Petersburg have no option to conduct any of their basic life necessities - indeed even to exist - in the city without the threat of extended solitary confinement or exile. "

Here is the link to the report: http://nlchp.org/documents/CAT_Criminalization_Shadow_Report_2014

Mayor Rick Kriseman's administration said the report contained outdated information and was compiled in January, when Kriseman was just entering office.

"This report does not reflect our recent strides, nor the reality on the ground in St. Petersburg," said Ben Kirby, Kriseman's spokesman. "St. Petersburg is going in the right direction."

Just over two weeks ago, Kriseman announced an initiative to place a dozen collection boxes around the city to raise money for homeless prevention. His administration has also doubled its \$50,000 contribution to Safe Harbor, given \$75,000 to St. Vincent de Paul to expand its day program and is considering restarting a program to deal with the chronically homeless.



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