



International Centre for Prison Studies

ICPS NEWS DIGEST

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Welcome to the tenth edition of the ICPS News Digest, a selection of news items from around the world on prison and the use of imprisonment. We aim in the Digest to cover all regions and include new developments in policy and practice, as well as information from official and intergovernmental bodies. The Digest is produced bi-monthly and this issue covers the period from 1 July to 31 August 2012. Please click on the blue highlighted words to access the news reports.

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Prison populations

Prison overcrowding continues to cause problems in many countries. The Acting Superintendent of Prisons in [Antigua](#) has said that urgent measures are needed to address the growing population at the country's already crowded prison, which was built to hold 150 prisoners but is currently holding 352. In the remand section 12 prisoners are held in a cell that measures 12 x 9 feet, and with only three beds per cell many prisoners sleep on blankets on the floor.

[Iran](#)'s chief prison official has said that Iran has about 220,000 prisoners, with some jails housing as many as six times the number of prisoners they were designed to hold. Iran's prison population has increased by at least 35 percent over the past three years largely due to a greater focus on prosecuting drug related crimes.

In [Uganda](#) 32,967 prisoners are being held in prisons with capacity for 14,493, leaving limited resources severely stretched. The prison administration reported that whilst the prisons are one of the highest producers of food in the country, they do not have enough money to feed the prisoners.

[Liberia](#)'s Solicitor General has revealed that the overcrowding at South Beach Prison, where 1,015 prisoners are held in a facility built for 375, means that four prisoners have to stand in a space intended for one meaning they must take it in turns to sleep. He also stated that about 85 or 90 percent of the prisoners are unconvicted.

[Colombia](#)'s Justice Ministry has announced new measures to stop the problem of overcrowding in the country's prisons. The Justice Minister said home detention and the transfer of prisoners from overcrowded prisons to others represented a first step towards this goal.

In Western [Australia](#) 46 prisoners at Bandyup Women's Prison in Perth have to sleep on the floor as the prison's population reached 300. The prison was originally designed to hold 180 but double bunking has increased its capacity to 260. The Corrective Services minister insisted that his department was dealing with the problem.

In the [US](#) the California Corrections Department has admitted it is unlikely to reduce its prison population to 137.5 percent of capacity by the June 2013 deadline set by the US Supreme Court. Instead it will ask for the cap to be raised to 145 percent, arguing that it had made great progress in improving the quality of healthcare which was the Court's main concern when setting the cap. Also in the [US](#), the prison population in Texas has fallen to its lowest level since 2008. While experts say that a decrease in crime rates, changes in demographics and an ageing state population have combined to mean fewer prisoners, judges are also increasingly sentencing people to alternative treatment and rehabilitation programmes that have proven more effective while also being cheaper than imprisonment.

In [Sri Lanka](#) it has been reported that over 15,000 people are in prison for failing to pay fines, more than half of the total number of people entering prison in 2011. Failure to pay a fine has become a major contributor to prison congestion in the country. To increase capacity in the prison system almost all the major prisons are being relocated to the suburbs.

Prison cells in the [Netherlands](#) do not meet the required European standard and there are questions over the doubling of the number of female prisoners, according to a report by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture. While the total number of prisoners fell from 20,000 to 15,000 between 2004 and 2010 the number of women prisoners doubled to 8.7 percent, the highest in Europe.

In [Fiji](#) statistics provided by the Corrections Service show that over half of the prison population, 819 out of the 1,375 prisoners, are youths, defined as those aged between 21 and 35 years of age. An official said the majority of youths in the prison system were jailed for marijuana related offences.

In [Malaysia](#) there were 9,757 foreigners serving sentences in the country's prisons in the first six months of this year, making up around 27 percent of the prison population.

Many countries are using national occasions as an opportunity to release prisoners and ease overcrowding. [Thailand](#) released 25,000 prisoners to commemorate the recent birthdays of

the Queen and Crown Prince. 377 prisoners were released in [Malawi](#) to mark 48 years of independence. The King of [Morocco](#) granted royal pardon to 562 people, including 371 who were released on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr, an occasion which also saw the release of 130 prisoners in [Iran](#). In [India](#) 750 prisoners held in Tihar Prison were granted remission on their sentence of up to 45 days as part of the country's 66th Independence Day celebrations.

