

PRI e-newsletter November 2015

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E-newsletter

November**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

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

UN General Assembly's Third Committee adopts revised Standard Minimum Rules as the 'Nelson Mandela Rules'

On 5 November 2015, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted the revised United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners in [Resolution A/C.3/70/L.3](#). The revised Rules are to be known as the 'Nelson Mandela Rules', to - as the resolution stated - 'honour the legacy of the late President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison in the course of his struggle for global human rights, equality, democracy and the promotion of a culture of peace'. The plenary of the General Assembly is expected to adopt the Rules this December which be the final step in the process.

For more information:

- Download a copy of the [Nelson Mandela Rules](#) in multiple languages and showing the [substantive changes](#). Find out more on the process of the review in this [joint NGO briefing](#)
- Listen to a [podcast](#) interview with PRI's Policy Director on why a revision was needed and what the changes could mean for prisoners, prison staff and for prison management
- Read this [blog](#) by PRI's Executive Director on three critical areas where the Nelson Mandela Rules provide stronger guidance.

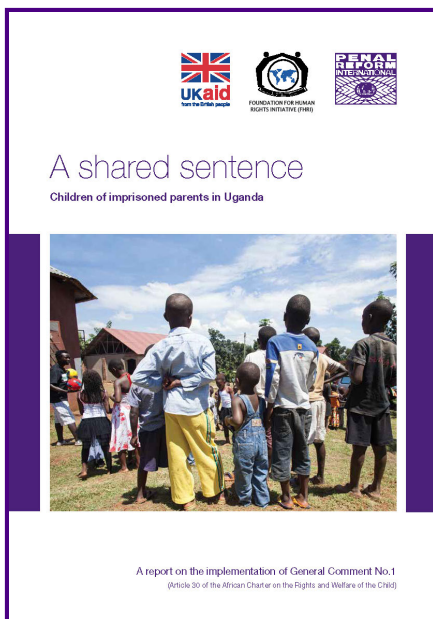
And our new expert blog this month:



[No prison is an island – the role of civil society in post-conflict penal reform](#)

In this [blog](#), Terry Hackett, Warden of Pacific Institution in British Columbia (BC), Canada, draws on his research into civil society action in justice and correctional reform in Rwanda to demonstrate the potential value that civil societies can bring to correctional reform processes in a post-conflict setting.

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN



[PRI and FHRI launch report 'A Shared Sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda'](#)

PRI and the [Foundation for Human Rights Initiative](#) (FHRI) launched a report, '[A Shared Sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda](#)' at the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child's (ACERWC) 'Conference to Assess the Situation of Children in Africa 25 years after the adoption of the ACRWC', which ran from 20-21 November 2015 at the African Union in Ethiopia.

This [new research](#) reports on the impact imprisonment has on children of prisoners in Uganda, assessing implementation of a key new standard - [General Comment No.1](#) on Article 30 of Africa's Children's Charter. In this [blog](#), FHRI's Programme Officer Diva Mukisa, says that the research showed that while Uganda has some good policies to protect children of prisoners, implementation needs to improve.

Read also this [short guide](#) to General Comment No. 1, published by PRI and the African

Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC).

Other news and resources

Israel: [Jail age to be lowered after wave of attacks perpetrated by youths](#)

Philippines: [Changes made in juvenile justice law](#)

Russia: [One dead as juvenile prison guards beat seven inmates](#)

Scotland: [Review on raising age of criminal responsibility to begin](#)

UK: [Government warned that it must take action to prevent suicides of young people in jail](#)

UK: [Prisons inspector welcomes improved restraint systems after deaths of two children](#)

US: [Ohio establishes good model for juvenile justice](#)

US: [What mass incarceration looks like for juveniles](#)



GLOBAL ADVOCACY

PRI at the 8th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues

Following the recent [report](#) of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák, this year's Minorities Forum on 24 – 25 November, focused on national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in the criminal justice system. During the session on challenges of criminal justice systems in addressing the needs and demands of minorities, Taghreed Jaber, Regional Director of PRI's Middle East & North Africa Office, gave a [presentation](#) (at 00:10:07) during which she raised core issues of concern regarding minorities' rights.

