

# 2024

**PENAL  
REFORM  
INTERNATIONAL**

## Annual report

**Penal Reform  
International**



**Strategy  
2024-2028**



# GLOBAL PRISON TRENDS 2024



# Annual Report 2024

## Penal Reform International

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Pages 6-9, designed by Alex Valy (extracted from PRI's strategy 2024-29).

*Detailed accounts, with all of PRI's financial information, and a detailed overview of our expenditure and income, alongside our audit and post-audit reports is available on our website.*

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# Message from PRI's Chair

“ David Fathi

When Penal Reform International was founded in 1989, it was driven by the belief that **criminal justice systems around the world must be more humane, more proportionate and rooted in human rights**. This annual report for 2024 shows just how far that vision has come. It also confirms that PRI is not only staying true to its founding mission but growing as a mature and forward-thinking organisation that is adapting to today's complex global realities.

One powerful example of this evolution is PRI's deepening commitment to **centring the voices and leadership of people with lived experience of justice systems**. From country-level initiatives to the creation of an international **Experts by Experience group** and the launch of a new 10-point plan to guide justice policymakers and practitioners, PRI is contributing to efforts to see justice reform informed not only by policy and research, but by those who have experienced the system firsthand. This is just the beginning of an approach we believe will strengthen the legitimacy, relevance, and impact of PRI's work in the years to come.

In 2024, PRI's work spanned regions and contexts with impressive breadth – from **advancing gender-sensitive justice and expanding access to legal aid, to training police and supporting detention monitors investigating deaths in custody**. PRI has contributed to UN and multilateral advocacy spaces while remaining grounded in work that supports real change on the ground. This demonstrates PRI's holistic approach to justice reform.

On behalf of the Membership Council, I extend my heartfelt thanks to PRI's dedicated staff, and to the donors – both financial and pro bono – whose support has sustained and energised the organisation throughout 2024. Your belief in PRI's mission enables it to continue championing fairer, more just systems for all.



# Message from PRI's Executive Director

“ Olivia Rope

2024 was a year of significant progress for Penal Reform International, set against a global context that brought a range of sobering challenges.

We launched our new organisational 5-year strategy – a document that we are immensely proud of. It reflects our deepening commitment to transforming criminal justice systems in a way that is both bold and pragmatic. The strategy reaffirms PRI's role as a catalyst for humane and rights-based justice. **It goes beyond prisons, police and probation to address the very foundations of criminalisation** – asking not only how people are treated once in the system, but why they were there to begin with. Poverty, discrimination and the status of people continue to shape who is targeted by justice systems, and tackling both these root causes and pathways is central to our mission.

Yet, this work is taking place in an increasingly difficult environment. **Civic space continues to shrink globally**, including in countries where PRI works and has staff. Meanwhile, steep cuts to funding across the human rights and development sectors have placed additional pressure on organisations like ours to adapt quickly, think creatively and make the case – more urgently than ever – that justice reform cannot be left behind. **Our work is not just relevant; it is foundational to any democracy that claims to uphold human rights.**

In this context, we are proud of what we have achieved this year, often in partnership with others. We are grateful to our supporters, donors, and dedicated staff who have shown remarkable resilience and vision in the face of complexity. Together, we continue to ensure that the rights and dignity of people in contact with justice systems are not overlooked but championed.

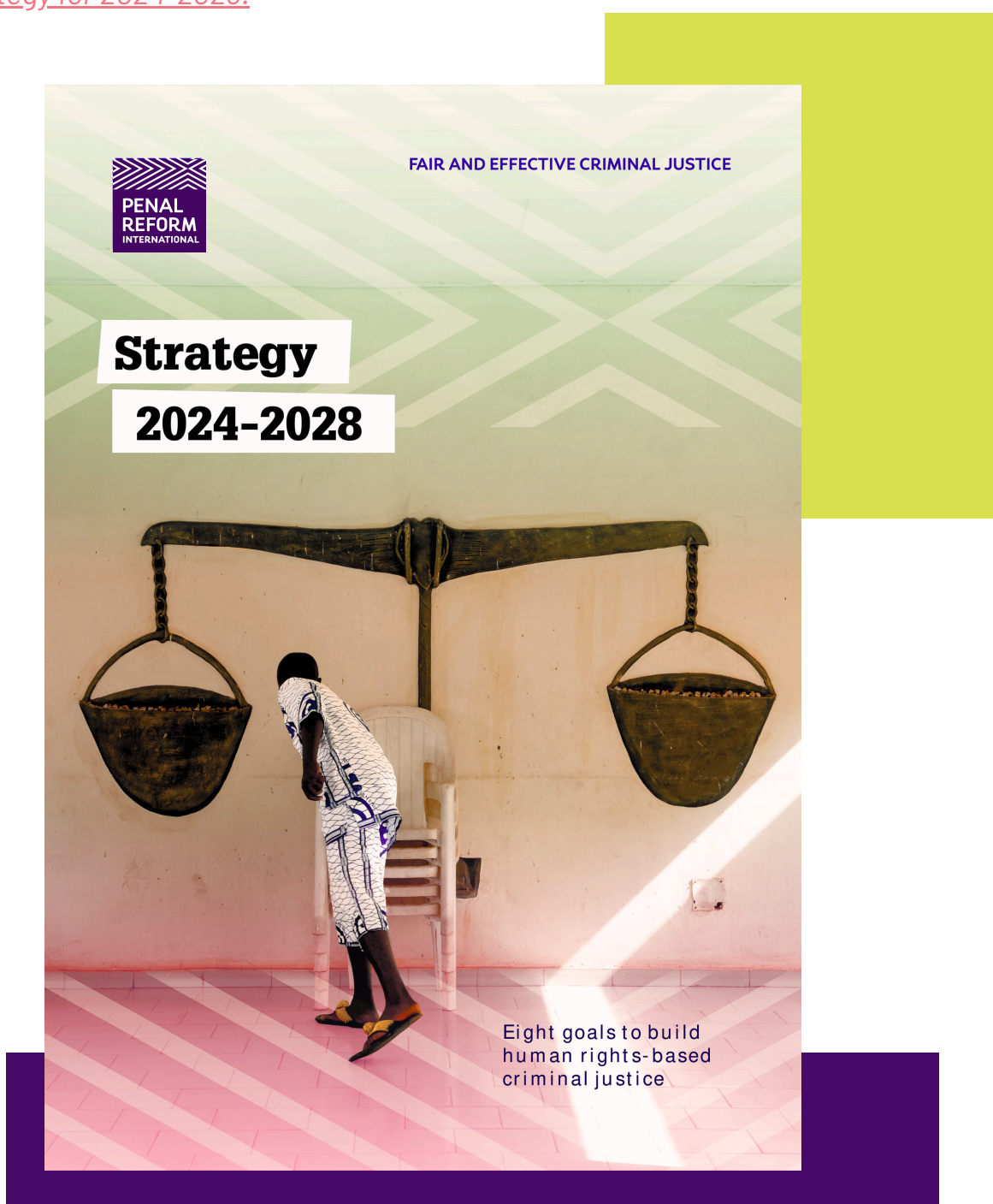


# A new strategy for PRI for 2024-2028

In July 2024 we published our new five-year strategy. It was the result of a consultative process that began in 2022. Feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and several workshops with PRI's international staff led us to streamline our ambitions from the previous strategy. Before identifying strategic goals, we went "back to the basics" by updating our Theory of Change (TOC) to align it with our strategy. Additionally, the strategy incorporates insights from our global group of Experts by Experience, who bring lived experience of the criminal justice system.