Health

The Provincial Health Office in Aklan Province, the [Philippines](#), will conduct a TB in Prison Programme, which will identify prisoners who are showing signs and symptoms of TB. The activity will involve the provision of health information and education, directly observed treatment shortcourse (DOTS) orientation, identification of TB symptoms and consultation to a total of 405 prisoners.

In [Russia](#) the number of complaints to doctors by prisoners in Moscow has increased significantly and the mortality rate among them has dropped by 19 percent in the first half of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011 according to a Moscow prosecutor.

The Kanombe Military Hospital in partnership with the [Rwanda](#) Correctional Service is aiming to treat 3,400 prisoners with eye problems around the country over a period of 42 days. The treatment will include correcting all eye problems, including operations to treat blindness and cataracts, and the provision of glasses for those who need them.

In Western [Australia](#) the State Government's much anticipated plan to hold intellectually disabled people indefinitely in dedicated secure units rather than prisons because they are unfit to stand trial for alleged crimes has been dealt a blow. The Mental Health Minister scrapped two centres just a week after announcing the \$18 million units for 20 people would be built and opened by 2014. The Minister said she had been advised they would be unlikely to get council approval and the Government was looking for alternative locations for the units.

A study on The Mental Health of Prison Entrants in [Australia](#) 2010 found that the number of prison entrants with a history of mental health problems is about two and a half times higher than that of the general population. The study used data from the 2010 National Prisoner Health Census which found that 31 percent of prison entrants surveyed said they had been told by a medical professional that they had a mental health disorder. A separate report found that in Queensland, [Australia](#), nearly 90 percent of indigenous women and 73 percent of indigenous men in the state's prisons have a diagnosed mental illness.

Rimutaka prison in [New Zealand](#) is set to open the country's first dementia unit later this year. The Corrections Department confirmed the 'high dependency unit' will be created for some of the 120 prisoners aged over 65 who struggle with daily tasks such as showering themselves.

In the [US](#) around 60 percent of doctors working in Louisiana's prisons have been disciplined by the state medical board for issues ranging from paedophilia to substance abuse compared to two percent of the state's licensed medical doctors, according to data from the

Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners. The executive director of the Board said doctors with serious issues are allowed to practice medicine “only because we’re convinced that’s a perfectly safe thing to do.”

During the first six months of 2012 the number of prisoners committing suicide in [Portuguese](#) prisons quadrupled in comparison with the same period in 2011, from two to eight, according to data from the General Prison Services Board. Since 2008 75 people have died in prison in [New Zealand](#), where the suicide rate is 11 times higher than in the general population. The coroner investigated 37 of those deaths, recording 13 as suicide, a trend the ombudsman called “a serious concern” in a 2011 report, recommending responsibility for healthcare should be removed from Corrections.

Drugs

A report by the [Australian](#) National Council on Drugs (ANCD) found that in New South Wales 42 percent of male and 54 percent of female prisoners were reported to be using at least one illicit drug regularly or almost daily in 2009, while some 92 percent of Queensland prisoners being released from custody were found to have a history of illegal drug use. The ANCD criticised state prison authorities for placing more emphasis on drug detection dogs and urine testing than with running drug treatment programmes.

In [Australian](#) Capital Territory (ACT), the state government has announced a renewed push to introduce a needle and syringe exchange programme in the Alexander Maconochie Centre which would see prisoners given clean needles to safely inject drugs as the government attempts to combat the spread of hepatitis C among prisoners. Drug counselling and support will be offered alongside the needle exchange. The plan will make ACT the first jurisdiction in Australia and the English speaking world to have a needle exchange in a prison setting.

Officials from the US Embassy in Nassau, [Bahamas](#), have donated 2,000 units of drug testers, along with a Body Orifice Security Scanner Chair and two cellular telephone detectors, to HM Prisons. The Prison Superintendent says the equipment will not only further strengthen the prison’s efforts to reduce the amount of drug contraband coming into the facility but will also help to facilitate its drug treatment programmes as it will enable the authorities to identify more quickly the prisoners who have drug addictions.

The [New Zealand](#) Corrections Minister has officially opened the expanded drug and alcohol treatment unit at Hawke’s Bay prison, as part of the Government’s target of reducing reoffending by 25 percent by 2017. A new intensive addiction programme for low security segregated prisoners will see an extra 120 prisoners receive treatment each year at the prison. Across the country 33,100 additional prisoners will receive new and expanded drug and alcohol treatment in prisons and in the community, an increase of almost 500 percent.

