

PRI e-newsletter December 2015

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# E-newsletter

**December****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.*

## In this month's edition

- [In the spotlight](#): UNGA unanimously adopts revised Standard Minimum Rules
- [New blogs](#)
- [Global advocacy](#)
- [Women in the criminal justice system](#)
- [Conditions in detention](#)
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## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### **[Historic update of international prison standards by the UN with adoption of the Nelson Mandela Rules](#)**

On 17 December, the UN General Assembly [unanimously adopted](#) the revised [UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners – to be known as the 'Nelson Mandela Rules'](#). In a [press release](#) PRI's Executive Director expressed her delight at the successful outcome of the four-year review of the UN Standard Minimum Rules and underlined the significance of the revision for both prisoners and prison administrations.

## **New animation: [The Nelson Mandela Rules – an animated introduction](#)**

Following the adoption of the revised [UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners \(the Nelson Mandela Rules\)](#), PRI has produced a [2-minute animation](#) to explain what the changes are and what they mean for prison management.




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## **NEW BLOGS**

### **Expert blog for PRI: [“Minus the urinals and painted pink”? What should a women’s prison look like?](#)**



Laura Maiello and Stephen Carter of US-based architectural and justice planning practice, [CGL Companies](#), discuss how architects, policy-makers and prison authorities can design and build prison facilities for women in a gender-sensitive manner.

### **Guest blog: [Make 2016 the year of international prison reform](#)**

In this blog, originally published on the website [Justice and Prisons](#), PRI associate Rob Allen argues that there are number of reasons why governments and donors should have prison reform in their sights this year, not least because prisons, particularly in conflict and post conflict situations, can be a source and driver of insecurity as the emergence of Daesh in the Middle East has demonstrated.

### **Guest blog: [Monitoring isolation and solitary confinement in the UK: inadequate procedures and informal practices need to be addressed](#)**

In this guest blog, Louise Finer, Coordinator of the UK’s National Preventative Mechanism, explains the findings from the NPM’s review of ‘isolation’ and ‘solitary confinement’ in detention. The NPM’s monitoring uncovered widespread practices that met the UN Mandela Rules internationally agreed definition of solitary confinement.

Read the [new report](#) by [Prison Reform Trust](#) for more information on segregation in prisons in the UK.

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## **GLOBAL ADVOCACY**

### **Briefing on Nelson Mandela Rules in Geneva**

Together with the Permanent Representatives of Switzerland and Uruguay to the UN and the [Quaker UN Office](#), PRI is hosting a briefing for Geneva-based governmental

delegates and staff of international organisations on the process and substantial changes to the revised Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The briefing is on 4 February 2016 at 3-5.00pm, followed by a reception, in Room XXV, Palais des Nations.

[Download the flyer.](#)

## **European Conference [“Children’s rights behind bars”](#) in Brussels**

On 15 February 2016 [Defence for Children International \(DCI\)](#) is organising the [European Final Conference “CHILDREN’S RIGHTS BEHIND BARS: Human Rights of children deprived of liberty – Improving monitoring mechanisms”](#) which will be hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels. At the conference the first European practical guide dedicated to the monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty for children will be launched.

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## **WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

### **Dignity: Women in detention series**

The Danish Institute Against Torture (author: Jo Baker) has finalised its [Series on Torture and Organised Violence](#) with the publication of 4 new country studies, focusing on conditions for women in detention in [Albania](#), [Jordan](#), [Zambia](#) and [the Philippines](#). The reports are based on human rights monitoring and research in 2013-2015 and aim to answer the following questions: What are the particular needs, issues, risks and vulnerabilities that face imprisoned women across the world? What challenges and promising practices are common in their management? And where do these practices fall in relation to international standards?

### **[Report: Paywand Afghan Association – Female prisoners deprived of their rights in Afghanistan](#)**

New [research](#) reveals that despite international financial support since 2001 to reform the Afghan criminal justice system, the rights of prisoners – and of women prisoners in particular – are largely neglected. 68 per cent of accused women are not informed of their rights, women are often held for up to two weeks in police custody (although this is only allowed for 24 hours), women have limited or no access to legal representation and there is insufficient (mental) health care or child care available in prison.

### **UN Working Group on discrimination against women raises concern about violence against women in detention in the US**

After a 10 day country visit to the US, the UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice [released a statement](#), reaffirming the concerns previously [raised by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women](#)

regarding women in detention. These include over-incarceration, sexual violence, shackling of pregnant women, solitary confinement, lack of alternatives to custodial sentences for women with dependent children, inappropriate access to health care and inadequate re-entry programs, and the criminalisation of women in prostitution.

A comprehensive report of the country visit will be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2016.

### **Other news and resources**

El Salvador: [Women inmates sow hope in prisons in El Salvador](#)

UK: [Women's prison report highlights mental health issues](#)

UK: [Women in Prison \(UK\): Report - State of the estate](#)

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## **TORTURE PREVENTION AND CONDITIONS IN DETENTION**

### **PRI Central Asia - Roundtable on implementation of innovation in treatment of prisoners**

On 10 December - [International Human Rights Day](#) – PRI's Central Asia office organised a [roundtable](#) devoted to innovation and further reform of the prison system in Kazakhstan. The event was organised in cooperation with the Committee on Legislation, Judicial and Legal Reform of the Majilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, the South African Embassy, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Public Monitoring Commissions of Kazakhstan.

### **Joint WHO/PHE report on Health and Justice Conference in Kyrgyzstan**

The World Health Organization and Public Health England have now published a [report](#) on their joint conference held 27-29 October in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The conference aimed to share good practice and focused specifically on infectious diseases such as HIV and TB, and drug use in prisons.

