



E-newsletter

Winter 2014



Season's greetings and 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](#)
- [Global advocacy](#)
- [Expert blog series](#)
- [Justice for children](#)
- [Women in the criminal justice system](#)
- [Conditions of detention](#)
- [Death penalty](#)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

[New publication: Death Penalty Information Pack](#)

This new short guide presents the fundamental issues and arguments linked to the abolition of the death penalty, reviews current trends towards abolition and highlights relevant international and regional human rights norms and standards and examples of good practice.

This guide replaces the original edition published in 2011.

EXPERT BLOG SERIES

To mark PRI's 25th Anniversary and prepare for the [Crime Congress in Qatar in April 2015](#), we're running a series of monthly expert guest blogs, addressing interesting current trends and pressing criminal justice challenges in criminal justice and penal reform. New blogs in the series include:

[Turning recommendations into reality: improving the impact of detention monitoring bodies](#)

In the latest entry in the series, Moritz Birk from the [Ludwig Boltzmann Institute](#) examines the role of National Preventative Mechanisms in challenging the practice of torture and measures their effectiveness in turning their recommendations into implementations of anti-torture policies.

[25 years preventive monitoring of places of detention – has the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture achieved its goal in Europe?](#)

In the November entry, Julia Kozma, elected member of the [CPT](#) for Austria, takes stock of the approach of preventative monitoring through unannounced visits. On its 25th anniversary the blog looks at the success of the CPT and outlines those areas that demand more work in the fight against torture.

[No escape from violence: childhood abuse, offending and women in prison](#)

In the series' October entry, Dr Lillian Artz, Director of the [Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit at the University of Cape Town](#), explores some of the findings of a 2012 study on women in detention, [Hard Times: Women's Pathways to Crime and Incarceration](#). The author focuses on physical and sexual abuse in the lives of women offenders as a probable catalyst for violent offences and calls for greater international attention on this relatively unknown issue.

Catch up on all of PRI's expert blogs [here!](#)

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

[Amman conference: 'Criminal Justice Reform and Human Rights: Recent Trends'](#)

On 3-4 November, PRI's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) office organised a two day conference in collaboration with the [UN Office of the High Commissioner for](#)

[Human Rights](#) and the Public Security Department / Correctional and Rehabilitation Department of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The conference provided a platform for in-depth discussion between some 200 participants on international and regional standards developed during the past 10 years and highlighted the best practices from the local level to comply with these standards. The conference included specialised sessions and workshops on the rights of vulnerable groups within the criminal justice system.

[Read more](#) about the progress of criminal justice reform initiatives in the MENA region and see highlights from the conference on Twitter at #CJRHR.

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

[25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)

November 20 marked [the 25th anniversary of the UN CRC](#), the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. The University of Leiden marked this event with a [conference from November 17-19](#) that reflected on the future of children's rights implementation.

Nikhil Roy, PRI's Programme Development Director, gave a presentation on the adverse effects of solitary confinement on children in detention and advocated for alternative disciplinary sanctions.

PRI also hosted a [side-event](#) with [Defence for Children Netherlands \(DCI-Netherlands\)](#) and the [European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CPT\)](#).

Also, in a [new blog on the PRI website](#), Renate Winter, a former youth court judge and a member of the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), reflects on the achievements and practical impact of the UN CRC since its creation 25 years ago.

[PRI receives 'Juvenile Justice without Borders' award from International Juvenile Justice Observatory \(OIJJ\)](#)

On 3 December, Alison Hannah, PRI's Executive Director, travelled to Brussels to receive the award from the OIJJ, in recognition of PRI's dedication in promoting the rights of children who come into conflict with the law, its adherence to the principles of child-friendly justice, and its commitment to promoting alternatives to detention as the best response to child offenders' needs.

Other recipients of this year's award included [Justice Imman Ali, Judge of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and a PRI board member](#).

PRI participates in expert consultation on children in detention with UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

PRI's Regional Director in Central Asia, Saule Mektepbayeva, took part in an Expert Consultation on Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty hosted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Professor Juan Méndez.



30 experts attended the consultation to discuss legal standards, best practices, and an array of topics pertaining to the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of juveniles deprived of their liberty.

