

PRI e-newsletter April 2015.

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E-newsletter

April 2015



Welcome to Penal Reform International's monthly e-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 promoting penal reform at the Crime Congress 2015

[Failed drug policies in Latin America: the impact on prisons and human rights](#)

In the last of our expert guest blogs for our anniversary year, Luciana Pol, Senior Fellow on Security and Human Rights at [Center for Legal and Social Studies \(CELS\)](#) in Argentina describes the impact of harsh drug policies in Latin America and the consequences for the human rights of prisoners and for prison management. She welcomes initiatives in several Latin American countries to start to recalibrate the criminal justice response to drugs, as well as the inclusion of human rights perspectives into next year's Special Session of the [UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem \(UNGASS\) in April 2016](#).

[These blogs look at emerging trends in criminal justice and penal policy - see the whole series here.](#)

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

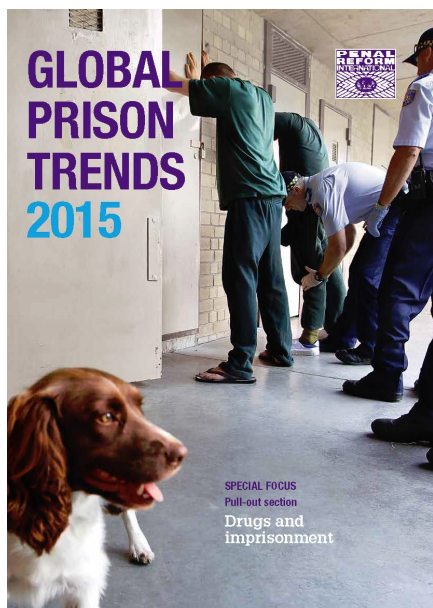
Update! Consensus now reached on all Standard Minimum Rules identified for revision

On 2-5 March 2015, the Government of South Africa hosted the fourth intergovernmental expert group meeting (IEGM) on the revision process in Cape Town. The meeting was attended by 41 Member States, and IGO and NGO representatives, including PRI.

The [IEGM report](#) recommended that the Crime Commission transmit the revised Rules to the Economic and Social Council for approval and subsequent adoption by the General Assembly as the “United Nations Revised Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners” to be known as “Mandela Rules”, to “honour the legacy of the late President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who spent so many years of His life in prison.”

See the [updated joint NGO briefing](#) for more information on the process.

[Download a complete version of the text of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners if the recommended revisions of the intergovernmental expert group are adopted](#)



[New PRI report and podcast: Global Prison Trends 2015](#)

PRI launched a new annual report [Global Prison Trends](#) at the Crime Congress in Doha. The report describes key global trends in the use and practice of imprisonment and identifies some of the pressing challenges facing states that want to organise their penitentiary system in accordance with international norms and standards. The report also includes a Special Focus section on the impact of the ‘war on drugs’ and its implications for prison management.

We also produced a [special podcast](#) to accompany the new Global Prison Trends report. Guests include: Bryan Stevenson (Director of the Equal

Justice Initiative and PRI Board Member), Alison Hannah (PRI Executive Director), Dr Marayca López (US corrections analyst and justice planner) and Rob Allen (criminal justice expert). Topics covered are: sentencing trends, prison technology, architectural design and rehabilitation.

PRI at the UN Crime Congress, Doha, April 2015

As well as a presentation by Haitham Shibli, Deputy Director of PRI's Middle East North Africa office on the value of the Bangkok Rules and their implementation five years on since they were adopted during Workshop 1 of the UN Crime Congress in Doha ([see webcast here – PRI intervention about approximately 1 hour](#)), PRI also co-organised and co-sponsored a number of side-panel events, including:

Gender-sensitive monitoring and oversight of prison systems: This panel, co-organised by PRI and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, addressed issues including the gender specific needs of women in detention and the requirement for monitoring bodies to incorporate gender perspectives in their work using the Bangkok Rules as a framework.

Revision of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners: These two panels, co-sponsored by PRI, South Africa, Thailand, Switzerland and Uruguay, provided an overview of the current review process to amend and update the Standard Minimum Rules.

Global Prison Trends: Developments and challenges in penal policy: This panel, co-organised by PRI, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, brought together experts from different regions to discuss some of the key global developments and challenges in prisons including alternatives to imprisonment, corrections in peace-keeping operations and drug policies. PRI also launched its new annual report: Global Prison Trends 2015.

[Official summaries of the side events and webcasts of interest are available on our website here.](#)

Coming up! UN Crime Commission, 24th Session, 18-22 May 2015

PRI is looking forward to participating at the Crime Commission in Vienna in two weeks' time. We will be hosting or co-hosting the following side events:

Tuesday 19 May

The Revision of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR). Cosponsored by South Africa, Thailand, Switzerland and Uruguay.