The outcome is an integrated TOC and strategy centred around eight strategic goals and three main objectives.

[Read our strategy for 2024-2028.](#)





# Target populations

Over the next five years our target populations encompass three main groups of stakeholders.

1

## People in contact with criminal justice systems

They are the focus of our work as rights holders. We collaborate with and assist people who interact with the police or law enforcement, those involved in criminal justice proceedings, people detained pre-trial or post-conviction, and those under other criminal justice measures such as probation and parole. We also provide support to people at risk of coming into contact with the law. Our services are inclusive of people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds, regardless of the crime for which a person is arrested, accused or convicted of.

2

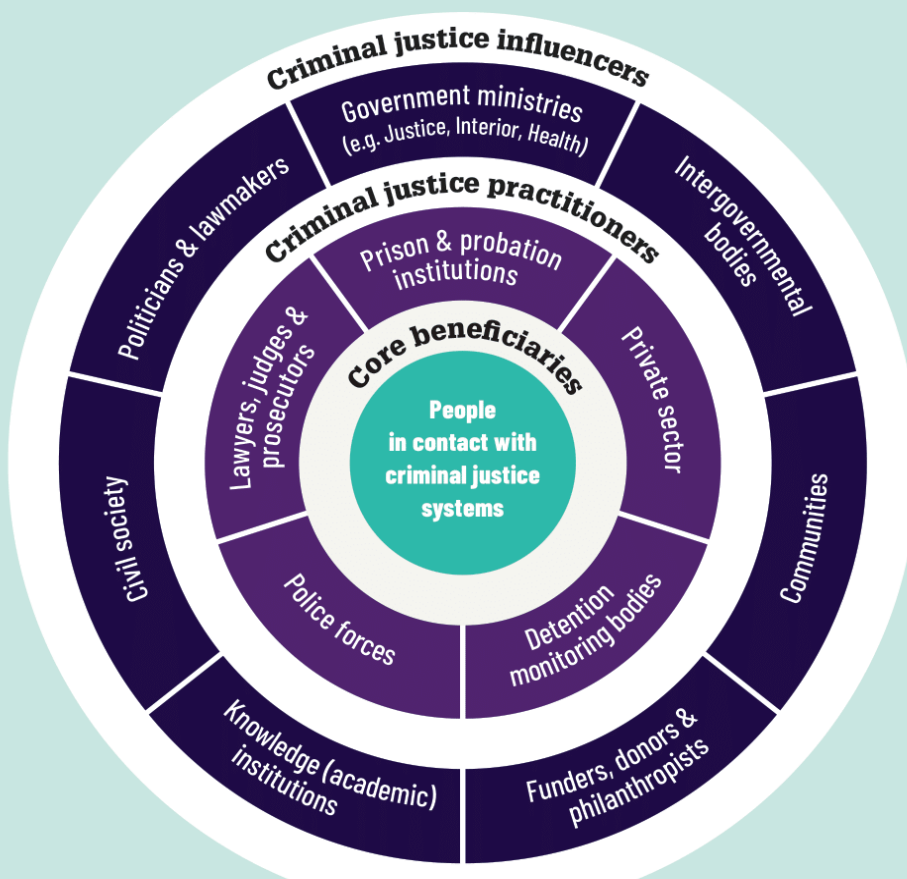
## Criminal justice practitioners

They are duty bearers, including both high-level management and frontline staff who interact daily with people at police stations or in prisons. Typical institutions involved include prisons, probation services, courts, prosecutors, judges, magistrates, police and law enforcement agencies and lawyers. We also target detention monitoring bodies such as members of National Preventive Mechanisms.

3

## Criminal justice influencers

This group encompasses a wide range of institutions and people who influence the criminal justice system. Stakeholders include government ministries such as justice and interior, politicians, lawmakers, civil society organisations, academic institutions, National Human Rights Institutions, intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations, the African Commission on Human Rights, the European Union, the Council of Europe, as well as funders and philanthropists. Local communities are also a target group who we must build strong and lasting relationships to support reform. At the heart of our efforts are people with lived and direct experience of the criminal justice system, a commitment we uphold through initiatives like PRI's Experts by Experience group.





# Theory of change

➔ Based on our assessment of the most pressing criminal justice problems today, we have formulated the following issue statement.

## Our issue statement

Criminal measures and sanctions are increasingly applied in a discriminatory manner within weak criminal justice systems that fail to uphold the rule of law, resulting in widespread human rights violations.

➔ We have determined that our impact statement adopted for our previous strategy remains accurate and relevant.

## Our impact statement

Safe societies based on fair and effective criminal justice systems that protect human rights and are non-discriminatory.

➔ We will achieve this impact by addressing the specific problems and needs of our **three main stakeholder groups**, each with its own objectives.

## Our three objectives

### Objective 1

Rehabilitate, reintegrate, and empower people in contact with criminal justice systems.

### Objective 2

Criminal justice practitioners apply human rights in their daily work.

### Objective 3

Fewer people are criminalised, sanctioned and imprisoned.





➔ To further operationalise the three objectives and enhance focus, we have developed specific goals aligned with each objective.

### **Our eight goals**

#### **Objective 1**

##### **Goal 1**

Ensure people in contact with criminal justice systems have access to education, life skills, and vocational training.

#### **Objective 2**

##### **Goal 2**

Justice institutions are people-centred, responsive to the needs and human rights of all, and non-discriminatory towards those in vulnerable contexts.

##### **Goal 3**

Safeguard and protect the rights of people in detention and the wider justice system during emergencies and crises.

##### **Goal 4**

Enhance oversight of criminal justice systems to increase accountability.

##### **Goal 5**

Promote the availability and use of diversion, restorative justice and non-custodial options.

#### **Objective 3**

##### **Goal 6**

Promote the inclusion of people with lived experience in criminal justice reform efforts.

##### **Goal 7**

Decrease the overreliance on criminal justice systems to promote equality, amidst increasing authoritarianism, poverty, and discrimination.