[Read more about the consultation.](#)

Other news and resources:

- India: [No change in Government's stand on Juvenile Justice Bill 2014](#)
- Spain: [Tough love: is this a model prison for children?](#)
- UK: [Hundreds of UK's most vulnerable children 'end up jailed'](#)

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

PRI trains UN Peacekeepers on the Bangkok Rules

On 7 November 2014, Andrea Huber, Policy Director for PRI, and Olivia Rope, PRI's

Programme Officer, provided a training session on the application of the [Bangkok Rules](#) to a group of corrections staff from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Rwanda as part of a two-week pre-deployment training session, organised and hosted by Sweden and the UN [Department of Peacekeeping Operations \(DKPO\)](#).



[Training of trainers with DOST Foundation staff on the Bangkok Rules](#)

From November 10-14, PRI hosted a delegation from the [DOST Foundation](#) for a training week on the Bangkok Rules and women in detention at our head office in London. The delegation also met with representatives from Women in Prison and [Compass Isis](#), a specialist service for female drug users. In turn, PRI also learned a lot about DOST's work and the particular challenges facing penal reformers in the Peshawar region

Other news and resources:

- Blog: [A new blog from Jo Baker](#), posted by the Oxford Human Rights Hub, describes the particular importance of contact with the outside world for women in prison.
- Blog: [When Pussy Riot met UK penal reformers](#)
- Canada: [Number of aboriginal women behind bars spiking](#)
- Russia: '[Violence breeds violence': one woman's story of 16 years inside a Russian jail](#)
- UK: The Halsbury's Law Exchange (HLE) has released a new discussion paper,

[Women in prison: is the penal system fit for purpose?](#), with a view to creating a full report on penal policy and rehabilitation in 2015. They are inviting involvement by contacting them at contact@halsburyslawexchange.co.uk

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

[PRI awarded four-year grant by Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for reform of the penitentiary system in Yemen](#)

The four year project starting this month will aim to reform the penitentiary system in line with international human rights; develop the capacity of civil society groups to initiate projects to support people in the criminal justice system and to protect the rights of prisoners; and implement alternative sanctions and diversion mechanisms at community and police levels.

Other news and resources:

- France: [A French Jail Is Trying to Halt Radicalization by Isolating 'Radical Muslim' Prisoners Together](#)
 - The Gambia: [UN monitors denied prison access, condemn 'consistent practice' of torture](#). Read the full [end-of-visit statement](#).
 - Georgia: [NGOs demand alternative monitoring in prisons](#)
 - Sierra Leone: [Locking ebola out of jails](#)
 - Sweden: [In Sweden, we treat our prisoners like human beings, not like criminals'](#)
 - Turkey: [Buildup in Turkey's prison population raises concerns](#)
-

DEATH PENALTY AND ALTERNATIVE SANCTIONS

[PRI brings experts, government and civil society together in Minsk to discuss the death penalty in Belarus](#)

This conference was held under a [PRI project funded by the EU](#) to campaign for the abolition of the death penalty in Belarus. Belarus is the only country left in the European region to still carry out the death penalty.



A key aim of the project is to increase public awareness about the use of the death penalty (a surprising number of members of the public surveyed as part of the project did not know that Belarus continues to execute people, for example), as states that retain the death penalty often justify retention on the strength of public opinion.

[Read more about the shift in Belorussian public opinion about the death penalty](#) and access [three articles shedding light on secretive death penalty process in Belarus](#) written by PRI's Russian journalism prize-winner, Adaria Gushtyn.

[Uganda shifts position on death penalty at UN](#)

Uganda has ended its opposition to a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty. At the [UN General Assembly](#) on 21 November 2014, [Uganda abstained on the measure](#), changing after seven years of voting against. The country is [one of ten where PRI is working](#) to abolish the death penalty and implement humane alternative sanctions.

Oliver Robertson, PRI's Death Penalty and Alternatives Project Manager, said: 'This is a great result, which comes after a lot of hard work by governments and civil society. We hope that countries will continue this positive trend when the General Assembly as a whole votes next month.'

[Book review: Life after murder – five men in search of redemption](#)

Nancy Mullane was a winner in PRI's [journalism competition](#) held as part of our [death penalty abolition programme](#) in 2014. While the competition was judged on the basis of articles submitted, she is also the author of this very unusual book telling the stories of five men sentenced to life imprisonment.

Other news and resources:

Germany: [One in three law students backs death penalty](#)

Indonesia: [Death row inmates 'burdening' Indonesian jails](#)

Uganda: [Death penalty for terrorism convicts okayed](#)

USA: [Scott Panetti: US appeals court grants stay of execution for mentally ill death row inmate](#)

USA: [Ohio House passes bill shielding execution drugmakers](#)

Copyright © 2014 Penal Reform International, All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)