

PRI E-newsletter May 2014

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E-newsletter

May 2014



Welcome to Penal Reform

International's Newsletter, a round-up of PRI and other penal reform news from around the world and a variety of criminal justice and human rights resources.

The views expressed in the news items below are not necessarily those of PRI.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

[PRI celebrates 25 years of penal reform](#)

PRI has kicked off its 25th anniversary celebrations, marking the occasion with two events, a new animation and the launch of an expert blog series!

The first event, [If prison doesn't work, what does?](#), was a panel discussion and reception in London - [read more](#) about the event, [watch a video](#) or [listen to a podcast](#) of the debate. The second was an informal reception at the Crime Commission in Vienna this month where we reflected on 25 years of PRI and launched our new animation, [Is a prison sentence always the solution?](#)



PRI's [25th anniversary expert blog series](#) was also launched this month, which will address some of the most interesting trends and pressing challenges in criminal justice on the 25th of each month until the Crime Congress in 2015. In the first of the series, Rob Allen, penal reform expert and PRI Associate, examines the involvement of private companies in prison services. [Read Rob's blog](#) or [listen to the podcast](#), and look out for the next in the series, where Dr. Shane Bryans will examine the challenge of radicalisation in prisons.

NEW FROM PRI

PRI's new animation: [Is a prison sentence always the solution?](#)

PRI has launched a new short animated film looking at the damaging effects of imprisonment worldwide.



This thought-provoking animation questions whether a prison sentence is always necessary and promotes greater use of non-custodial sanctions. It is currently available in English; Russian and Arabic versions to follow shortly! [Watch it here](#).

[The Use and Practice of Imprisonment: Current Trends and Future Challenges](#)



23rd Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

The use and practice of
imprisonment
Current trends and future challenges

An update – May 2014

Updated in May 2014, this paper was first presented to the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna in April 2013.

It will now form the basis of a new PRI series of publications which will provide annual updates on global developments in penal reform and criminal justice, to be launched at the five-yearly Crime Congress on Doha, Qatar in April 2015.

Read more about the annual publication, and an expert blog series that will support its launch, [here](#).

[PRI MENA newsletter - May 2014](#)

PRI's MENA Office are now producing a quarterly e-newsletter in Arabic with news and resources from the region. [Read the second edition here](#).

حالات قافأ" ةرودلا ةلجملأ نم ينائل ددعل"

أطلقت المنظمة الدولية للإصلاح الجنائي مكتب الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا المجلة الدورية «أفاق الإصلاح»، والتي تعتبر نافذة عن أنشطة وأخبار المنظمة، ونظم العدالة من مصادر ومراجع وإصدارات العدالة الجنائية وحقوق الإنسان، إضافة إلى مجموعة متنوعة من الجنائية وحقوق الإنسان. نتمنى أن ينال هذا العدد استحسان ورضا الجميع

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

PRI at the UN Crime Commission and next steps in the revision of the SMR

The UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice took place in Vienna from 12-16 May. PRI was at the Commission, focusing on the resolution on the revision of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR), holding side-events on [implementation of the UN Bangkok Rules](#) and on [wider impacts of the death penalty](#), and also taking a moment of [reflection on our 25th anniversary](#).

The [revision process of the SMR](#) was a key priority for PRI's delegation. We welcomed the resolution which was adopted with 28 states as co-sponsors, extending the mandate of the intergovernmental expert group, which will report to the Crime Congress (Workshop A) and to the next Crime Commission in 2015.



[Read more](#) about PRI's activities at the Commission or see all official documentation [here](#).

PRI attends expert meeting on prison health in Europe

On 27 May, WHO/Europe and the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe jointly held a meeting of experts in Strasbourg, France, on prison health in Europe and the role of international organisations. PRI's programme officer, Olivia Rope, attended the meeting, which sought to identify opportunities for collaboration between organisations and identify ways to facilitate further involvement of health ministries in health care for prisoners. WHO/Europe's new publication, [Prisons and Health](#), was also launched at the event.

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

Damage Limitation: An update from the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)

The ACERWC is mandated with monitoring implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. This piece provides an update from the Committee,

following its 23rd Session held in the Committee's new headquarters in Addis Ababa. It also provides details of the [first ever General Comment](#) from the Committee, on the rights of children of imprisoned parents and primary caregivers. The General Comment was adopted in November 2013 and is now available online from the [ACERWC website](#).

Crime Commission addresses violence against children in criminal justice

Among the resolutions approved at the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna in May was a resolution on "[Model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice](#)". This aims to ensure protection of the rights and best interests of the child in the administration of justice. Co-sponsored by over 40 Member States, the draft resolution recommends approval of the model strategies and practical measures by ECOSOC, with a view to adoption by the General Assembly. Read the draft resolution [here](#).

Other news and resources:

- The 66th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is currently underway in Geneva, from 26 May - 13 June. Relevant documentation, including the full Programme of Work, is available [here on the OHCHR website](#).
- New briefing paper published by (US-based) The Sentencing Project: [Juvenile Life Without Parole: An Overview](#)
- [Brunei Darussalam: Inhuman sentencing of children](#)
- [Australia: Young people can confess to a minor offence without getting a criminal record](#)

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

PRI to hold event on 'Human Rights of Women in Detention'

On 17 June 2014, PRI will co-host a side event with [DIGNITY \(Danish Institute Against Torture\)](#) at the 26th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Coinciding with the Annual Day of Discussion on Women's Rights, the event brings together many of the main actors on women's rights at the UN, including representatives from UN Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice, and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. It will draw on the UN Bangkok Rules and aim to equip stakeholders with tools for their implementation.