##### **Goal 8**

Reduce or eliminate disproportionate and inhumane sentences, as well as the use of pre-trial detention.

➔ The interventions (our activities) to achieve our goals are organised into three strategic pathways, each tailored to one of our **three main stakeholder groups**.

### **Our three strategic pathways**

#### **Pathway 1**

Providing support and services for people in contact with criminal justice systems.

#### **Pathway 2**

Strengthening capacity of people working in criminal justice institutions.

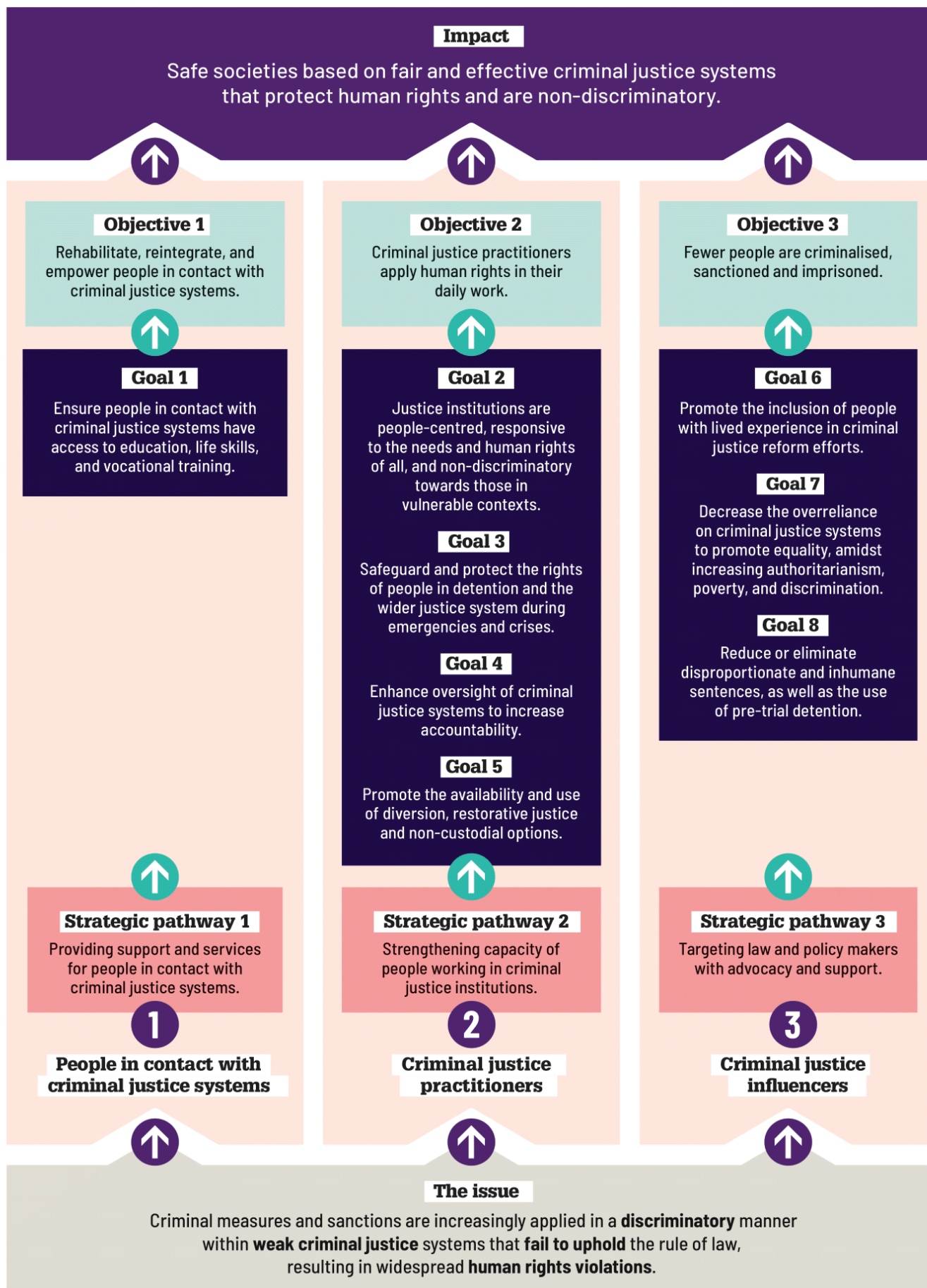
#### **Pathway 3**

Targeting law and policy makers with advocacy and support.





## Our Theory of Change (TOC)





# OUR ACTIVITIES

# AND IMPACT IN 2024



**Image:**  
Consultation with young people with lived experience of  
justice systems, Indonesia



# Where we work

In 2024, we led impactful projects, driving meaningful change in:

- Algeria
- Armenia
- Bulgaria
- Central African Republic
- Ireland
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Morocco
- Palestine
- Qatar
- Romania
- Sudan
- Türkiye
- Uganda
- Yemen

Beyond the countries we led projects in, we extended our support, deployed expert missions, advised governments, and contributed to key events in:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- France
- Kuwait
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- United States
- South Africa
- Rwanda

We work at the international level, engaging in the current key forums

- Summit of the Future
- UN Human Rights Council
- UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- UN Commission on the Status of Women
- UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board
- Council of Europe forums, including the European NPM Forum
- African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights
- The Arab League
- African Commission of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of a child

# Our impact in 2024

## Objective 1

### Rehabilitate, reintegrate, and empower people in contact with criminal justice systems.

Rehabilitation and reintegration of people in contact with justice systems remains core to PRI's mission. In 2024, in **Central African Republic**, carpentry workshops were restarted in multiple prisons, under which an initial three months of training benefitted 40 people detained in Ngaragba, Bambari, Bouar and Berberati prisons.

In **Uganda**, PRI continued its efforts to promote gender-sensitive justice, with a strong focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of women in contact with the law. A baseline study identified lack of a safe space and funding as major barriers to effective rehabilitation. Following a stakeholder mapping exercise, PRI launched a rehabilitation needs assessment for 96 women held in Fort Portal Women's Prison. Based on the findings, a vocational training programme was developed for 45 women at Fort Portal women's Prison, offering courses such as carpentry and culinary arts to help build practical skills and support financial independence after release.

Recognising the importance of mental wellbeing and family support in the rehabilitation process, PRI facilitated over five family visits for women in Fort Portal Women's Prison in 2024. A total of 105 family members attended, overcoming barriers such as long distances and transport costs. These visits were part of a broader effort to improve the mental wellbeing of women deprived of liberty, who face distinct challenges.

