



INTERNATIONAL PRISON NEWS DIGEST

43rd Edition – January – February 2018

Welcome to the 43rd 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 January to 28 February 2018.

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. News items are grouped regionally. 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

Kenya: The Judiciary is planning reforms to avoid the unnecessary imprisonment of petty offenders. [The Star, 16 January 2018](#)

Morocco: The Moroccan Minister of Justice has announced that around 40 percent of the country's prisoners are held in pre-trial detention. [Morocco World News, 14 February 2018](#)

Namibia: Jail terms that exceed the expected lifespan of long-term prisoners are not constitutional in Namibia, the Supreme Court has ruled. [The Namibian, 7 February 2018](#)

Nigeria: The recently inaugurated national stakeholders' committee on prison reforms has begun a state tour of prisons with a view to decongesting the over-populated facilities. [All Africa, 23 January 2018](#)

South Africa: Fourteen prisoners in Johannesburg "Sun City" Medium B prison told the South Gauteng High Court that there were up to 20 hours between the last meal of the day and breakfast. [News 24, 31 January 2018](#)

South Africa: Prisoners serving life sentences in prisons around South Africa are protesting continued backlogs in parole considerations, with some embarking on hunger strikes. [Daily Maverick, 12 February 2018](#)

AMERICAS

Brazil: Nine prisoners were killed, 14 were injured, and dozens escaped in a prison riot. [Reuters, 1 January 2018](#)

Brazil: Fighting between gangs at a prison in Brazil's northeastern Ceara state has left 10 dead. [Yahoo News, 29 January 2018](#)

Brazil: The Supreme Federal Court has ruled that defendants who are pregnant, mothers with young children or people with disabilities, who are accused of non-violent crimes, will not be detained in jail before their trials. [Jurist, 23 February 2018](#)

Canada: Canada's use of prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement in federal prisons is unconstitutional, a judge has ruled. [The Guardian, 18 January 2018](#)

Canada: Canada's prison system has overhauled its policies around transgender prisoners. [CBC News, 31 January 2018](#)

Canada: The federal prison watchdog is urging more "compassionate" parole options and a ban on medically assisted death behind bars. [CBC News, 25 February 2018](#)

Haiti: Haiti has been ranked as the country with the most overcrowded prisons in the world, according to information on World Prison Brief (WPB). [Jamaica Observer, 5 February 2018](#)

United States: The district attorneys for Manhattan and Brooklyn, New York City, have announced that their offices will no longer require cash bail for most non-felony cases. [The Guardian, 10 January 2018](#)

United States: Federal courts are less likely to give Latinos and Native Americans the option of getting out of prison early for good behaviour, a new study suggests. [Journalist's Resource, 14 February 2018](#)

ASIA

Cambodia: The anti-drug campaign has led to a sharp increase in the number of prisoners in Cambodia. [Xinhuanet.com, 20 February 2018](#)

Japan: The Justice Ministry plans to conduct a simple dementia test for new prisoners aged 60 or over. [Japan Times, 21 January 2018](#)

Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan's prison population has fallen dramatically. [Astana Times, 17 February 2018](#)

Kuwait: Kuwait is taking steps to address overcrowding in its prisons and reduce significantly the number of prisoners. [Gulf News, 23 January 2018](#)

Myanmar: About 48 per cent of prisoners are serving prison terms for drug use, or other drug-related reasons. [Eleven Myanmar, 28 February 2018](#)

Nepal: The number of foreign prisoners in Nepali jails is rising. [The Himalayan Times, 22 February 2018](#)

Thailand: The military government has said it will begin devising ways to reduce prison overcrowding. [Khao Sod, 14 February 2018](#)

EUROPE

Finland: The number of custodial prison sentences handed down by Finnish courts decreased by 42 percent between the years 2004 to 2016. [YLE, 8 January 2018](#)

Finland: The number of prisoners in Finland's correctional institutions who have been diagnosed with psychotic or schizophrenic disorders has increased ten-fold. [YLE, 14 January 2018](#)

France: A landline telephone is to be installed in almost all French prison cells in an attempt to improve rehabilitation rates and curb smuggling of mobile phones. [The Telegraph, 2 January 2018](#)