Wednesday 20 May

Efforts towards implementation of the United Nations "Bangkok Rules" on women prisoners and offenders. Co-hosted with UNODC Justice Section.

Thursday 21 May

Global Trends: Developments and Challenges in Penal Policy

Friday 22 May

The Death Penalty: A Conversation with Professor William Schabas. Co-organised with the [Friends World Committee for Consultation \(Quakers\)](#)

Download the [official programme of events here](#).

SENTENCING AND ALTERNATIVES

UN Working Group on arbitrary detention adopts principles and guidelines on challenging the lawfulness of detention

The [*Basic Principles and Guidelines on Remedies and Procedures on the Right of Anyone Deprived of His or Her Liberty by Arrest or Detention to Bring Proceedings Before Court*](#) were developed by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at the request of the Human Rights Council by its resolution 20/16 of 17 July 2012. The Principles and Guidelines will form a framework to guide Member States on the principles on which the court review of the lawfulness of detention is based.

PRI contributed to the [consultation on the draft](#), stressing that restrictions on the right to liberty are problematic in human rights terms not only if the detention is unlawful, but also if it is arbitrary, unnecessary or disproportionate, and emphasising the barriers that often prevent detainees from being able to bring a challenge, including limited access to legal aid.

The draft will be presented to the Human Rights Council during its 30th session in September 2015.

Other news and resources:

US: [The painful price of ageing in prison](#)

US: [Too many laws, too many prisoners](#)

Are some justice systems getting the balance wrong? [See our guest blog by Mary Rogan on proportionality and sentencing](#).

Colombia: [Court gives government ultimatum to solve prison crisis](#)

Russia: [Russian lawmakers approve prisoner amnesty in honor of victory day](#)

Tanzania: [Thousands receive presidential mercy](#)

Morocco: [Morocco penal code reforms spark fresh debate](#)

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

PRI's Programme Development Manager gives presentation to HMIP on international standards relating to children in detention

On 25 March, PRI's Programme Development Director, Nikhil Roy, was invited to present at a staff development day at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), the Inspection body for England and Wales and NPM coordinator. Nikhil discussed with participants the international and European standards relating to children in detention and PRI's work in this area.

Update! Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty

The planned new UN global study on children in detention is moving forward. On 13 April, Defence for Children International (DCI) [organised a side event on the Study at the Doha Crime Congress](#) This follows a number of advocacy events, including at the Human Rights Council in Geneva in March.

PRI is part of the core NGO group, led by DCI, supporting the Study. The next step will be for the Secretary General, after consultation with UN agencies, to commission the study and decide on the best way to carry it out.

[More information about the Global Study here](#)

Other news and resources:

Some good news and bad news on the minimum age of criminal responsibility:

India: [Cabinet okays trial of juveniles at 16 as adults](#)

Brazil: [Lowering Brazil's jailing age won't save its teens](#)

Zimbabwe: [Zimbabwe is considering raising the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12 years, as the ACERWC had advised](#)

PRI has a useful short briefing on the [Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility](#).

Israel: [More than 200 Palestinian children are in Israeli prison](#)

USA: [Are Adult Decisions Harming Kids in Juvenile Justice?](#)

Global: On 6 May, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture hosted a webinar during which practitioners and experts from around the world discussed his recent thematic [report on children deprived of liberty](#). The webinar is now available as [a podcast](#).

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



PRI trains probation and prison staff on the UN Bangkok Rules

In March, PRI [worked with the Kenyan Probation Service](#) to run a workshop on the Bangkok Rules for probation and prison staff in Kenya. The training covered the typical backgrounds of women offenders, their special needs, and how the Bangkok Rules can be applied in Kenya. All of the participants surveyed at the end of the course said that they would change the way they worked as a result of the training.

Over the past year, PRI has delivered face-to-face training to some 100 prison, probation and NGO staff, with a particular focus on Training of Trainer sessions. PRI has also run two training sessions within the United Nations Prison and Probation Officer Course (UNPriProC) run by [the Swedish Prison and Probation Service](#) for future UN peacekeeping officers as part of their pre-deployment training. Following PRI's Training of trainers for the UNPriProC course last month, this course will now include a Bangkok Rules component on a permanent basis.

Why not enrol on [PRI's FREE e-course on the Bangkok Rules](#)? – available now in English, Arabic and Russian.



New PRI resource: Women in the criminal justice system: the added value of the UN Bangkok Rules

This new article by PRI's Policy Director, Andrea Huber, outlines aspects of discrimination faced by female suspects, defendants and prisoners in criminal justice systems, their

number, profile and characteristics, and the offences they are typically charged with or convicted for. It covers certain key conditions in detention as well as programmes in place for rehabilitation and reintegration. The report draws on data, country examples and findings from a number of recent research studies in countries including Argentina, Armenia, China, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa and Tunisia.