In partnership with the psychiatric department of the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS), PRI also conducted medical camps in Jinja, Mbale, and Soroti prisons to assess mental health needs. Of the 164 individuals screened, 94 (57.3%) were diagnosed with mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety and were provided with appropriate treatment. Others were diagnosed and treated for physical illnesses including peptic ulcer disease and malaria.

Acknowledging that employment and financial stability are critical to preventing further contact with the justice system, PRI supported reintegration initiatives through entrepreneurship training for women in Jinja Prison. Participants also received business start-up packs, including seed funding, to help them establish small enterprises upon return to their communities. In 2024, 40 women took part in the training, bringing the total number reached since the initiative began in 2021 to 101. Of those trained, 24 women received formal certification in 2024, marking a significant step toward sustainable reintegration.

In **Sudan**, PRI implemented several rehabilitation and reintegration programmes aimed at supporting people in prisons' well-being and preparing them for life after release. Notably, a soap production workshop was established in Port Sudan Prison to provide women in prison with vocational training and income-generating opportunities. Additionally, PRI developed two large-scale prison farms in Kassala and Dongola, covering a total of 31 acres (equivalent to 125,000 square metres). These farms have directly benefited approximately 2,800 people in prison, as well as prison staff and surrounding internally displaced communities. By promoting the right to food and addressing malnutrition, the initiative has improved living conditions and fostered self-sufficiency within and beyond the prison walls.

**Providing legal aid and support** has been a key achievement in 2024, reflecting the recognition that access to legal aid is essential to ensuring that individuals are treated fairly by the criminal justice system. It helps people understand and navigate complex legal processes, challenge unjust outcomes, and assert their rights. Without access to legal support, many face imprisonment simply because they cannot afford a proper defense. For those already in prison, legal aid can be a critical lifeline—opening pathways to appeal, early release, or alternative measures.

In **Central African Republic**, legal aid was provided to 160 vulnerable people detained, and mobile judicial hearings helped a further 200 people in Ngaragba prison in Bangui, amid serious levels of overcrowding.

In Türkiye, PRI's legal aid efforts were implemented through its partner organisation Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CISST). In 2024 legal assistance and human rights support was provided to 1,601 persons held in prisons and their families across 271 prisons. Communication took place via 1,939 letters and 113 hotline interactions. In parallel, legal visits to 25 prisons were conducted in 16 provinces, where four expert lawyers held one-on-one meetings

with 52 persons held in prisons, primarily in high-security institutions. A total of 3,842 rights violations were recorded and followed up through 4,542 applications to 16 national institutions. These efforts contributed significantly to addressing systemic issues such as isolation, disciplinary measures and denial of medical care, while offering targeted support to vulnerable groups, including women, children, LGBTI+ persons, persons with disabilities, and foreign nationals in detention.

In **Uganda**, legal assistance was provided to approximately 289 individuals who were released on non-custodial alternatives such as community service, reconciliation, mediation, bail and bond, while 40 received short-term sentences ranging from 1 to 6 months in custody and 4 civil debtors were released and went home after negotiation with the court bailiffs and the SACCOs leaders.

Legal counselling reached an estimated 3,500 beneficiaries, including imprisoned people and their families.

As a direct result of capacity-building for civil society by PRI in Algeria, two initiatives were launched with local NGOs to establish legal aid centres and psychological support for children in contact with the law in coordination with the Child Advancement and Protection Commission office.

Moreover, three one-stop centres for women were launched in Khartoum, Port Sudan and Blue Nile by PRI's implementing partners, The Sudanese Organization for Research and Development (SORD) and the International Center for Childhood Development and Generation for peace, offering holistic services including legal aid, psychological support, documentation assistance (e.g. ID papers and birth certificates) and child-friendly safe spaces, assisting 5,050 women directly. Furthermore, over 1,115 individuals participated in more than 100 awareness-raising sessions on gender-based violence and women's access to justice held in IDP camps, while an additional 5,000 were reached through public awareness efforts using printed materials, podcasts, social media and phone messaging.



**Image:**  
IDLO - Consolidating efforts towards gender-responsive treatment for women offenders in Uganda  
PRI staff with one of the beneficiaries during the field monitoring in Fort portal

# Our impact in 2024

## Objective 2

### Criminal justice practitioners apply human rights in their daily work.

PRI continued to engage in several conflict-affected settings in 2024, working with authorities and partners to provide basic needs for people in detention, and programmes to ensure food security and possibilities of work.

Across **Sudan**, PRI supported 8,454 people in prison through targeted interventions aimed at safeguarding their fundamental rights, including access to justice, the highest attainable standard of health and rehabilitation services even amidst ongoing conflict. In Port Sudan Central Prison, infrastructure improvements ensured that 570 people in prison now enjoy their right to clean drinking water. Access to health and an upgraded medical facility in Port Sudan, Kassala and Al-Jazira prisons. Additionally, during a cholera outbreak, emergency health measures and preventive action saved over 700 lives, highlighting PRI's steadfast commitment to protecting the right to health and delivering life-saving support in crisis settings. Additionally, five mothers and babies units that support the wellbeing of children accompanying their mothers in detention have been established in Sudan for the benefit of more than 100 children.

Enhancing oversight and data-driven policies was a cornerstone of PRI's work during 2024. We supported detention monitors in their work, including through a specialist workshop for detention monitors focused on monitoring of deaths in prison.

Another tool developed for detention monitors focused on addressing corruption in places of detention. In partnership with the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, PRI's guide outlines key risks, offers strategies for prevention and highlights the crucial oversight role of monitors, particularly in environments with weak political will.

In **Uganda**, capacity-building initiatives were also undertaken to strengthen justice processes. Trainings reached 98 police officers, 81 prosecutors, 80 local leaders and 72 prison staff, alongside 23 representatives from NGOs and faith-based institutions. Follow-up assessments showed a positive application of the knowledge gained—for example, an increased use of summonses and greater involvement in mediation, which contributed to a rise in the use of non-custodial alternatives.

In Kazakhstan, we are actively working to improve the mechanisms for the prevention of torture. Analysis of the effectiveness of the NPM institute in Kazakhstan has been carried out in cooperation with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

A practical tool for prisons on **the placement of Trans and Non-Binary People: A Guide for Prisons** was published in collaboration with Trans Europe and Central Asia (TGEU). This guide supports prison authorities in applying a human rights-based framework for the safe and respectful placement of trans and non-binary individuals in detention.

PRI also led on the production of a practical tool to support the collection of data on violence against children (VAC) in detention. Expertise and the views of affected children were key in the development. With a focus on implementation and roll-out in the **European Union**, the Tool was accompanied by a guide that sets out detailed guidance on implementing the tool effectively. The piloting of the tool started in 3 countries – **Bulgaria, Ireland and Romania** – with facilities selected and personnel engaged. A high-level transnational advocacy event in **Madrid** convened European and UN child justice experts to shape a regional strategy (and an advocacy roadmap) on VAC data collection. The event also reviewed methodologies for child participation, reinforcing commitments to child-inclusive processes.