Treatment of prisoners

A report issued by a group of [Egyptian](#) human rights organisations has revealed that prisoners are subjected to 'inhumane' tests following visits by their family members. The report, which focused on Tora prison, stated that prisoners are forced to drink water with soap, which causes severe vomiting and diarrhoea, so that the prison administration can make sure their stomachs do not contain any prohibited items. The report also noted the deplorable conditions in which prisoners live due to overcrowded cells, lack of proper ventilation, shortage of medical supplies and absence of leisure breaks.

Prisoners in Queensland, [Australia](#), claim they are being fed rotten fruit and vegetables and meals that don't meet basic nutritional requirements, forcing them to spend their weekly allowance on vitamins and tins of tuna instead of on toiletries or phone calls to their families. The Department of Corrective Services strenuously denied the claims. In Western [Australia](#) the state government has announced plans to halve the number of prisoners it transports to funerals in order to meet budget cuts. It wants to save more than \$500,000 by allowing prisoners to 'virtually' attend funerals streamed over the internet and by holding memorial services in jail.

A court has ordered the [French](#) state of New Caledonia to pay compensation to 30 prisoners for detaining them in inhumane conditions. The men were held at the Camp Est prison in Noumea, which they claim was not only overcrowded but infested with rats and cockroaches. They complained they were expected to use the toilets in full view of their cellmates and that their sheets were only changed every two months. Sixty more prisoners are now hoping to take up cases against the state.

A report released by the public defender's office in [Georgia](#) following the inspection of the N8 prison in Gldani found that many prisoners had been awaiting transfer to other prisons for a long time, and without being provided with a firm timetable for their transfer. Prisoners are only allowed 15 – 20 minutes exercise per day, the prison shop lacks healthy products such as fruit and vegetables, and prisoners are only allowed brief phone privileges twice per month.

Over 100 prisoners went on hunger strike and five slashed their veins at a high security prison in southern [Russia](#) over the controversial death of a fellow prisoner. Rights activists insist that the prisoner, Sergei Lasko, was beaten to death by the officials at the prison in Salavat, but according to the local Investigative Committee he died from a heart attack. In [Russia](#)'s eastern Siberian province of Yakutia 19 prisoners attempted to commit suicide by slashing their veins. A team of investigators subsequently visited the prison to investigate the incident and to check for possible violations of the prisoners' rights by prison authorities.

A federal court judge says [Canada](#)'s prison system is breaking the law by failing to deal with prisoner grievances in a timely manner, saying the backlog is contributing to growing tensions and violence within the system. The judge ordered a judicial review and that a senior official with the Correctional Service of Canada should review the matter.

In [Ireland](#) new robust prisoner complaints procedures are to be introduced following the publication of a report on the issue by the Inspector of Prisons. The new system will give

priority to complaints of most concern – those alleging serious ill treatment, use of excessive force, racial discrimination, intimidation or threats. Such complaints will be examined by investigators from outside the prison service.

In the [US](#) state of New Hampshire four female prisoners are suing the Department of Corrections for what they say is a disparity of opportunity compared to the male prisoners in the state. The suit alleges that the Department is out of compliance with the 1987 federal court order that required the state to provide female prisoners with services male prisoners already receive, including vocational education, mental health treatment and housing programmes.

An EU funded project has been launched in [Lebanon](#) which aims to improve the conditions in women's prisons in order for them to meet international human rights standards by developing the competence of prison authorities to uphold the human rights of women in prison, enhancing the legal and social support to women prisoners to claim their rights and report abuses, mobilising civil society stakeholders on gender equality and human rights considerations, and promoting regulatory improvements by proposing changes in legislation. Also in [Lebanon](#), the water supply to the country's biggest prison, Roumieh, has increased by almost 50 percent after a project implemented by the International Committee of the Red Cross was handed over to authorities. The project links the prison's water system to a new well.

The [Zambia](#) Prisons Service is setting up a milling plant in Kabwe to fully add value to maize and other crops produced by prisoners throughout the country each year. An official said the development was aimed at increased sustainability in the provision of food to the prisoners.

