

PRI's Bangkok Rules E-bulletin: September 2013

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Bangkok Rules E-Bulletin

Women in the Criminal Justice System

September 2013



Toolbox on the UN Bangkok Rules

Welcome to Penal Reform International's quarterly Bangkok Rules E-Bulletin, a round-up of news and developments from PRI and others around the world on women in detention, and the implementation of the UN Bangkok Rules. The views expressed in the news items are not necessarily those of PRI.

We welcome contributions to the e-bulletin and do let us know what you think by emailing publications@penalreform.org

What's in this issue?

- [New publications from PRI](#)
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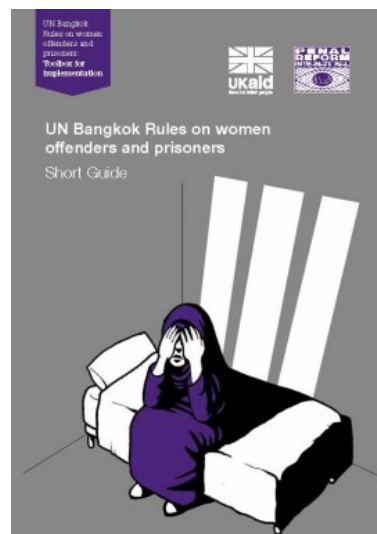
WHAT ARE THE BANGKOK RULES?

The Bangkok Rules are a set of standards adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2010, which supplement existing standards for the treatment of prisoners by addressing the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system for the first time. For more information on the Rules see PRI's [short guide](#).

NEW FROM PRI

Short Guide to the UN Bangkok Rules

PRI has published a short guide in English on women offenders and the UN Bangkok Rules. This guide covers the profile of women prisoners and why international standards are needed. It also gives a quick overview of who the Rules protect, what they say and who should be involved in their implementation.



Women in detention:
a guide to gender-sensitive monitoring

Mujeres privadas de libertad: una guía para el monitoreo con perspectiva de género



PRI and APT's *Women in detention: a guide to gender-sensitive monitoring*, is now available in Spanish, thanks to translation provided by APT. English, Russian and Georgian versions are also available.

LOOKING AHEAD

Who are women prisoners? Launch of survey results from Armenia and Georgia

PRI will launch a new report, *Who are women prisoners? Survey results from Armenia and Georgia*, at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw on 25 September. The report will be available in English and Russian.

Who are women prisoners?
Survey results from Armenia
and Georgia



Examining the profile and backgrounds of women offenders, the report seeks to illustrate the necessity for gender-specific policies that respond to the particular needs of women in prison, and to support countries in identifying some key areas which ought to be addressed as a matter of priority. The report includes recommendations to this end, pointing to the relevant provisions of the UN Bangkok Rules. PRI carried out a survey with 65 and 70 per cent of the



Towards a gender-sensitive penal policy

female prison populations in Georgia and Armenia respectively.

A snapshot of the survey results:

- 78% of the women surveyed are mothers
- The most common reason given for committing the offence was financial in both countries
- On average the top three support requirements women identified when leaving prison as identified by the women surveyed were help with employment, health treatment and counselling, and childcare and family reunification.

The report presents research findings from both the survey with prisoners, an analysis of statistics received from authorities and interviews with key stakeholders, including NGOs.

Launch of Toolbox for Implementation of the Bangkok Rules

PRI would like to invite you to the launch of our toolbox, at the UN General Assembly or via webcast on 16 October, 13:15-14:30 (EDT).

The toolbox, aimed at supporting the implementation of the Bangkok Rules, has as its centrepiece a [Guidance Document and an Index of Implementation](#), published with the Thailand Institute of Justice, and an e-learning course, [Women in detention: Putting the UN Bangkok Rules in Practice](#), developed with Human Rights Education Associates (HREA).