PRI event on implementation of the Bangkok Rules

PRI, together with UNODC, Thailand Institute of Justice and the Permanent Mission of Thailand, hosted a side event at the UN Crime Commission in Vienna in May, looking at

ways that the Bangkok Rules can be put into practice. The event, [The Bangkok Rules on Women Offenders and Prisoners: Towards Implementation](#), was opened by HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN in Vienna, and panellists included Regional Director of PRI's MENA Office, Taghreed Jaber, and Policy Director, Andrea Huber. Read more about the event [here](#).



Read more about developments and issues affecting women in the criminal justice system in the [latest edition of PRI's quarterly e-bulletin](#) on women in detention and the Bangkok Rules. To sign up email info@penalreform.org

Other news and resources:

- New briefing from the [Howard League for Penal Reform's](#) Commission on Sex in Prison: [Women in prison: Coercive and consensual sex](#)
- DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and OSCE Gender Section have published [three guidance notes on integrating gender into security sector oversight](#) - available now in English, and shortly in Bosnian, French and Russian.
- Australia: [Audit on women in prison makes 61 recommendations](#)
- Ireland: [Nearly half of females jailed out on release due to overcrowding](#)
- Zimbabwe: [Smaller prisons hit by sanitary wear shortage](#)
- Canada: [Watchdog 'disappointed' by scope of mental health project](#)

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPROVEMENTS

[New Council of Europe recommendations on electronic monitoring and the role of the Confederation on European Probation \(CEP\)](#)

This guest blog, by Mike Nellis, Professor Emeritus at Strathclyde Law School's [Centre for Law, Crime and Justice](#) and Dr Dominik Lehner Head of the Penal Services, Justice and Security Department, Basel, looks at the genesis and development of the [Council of](#)

[Europe's recommendations on electronic monitoring](#), adopted in February of this year, and their significance in this somewhat contentious field of practice.

Positive outcomes from PRI's Africa Alternatives to Imprisonment Conference

In November 2013, [PRI co-hosted a conference](#) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to discuss the development of community service in East Africa. Recent follow up with participants (Heads of Probation Services from eight African countries and NGO representatives) has indicated that the conference has had a positive effect on networking and information sharing, with 100 per cent of respondents saying they have since been in contact with other participants from the conference, including to "exchange ideas, opinions and experience on best practice of non-custodial measures."

80 per cent of respondents also reported progress on effective collaboration between probation/community service departments and NGOs. In Kenya, for example, civil society organisations are now working with the Probation Department to provide vocational training and support to women offenders.

Other news and resources:

- [Council of Europe recommends that governments make more use of alternative measures to imprisonment](#). The call comes following publication of the 2012 [Annual Penal Statistics](#) which show prison overcrowding persists in Europe.
- [African Commission on Human and People's Rights sets out standards on pretrial detention](#)
- [Yoga bends and trends in Kenyan prisons](#)

DEATH PENALTY

PRI seeks to improve understanding of the death penalty in Belarus

Throughout this week, 2-6 June 2014, PRI is hosting a number of activities in Minsk, Belarus, in an effort to improve public understanding of the death penalty. Events include roundtable discussions, distribution of publications and film screenings, such as 'Twelve Angry Men'.

PRI submission to the Secretary General on moratoriums on the death penalty

The UN Secretary General is preparing a report on moratoriums on the use of the death penalty ahead of the expected debate and resolution on the issue at the General Assembly. PRI submitted a joint report with [Foundation for Human Rights Initiative \(FHRI\)](#), our partner in Uganda, detailing the status of death penalty moratoriums in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, MENA and East Africa. Read the submission [here](#).

[Public opinion supports abolition of the death penalty in Tajikistan](#)

A survey of over 2,000 people was carried out by NGO [Nota Bene](#) in 2013, as part of PRI's EU-funded programme on the progressive abolition of the death penalty. The survey found that support for the abolition of the death penalty had increased by 6 per cent since 2010 to 67.2 per cent. Read the full survey results [here](#).

[Investigative International Journalism Competition update](#)

The deadline for PRI's competition for the best journalism investigating the death penalty and life (or long-term) imprisonment passed last week and entries are currently being reviewed. Winners will receive an expenses-paid two-day trip to London in October, including a visit to the offices of *The Guardian* newspaper. Good luck to all who entered!

Other news and resources:

- [Sierra Leone to abolish death penalty](#)
- [Burma: Open letter to President Thein Sein on the abolition of the death penalty](#)
- [Maldives enacts regulation for death penalty, overturning 60-year moratorium](#)
- [Maldives teenager could face death penalty, following re-introduction](#)
- [Taiwan: Five executions in four different prisons in one day](#)
- [US: Guardian challenges lethal injection secrecy in landmark Missouri lawsuit](#)

OTHER NEWS

- [PRI board member and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, Bryan Stevenson is honoured by the VERA Institute of Justice](#)
- [UNODC/WHO publication 'Good governance for prison health in the 21st century. A policy brief on the organisation of prison health' is now available in Russian](#)
- ['Electronically Monitored Punishment: International and Critical Perspectives' is now available in paperback. Get 20 per cent off with this flyer!](#)

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