PRI's [oral statement](#) at the Forum coincided with the [International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) and highlighted the link between violence and imprisonment of minority women and the challenges faced by the criminal justice system in addressing this.

This was also a focus of an expert panel at a [side-event on violence and discrimination against minority women in the criminal justice system](#), sponsored by PRI, the Quaker UN Office (QUNO), the Permanent Mission of Canada and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. The panel which included Anna Giudice Saget (UNODC) and Hannah Wu (Secretary of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice) elaborated on the cycle of violence faced by minority women in the criminal justice system.

DRUG POLICIES

Coming up: Side-event on drug policy reform at reconvened Commission meeting in Vienna

On 10 December, PRI, together with the Thailand Institute of Justice, the International Drug Policy Consortium, the Permanent Missions to the UN of Thailand and Costa Rica, will hold a [side-event](#) in Vienna at the reconvened [Commission on Narcotic Drugs](#) to promote options for drug policy reform that aim to promote alternatives to incarceration and more proportionate sentencing for drug offences, in an effort to reduce prison overcrowding and ensure an approach based on health, human rights and social inclusion.

Drug policy and the sustainable development goals

Following the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September, [this paper](#), drafted by [Health Poverty Action](#) in collaboration with the International Drug Policy Consortium, sets out the ways in which current drug control efforts are already impacting upon the development sector's efforts to achieve sustainable development, highlighting specific areas of policy incoherence between drug control and development, as well as recommendations for the way forward.

New resources on the impact of drug policies on women and children:

A [new report](#) by the [Research Consortium on Drugs and the Law \(CEDD\)](#) on the impact of drug policies on the imprisonment of women in the Americas and the ways in which their families are affected.

The unintended consequences of the war on drugs for young people and children, distinct from those relating to drug use, have been summarized by [Count the Costs](#) in a new [report](#) which shows how the current enforcement-based approach not only fails to protect them, but leaves them exposed to even greater risks.

Other news and resources

Canada: [Trudeau mandates pot legalization, overhaul of Conservative justice reforms](#)

Ireland: [Ireland to 'decriminalise' small amounts of drugs, including heroin, cocaine and cannabis, for personal use](#)

US: [Drug offenders make up nearly one-third of prison admissions](#)

US: [Cut Sentences for Low-Level Drug Crimes](#)

US: [Seattle to host safe-injection sites for heroin users](#)

Vietnam: [First methadone maintenance therapy service unit for prisoners opened](#)

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

[DOST Welfare Foundation conducts training in Pakistan on UN Bangkok Rules](#)

In November, PRI's partner NGO in Pakistan, the [DOST Welfare Foundation](#), trained 48 law students, 21 faculty members of local Law Colleges, and 30 NGO representatives from Peshawar on the [UN Bangkok Rules](#), focusing on the particular situation of women prisoners in Pakistan, the extent to which the UN Bangkok Rules are being implemented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and improvements that could be made. The [training](#) looked at topics at various issues for women prisoners and the extent to which legislation and policy in Pakistan, such as the Pakistan Prison Rules, are implemented and reflect the UN Bangkok Rules.

[New research – 'Getting away with it: the treatment of rape in Cambodia's justice system'](#)

[Research](#) by the [Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights](#) (LICADHO) shows how the Cambodian justice system fails to investigate and prosecute cases of rape involving women and children and how due to systemic flaws (corruption, discrimination, etc.) perpetrators are seldom held accountable.

Other news and resources

Brazil: [Brazil's Female Prison Population Soars 567%](#)

Saudi Arabia: [Trapped in the system: Thousands of Saudi women released from prison are abandoned by their families](#)

UK: [Transgender prison death: Review of procedures under way](#)

UK: [BBC Law in Action Series – Mums behind bars](#)

US: [Voices from Solitary: Pregnant in Prison, Birth in Shackles](#)

US: [Prison Policy Initiative: 30% of world's imprisoned women held in the United States](#)

TORTURE PREVENTION AND CONDITIONS IN DETENTION

New report by American Civil Liberties Union – In Jail and in Debt: Ohio's Pay-to-Stay Fees

In the US, [charging inmates a daily fee](#) during imprisonment, is common practice in many states. These so-called 'pay-to-stay' fees can leave prisoners with insurmountable debts upon release and, according to [new research](#) conducted [ACLU](#) in Ohio, create a vicious circle of violence and criminalisation.

