

# INTERNATIONAL PRISON NEWS DIGEST

## 53<sup>rd</sup> Edition – September - October 2019

Welcome to the 53<sup>rd</sup> 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 2019.

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 Kenya Prisons Service is going cashless in an effort to salvage its troubled business wing and close loopholes that unscrupulous staff use to siphon funds. [The Star, 16 September 2019](#)

**Morocco:** A report by the Court of Auditors has found that many of the prisons lack essential equipment, such as metal detector gates and surveillance cameras. [Morocco World News, 13 September 2019](#)

**Rwanda:** Rwanda continues to grapple with prison overcrowding as more and more people are locked up in jail without going to court. [Journal du Cameroun, 30 October 2019](#)

**South Africa:** The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has revealed that SA's correctional facilities have been overcrowded and under-resourced for nearly two decades. [Daily Maverick, 4 September 2019](#)

**South Africa:** A High Court Judge has given Parliament two years to fix provisions of the Correctional Services Act relating to the independence of the prisons inspectorate, which she says are unconstitutional. [Ground Up, 5 September 2019](#)

## AMERICAS

**Argentina:** Relatives of imprisoned drug traffickers charged fees to other families to let them in to see their loved ones in an Argentine jail. [InSight Crime, 18 September 2019](#)

**Haiti:** Prison authorities in Haiti have confined prisoners to cells that lack showers or toilets, in a country where most detainees are stuck awaiting trial for months or even years. [France24, 21 October 2019](#)

**Mexico:** The Mexican President has sent a draft law to Congress that aims to grant amnesty to people serving jail time for lesser offences, including abortion and possession of small amounts of drugs. [Reuters, 16 September 2019](#)

**Mexico:** Six prisoners were killed in a clash between rival groups at a prison in the central Mexican state of Morelos. [Euronews, 31 October 2019](#)

**US:** A prisoner with a history of mental illness was held in solitary confinement at a prison in Virginia for over 600 days, leading to a collapse in his physical and mental condition. [The Guardian, 4 September 2019](#)

**US:** The California Legislature has moved to phase out the use of private prisons in the state. [San Francisco Chronicle, 11 September 2019](#)

**US:** A recent report shows that 39 states had decreases in their prison populations from 2009 to 2017. [ABC News, 24 September 2019](#)

**US:** More women are being held in local jails than in state prisons, but little attention is paid to the health care, counselling and family services they need. [The Crime Report, 30 October 2019](#)

## ASIA

**Bangladesh:** Over 23 prisoners are dying every month, amid a shortage of doctors, nurses, and ambulances, and poor medical facilities in 68 prisons in the country. [The Daily Star, 17 September 2019](#)

**Bangladesh:** A prisoner database management system with biometrics has been launched in Bangladesh with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). [BDNews24, 18 September 2019](#)

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong's prison authority will test facial recognition technology, tracking wristbands and robot warders to create a "super security and surveillance system". [South China Morning Post, 21 October 2019](#)

**Israel:** The Israel Prison Service is refusing to translate its regulations into Arabic, citing the controversial nation-state law to say it is not a legal requirement. [Haaretz, 3 September 2019](#)

**Japan:** The Ministry of Justice has decided to permanently station probation officers at large-scale prisons across Japan as part of its efforts to tackle high reoffending rates. [The Mainichi, 3 October 2019](#)

**Philippines:** At least two people were reported killed and 32 others injured when a riot broke out between rival gangs in the Manila City Jail. [Al Jazeera, 30 September 2019](#)

**Philippines:** There are at least 5,000 deaths of prisoners at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City every year, according to an official from the Bureau of Corrections. [Tempo, 3 October 2019](#)

**Taiwan:** One suicide and several suicide attempts have resulted from poor conditions at the Lyudao Prison on Taitung County's Green Island. [Taipei Times, 17 September 2019](#)

**Tajikistan:** Lawmakers in Tajikistan have approved amnesty legislation intended to result in around 20,000 people being released from the country's prisons and jails. [Eurasianet, 25 October 2019](#)