The launch event will take place in the context of the UN General Assembly, in Conference Room 6, North Lawn Building at the UN Buildings in New York. Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand, who played an instrumental role in the development of the Rules, will deliver the keynote address. The event will be webcast for those unable to attend, the link for which will be made available in due course. All three tools will be available free of charge following the launch.

Online course on safeguards against torture and ill-treatment

Human Rights Education Associates are running an online course on safeguards against torture and ill-treatment, with PRI's Policy Director, Andrea Huber, as instructor from 16 October-26 November. It includes a special session on gender issues. Click [here](#) to find out more and to register for the course!

Research in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on women in prison

In mid-September, PRI will carry out research in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (as the second phase to the women in prisons research project) and will publish a report in Russian and English later in 2013.

PRI to conduct study on women in prison in Georgia on behalf of UN Women

UN Women is commissioning four studies to assess the situation and needs of women and girls in Georgia, as part of its *Innovative Action for Gender Equality in Georgia* (IAGE) project. The main aim of the project is to adopt and implement relevant policies and legislation that specifically address the needs of women in Georgia.

PRI has been selected to conduct one of these studies, focusing on women in prison in Georgia. This is a great opportunity to build on PRI's new report, *Who are women prisoners? Survey results from Armenia and Georgia*, outlined above.

The study will look at the needs and priorities of current and former women prisoners and consider how their social, legal, economic and physical conditions and rehabilitation and reintegration measures can be improved. It will also examine Georgia's compliance with the Bangkok Rules and develop recommendations accordingly.

LOOKING BACK

PRI submits written statements to the Human Rights Council

(22 August) Ahead of the forthcoming [24th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council \(HRC\)](#) in Geneva, PRI made two submissions: On [the death penalty](#), including the rights and welfare of children of parents sentenced to death, and on [the human rights impact of the overuse of imprisonment](#). To read more about PRI's activities at the HRC which includes a side-event click [here](#).

PRI blog: Protecting the rights of women offenders – a job for the CEDAW Committee?

(19 August) PRI's Programme Officer, Olivia Rope, considers the potential role of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in protecting the rights of women offenders and contributing to systemic improvements in their treatment. Read Olivia's post [here](#).

New PRI website launched with section on women in the criminal justice system

July saw the launch of a [new PRI website](#)! All of our resources and tools can be searched by theme, language, region, type of content, etc, thanks to an improved search function. To see our new priority section on women in the criminal justice system, [click here](#).

PRI blog: Alison Hannah on problems faced by women in prison in Bangladesh

(6 July) PRI and partner organisation, [Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust \(BLAST\)](#) organised a one day training session for prison staff on implementing the Bangkok Rules. PRI's Executive Director, Alison Hannah, writes about issues faced in women's prisons in Bangladesh, including those relating to healthcare and hygiene (such as access to sanitary pads), uncomfortable visits with families, and the need for rehabilitation and reintegration support. Read the post [here](#).

PRI joins the first all-Russia conference of the heads of mother and baby units

Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN) invited PRI to take part in the first all-Russia conference of the heads of mother and baby units in women's prisons that took place in Nizhny Novgorod on 31 May-2 June 2013. The conference addressed medical assistance surrounding childbirth, training programmes for mothers and development programmes

for babies. PRI also took part in drafting the conference recommendations to be passed to the Director of FSIN, which include: the expansion of joint mother and baby accommodation to all units, the development of guidelines on the organisation of the units and widening of interaction with NGOs in this sector.

Piloting of assessment tool for NPMs and other monitoring mechanisms

An assessment tool currently being developed for National Preventative Mechanisms (NPMs) and other monitoring mechanisms by PRI and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), was piloted in June with the Georgian NPM. As part of the pilot, a group visited a women's prison in Rustavi, Georgia and focused on gender-sensitive monitoring and pre-trial issues.

The tool seeks to provide practical guidance to monitoring bodies and includes four thematic papers (including the [Guide to gender-sensitive monitoring](#)), highlighting aspects which contribute to a climate in which torture and ill-treatment can occur, but usually receive little coverage by monitoring bodies. In addition five fact sheets will provide short and practical guidance on how monitoring bodies can focus on thematic areas and thereby address systematic deficiencies contributing to abuse.

