



INTERNATIONAL PRISON NEWS DIGEST

35th Edition – September - October 2016

Welcome to the 35th edition of the International Prison News Digest, our selection of news items from around the world on prison and the use of imprisonment. The Digest is produced bi-monthly and this issue covers the period from 1 September to 31 October 2016.

In this and future editions of the Digest, we are grouping news items regionally, rather than thematically. We aim in the Digest to cover all regions of the world and include new developments in policy and practice, as well as information from official and intergovernmental bodies. By clicking on the hyperlinks, you can access the news articles in their original form.

Content is sourced solely from English language news stories. Readers wishing to notify us of important news items in other languages are welcome to send us articles with a short summary of key content and we will consider them for inclusion in the next edition. Please note that ICPR is not responsible for the accuracy of external content.

Information on global prison systems can be found on [World Prison Brief](#)

AFRICA

Angola: At least 2,500 prisoners have been set free under the **Amnesty Law**. [All Africa, 22 September 2016](#)

Kenya: Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has announced that he is **pardoning** more than 7,000 convicts, in the process making space for people convicted of crimes of corruption. [AA News, 20 October 2016](#)

Kenya: Kenya's President has **commuted** the sentences of all the country's **death row** prisoners to life imprisonment. [Independent, 25 October 2016](#)

Libya: Libya's prisons and its detention system is in **chaos**, and earlier hopes for reform have faltered, according to a United States Institute of Peace (USIP) report. [Libya Herald, 4 September 2016](#)

Malawi: A survey by Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) has revealed that as a **food crisis** unfolded in the country, prisoners are going for days without food. [News 24, 12 September 2016](#)

Mauritania: Prisoners at Nouakchott's Al-Qasr Prison **rioted** to protest alleged **mistreatment** by the prison authorities. [World Bulletin, 1 September 2016](#)

Mozambique: Mozambican jails and police cells are a **threat** to the lives and health of those held prisoner there according to the annual report from the country's ombudsman. [All Africa, 20 October 2016](#)

Senegal: Prisoners at the Rebeuss prison in Dakar **rioted** to protest **inhumane treatment** by prison authorities. [Face2Face Africa, 22 September 2016](#)

Senegal: Senegal is experimenting with a new form of **restorative justice** where child prisoners are being taught to fence in twice-weekly classes that take place outside of prison walls. [Jollof News, 3 October 2016](#)

South Africa: Human rights lawyers have threatened legal action against the Department of Correctional Services in a bid to force it to process outstanding **parole** applications of long-term prisoners. [News 24, 23 October 2016](#)

Tunisia: More than 400 cases of **torture** were reported in prisons across Tunisia between October 2013 and October 2015, according to the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH). [AA News, 28 September 2016](#)

Uganda: The Prisons Service is calling for a revision in the law to limit the period an prisoner can spend on **remand** awaiting trial. [NTV, 12 September 2016](#)

Uganda: Uganda Prison Services is to build a 1000-prisoner capacity prison annually starting this year in order to cut down **congestion**, the Internal Affairs minister has announced. [All Africa, 12 October 2016](#)

Uganda: The judiciary has issued sentencing **guidelines** for lower courts as a way to ensure uniformity and avoid erratic judgements in lower courts. [All Africa, 17 October 2016](#)

AMERICAS

Argentina: The number of prisoners in Argentina convicted for **drug offences** has more than doubled in a decade. [InSight Crime, 5 September 2016](#)

Argentina: The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) has published a report condemning the complicity of the media and the judiciary in the irregular **detention** of citizens, as well as prison conditions **violating** international human rights standards. [Buenos Aires Herald, 23 October 2016](#)

Bahamas: A Court of Appeal ruling has clarified the way police officers and judges must deal with **children** that come into contact with the justice system. [Tribune 242, 6 September 2016](#)

Brazil: Nearly half of all people imprisoned in Brazil's third most populous state, Rio de Janeiro, are being detained **without a conviction**, according to the NGOs Global Justice, and Rio's State Mechanism for Preventing and Combating Torture. [Telesur, 18 September 2016](#)

Brazil: At least 25 prisoners have reportedly died in **clashes** between two rival factions in a prison in Brazil's far north, the latest episode of **violence** shaking the country's underfunded and overcrowded penal system. [The Guardian, 17 October 2016](#)

Brazil: At least eight prisoners have **died** at a prison in the city of Porto Velho in north-western Brazil. [BBC News, 17 October 2016](#)

Brazil: At least four prisoners died and another 19 were injured during a **riot** at a prison in the western Brazilian state of Acre. [Global Times, 22 October 2016](#)

Brazil: A **riot** at a youth prison in north-eastern Brazil has left seven prisoners dead, officials say. [BBC News, 31 October 2016](#)

Canada: Canada's prison agency has halved the number of prisoners it keeps in indefinite **solitary confinement** over the past two years, according to new data. [The Globe and Mail, 12 October 2016](#)