Prison violence

[Canada](#)'s prison population has reached an all time high, with 15,097 prisoners now held in federal prisons and with more prisoners sharing cells designed for one, a situation that has raised tensions and led to growing violence. The correctional investigator reported that assaults in the Prairie region have increased by 90 percent in the past five years, from 306 in 2007 to 583 in 2012, while the number of incidents involving use of force by staff rose by 95 percent over the same period.

Fights, bullying and sexual abuse are too prevalent in [German](#) prisons, according to a study by the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony. The report found that one in four prisoners in German jails experienced an act of violence in the month before the study was conducted. The number rose to half of the people held in facilities for young offenders. Seven percent said they were subject to sexual abuse.

Twenty five people were killed and dozens wounded during a riot at Yare I prison in [Venezuela](#) when two groups of prisoners waged a gunbattle inside the prison while hundreds of relatives were visiting. In Uribana prison in [Venezuela](#) 581 people were taken hostage by prisoners complaining about procedural delay, denial of benefits and ill treatment.

A report released by the Ombudsman in New South Wales, [Australia](#), said that prison officers weren't properly trained on appropriate ways to handle prisoners and were often unaware of when to use batons. The report recommended that Corrective Services investigate each use of force and replace faulty CCTV equipment within three months to make prisons more accountable.

In [Canada](#) documents obtained under Access to Information showed that the use of tear gas, pepper spray, guns and physical restraint is increasing in the country's prisons to defuse violence. The documents showed that incidents where use of force was applied against federal prisoners have increased by 37 percent in the last five years, to 1,339 in 2011-12 from 975 in 2007/8. Use of tear gas has tripled over the same period, from 96 to 292 while use of pepper spray has more than doubled to 400 from 186.

Developments in rehabilitation

In [Singapore](#) prisoners can learn new skills through innovative reintegration programmes run by the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE). These include cooking classes, training on basic computer literacy, design management and people management skills. Last year more than 1,500 prisoners found jobs prior to release, a 35 percent increase from 2010.

Under a programme started in 2000 by the local cooperative, San Giacomina, in conjunction with the prison on Elba Island, five prisoners still serving their sentences are helping to manage a hotel on the island of Pianosa off western [Italy](#). The prisoners have been given contracts to work as barmen, cooks, cleaners, waiters and gift shop salesmen in the hotel. The programme is open to prisoners who have served at least two thirds of their sentence and have shown exemplary behaviour.

Since it was launched in 2010 more than 400 prisoners have enrolled in the 'I Change' programme in [El Salvador](#). The programme's first stage offers opportunities in education, health, religion, art and culture, sports and crafts to prisoners who have already served a third of their sentence or are eligible for parole within the next six months. Prisoners who complete the first stage are then allowed to leave the prison to work every day and return at night, except on weekends when they can stay with family members.

At the Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women in Washington, [US](#), prisoners are helping to save the endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly which they breed in a greenhouse outside the prison. These efforts are part of the Sustainability in Prison Project which works with prisons throughout Washington and treats the prisoners as collaborators rather than labourers. They apply for the positions and get training, education and a small wage. Together they have helped to conserve endangered butterflies, frogs, flowering plants and moss.

Prisoners in [Thailand](#) are learning the skill of lapidary, cutting and polishing precious stones. The training is part of a programme established by a jewellery company owned by a former prisoner who approached Chanthaburi Central Prison when his company found it hard to

get workers with the necessary skills to work as lapidary craftsman. The company sends raw gems to the prisoners for cutting, and the prisoners are paid a bonus when the jewellery is sold. At Chon Buri Prison one hundred prisoners have been trained in underwater welding, and so far 39 of them have developed skills sufficient for them to gain work after they are released from prison.

Prisoners at Jaw Prison, [Bahrain](#), have been creating scores of handicrafts from glass, ceramic and wood, with intricate carvings and paintings. Prison officials plan to hold an exhibition-cum-sale, 60 percent of the proceeds from which would go to the prisoners who made them.

Prisoner work programmes in [Taiwan](#) designed to help prisoners transform their lives and to prepare them for a fresh start have also generated big profits for the country's prisons. According to data compiled by the Agency of Corrections, sales of prison made products at ten prisons across the country totalled over NT \$320 million (US\$10.64 million) in 2011.