Annual report: UK National Preventive Mechanism finds terminology used to describe solitary confinement may mask its use

In its [Sixth Annual Report](#) UK's National Preventive Mechanism the body tasked with monitoring UK detention facilities in line with the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, warns that the use of a wide range of terminology for solitary confinement and isolation can 'obscure the seriousness of the practice and the need for rigorous monitoring and governance'.

Other news and resources

Global: [ECHR decision in Farid Bamouhammad v. Belgium – prison conditions constituted degrading treatment](#)

Global: [UNODC launches health services programme in Southern African prisons](#)

Brazil: [Brazil torture prevention: Serious challenges remain but progress possible, UN experts find](#)

Ireland: [State's inaction on torture protocol is embarrassing](#)

Jersey: [Jersey prison welfare not up to UN human rights standards](#)

Morocco: [Moroccan prisons becoming more crowded, more violent](#)

New Zealand: [Prisoners denied mental health drugs](#)

Northern Ireland: [Killer wins legal case against prison over his 50 days in solitary](#)

Russia: [Russia's Amazon for prisoners offers online shopping and e-mail behind bars](#)

DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION

UK marks 50th anniversary of de facto abolition of the death penalty

This month the UK commemorated the de facto abolition of the death penalty 50 years

ago. During a week of events, publications and programmes on related issues, the [Death Penalty Project](#) published a comprehensive analysis of the death penalty in the UK. The [report](#) was launched at an event with [Louis Blom-Cooper](#), who was involved in the successful efforts to abolish the death penalty in 1965.

In this [blog](#) PRI's Oliver Robertson explains how the UK's path to abolition may have lessons for some states today and refers to a previous [analysis](#) by the [International Commission against the Death Penalty](#) on the paths to abolition taken by different states.

Read also PRI's report [Strengthening Death Penalty Standards](#), published earlier this year, which examines recent developments nationally, regionally and internationally and suggests ways that death penalty standards can be or have been improved.

UN report – States to protect their citizens facing death penalty abroad

The UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Christof Heyns, highlights in a recent [report](#) the number of foreign nationals facing capital punishment after trials that don't meet minimum standards of fairness and the added vulnerability of facing trial in a foreign jurisdiction while often lacking support from their state of origin.

Mr Heyns furthermore urged for progressive abolition of the death penalty, calling this form of punishment 'an affront to the right to a dignified life'.

Against the tide of recent global developments to abolish the death penalty - with [Vietnam](#) recently passing a law to abolish capital punishment for 7 crimes and [Malaysia's](#) Attorney General seeking to abolish mandatory death penalty - the [Maldives](#) has announced to continue the process of drafting legislation to implement the death penalty.

Other news and resources

Japan: [Survey offers insights into Japan's death-row inmates' thoughts, feelings and fears](#)

US: [US set to execute fewest number of people in 24 years](#)

OTHER NEWS

Australia: [NSW Prison watchdog complained independence was compromised before quitting](#)

Cambodia: [More Than 100 Prisoners Pardoned for Festival](#)

Northern Ireland: [Prisoners at Magilligan jail given access to Skype](#)

Scotland: [Prison chief calls for policy reform as 'obsession' with jailing criminals targets](#)

[society's most vulnerable](#)

South Africa: [Prisons still operate in shadows, says expert](#)

Tanzania: [Outgoing president pardons 4,160 inmates as he steps down](#)

UK: [Skype scheme prisoners axed amid terror fears](#)

US: [Obama to announce executive actions to help prisoners rejoin society](#)

And finally, we are also pleased to note that the Uganda National Community Service Program - a partner in our [East Africa programme](#) to scale up the use of community service - received the Excellence Award at the 2015 Recognition Awards Ceremony of the Justice, Law and Order Sector in Uganda.

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