[New PRI blog: 'Why didn't you just leave your husband?' Responding to crimes by women who are victims themselves](#)

This new blog post by PRI's Programme Officer, Olivia Rope, says that research from around the globe shows that a high number of women in prison have experienced violence in their lives prior to prison, and that it is often an indirect or direct cause of offending. She calls on legislators and judicial authorities to re-think their policies and sentences to reflect the role this violence has played in these women's lives, particularly in cases where women have killed their abuser.

See also below, our August training for monitoring bodies on gender-sensitive detention monitoring.

Other news and resources:

China: [China, in suspending woman's death sentence, acknowledges domestic abuse](#)

India: [Over 90 per cent of women inmates in Odisha don't know the reason for their imprisonment](#)

Indonesia: [Second Chance Foundation offers employment opportunities to released women offenders](#)

Sierra Leone: [Women Behind Bars: A new documentary about our work](#)

Thailand: [Surge in women being imprisoned](#)

UK: [Number of women in prison is too high](#)

USA: [Minnesota Prison Doula Project and the experiences of pregnant women giving birth in prison.](#)

[Sign up to our specialist e-bulletin on women offenders and the UN Bangkok Rules. The latest edition \(April 2015\) can be found \[here\]\(#\).](#)

DEATH PENALTY



New PRI paper: Prison guards and the death penalty

This short briefing [paper](#) draws on research and interviews with prison guards to outline the psychological impact that the death penalty may have on guards who have worked with prisoners on death row for many years.

It is part of a series looking at the wider impact of the death penalty. See also [Fighting for clients' lives: the impact of the death penalty on defence lawyers](#).

Other news and resources:

Global views: last month's executions in Indonesia:

[The Guardian view on Indonesia's executions: cruel and unnecessary](#)

[Bali Nine duo executed: the view from Indonesia](#)

[Impending Bali executions rely on mistaken ideas about drugs](#)

PRI's new report – [Global Prison Trends 2015](#) – includes a special focus on drugs and imprisonment with a section on drugs and the death penalty.

Oman: [Death penalty introduced for drug offenders in Oman](#)

US: [Support For Death Penalty Hits A 40-Year Low, Survey Finds](#)

US: [Death row: US Supreme Court justice says drug for inmates' executions like being 'burned alive'](#)

Vatican: [Pope speaks out against the death penalty](#)

TORTURE PREVENTION

Coming soon! [Summer school for monitoring bodies on gender-sensitive monitoring](#)

PRI is co-organising a Summer School for members and staff of National Preventive

Mechanisms on *Preventing torture and ill-treatment of female detainees through gender-sensitive monitoring*, based on the Bangkok Rules. It will take place from 10-13 August 2015 in Bristol, UK, and is co-organised with the University of Bristol, in partnership with the Association for the Prevention of Torture. It is sponsored by the Danish Government within the Convention against Torture Initiative.

[See here](#) for more information. To register, fill in this [form](#) and send to Peter Keeling at pkeeling@penalreform.org **before 10 June**.

PRI's South Caucasus Director interviewed on torture prevention at a Wilton Conference

Last month, PRI's Regional Director in South Caucasus, Tsira Chanturia, attended a conference at Wilton Park (UK) on 'strategies for tackling torture and improving prevention'. In a [podcast produced at the conference](#), Tsira and Secretary General of the [Association for the Prevention of Torture](#), Mark Thompson, discuss the legal instruments that have been set up to stop torture taking place and why the UN convention has not been ratified by all states.

Other news and resources:

Jamaica: [Degrading and inhumane treatment in prisons](#)

Ukraine: [Report says those imprisoned by Ukrainian military are tortured](#)

USA: [Transgender inmates abused in prisons](#)

USA: [Inmates face violence and humiliation](#)

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

Guest blog: Introducing a valuable new tool for detention monitors

In a guest blog post for PRI, Jean-Sébastien Blanc, Detention Advisor at the [Association for the Prevention of Torture \(APT\)](#), introduces their newly launched database – Detention Focus – of international and regional standards, information, guidance and helpful tips to assist prison monitors.

PRI attends seminar for the Council of Europe and International Bodies' Work in Improving Detention Conditions

On 7 May, PRI's Policy Director, Andrea Huber, gave a presentation on the Revised Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR) at the Academy of European Law's annual conference on the work of the Council of Europe and international bodies in improving conditions related to detention.

Further information on the event is available on the [Academy of European Law's website](#).

Other news and resources:

Finland: [In Finland's 'open prisons,' inmates have the keys](#)

Australia: [The wisdom of humane prison design](#)

India: [Inmates to run salon outside](#)

And a final food for thought: As Zimbabwe's [Prisons beg as inmates feed on salt](#), Jean-Sébastien Blanc from APT explains in a blog why the provision of decent food in prisons is essential for human dignity in [The aftertaste of food in prison](#).

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