Canada: Canada's prison watchdog is raising red flags about the "go-to" use of **pepper spray** in federal penitentiaries, which his office found has tripled in a five-year period with little accountability. [CBC News, 31 October 2016](#)

Canada: **Indigenous** people now represent more than a quarter of all prisoners held in Canada's federal prisons, according to the new annual report from Canada's prison watchdog. [Vice News, 31 October 2016](#)

Chile: A **fight** between rival gangs in a Santiago prison left one prisoner dead and at least 12 injured. [Latin American Herald Tribune, 27 September 2016](#)

Guatemala: A prison **riot** in Guatemala highlights a broken system that continues to suffer from overcrowding, rising violence and a lack of organizational leadership -- all of which likely exacerbates the nation's gang problems. [InSight Crime, 7 October 2016](#)

Mexico: One prisoner has been killed and eight injured in the latest **uprising** at a troubled prison in northern Mexico. [CTV News, 13 October 2016](#)

ASIA

Cambodia: The UN special rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia has voiced her concern about **overcrowding** in prisons caused by an increase in temporary detentions before trials. [Khmer Times, 12 October 2016](#)

China: China's national legislature has approved a pilot program to allow **plea bargaining** in its some of its courts. [Reuters, 3 September 2016](#)

China: An official White Paper titled "New Progress in the Judicial Protection of **Human Rights** in China", has been published which will enhance scrutiny of supervisory activities and the execution of punishment, standardise commutation, parole, and execution of sentence outside prison. [Firstpost News, 12 September 2016](#)

India: 1,702 prisoners **died** in 2014, according to figures released by the Minister of Home Affairs. [Firstpost News, 15 September 2016](#)

Indonesia: Indonesia's parliament has passed controversial laws authorising chemical castration, minimum sentences and execution for convicted **paedophiles**. [BBC News, 12 October 2016](#)

Indonesia: The Law and Human Rights Ministry is set to increase the **capacity** of penitentiaries nationwide by 5,000 by the end of the year in an effort to help ease **overcrowding** in correctional facilities. [The Jakarta Post, 17 October 2016](#)

Iraq: Parliament has passed a controversial **amnesty** law which could apply to up to 50,000 prisoners. [AMI Newswire, 1 September 2016](#)

Israel: Israel's criminal justice system is plagued by serious systemic **failures** resulting in the conviction of innocent people, according to a report by the Public Defender's Office. [Israel Hayom, 4 September 2016](#)

Kazakhstan: The United Nations' torture prevention body has urged Kazakhstan to focus more on the **rehabilitation** of prisoners rather than punishment, as part of efforts to ensure that people deprived of their liberty are protected against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. [UN.org, 3 October 2016](#)

Sri Lanka: Cabinet approval has been granted for the appointment of a Task Force on Legal and Judicial Causes of Prison **Overcrowding**. [Daily News, 1 September 2016](#)

United Arab Emirates: Judicial officials looking at reforms to the **narcotics law** want the mandatory four-year prison sentence for drug abuse abolished, saying some cases warrant more lenient punishment. [The National, 5 October 2016](#)

Vietnam: Nearly 25,000 prisoners are eligible for **remission** of their sentence on the occasion of the country's 71st National Day. [Daijiworld, 1 September 2016](#)

EUROPE

Belarus: Prisoners convicted of **drug offences** in Belarus are being forced to wear identifying badges and endure harsh conditions as part of the government's increasingly repressive drug policy. [Talking Drugs, 14 September 2016](#)

France: Prime Minister Manuel Valls has announced a plan to **build** 33 new prisons around the country by 2025 to deal with the chronic **overcrowding** in France's jails. [The Local, 6 October 2016](#)

France: France's Minister of Justice has announced the end of prison wings for **radicalized** prisoners, promising a new "regime" instead. [The Local, 25 October 2016](#)

Georgia: The Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe has released a document commending the current Georgian Government on the steps it has taken to address the issue of prison **overcrowding**. [News.Az, 24 September 2016](#)

Iceland: There are 560 people in Iceland **waiting** to serve their prison sentences, while those who have waited the longest have waited six years to serve their sentences. [Iceland Review, 19 October 2016](#)

Ireland: Almost one in five prisoners serving **life sentences** were doing so outside of jail last year, according to figures released by the Department of Justice. [Irish Times, 6 September 2016](#)

Ireland: A database designed by a group of law students at University of Limerick (UL) will record information regarding **deaths** in prison custody. [Irish Legal, 11 October 2016](#)

Ireland: Prisoners in the Republic of Ireland were held in **solitary confinement** for 22 hours a day for months and even over a year, despite UN recommendations of a 15 day limit. [The Detail, 24 October 2016](#)

Netherlands: Junior justice minister Klaas Dijkhof has set up a special committee to look at the possible release of people sentenced to **life in prison** in the Netherlands. [Dutch News, 26 October 2016](#)