Expert meeting with UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

A [video](#) is now available from the expert meeting convened by University of Chicago Law School in May to provide guidance and feedback for a thematic report by Professor Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, on the causes, conditions and consequences of women's incarceration around the world. PRI was represented at the meeting by our Policy Director, Andrea Huber. Watch the video and read Andrea's contribution [here](#). The Special Rapporteur's report to the General Assembly will be presented in October 2013.

NEWS FROM OUR NETWORK

Submission to the UN on shackling of pregnant women in the US

In September the International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School, ACLU and CLAIM submitted a report to the UN: 'The Shackling of pregnant women in the US: a human rights violation committed regularly in the United States.' It was submitted for the Fourth Periodic Report of the US. The report can be [accessed here](#).

The first East Africa Criminal Justice Civil Society Network newsletter

PRI and FHRI, with financial support from the UK Government, have launched a newsletter providing a monthly round-up of criminal justice news and resources from east africa and worldwide, including specific initiatives on the Bangkok Rules. For more information or to sign up to the newsletter, email divamukisa@gmail.com.

New approach needed for women offenders in the UK

In May, the UN Committee against Torture issued its [concluding observations](#) on the fifth

periodic report of the UK, in which it recommends ensuring effective diversion from the criminal justice system for petty non-violent offenders and increasing the use of community sentences. INQUEST also [published a report](#) in June recommending a complete rethink of the way women are treated in the UK criminal justice system.

On 19 June, alternatives to prison for low-risk female offenders were examined in a [one hour BBC broadcast](#) where Jane Garvey spoke to staff and clients at the Anawim Women's Centre in Birmingham; Helen Grant MP, Justice Minister; and others. Finally, on 9 July, a requirement to address the particular needs of women offenders in the provision of supervision and rehabilitation services in the UK was included in the Offender Rehabilitation Bill. See comments from the Prison Reform Trust [here](#).

French film shows the struggle of imprisoned mothers

An online version of the film "Loin des Yeux" ("Out of Sight"), with English subtitles, is available for purchase [here](#). The film shows 30 mothers in prison, serving sentences ranging from a few months to several years, struggle to maintain a relationship with their children.

Report: Weaving Justice: Pre-trial Prisoners in the City of Sao Paulo

(April) A new [report has been published](#) by the Institute for Land, Work and Citizenship (ITTC) and the National Catholic Prison Ministry (PCr) which includes a study of prisoner profiles upon entry into the prison system. The report finds that over 81 per cent of the women interviewed said they had children (compared to 53 per cent of men), with over 56 per cent saying they lived with their children before arrest (compared to 23 per cent of men).

OTHER NEWS

[New Ugandan guidelines take into account the best interests of the child and the Bangkok Rules in terms of sentencing a care-giver](#)

[UK: Women offenders 'afterthought' in rehabilitation plans](#)

[Australia: Children of prisoners urged to have say on support services](#)

[Women cope with life behind bars in new series Orange is the New Black](#)

[UK: Prison is 'ineffective' punishment for many women offenders, say MPs](#)

[US: Mass incarceration does injustice to millions of American children](#)

[Uganda: Hair dressing training launched at Kampala women's prison](#)

[World's oldest woman prisoner dies aged 107 in Indian jail](#)

[Nigeria: How children born in Kirikiri prisons live](#)

[Zimbabwe: Women prisoners worst affected by HIV](#)

[Do you have new publications or resources to share on women and criminal justice?](#)

We hope that our newsletter is used to share information and resources among a growing network of individuals and organisations interested in the issue of women and detention, and would like to encourage colleagues to send us materials, feedback, news items, information about events etc to include it in our bulletins. We are also always interested in your feedback on our publications, projects and the bulletin itself. We hope to hear from you! Send your contributions to info@penalreform.org.

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