Strengthening capacity of people working in criminal justice institutions is core to PRI's work to effect change (Strategic pathway 2 of our strategy). Training and capacity-building initiatives covered many different topics and reached many different stakeholders in 2024.



In **Yemen**, draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and investigative guidelines were developed, alongside efforts to create gender-sensitive spaces in Lahj, Aden, and Memdarah police stations – bringing the total of such spaces to 6 across Yemen. These efforts are helping to ensure greater privacy and security for women, especially those accompanied by children. A mapping of services for women and children across nine governorates was undertaken to build an effective referral case management system. The Minister of Interior’s public endorsement visit to the women’s police academy further reinforced high-level support.

In **Central African Republic**, PRI continued to support the penitentiary reform efforts, alongside the UN Peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA). This included the inaugural annual meeting of corrections staff in Bangui which served as a discussion platform for overcoming issues faced by the penitentiary administration in the country to identify short and long-term solutions. A two-month communication campaign highlighted achievements from the first phase of penitentiary reform (2019-2024) and mobilised stakeholders for the second phase (2024-2028). Workshops were also conducted with 63 stakeholders, from both government and civil society, resulting in the validation and endorsement for policies aimed at improving detention conditions for vulnerable groups and strengthening prison management. The workshops also improved the relationship between the penitentiary service and various governmental and non-governmental entities. Furthermore, in view of the resource-strained context, PRI continued to address some of the infrastructural gaps of the penitentiary facilities by supplying computer equipment and ensuring access to the internet across central and regional services to enhance their operational capacity and inter-connectivity.

Our work in Yemen continued under the Women Peace and Security Agenda. Until the end of 2024, over 1,200 women police officers benefitted from various training programmes at the women’s police academy in Aden that PRI established in 2020. These workshops covered various areas such as investigative interviewing, gender-sensitive policing, and international standards for working with women in contact with the law.

Other gender-sensitive justice training was part of our work in **Uganda**, where training of prison officers led to increased knowledge on gender-sensitive reintegration for women. A rehabilitation manual for gender-responsive approaches was also published. For police, a gender-sensitive policing curriculum and manual for use in training law enforcement officers was finalised and launched. In **Armenia**, a Training of Trainers (ToT) on dynamic security was held in June for 14 prison staff and a workshop reaching 15 stakeholders (on criminal subcultures addressed issues like inter-prisoner violence, informal prisoner hierarchies and systemic reforms needed to improve prison conditions and ensure rehabilitation. This work was delivered under the AISPIRA project which was closed in September 2024 with a high-level event involving government stakeholders and project evaluators. The event fostered dialogue on sustaining reforms in prisons and probation.

Also, in **Central African Republic**, newly recruited prison personnel were trained, followed by a swearing-in ceremony for 295 new staff – contributing to the demilitarisation process of the prisons.



# Our impact in 2024

## Objective 3

### Fewer people are criminalised, sanctioned and imprisoned.

In 2024, PRI made significant steps towards integrating the voices and experiences of individuals directly impacted by criminal justice systems into our work.

We published the 10-point plan for involving people with lived experience in criminal justice reform, focusing on fragile and conflict-affected settings. This plan, enriched by insights from projects PRI implemented in Armenia, Indonesia and Uganda, promotes practical knowledge, human rights protection and meaningful engagement in reform efforts. It emphasises the importance of involving people with lived experience in developing, implementing and monitoring policy reforms, ensuring their participation is equitable, informed and impactful.

PRI's group of 'Experts by Experience', established in 2023, met two times in 2024 and finalised its Charter. The overall aim of the group is to update each other on the work the members are engaged in. We also asked the group for feedback to two important documents: the new strategy and the 10 Point plan for involving people with lived experience in reform. The meetings generally provide a safe and supportive space, serving as a source of inspiration for the members to continue with the valuable work they do.

In **Armenia**, PRI brought together individuals with lived experience of the justice system and government and civil society representatives to inform evidence-based criminal justice reforms under the title of, 'Adding Seats to the Table'. A tailored training session for 7 people with lived experience (PWLE) prepared them for the dialogue with 25 officials and civil society representatives, providing space for PWLE to share experiences and shape future reforms. This novel approach introduced the first platform in the country where criminal justice policies and practices were constructively examined

and tested based on the experiences of people with lived experience from diverse backgrounds. PRI strived to centre the voices of people with lived experience in its UN advocacy work. At the 67th Commission on Narcotic Drugs, PRI co-hosted a side event on opioid agonist treatment in prisons, featuring speakers from networks of people who use drugs. At the Human Rights Council's 57th Session, PRI co-sponsored events on digital technologies in justice and prison labour, including contributions from people affected by electronic monitoring in England and Wales and prison labour in the United States.

As part of the Global Campaign to Decriminalise Poverty and Status, PRI co-organised a side event at the 68th Commission on the Status of Women in New York, highlighting how poverty and punitive legal systems disproportionately affect women. The event, supported by international stakeholders and featuring voices of women with lived experience, called for urgent reform. PRI also facilitated sub-grants to eight global projects addressing the criminalisation of poverty and status, focusing on key priorities such as homelessness, petty offences and discriminatory law enforcement.

Reducing the use of life imprisonment remained a priority for PRI in 2024. A pioneering policy briefing on informal life imprisonment, was co-published with the University of Nottingham, shedding light on this often overlooked but harsh and indefinite form of punishment. The report calls for greater transparency, safeguards and accountability in how life sentences are imposed and implemented, aligning with international human rights standards.

Promotion of non-custodial alternatives to imprisonment had several strands to it during the year. PRI supported the largest World Congress on Probation and Parole hosted by the Dutch Probation Service in the Hague in April. We showcased our work and actively engaged authorities, stakeholders and people with lived experience from across different regions including Palestine, Kuwait, Kenya, Armenia, and Zambia through three impactful sessions:

- Guidelines for human rights-based electronic monitoring;
- Child-friendly probation from a global perspective;
- establishing new probation systems in emerging states.

PRI joined a new global consortium working to **abolish the death penalty worldwide**, reinforcing our long-standing commitment to ending this inhumane and irreversible punishment. Through this civil society consortium, funded by the EU, we are contributing expertise on alternatives to the sentence, ensuring they are humane, and advocacy at multilateral level.

A major step was also taken by working towards mapping out legal aid providers in **Sudanese states**, with the aim of laying down the foundation for establishing a national legal aid system. The work also included establishing two legal aid centres in Kassala, operated by PRI's local partner, the Sudanese Organization for Research and Development (SORD) and in Port Sudan in partnership with the International Center for Childhood Development, which successfully handled 350 cases between them to support women access to justice. An additional two Legal aid offices were also set up in Port Sudan and Kassala prisons, staffed by dedicated lawyers to provide legal aid for people in prison and help facilitating their release.

