

AFRICA PRETRIAL JUSTICE MONITOR



Africa Pretrial Justice Monitor

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Notice Board

ICPS Digest: The International Centre for Prison Studies has released the 16th edition of its News Digest. The Digest contains updated prison population statistics and several articles on conditions of detention in African prisons. The Digest is available at <http://www.prisonstudies.org/news.html>

Country Reports

ANGOLA

Increase in police brutality: The Global Post reported that a number of human rights organisations have denounced the recent escalation in incidences of police brutality against civilians. The report noted that in recent months, there have been high levels of police violence against peaceful protests, street vendors, journalists, activists and human rights defenders. Reported by The Global Post, 4 September 2013, at <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130904/angola-rights-groups-denounce-rising-police-violence> Also reported <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/27/us-angola-prison-idUSBRE98Q0T620130927>

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Prison escape: Radio Okapi reported that 16 Inmates escaped from Minova Prison on 5 September 2013. Two of the escapees were reportedly convicted offenders whereas the remaining 14 were remand detainees. Reported by Radio Okapi, 6 September 2013, at <http://radiookapi.net/en-bref/2013/09/06/sud-kivu-16-detenus-sevadent-de-la-prison-de-minova/> (Original in French)

EGYPT

Custody time limits quashed: World bulletin reported that Egypt's interim President Adly Mansour has issued a legislative amendment that removes the maximum period of pre-trial detention for detainees facing the death penalty and life sentences. Previously, the maximum period of pre-trial detention for defendants facing the death penalty was 24 months. For those facing life sentences, it was 18 months. The report notes that it is not yet clear why the legislative amendment was issued. Reported by World Bulletin, 26 September 2013, at <http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=119008>

GABON

Torture and overcrowding in detention facilities: Gabon Review reported that a new head of prison administration was appointed on 23 September 2013. On the list of issues that will soon be addressed by the new head is the eradication of torture in detention facilities as well as prison overcrowding. Reported by Désiré Dzonteu, 25 September 2013, at <http://gabonreview.com/blog/un-nouveau-patron-pour-lunivers-carceral-gabonais/> (Original in French).

LIBERIA

Journalist detained: News24 reported that Liberia has rejected calls from the Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters Without Borders to release the editor of a newspaper who was detained last month in connection with having reported on corruption within the government. The editor reportedly published a series of stories criticising ministerial inability to account for funds. Reported by News24, 3 September 2013, at <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Liberia-keeps-editor-in-jail-20130904>

LIBYA

Thousands in militia prisons: allAfrica.com reported that thousands of people are being detained in militia prisons, which are excluded from any form of state control. Many of the detainees are reportedly being subjected to ill-treatment and torture. The report notes that the United Nations has reported that it has gathered evidence suggesting that at least ten deaths in militia institutions were a result of torture. Reported by allAfrica.com, 26 September 2013, at http://allafrica.com/stories/201309241066.html?aa_source=mfhdlns

SENEGAL

Technology to assist in overcoming lengthy detention: Rewmi reported that the digitalisation of the country's detention system would hopefully bring about an end to lengthy periods of pre-trial imprisonment. The report also notes that it may also improve prison conditions to the point where the country's prisons comply with international standards. Reported by Rewmi, 19 September 2013, at http://www.rewmi.com/Sidiki-Kaba-evoque-des-choses-pas-acceptables-dans-les-prisons_a82622.html

SOUTH AFRICA

Detainees escape: IOL reported that two remand detainees escaped whilst being transported from court to prison, in Mpumalanga. The detainees reportedly managed to cut through the steel bars at the rear of the vehicle. The report states that it is unknown what charges they were facing in court. Reported by IOL, 1 September 2013, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/awaiting-trial-prisoners-escape-1.1570995#.Ukk7uX9sRWA>

White Paper on Remand Detention: The Mail and Guardian reported that the new draft White Paper on Remand Detention was approved during the week of 1 September 2013. One of the circumstances that the White Paper seeks to prevent is lengthy remand detention, and reportedly emphasises the importance of speedy prosecutions. The report notes that civil society organisations have stated that although the policy is an important step forward, little will be achieved unless the entire criminal justice system undertakes to improve pretrial justice. Reported by Sarah Evans, 6 September 2013, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-09-06-00-white-paper-promises-changes-for-those-awaiting-trial> also reported at <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/new-rules-awaiting-trial-prisoners>

Man detained in Pakistan: eNCA reported that a South African citizen in Pakistan to visit his ailing mother was arrested and detained after being apprehended at a roadblock in Lahore. His family have not heard from his since. The Department of International Relations is reportedly assisting the man's family. Reported by eNCA, 17 September 2013, at <http://enca.com/south-africa/south-african-man-detained-pakistan> Also reported at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/fresh-plea-for-kabul-to-free-sa-prisoner-1.1578129#.UkmB839sRWA>

SOUTH SUDAN

Opinion piece on pretrial detention: allAfrica.com published an opinion piece by Victor Lowilla, the Director of the Legal Aid Department at the South Sudan Law society. The article discusses the extreme delays in the processing of criminal cases and examines the ways in which the government is failing to address the problem. The article was published on 22 September 2013 and is available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201309231410.html>

TUNISIA

Allegations of mistreatment: allAfrica.com published a press release from the Arab Network for Human Right Information that alleges that two remand detainees, charged under a 2003 'anti-terrorism' law, filed complaints of ill-treatment in mid-August 2013. Despite such complaints, the report notes that neither the general prosecutor nor the investigative judge have opened an investigation into these allegations, nor have they ordered a medical examination of either prisoner to record physical evidence of abuse. Reported by allAfrica.com, 1 September 2013, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201309020393.html>

UGANDA

Police shooting encouraged: The Daily Monitor reported that police management in Uganda have reintroduced the 2002 "Operation Wembley" method, whereby the flying squad unit are authorised to shoot-to-kill suspected burglars on sight. The Wembley method, criticised by human rights groups, was reportedly reintroduced in an effort to combat organised crime in Kampala and the surrounding suburbs. Reported by Abubaker Lubowa, 3 September 2013, at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Police+in+shoot+to+kill+move+against+robbers/-/688334/1977256/-/ccb51sz/-/index.html>

Global Campaign for Pretrial Justice

On any given day, an estimated three million people around the world are behind bars awaiting trial. Many will spend months and even years in detention - without being tried or found guilty - languishing under worse conditions than people convicted of crimes and sentenced to prison. To address the over-reliance on pretrial detention and promote greater

access to legal assistance, the Global Campaign for Pretrial Justice is working to gather empirical evidence to document the scale and gravity of the problem; pilot innovative practices and methodologies, to identify effective, low-cost solutions; and build a forum for sharing knowledge among practitioners, researchers and policymakers. For more information on the Global Campaign for Pretrial Justice, please visit http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/focus/criminal_justice/projects/globalcampaign

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