As part of efforts to fulfil its promise of ensuring an adequate food supply in the country by 2015, the [Nigerian](#) Federal Government has announced plans to use 200,000 prisoners to boost agricultural production across the country. The prisoners, who would constitute the majority of the workforce, would earn salaries which would be paid to them at the end of their prison term. It was hoped the programme would also give the prisoners the skills needed to enable them to find employment on release.

[New Zealand](#) Post – the country's postal system - will help to fund a programme aimed at improving the literacy skills of prisoners. The programme targets functionally illiterate prisoners who are serving a short sentence or are on remand. It places a particular focus on people whose illiteracy is a contributing factor in their offending – for example driving without a licence because they lack the skills to complete the written driving test. Around half of the country's prison population cannot read or write.

Prisoners in Shanghai, [China](#), can now earn a college degree as the province opened the country's first prison campuses at four prisons. The programme will eventually be rolled out to all 13 prisons in the province.

The Department of Education in the [Philippines](#) reported that 100 percent of prisoners who took this year's elementary equivalency test passed the exam, more than double the 48 percent pass rate in 2010. The success is attributed to the use of teachers serving sentences to augment the prison system's limited teaching force for the Alternative Learning System which brings basic literacy to the out of school sector.

The number of prisoners who received a score of over 900 out of 990 in the Test of English for International Communication at the Uijeongbu Correctional Institution in [South Korea](#) has doubled from last year. The scores are higher than most college students achieve.

A primary school in Western [Australia](#) has set up a programme with each of Perth's major prisons to allow imprisoned parents to earn points for certain work that can be redeemed at

the school to purchase uniforms, food or pay for excursions. The scheme allows the parents to remain involved in their child's education and maintain the family bond.

A prison in the [Mexican](#) city of Merida is holding its own version of the Olympic Games, giving 800 prisoners the chance to compete in 13 different sports. Authorities at the Yucatan Rehabilitation Center said the goal of the sporting event is to facilitate the prisoners' eventual reinsertion into society.

Prisoners at the Santa Rita do Sapucal prison in [Brazil](#) can reduce their sentences by pedalling a stationary bicycle connected to a power generator that charge batteries which are taken to the city centre to power some of the street lights. The prisoners will receive one day off their sentence for every 16 hours of pedalling they do.

More than 100 prisoners have married at a [Mexican](#) border prison in a collective ceremony meant to give their families legal rights for visits and court proceedings. The Civil Registry Office director, who carried out the ceremony, said the weddings were part of a government strategy to help prisoners reintegrate back into society when they are released from prison.

Sentencing and the law

[Colombia](#)'s Constitutional Court has approved the government's proposal to decriminalise the possession of small amounts of cocaine and marijuana for personal use. Anyone caught with less than 20 grams of marijuana or one gram of cocaine may receive physical or psychological treatment depending on their state of consumption, but may not be prosecuted or detained. The move is part of a growing trend in Latin America.

The Justice Ministry in the [Czech Republic](#) has proposed that prisoners should be eligible for house arrest after serving half of their sentence, or one third in exceptional cases. The measure is intended to solve the problem of overcrowded prisons and to save money. Under the new legislation prison directors would also be authorised to release prisoners to serve their time under house arrest.

Courts in [Ireland](#) are imposing more community based penalties rather than prison sentences, with the number of community court orders made in 2011 increasing by 40 percent according to the annual report of the Probation and Welfare Service. The report reveals the service dealt with 14,845 people in the community last year, with 8,135 new cases being referred by the courts. The increase follows legislation introduced in October 2011 which meant that when judges are considering imposing a sentence of 12 months or less they must first examine the appropriateness of community service.

The [South African](#) Correctional Services Minister has used ICPS data showing that the country has the highest prison population rate in Africa to call for a debate on the use of imprisonment. He said attention should be given to the better use of non-custodial sentences for those accused of lesser crimes. He also noted that 46,000 out of the prison population of 146,000 were awaiting trial. A limited poll of 49 magistrates in [South Africa](#) has shown that 80 percent of respondents did not agree that all prisoners were dangerous

and needed to be locked up; about half did not support the use of longer prison sentences to fight crime and 63 percent did not believe that putting people in prison stopped them from committing crimes in future.

The Chief Justice in New South Wales, [Australia](#), has called for the state government to consider changing sentencing laws, saying that the notion that longer prison terms deter crime is “fiction.” He said the impact of an individual’s sentence on the likelihood that someone else will commit a similar crime in future is one of the factors that judges have to consider during sentencing, but that there was “no persuasive evidence that it works.”