In **Uganda**, a multi-pronged strategy was implemented, to address the ever-increasing number of people in prison (reaching record highs) through advocacy, legal aid and capacity-building. A national Roundtable on alternatives to imprisonment convened 53 stakeholders from judiciary, law enforcement, CSOs and the media. **61 prosecutors** were trained on non-custodial sentencing and 40 community monitors were trained in Masindi and Mbarara to support local oversight (for example by local councils).

Advocacy to see improved policies, strategies and coordination among different states in 2024 took different forms. In **Algeria**, in partnership with Algeria's Prison Administration (DGAPR), two significant events were convened in 2024. In February, a high-level roundtable with over 100 stakeholders—including government, NGOs and foreign government embassies—built consensus on justice reform and civil society collaboration.

In June 2024, a national conference, attended by 120 stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives and international partners, presented a strategic roadmap for cooperation between civil society and justice sector institutions. The roadmap outlined frameworks to strengthen collaboration in the promotion of justice and human rights. This effectively positioned CSOs as essential stakeholders in Algeria's justice reform landscape and laid a strong foundation for continued dialogue and partnership with the government.

In Libya, a new initiative by PRI brought together four governmental institutions, civil society and academia to build capacity on post-conflict justice systems. The programme emphasised the role of civil society in protecting rights and facilitating access to justice, while creating a platform for collaboration between public institutions and non-state actors.

In the State of **Kuwait**, and as part of a cooperation agreement between PRI and the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies—an entity affiliated with the Ministry of Justice—two workshops were held for heads and members of the Public Prosecution. A total of 60 participants took part across two sessions, under the theme “Enhancing the Effectiveness of Justice.” The workshops focused on ensuring that justice practices at all stages uphold human dignity and human rights, operate within the bounds of the law, and enforce justice without infringing on individual rights and freedoms beyond what is legally permitted. A key recommendation emerging from the sessions was the importance of ongoing in-service training for Public Prosecution personnel to keep pace with evolving justice systems. Participants also proposed the development of the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies into a regional training centre serving the Gulf and Middle East regions.

In **Europe**, a new project kicked off in September with partners across Ireland, Romania, Spain and Ukraine, to address safeguarding children's procedural rights in the digital age.

## Spotlight:

# 10 Years of Global Prison Trends

2024 marked a major milestone for Penal Reform International with the **tenth edition of our flagship Global Prison Trends report** – a decade of documenting, analysing and influencing the state of prison systems worldwide. Published in collaboration with the Thailand Institute of Justice, the series has become a key resource for understanding global developments in prison systems and the wider use of imprisonment.

Each edition has highlighted emerging challenges and persistent issues, including overcrowding, pre-trial detention, health and mental health in prisons, prison labour, the use of technology in criminal justice and gender-specific needs. The 2024 report placed particular focus on corruption in prisons, disparities in prison work, and the growing use of digital tools in detention settings, while also exploring sustainability and rehabilitation initiatives.



**Global Prison Trends 2024** is available in multiple languages, including:

- English,
- Arabic,
- French,
- Spanish,
- Russian,
- Thai, and
- Turkish.

It is widely used by practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors and regularly informs multilateral advocacy and reform efforts. The report has been launched in a variety of settings, ranging from UN forums to civil society events and academic institutions.

**DOWNLOAD NOW**







# STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS



# Stakeholders and partners

*In 2024, PRI deepened and developed partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders globally, recognising collaboration as essential to achieving our mission.*

## Criminal justice practitioners

PRI works with, and targets duty bearers, including both high-level management and frontline staff who interact daily with people at police stations or in prisons. Typical institutions involved include prisons, probation services, courts, prosecutors, judges, magistrates, police and law enforcement agencies, and lawyers. We also work with detention monitoring bodies such as members of National Preventive Mechanisms.

PRI welcomed Kuwait’s National Diwan for Human Rights to explore shared priorities and lay the groundwork for future collaboration on justice and human rights reform which led to training initiatives as a starting point.

In addition to an MOU that was Signed with National Human Rights Committee in Qatar that aims at enhancing cooperation in the field of training and capacity building for justice system institutions in Qatar and at global and regional level.

Our collaboration with authorities and national practitioners is often to give practical support and knowledge on best practices, innovative solutions, etc. For instance, we facilitated a study visit for an Armenian delegation to the Netherlands for prison and probation officers. This visit was an opportunity for them to observe innovative practices in rehabilitation and community reintegration, which could be adapted and implemented in Armenia.

## Criminal justice influencers

PRI works with a wide range of criminal justice institutions and people who influence the criminal justice system. Stakeholders include government ministries such as justice and interior, politicians, lawmakers, civil society organisations, academic institutions, National Human Rights Institutions, intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations, the African Commission on Human Rights, the European Union, the Council of Europe, as well as funders and philanthropists. Local communities are also a key target group with whom we must build strong and lasting relationships to support reform. At the heart of our efforts are people with lived and direct experience of the criminal justice system, a commitment we uphold through initiatives like PRI’s Experts by Experience group.

In 2024 we worked with, supported, and followed the work of key inter-governmental organisations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Much of this engagement is aimed at advocating for the elaboration, development and adoption of human rights standards both internationally and regionally, as well as using multilateral spaces to promote their effective implementation at national level.

Throughout 2024, we collaborated with civil society organisations, both within our practical programmes and at the multilateral international level, in a spirit of solidarity and shared purpose – strengthening capacity, fostering coordination, and amplifying the collective impact on criminal justice reform, even in the face of an increasingly challenging environment for all of civil society as a whole.

# We are part of

Global Campaign to Decriminalise Poverty and Status  
including as a member of the Global Campaign  
Coordinating Committee (GCCC)

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Global Initiative on Justice with Children

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Vienna Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal  
Justice

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WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform

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Partos

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The Dutch National Action Plan 1325 partnership  
(promoting Women, Peace and Security agenda)

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Informal CSO Group on Health in Prison, of which PRI is  
Secretariat

---

Informal Coalition on Life Imprisonment, which PRI  
convenes

---

World Coalition against the Death Penalty, of which PRI is a  
Steering Committee member

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Human Rights Democracy Network (Brussels)

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Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs

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Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children of  
Incarcerated Parents

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World Health Organisations' Health in Prisons Programme's  
Steering Committee

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Image: Pexels





# COMMUNICATIONS PUBLICATIONS



# Communications

## Website



## Blogs

PRI’s expert blog continued to offer a space in 2024 for exploring new research, emerging issues, and expert perspectives on criminal justice reform.

