

Deadlock: the human rights impact of over-incarceration

**Monday 16 September
13 – 15hr
Palais des Nations
Room XXIV**

In light of the Secretary General's Report on human rights in the administration of justice (A/68/261), the side event seeks to address the practices and policies contributing to an overuse of imprisonment, and their impact on human rights.

The size of the prison population throughout the world is growing, impacting on significantly upon human rights of those detained.

While the issues of torture and ill-treatment are raised by human rights mechanisms frequently, the underlying problem of overcrowding is often overlooked. The overuse of imprisonment - although one of its major causes - is often regarded as an issue of criminal law exclusively rather than a human rights concern.

Yet, the negative impact of the overuse of incarceration on human rights is manifold. Without addressing it, the existing human rights mechanisms will continue to report on deplorable detention conditions across the globe without ever being able to effectively remedy them.

A focus on the human rights impact of criminal justice policies in a comprehensive way is lacking to date, and while the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms have expressed concern over prison overcrowding time and again, no mechanism has yet been established to address its causes.

It is time for a strategy, preventing imprisonment where it is unnecessary or disproportionate. The side event seeks to contribute to the discussion of such an approach in preventing human rights violations of persons deprived of their liberty.

Sandwiches and refreshments will be provided before the side event.



Promoting fair and effective criminal justice

Permanent Mission of Austria
to the United Nations in Geneva



Welcome & Introduction

Thomas Hajnoczi
Permanent Representative of Austria

Over-incarceration from a human rights perspective

Mona Rishmawi
Chief of the Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch

Human rights implications of mass incarceration in the United States

Jamil Dakwar
Director, Human Rights Program, American Civil Liberties Union

Excessive and arbitrary use of pre-trial detention

Kersty McCourt
Senior Advocacy Advisor – Criminal Justice Reform, Open Society Justice Initiative

Over-incarceration and its links to poverty and discrimination

Mads Andenas
Member of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD)

Life and long-term imprisonment

Dirk van Zyl Smit
Professor, University of Nottingham

Discussion

Moderation: Andrea Huber, Policy Director, Penal Reform International