## EUROPE

**Belgium:** Belgium's first-ever transitional housing unit for prisoners about to be released has opened in the Flemish city of Mechelen. [The Brussels Times, 9 September 2019](#)

**Czech Republic:** Companies in the Czech Republic are increasingly interested in employing prisoners. [Radio Prague International, 30 September 2019](#)

**Ireland:** Seriously mentally ill prisoners assessed by psychiatrists as needing admission to the Central Mental Hospital, are having to wait as long as two years to be transferred. [The Irish Times, 9 September 2019](#)

**Ireland:** The Irish Prison Service said more people are being sent to prison and overcrowding has once again become an issue in Irish prisons. [RTE News, 20 September 2019](#)

**Ireland:** The Irish Prison Service strategic plan 2019-22 has promised improved Governance structure with the appointment of a new Prisons Advisory Board. [Law Society Gazette Ireland, 20 September 2019](#)

**Italy:** Italy has reacted angrily to a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that it should relax conditions for prisoners serving life sentences. [The Telegraph, 9 October 2019](#)

**Spain:** Researchers have analysed the cases of 1,328 patients sent to penitentiary psychiatric consultation by the medical services, the most comprehensive study conducted in Spain to date. [News-Medical-Life Sciences, 17 September 2019](#)

**Turkey:** The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that Turkey had violated the right to respect for private and family life of two prisoners who were held in prisons far from their homes. [Stockholm Center for Freedom, 19 September 2019](#)

## UNITED KINGDOM

**England and Wales:** Two in five prisoners who have died in segregation in the past six years were known to be at risk of self-harm and suicide at the time of their deaths, figures show. [The Guardian, 3 September 2019](#)

**England and Wales:** The government needs to take action to end the “irreparable harm” inflicted on children whose mothers are in prison, MPs and peers have warned. [Independent, 9 September 2019](#)

**England and Wales:** Eleven separate investigations have been launched into the death of a newborn baby at Britain’s largest female prison. [The Guardian, 8 October 2019](#)

**England and Wales:** Administrators are doing too little and acting too slowly to curb preventable deaths in prisons, the ombudsman has said. [Financial Times, 10 October 2019](#)

**England and Wales:** The ageing jail population has left prison officers providing care for a growing number of older prisoners "dying in front of them", officers have said. [BBC News, 22 October 2019](#)

**England and Wales:** Plans to close Victorian-era jails in England and Wales and sell them for housing have been scrapped. [BBC News, 22 October 2019](#)

**England and Wales:** The prison system in England and Wales is in an “appalling” state of crisis, lacking decency or security and no clear plan for desperately needed change, MPs have warned. [The Guardian, 31 October 2019](#)

**Northern Ireland:** A review into how vulnerable prisoners are monitored in Northern Ireland's prisons is not expected to be completed until 2020 - more than three-and-a-half years after it was first announced. [Belfast Telegraph, 3 September 2019](#)

**Northern Ireland:** Forty-six people died in a Northern Ireland prison or within a fortnight of being released from jail in the past five years. [BBC News, 8 September 2019](#)

**Scotland:** Scotland's prisons are close to breaking point with overcrowding and rising assaults on staff by prisoners posing a threat to "operational safety". [The Scotsman, 12 September 2019](#)

**Scotland:** A European anti-torture watchdog has condemned the treatment of prisoners with mental health problems in Scotland's jails, after observing disturbing scenes in a women's prison. [The Herald, 11 October 2019](#)

## OCEANIA

**Australia:** A review of three youth prisons in Victoria has found children and young people are being "damaged rather than rehabilitated" through "excessive isolation". [ABC News, 5 September 2019](#)

**New Zealand:** The remand prisoner population has hit an all-time high this year, as the Government continues to work towards its goal of reducing the prison population by 30 percent in 15 years. [Newsroom, 20 September 2019](#)

**New Zealand:** A Bill to improve prison security and ensure the fair, safe, and humane treatment of people in prison while upholding public safety has passed its third reading. [Sun Live, 23 October 2019](#)