Russia: The Russian penal authorities say that the number of **uprisings** by prisoners has increased over the last four years, that prisoners are increasingly aggressive, and that their revolts are having a negative impact on the population in neighbouring areas. [Eurasia Review, 4 October 2016](#)

Russia: The Russian correctional system will be reintroducing **compulsory labour** as a criminal punishment starting January 1, 2017. [VOA News, 13 October 2016](#)

Turkey: Almost 34,000 prisoners have been **released** from prison in a move to free up space for thousands of people detained over a failed coup. [The Independent, 2 September 2016](#)

Turkey: More than 170 jails will be built over the next five years in Turkey, according to a statement from the Justice Ministry, increasing **capacity** by 100,182 prisoners. [Hurriyet Daily News, 15 September 2016](#)

United Kingdom

England and Wales: The House of Commons Justice Committee has recommended that victims of crime should be given the right to **restorative justice**, where they can confront the criminal who harmed them, once the criminal justice system develops sufficient capacity. [The Guardian, 1 September 2016](#)

England and Wales: An official inquiry has criticised the “wholly unacceptable level of **violence**” in English and Welsh jails after a record six prisoners were killed in 2015-16. [The Guardian, 21 September 2016](#)

England and Wales: Re-offending rates among criminals given short jail sentences remain high and public protection work is "weak" despite a probation revolution, watchdogs have warned. [The Telegraph, 4 October 2016](#)

England and Wales: All staff working within the criminal justice system, including nurses, should receive training to better recognise and respond to **mental health** problems, according to new draft guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. [Nursing Times, 7 October 2016](#)

England and Wales: Magistrates’ powers should be increased so that they can sentence convicted defendants to up to one year in prison for a single offence, a House of Commons committee has recommended. [The Guardian, 19 October 2016](#)

England and Wales: Young offenders up to the age of 25 should be kept out of adult prisons because of “irrefutable evidence” that the typical adult male brain is not fully formed until at least the mid-20s, MPs have said. [The Guardian, 26 October 2016](#)

England and Wales: The Ministry of Justice has explicitly acknowledged that **staff cuts** are a factor in the rising tide of violence in prisons in England and Wales. [The Guardian, 27 October 2016](#)

England and Wales: Suicides in prison have reached “epidemic” proportions, with rates of self-harm and violence soaring to unprecedented levels. [The Guardian, 29 October 2016](#)

Northern Ireland: The prison ombudsman has expressed concern that a number of prisoners have spent months, and in some cases years, in **solitary confinement**. [BBC News, 5 September 2016](#)

Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland’s **prison population** declined last year for the first time since 2010, according to new Department of Justice figures. [Irish Legal, 30 September 2016](#)

Scotland: The number of prisoners who have tried to commit **suicide** has increased by over half in a year. [Herald Scotland, 18 September 2016](#)

Scotland: Scotland's chief prisons inspector has called for greater use of **alternatives** to short sentences as well as more help for prisoners **reintegrating** into society upon their release as Scotland's prison population falls to its lowest in seven years. [Scottish Legal, 25 October 2016](#)

OCEANIA

Australia: Prisoners at a maximum security prison in Australia are on **strike** over wages, saying the A\$9 a day that they have been promised in a new deal is not enough to cover living costs inside. [BBC News, 6 September 2016](#)

Australia: Fine defaulters in Western Australia will be given the option to work in the community to pay off the penalty, under plans aimed at reducing high **indigenous** incarceration rates. [Perth Now, 15 September 2016](#)

Australia: Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre has been identified as the most **overcrowded** prison in Queensland, with pregnant prisoners forced to sleep on mattresses placed on the floor. [Brisbane Times, 27 September 2016](#)

Australia: The use of **restraint chairs** on young people will be banned in the Northern Territory, under a bill introduced by the new Labor government on Tuesday. [The Guardian, 25 October 2016](#)

Australia: The government is pushing for a new inquiry into **Indigenous** incarceration rates, with Indigenous children and teens 24 times more likely to be incarcerated than their peers. [Huffington Post, 27 October 2016](#)

New Zealand: A \$15.3 million trial to try to boost the **job prospects** of prisoners and reduce **reoffending** has started in seven prisons. [New Zealand Herald, 3 October 2016](#)

New Zealand: Figures reveal just 37 per cent of prisoners assessed under a national framework between July last year and August this year were able to complete everyday **literacy** tasks, while 27 per cent were in critical need of **education**. [Stuff.co.nz, 3 October 2016](#)

New Zealand: Plans to strip **benefits** from offenders who fail to carry out a community sentence are "**inhumane**" and would make innocent children suffer, MPs have been told. [Stuff.co.nz, 12 October 2016](#)

New Zealand: Inadequate facilities for people with high **mental health** needs have been highlighted by the Chief Ombudsman, who says the issue needs to be addressed. [RNZ, 24 October 2016](#)

New Zealand: The government has conceded it is unlikely to meet its five-year target for reducing prisoner **reoffending**. [RNZ, 25 October 2016](#)