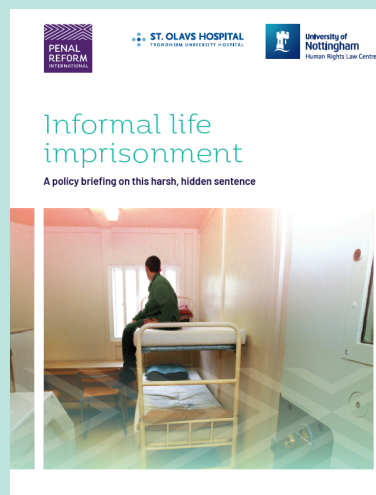
- [Growth – an emerging new philosophy, to transform culture in detention](#)
- [Findings From Auditing Prisons In Malawi: A Data Driven Approach To SDG16.3.2](#)
- [Five takeaways from #CSW68 on the criminalisation of women linked to poverty](#)
- [Building Probation Role and Capacity – Learning from European Experience of Probation Service Development](#)
- [Understanding and supporting the needs of neurodivergent people in prisons is a human rights issue](#)
- [A turning point for detention in Europe: Political support for detention houses](#)
- [Beyond capacity: Europe’s prison overcrowding challenge](#)

Our overall blogs were read over **1,800** times over the year – showing steady engagement, with readers spending time on pages and interacting with the content in meaningful ways. These patterns show that PRI’s blog is helping to spark dialogue and share knowledge across our global network.



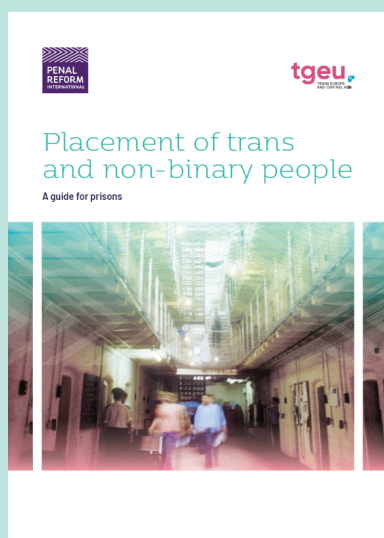
## Global Prison Trends 2024

The Global Prison Trends 2024 report is the 10th edition in this flagship series, offering a detailed overview of the major developments and challenges in prison systems around the world. Published in collaboration with the Thailand Institute of Justice, this edition sheds light on key issues such as prison overcrowding, the mental health crisis in prisons, corruption, and the growing use of digital technologies.



## Informal life imprisonment

A policy briefing co-published with the University of Nottingham on this harsh, hidden sentence. This briefing explores the overlooked use of informal life imprisonment globally, urging humane, transparent practices aligned with international standards, and offering recommendations for policy reform and better implementation.



## Placement of trans and non-binary people: A guide for prisons

This guide by Penal Reform International and TGEU outlines a human rights-based framework for placing trans and non-binary people in prison, promoting safer, more inclusive practices across detention systems.



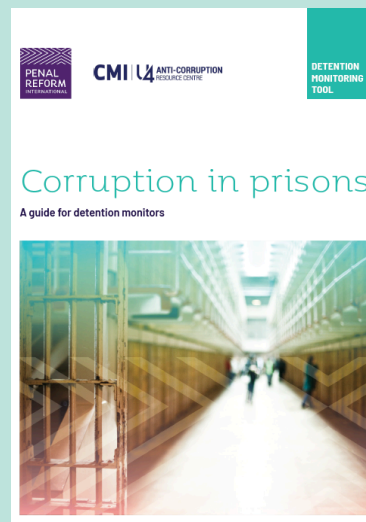
## 10 point plan on Involving people with lived experience in criminal justice reform:

A focus on fragile and conflict-affected settings. This ten-point plan supports policymakers and practitioners in involving people with lived experience in criminal justice reform, with strategies drawn from PRI's work in Armenia, Indonesia, and Uganda.



## A new five-year Strategy. Criminal justice reform with human rights at its core

This strategy builds on PRI's 35 years of dedicated work, which has promoted systemic change and has positively affected countless lives and communities. Our new strategy outlines our vision for the next five years, to establish human rights as the foundation of criminal justice reform.



## Corruption in prisons: a guide for detention monitors

This guide, co-published by PRI and the [U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre](#), offers an overview of corruption risks in prisons and recommends steps for addressing them. It is intended for use by various monitoring bodies, including National Preventive Mechanisms, National Human Rights Institutions, judicial monitors, ombudsperson offices and civil society organisations, as well as policymakers and prison staff.



## Ending violence against children in detention in the EU

This Working Paper draws on recent comprehensive research on children's experiences of violence within detention facilities across the EU. It provides an overview of the critical issues related to violence against children (VAC) in these facilities, highlighting the urgent need for action based on evidence. The paper reveals significant gaps in data collection and inconsistencies in legal frameworks across EU countries—issues that violate children's rights, impact their physical and mental well-being and obstruct effective policy responses.



# Social media engagement

## LinkedIn



Impressions

**11,198**



New followers

**1,142**



New profile views

**5,543**



**3,579**  
**clicks**



**951**  
**reactions**



**90**  
**reposts**

## X (Twitter)

### Performance Breakdown



Posts published

**97**



Estimated total reach

**36K**



Enagements

**625**



Total followers

**5.5K+**

# Our funders and supporters

Penal Reform International is grateful for the following organisations and institutions for their financial and/or pro bono support in 2024.

## Pro bono contributions

During 2024, PRI was supported generously by some of the world’s leading law firms and counsel on a pro bono basis. This gave us substantial access to top legal expertise and resources on criminal justice matters as well as operational matters.

- Linklaters LLP: between 2015 – 2025, 4,382 hours, with 92 hours in 2024.
- Baker & McKenzie LLP
- Baker & McKenzie Amsterdam NV
- Norton Rose Fulbright LLP
- Osborne Clarke SRL/BV
- Pinsent Masons LLP

## We need your support!

Since 1989, Penal Reform International has worked in over 90 countries to make criminal justice systems fairer, more effective and grounded in human rights. Your donation enables us to respond rapidly during crises, deliver legal aid, promote access to healthcare in detention and provide expert guidance to authorities on protecting people in custody. By donating, you become part of a global community committed to protecting the rights and dignity of people in contact with criminal justice systems.



