



Bangkok Rules E-Bulletin

Women in the Criminal Justice System

September 2014



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?

- [In the spotlight](#)
- [New blog by guest writer, Jo Baker](#)
- [Recent PRI activities on women and the Bangkok Rules](#)
- [Other news relating to women in criminal justice systems worldwide](#)

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](#) on the Rules.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

PRI research report: 'Who are women prisoners? Survey results from Jordan and Tunisia'

The report provides results from a survey of 28 and 32 percent of the female prisoner population in Jordan and Tunisia respectively, with a view to highlighting the need for policies that better reflect the specific needs of women prisoners. The report provides recommendations based on the Bangkok Rules.



Findings include:

- 7 in 10 women prisoners surveyed in Jordan are mothers: 27 percent of those in judicial detention had their children taken away from them, a quarter experienced the breakup of their families, and 11 percent had children who live on the street.

- 62 percent of women surveyed in administrative detention in Jordan had experienced domestic abuse; 38 percent of the same group had experienced sexual abuse.
- In Tunisia, 71 percent of the women surveyed had depression while 44 percent had harmed themselves or attempted suicide.

This report is the third to be published as part of [PRI's ongoing research project on women prisoners](#) based on Rule 67 of the Bangkok Rules. PRI is currently supporting the [Foundation for Human Rights Initiative](#) in conducting similar research in Uganda and has shared its methodology with Advocaid for their upcoming report on women prisoners in Sierra Leone.

NEW BLOG

[*Women in prison: Information vacuums, harms and human rights by Jo Baker*](#)

PRI's [latest blog post](#) is a feature by Jo Baker highlighting the lack of information available to female prisoners and the resulting harm to their ability to exercise their human rights.

The first-hand accounts from female prisoners in the Philippines and Jordan paint a dark picture of fear, control, and abuse. The experiences of women interviewed range from giving birth in poorly equipped prison clinics to self-harm and hunger strikes.



The blog also points out the distinct plight of foreign women prisoners whose problems are exacerbated by language barriers and a lack of knowledge of cultural

norms. This issue is of special relevance to Rule 2, which requires access to consular representatives for foreign nationals and guidance for women prisoners with different languages.



The blog is [available on the PRI website](#). Read the full report by Jo Baker and Therese Rytter, [Conditions for Women in Detention: Needs, vulnerabilities and good practices](#), published by DIGNITY.

PRI NEWS

[Arabic version of PRI's Short guide to the Bangkok Rules](#)

PRI's short illustrated guide to the Bangkok Rules is [now available in Arabic](#). The guide provides an accessible summary of the profile of women prisoners, identifying why international standards are needed and outlining who and what the Rules address.

[PRI's Statement to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention \(WGAD\)](#)

In a statement to the WGAD on their [Draft 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](#), PRI highlighted the fact that women detainees face particular difficulties when attempting to challenge the 'lawfulness' of their detention. Enforced gender roles and discrimination in educational opportunities undermine women's abilities to understand and finance a legal challenge in many countries. Women who are detained on the grounds of 'protective detention' are an especially vulnerable group. Read the full statement [here](#).

[UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Woman \(CEDAW\) report on Georgia](#)

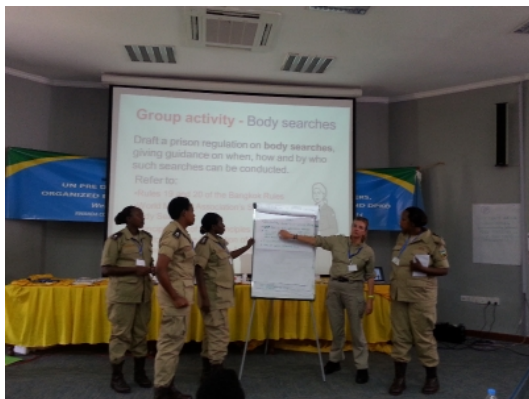
CEDAW has released its [Concluding observations](#) on Georgia's fourth and fifth period reports. With respect to women prisoners, the Committee recommends the provision of gender-specific treatment services for women who use drugs and calls for harm reduction programmes for women prisoners. CEDAW also recommends access to prolonged family visits for women detained in penitentiary institutions.

The observations reflect [PRI's submission to CEDAW in July](#), based on the findings of a PRI [research report](#).

Prison Health in Europe

PRI participated at the joint World Health Organization (WHO)/Council of Europe meeting of international experts in Strasbourg on May 27. The event, entitled *Prison Health in Europe: Missions, Roles and Responsibilities of International Organizations*, has resulted in the '[Strasbourg Conclusions](#)', which highlight the pressing need for better healthcare services in prisons and draw attention to vulnerable groups who are especially affected by poor healthcare, including women, in reference to the Bangkok Rules.

The WHO has also published a new book, [Prisons and Health](#), which includes a chapter devoted to women's health in prisons.



PRI gives training on Bangkok Rules at the 'All Female United Nations Prison Officers Course' at Rwanda's Peace Academy

PRI's Policy Director, Andrea Huber, joined a group of instructors at a pre-deployment course for UN peacekeepers. This day long course provided participants with training on the gender-specific needs of women prisoners, based on the Bangkok Rules. [Read more on the PRI website](#).

Photo essay of PRI-supported project in women's prison in Kazakhstan

A media report gives an insight into a PRI-sponsored programme that has been established at a women's prison in Atyrau, Kazakhstan. This programme, inspired by the '28 Loops Club', sees [women prisoners gather together to knit warm clothing for premature babies](#), with the aim of providing a rehabilitative and re-integrative experience for the participants.