[Puerto Rican](#) voters unexpectedly rejected a constitutional amendment that would have limited some defendants’ right to bail. The Island’s constitution contains an absolute right to bail, and the proposed amendment would have let judges deny bail for those accused of premeditated murder or killings committed during home robberies, sexual assaults or kidnappings. [Puerto Rico](#) has, however, implemented a new penal code which establishes longer fixed sentences for offences including homicide, assault, kidnapping, robbery, sexual assault and the production of child pornography.

Police officers as well as army and prison service officials have been drafted in to prosecute cases around [Zimbabwe](#) due to an acute shortage of civilian public prosecutors. The Justice Minister said the development risked militarising the country’s public prosecution department, and said the Justice Department was struggling to recruit more law officials because of poor salaries.

[Tanzania](#) has launched a legal aid secretariat which will act as a regulatory body for legal aid in the country. The Deputy Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, who launched the secretariat, said the issue of free legal aid services was key to the realisation of justice and one of the fundamental components of access to justice which must be met if a nation is to achieve equality before the law and equal access to justice for all.

A legal aid clinic has been inaugurated at Nagpur Central Jail in [India](#). The clinic aims to assist those awaiting trial and convicted prisoners in legal dealings and to ensure their rights are protected by offering free legal services.

A man convicted of murder in [New Zealand](#) has been given a lighter sentence after his mother apologised to the victim’s family, who forgave him after a traditional Samoan apology where someone who has done wrong presents themselves, covered in fine mats, to their victim’s family. As the man was in prison he was unable to complete the ceremony so his mother stepped in to take his place, and the remorse shown and his mother’s actions were factors in the judge agreeing to sentence him to life imprisonment with a minimum non-parole period of ten years, the lightest sentence he could have received in the circumstances.

Prominent lawyers are joining those calling on [China](#) to reform its controversial laojiao, or re-education through labour system, which allows suspects to be sentenced to forced labour without first undergoing a trial. Critics say that because the penalties under laojiao can exceed even the six month minimum penalty for criminal offences this undermines the

notion that system is used on people whose deeds are have not been serious enough to constitute crimes. They also claim that the system is neither transparent nor well supervised.

A report released in the [US](#) by the National Conference of State Legislatures showed that for a variety of reasons, including cutting costs, state legislatures are moving away from the punishment focused policies for young offenders passed in the 1980's and 1990's and moving towards rehabilitation. Some states have raised the juvenile court age from 17 to 18, Colorado gave judges more discretion about which youths are transferred to adult court jurisdiction, and 29 states enacted laws to improve mental health care for the young after research showed that up to 70 percent of youths arrested had some kind of mental health problem. However problems still remain, with the number of girls in the juvenile justice system rising steadily over the past decade and few states offering any gender specific treatment for girls in the system.

In [Indonesia](#) the government has passed a bill on juvenile criminal offenders which is expected to reduce the number of children in prison. The bill allows investigators, attorneys and judges to seek out of court settlements, with the approval of victims, for any crimes committed that carry a sentence of less than seven years in prison.

Sixty four prisoners on death row in [Zambia](#) have petitioned the Attorney General over the delayed hearing of their appeal cases before the Supreme Court. The prisoners want the court to compel the State to compensate them for the mental anguish and torture they have gone through as a result of the delay. They also want the court to order the expeditious hearing of their appeal cases saying their constitutional rights have been violated.

The [Thai](#) government has abolished the death penalty for those under the age of 18 and further reduced life imprisonment terms for minors to 50 years in prison. The changes came as part of conditions attached to Thailand's application for candidature for membership of the UN Human Rights Council.

The Minister of Law in [Singapore](#) has announced that apart from in cases of intentional killing, the death penalty will no longer be mandatory but will be at the discretion of the courts. The Minister told Parliament that once the legislation has been put in place, all those who meet the requirements can elect to be considered for re-sentencing.

Prison policy

In the [US](#) the Idaho Department of Corrections has flown 130 prisoners to a prison in Colorado because Idaho's prisons don't have enough room to hold the state's growing prison population. The Department director said the move is hard on families, but the state is simply out of room.