## Our Expenditure in 2024

	Direct costs	Support & Governance costs	2024 Total
Raising funds	133,722	7,738	141,460
Activities			
Advocating for Prison and Penal Reform at international, regional and local levels	444,325	20,854	465,179
Reducing the use of imprisonment	293,807	13,790	307,597
Prevention of torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment	96,264	4,518	100,782
Abolition of the death penalty and humane alternatives	71,695	3,365	75,060
Child-friendly justice systems	617,432	28,977	646,409
Gender-sensitive justice systems	2,299,728	107,932	2,407,660
Emerging trends and challenges in criminal justice systems	31,823	1,493	33,316
Rehabilitation and reintegration	349,321	16,395	365,716
Humane, rights-based detention conditions	310,288	14,563	324,851
Totals	4,648,405	219,625	4,868,030

## Donors

A4ID Advocates for International Development	5,487
Avocats sans Frontières	194,155
CMI (CHR. Michelsen Institute)	7,117
Cornell University Law School	31,062
Council of Europe	6,800
Directorate of Norwegian Correctional service	23,150
Embassy of France (Sudan)	789,136
Embassy of France (Uganda)	2,700
European Union	1,698,198
Europris	10,000
Individual donations	6,562
Interest	23,042
IDLO (International Development Law Organisation)	213,520
ILANUD	13,382
KMF (Knowledge Management Fund)	17,266
Linklaters LLP	29,375
Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, The Netherlands	782,864
Norwegian Embassy Sudan	125,700
Nuffic	73,763
Thailand Institute of Justice	84,566
The Netherlands Helsinki Committee	36,756
UNICEF	52,655
UNODC	192,722
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	178,664
University of Nottingham	13,958
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,612,600</b>





## Organisational model

PRI is an independent international non-governmental organisation operating globally through offices in multiple locations. Our headquarters are in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, with regional and country programmes based in Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Uganda. In other regions, such as South-East Asia and South America, we collaborate with civil society partners without maintaining a physical office. This structure supports the diversity of our global presence, overseen by headquarters to ensure strategic alignment, centralisation of financial and operations matters and a shared approach to our work, while remaining context-specific.

## Our implementation model:

### Headquarters

- \* Our headquarters develop and oversee the global implementation of PRI's Theory of Change and strategy. Headquarters also leads the development and implementation Strategic Pathway 3 on Advocacy through our Policy Programme. Central services, including programme development and fundraising, monitoring, evaluation and learning, finance, administration and human resources (through our Governance and strategy programmes), are based at HQ.

### Regional programmes

- \* Our regional offices implement PRI's projects within their respective regions. They are staffed with nationals from the region, bringing expertise, experience and context-relevant knowledge. Many of our programmes are implemented in partnership with civil society organisations. In some cases, country offices are established for larger, long-term projects (for example in Yemen, Sudan and the Central African Republic).

## FAIR AND EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

PRI employs an international staff team who operates globally through offices in multiple locations in 2024: Amman, Amsterdam, Astana, Kampala, London, and Tbilisi.

It is led by PRI's Management Team.

### Management team

[See our Management Team](#)

### Membership Council

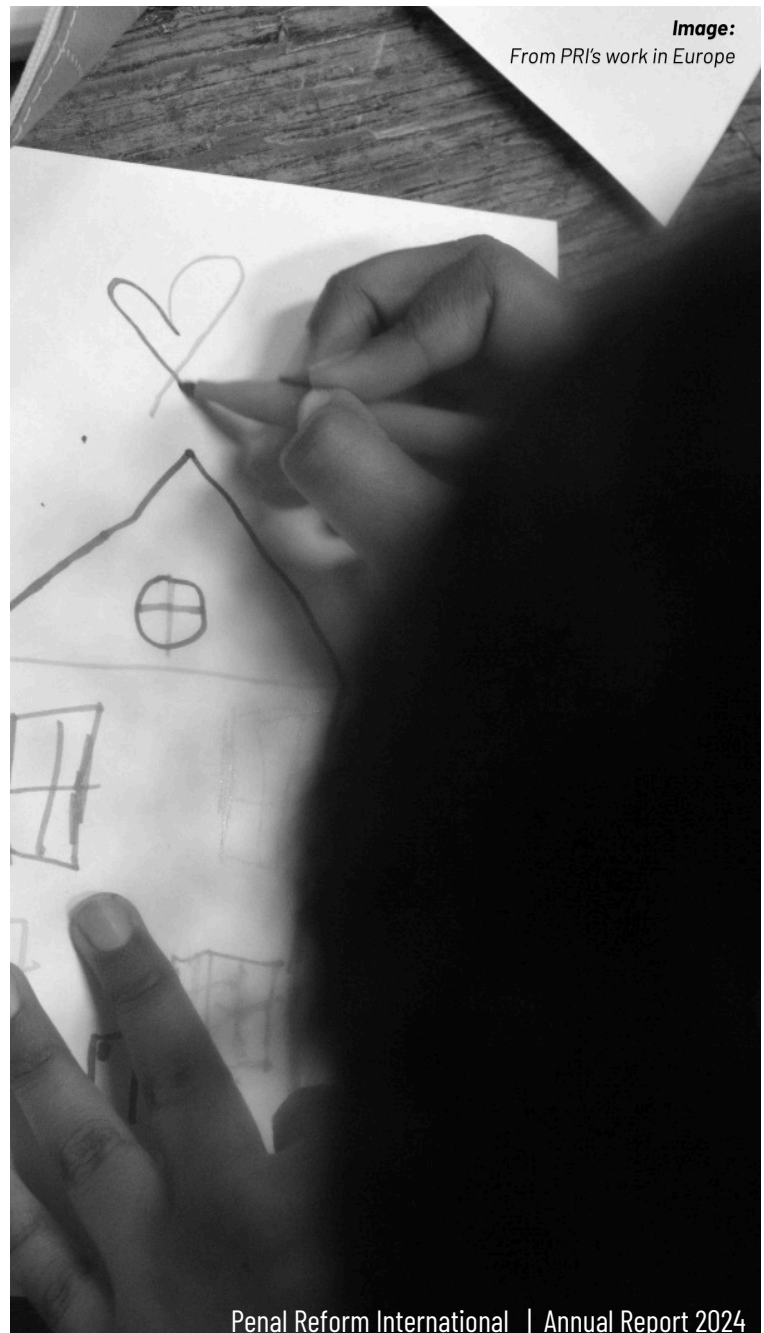
The Membership Council, consisting of nine members representing diverse regions, approves the annual report and financial statements, elects organisational officers who constitute the Board (4 people), and oversees significant decisions like amendments to the Articles and organisational strategy.

[See the profiles of our Membership Council](#)

### Advisory Council

PRI's Advisory Council are appointed by PRI's Membership Council, and composed of human rights and criminal justice experts who are committed to actively helping PRI achieve its ambitions through a range of activities and means of engagement.

[See profiles of our Advisory Council](#)





## FAIR AND EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### **Headquarters and Europe Programme**

Amsterdam Law Hub  
University of Amsterdam  
Nieuwe Achtergracht 164  
1018WV Amsterdam  
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### **Headquarters**

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### **Penal Reform International in Middle East and North Africa**





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