Blog: 'Protecting girls from all forms of violence in the criminal justice system' by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children

Building on her work with PRI on raising awareness and advocating changes to the

treatment of girls in the criminal justice system, [Marta Santos Pais' new blog](#) explains how the new *Model Strategies and Practical Measures for the Elimination of Violence against Children*, which the UN General Assembly is expected to adopt in October, will bring together international and regional standards to promote this aim. She highlights the extreme vulnerability of girls in the criminal justice system due to their 'double disadvantage' of age and gender and advocates the new *Model Strategies* as a way to 'bridge the gap between international standards and practice, and to ensure that freedom from violence is a reality for all girls and boys around the world'.

[Launch of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child's \(ACERWC\) first General Comment](#)

In early September, [PRI co-organised the launch of ACERWC's first General Comment](#), which addresses the protection of prisoners' children. The General Comment recognises the financial, psychological and social difficulties facing the children of imprisoned parents and calls for greater use of non-custodial sentences for parents and carers. Courts should now always consider the best interests of the child when determining which sentence to pass for the parent.

The [full text](#) of the General Comment can be found on the Committee's website and [a short guide](#) created in conjunction with PRI is also available. [Read more](#) about the launch or [watch a video!](#)

[PRI's international conference in Jordan: Keynote address on the Bangkok Rules](#)

PRI, together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will be organising an international conference on recent trends in criminal justice reform and human rights on November 3-4. Ambassador Panupong from the Thailand Institute of Justice will deliver a keynote speech on the Bangkok Rules. Other topics for discussion at the conference will include regional developments in the Middle East and North Africa, rehabilitative and restorative approaches to detention and the protection of children in the criminal justice system.

OTHER NEWS

- [Shadow report to the UN Committee against Torture](#): The International Human Rights Clinic at University of Chicago Law School, the National Prison Project of ACLU Foundation, Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers–Cabrini

Green Legal Aid, and Rachel Roth, PhD have issued a shadow report to the Committee on the practice of shackling incarcerated pregnant women. The submission highlights that this practice constitutes cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment because it increases the risk of serious medical complications and is unnecessary except under the most extreme circumstances, when a woman has been credibly and individually determined to pose a flight risk or danger to herself or others.

- Policy Brief: [New policy brief by UNODC \(with UNWomen, WHO and INPUD\)](#) identifying the specific problems faced by women drug-users and promoting alternatives to imprisonment, based on the Bangkok Rules
- Research Project: New study on the impact of maternal imprisonment on children. For more information [visit the researcher's online profile](#)
- [Free academic articles on gender-specific issues](#)
- Australia: [Justice system failing indigenous women](#)
- Australia: [Jail rates for indigenous women soar as legal funding cuts loom](#)
- Canada: [Women inmates on the rise](#)
- Canada: [Prison guards not trained to deal with severely mentally ill](#)
- Canada: [Transgender woman files human rights complaints](#)
- Canada: [Lengthy political debates over the new Prostitution Bill](#)
- Canada: [Federal plan to help mentally ill female inmates on hold](#)
- DRC: [Rape 'routine' in DR Congo prisons](#)
- India: [Women prisoners in Hyderabad to learn computers](#)
- India: [Life is hell for women inmates of two Mumbai jails](#)
- Japan: [Ehime prison remodeled to address space shortage for female inmates](#)
- Jordan: [Women leave protective custody to lead independent lives, against all odds](#)
- Kenya: [Life of children in prison](#)
- Kenya: [Women in and out of prison – what they go through](#)
- Malaysia: [A comparison study between men and women inmates on stress and depression](#)
- Namibia: [No safe homes in Oshana, Ohangwena](#)
- New Zealand: [Coping with life behind bars](#)
- Nigeria: [New report by Amnesty International on torture, including cases of women prisoners who are subjected to abuse and rape by the police](#)
- Russia: [Russia's boom business: forced labour in prisons](#)
- Scotland: [Too many women are still being sent to jail](#)
- Sierra Leone: [Law in the time of Ebola](#)
- Sierra Leone: [Ebola prevention and support for women in prison](#)
- South Africa: [Prisoner left in cell with her dead baby](#)
- Tanzania: [Why prisons must move from a punitive to corrective approach](#)
- Thailand: [Behind bars: Thai women pay high price for drugs](#)

- Thailand: [IPSR urges better conditions for women behind bars](#)
- Trinidad and Tobago: [How do 11-year-old girls end up in prison?](#)
- Turkey: [Ministry says 334 children in prison with convicted mothers](#)
- UK: [Female prisoners plan naked protest over underwear restrictions in British jails](#)
- UK: [Senior Policy Associate calls for a change in 'prescription' when assessing violence against women](#)
- UK: [New article by Jenny Earle, Programme Director for Reducing Women's Imprisonment at the Prison Reform Trust, published in the Academy News Bulletin](#)
- US: [Domestic violence lands many women in jail, not wearing Miss America tiaras](#)
- US: [Quick facts on women in the federal offender population](#)
- US: [Mentally ill inmates at Michigan women's prison report they were hog tied naked, deprived of water](#)
- US: [New voluntary programme to bring children into prison for Mother's Day](#)
- US: [For US\\$2 a day, female inmates help douse trail fire](#)
- Zambia: [Maternity care should be made available to pregnant women in prisons across the country](#)
- Zimbabwe: [Gender discrimination in prisons slammed](#)
- Zimbabwe: [Pregnancy fears block open female prison](#)

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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