France: A series of attacks against prison guards by prisoners at institutions across France led to a nationwide strike in the country. [BBC News, 22 January 2018](#)

FYR Macedonia: The Macedonian parliament has adopted an amnesty bill to ease overcrowding in the country's prisons, which have faced acute criticism for their inhumane conditions. [Business Insider, 15 January 2018](#)

Ireland: The number of people being sent to prison fell by almost 40 percent in 2017 which has been attributed to a massive drop in fine defaulters being jailed. [Irish Examiner, 10 February 2018](#)

Ireland: Foreign nationals receive prison sentences an average of 11 months longer than those handed down to Irish nationals for possession of drugs for sale/supply worth less than €13,000. [Irish Examiner, 26 February 2018](#)

Italy: The cabinet of Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni has approved three decrees which will implement prison reform. [Xinhuanet.com, 23 February 2018](#)

Norway: The Norwegian government is ending its agreement to lease jail space for Norwegian prisoners in the Netherlands. [News in English.no, 23 February 2018](#)

Portugal: the Council of Europe's anti-torture committee has urged the Portuguese authorities to take determined action to provide prisoners with safe and decent living conditions. [Council of Europe, 27 February 2018](#)

Romania: Romania may implement measures aimed at reducing prison overcrowding and compensate prisoners held in inhumane conditions. [Romania Insider, 18 January 2018](#)

Russia: The Federal Service for Execution of Punishment reports that the number of prisoners has fallen to the lowest level in the history of the Russian Federation. [Vestnik Kavkaza, 13 January 2018](#)

Slovakia: The Justice Ministry has received approval for its project to build a new prison in Rimavská Sobota in central-southern Slovakia. [The Slovak Spectator, 11 January 2018](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

England and Wales: Prisons are failing to carry out prompt and thorough investigations into alleged discrimination behind bars, a watchdog has warned. [BT, 17 January 2018](#)

England and Wales: The head of the prison service has accepted the findings of two damning inspection reports but blamed the failures on government cuts and the influx of drugs into jails. [The Guardian, 19 January 2018](#)

England and Wales: The new prisons minister has vowed to "get back to basics" to ensure clean, safe jails. [The Guardian, 24 January 2018](#)

England and Wales: Violence and self-injury in prisons have risen to record levels, new figures show, as overcrowding continues to put pressure on jails in England and Wales. [Independent, 25 January 2018](#)

England and Wales: Prison inspectors need more funding to hold the government and prison bosses to account when jails have "urgent and serious failings", MPs have said. [BBC News, 16 February 2018](#)

England and Wales: The government hopes to increase the number of prisoners released early from jail under strict home curfew rules, it has emerged. [The Guardian, 16 February 2018](#)

Scotland: Scotland's judges have outlined their opposition to plans allowing them to decide on whether a prisoner should be given the vote. [The Scotsman, 6 January 2018](#)

Scotland: Concerns have been raised over the “heavy-handed” use of remand after it emerged that nearly one in five prisoners in Scotland are being held awaiting trial. [The Scotsman, 13 January 2018](#)

Scotland: Prison drugs policy needs to be changed with much greater focus on health concerns after nearly one third of prisoners tested positive for illegal substances. [Herald Scotland, 20 January 2018](#)

OCEANIA

Australia: The rapidly growing and overcrowded NSW prison population has finally plateaued because many more prisoners are being paroled. [SBS News, 30 January 2018](#)

Australia: Prisoners with disabilities are being locked in solitary confinement for prolonged periods, living in nappies, urinating in bottles and suffering physical and sexual abuse. [The Guardian, 6 February 2018](#)

New Zealand: Hundreds of corrections staff are assaulted by prisoners each year, new data shows. [NZ Herald, 15 January 2018](#)

New Zealand: A new report shows the number of prisoners in solitary confinement has more than doubled since 2010. [TVNZ, 29 January 2018](#)

New Zealand: The Office of the Inspectorate has released reports into Manawatu Prison and Auckland Prison, the first resulting from a programme of inspections of New Zealand prisons. [Voxy.co.nz, 15 February 2018](#)