### **WHO: Report – Food systems in correctional settings**

Recognising the critical role of food for the physical and mental health of prisoners, WHO has published a [report](#) which includes an overview of existing research and a case study in Danish correctional institutions, with conclusions and recommendations for policy makers and prison management to maximise the health and safety of prisoners.

Next month PRI will be publishing a blog on food in prisons by the co-author of this WHO-report - please look out for it!

An increased global awareness of the role of food in prisons has recently led to

[improvement of the prison diet in New York](#) by officially eliminating the notorious 'loaf', often used as disciplinary measure for prisoners in solitary confinement, from the menu.

### **[European Committee for the Prevention of Torture \(CPT\) issues guidance on living space per prisoner](#)**

The [new guidance](#) seeks to clarify the CPT's position regarding the minimum living space per prisoner and combines all its basic minimum standards on the issue into one document, based on type of establishment, intended occupancy level - single and multiple-occupancy - and the regime offered to prisoners.

The European Court of Human Rights is currently in deliberation on the case of [Muršić v. Croatia \(application no. 7334/13\)](#) in which the applicant, Mr Muršić, complains about inadequate detention conditions and the lack of personal space in particular.

### **Other news and resources**

Armenia: [Prison Monitoring: Public observers note progress, point out problems at penal institutions in 2015](#)

Canada: [Sharp decline in inmate segregation](#)

Czech Republic: [Czech prisons overcrowded, to lack capacity soon](#)

Russia: [Inside Vladimir Putin's £115m detention centre Kresty](#)

US: [New York State Agrees to Overhaul Solitary Confinement in Prisons](#)

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## **DRUG POLICIES**

### **PRI at the reconvened UN Crime and Drug Commissions**

In December PRI attended the [reconvened UN Crime and Drug Commission session](#) in Vienna. While these meetings normally deal with administrative and budgetary matters, this year, there was also a day devoted to preparations for the upcoming UN Special Session on the world drug problem in April 2016. PRI was one of the signatories to a [joint NGO statement](#) calling for a ban on the death penalty for drug-related offences, and was a panellist at a side event on proportionality in drug policy and imprisonment, which was co-sponsored by the governments of Thailand and Costa Rica, as well as the [Thailand Institute of Justice](#), the [International Drug Policy Consortium](#) and PRI.

For details of the negotiations and positions of all member states at the Commissions, read the [International Drug Policy Consortium \(IDPC\)'s blog](#).

### **[Civil Society Task Force for UNGASS](#)**

From 19 to 21 April 2016 the UN General Assembly will hold a [Special Session on drugs \(UNGASS\)](#). To support civil society input and participation, the Vienna NGO Committee

on Drugs and the New York Committee on Drugs joined forces and established a [Civil Society Task Force](#) (consisting of 26 members). PRI is a member of the task force and, together with the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), organised a consultation of civil society organisations working on criminal justice related issues. The consultation took place on 29 September 2015 in Geneva, on the occasion of a Human Rights Council Panel discussion on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights. The views and recommendations of this consultation were shared electronically with other criminal justice organisations to collect additional views and recommendations. You can find the result of this consultation [here](#).

PRI furthermore provided a [submission](#) to UNGASS and will also participate at the Hearing of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 8-9 February and at the Civil Society Hearing in New York on 10 February 2016.

### **UK Inspectorate of Prisons Thematic Report: Changing patterns of substance misuse in adult prisons and service responses**

This [thematic report](#) highlights changing patterns in substance misuse (from opiates and Class A drugs to misuse of medication to use of New Psychotic Substances (NPS), particularly synthetic cannabis) and reveals that current policies are unable to provide an adequate response to these developments and only few prisons have adopted the necessary 'whole-prison' approach to address illicit drug use.

Additional reports, published earlier this year by the [Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust](#) and [The Centre for Social Justice](#) acknowledge the increased use of NPS in prison and the impact it has on the welfare of staff and prisoners.

In response to the changes in substance misuse [prisons in the UK recently introduced new drug tests](#) that should be able to detect psychoactive substances.

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## **OTHER NEWS**

### **PRI opens office in Uganda**

PRI is delighted to announce the opening of its new PRI Africa Office in January 2016. Based in Kampala, Uganda, the office will develop PRI's expanding work in the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

Further information on our East Africa work can be [found here](#).

### **In the media:**

Global: [5 Myths About the UN Human Rights Council](#)

**Death Penalty and life imprisonment:**

Japan: [Japan hangs first man convicted by jury as Tokyo claims death penalty is popular](#)

Mongolia: [UN human rights chief hails end of death penalty in Mongolia](#)

UK: [Lord Woolf calls for an end to mandatory life sentences for murder](#)

US: [Death penalty rates plunge to lowest level in the US since 1970s](#)

**Alternatives to imprisonment:**

Ireland: [New court fine payment system will 'dramatically reduce' number of jail sentences](#)

New Zealand: [Bail reforms lead to higher prison population](#)

Scotland: [Prisons budget cut by almost £40m as alternatives get funding boost](#)

**More news:**

Australia: [Private prison operators still hide from scrutiny, despite reform](#)

Thailand: [Low-cost prisons planned as pre-release facilities](#)

Turkey: [Number of child inmates in Turkey up 500 percent in five years](#)

UK: [Foreign prisoners 'will be let out early' under agreement they leave UK](#)

UK: [Give prisoners iPads to help rehabilitation, says report](#)

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