Also in the [US](#) Goldman Sachs will invest nearly £10 million in a New York City jails programme using an innovative financial instrument in which private investments fund public social services. The company will create one of the country's first 'social service

bonds' to help fund the programme which aims to lower the 50 percent recidivism rate among young prisoners at the Rikers Island prison. The four year programme, in which private non-profit groups will provide education and intensive training and counselling to at-risk imprisoned young people, must reduce the recidivism rate by at least ten percent to recoup the investment.

The number of [Americans](#) who cannot vote because they have been convicted of a felony continues to increase. The Sentencing Project reported that in 2010 5.5 million voting-age citizens were disenfranchised because of their criminal records, up by nine percent from 2004. About a quarter are in prison, but the rest have completed their sentences or are on probation or parole. Only Maine and Vermont impose no voting restrictions on prisoners or ex-prisoners, while the other states impose various restrictions and 11 states ban ex-prisoners from voting even after they have completed prison and probation or parole.

In [South Africa](#) the Department of Correctional Services Women's Network has been launched by the Correctional Services Minister. The Network aims at empowering female officials as the department has been dominated by male officials for years.

Corrections [Canada](#) must reduce its spending by \$295 million by 2015 as part of the Conservative government's deficit-reduction programme. Canada's federal prison population has been rising since 2006 and is now growing faster, annually, than the crime rate is dropping leaving those working in prisons and those speaking for prisoners concerned about where these cuts will take place. One of the [ideas](#) being considered is the use of private companies to deliver some prison services such as cleaning and food preparation. The [Canadian](#) government has also cut 20 percent of federal funding for youth justice programmes, cutting \$35.6 million used to supervise and rehabilitate young offenders.

The three maximum security units of [Swedish](#) prisons Kumla, Hall and Saltvik remain less than half full, despite costing the Prison and Probation Service 50 million kronor (\$7.5 million) in 2011. The Service says this is intentional and that they strategically avoid filling the units as prisoners are often dangerous and cannot be placed together, but the Justice Minister has expressed concern that the costs are too high.

The Service for Supervision of Correctional Institutions in [Norway](#) has proposed closing 27 out of the country's 60 prisons. The prisons that would be closed are those which hold less than 30 prisoners because of their inefficiency.

The Justice Minister in the [Czech Republic](#) is proposing that the number of types of prison should be reduced from four to two in order to cut costs. The Minister said he thought this could be done by subdividing the existing prisons according to the type of sentence.

In [New Zealand](#) the private prison operator Serco has been given another large fine for allowing a prisoner to escape. The company has now received \$300,000 in fines since it started operating Mount Eden prison a year ago. The [company](#) also failed to meet half of its performance targets since taking over the prison, with only 28 percent of sentenced

prisoners having an appropriate sentence plan in place within required timeframes, three prisoners wrongly released and three wrongful detentions.

The last 16 year old boy held in an adult jail in [Ireland](#) has been released in what is seen as a 'milestone' for the country. It brings to an end a practice, repeatedly condemned by domestic and international prison watchdogs, of imprisoning 16 year olds with adult prisoners. The next phase is to remove 17 year old boys, which is expected to happen in the next 18 months.

Responsibility for prisons in [Trinidad and Tobago](#) has moved from the Ministry of National Security to the Ministry of Justice. The Justice Minister has promised many changes including more generous recreational time, a village concept with a supermarket, and sporting facilities. The Minister also proposed to establish a Prison Ombudsman and Appeals Tribunal with sweeping oversight functions that will safeguard prison officers from false allegations while protecting prisoners from abuse.

Delegates from the [Southern African](#) Development Committee (SADC) have drafted a training manual for the region's correctional service officers which will be in line with model contemporary standards in training. Once endorsed by the relevant commissioners it will be integrated as the training manual for the region. The manual was developed because countries in the SADC face similar challenges and it was felt that training material used by correctional officers should also aim to address these challenges in the region.

There were around 2,400 newly appointed volunteer probation officers in [Japan](#) in 2011, the lowest number in ten years according to the Justice Ministry. The number of new officers, who help former prisoners and others with criminal records to reintegrate into society, was lower than the number of those who quit in 2011. In some areas of Tokyo the number of probation officers was less than 60 percent of the figure needed. The Ministry is undertaking a nationwide survey asking those who had been asked to be probation officers why they declined, and what measures have been taken by local associations to recruit probation officers.

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