



International Centre for Prison Studies

ICPS NEWS DIGEST

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Welcome to the sixteenth 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. Please click on the blue highlighted words to access the news reports.

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Prison populations

[Israeli](#) prisoners are allotted roughly a third of the living space the average prisoner gets in the West, according to an annual report released by the Public Defender's Office, which concluded that the country's prisons are too crowded. According to the report, Israeli prisoners get on average only 2.9 square meters of living space per person. The defender's office suggests that legislation be passed to set standards for proper living space for prisoners and detainees.

In [Costa Rica](#) the Partido Acción Ciudadana (PAC), the Defensoría de los Habitantes (Ombudsman) and the public employee union, the Asociación Nacional de Empleados Públicos y Privados (ANEP), have joined together to ask the government to declare a state of emergency in the country's penitentiary system. They are calling for the government to take into account the serious problem of overcrowding in the national prisons, for an increase in prison staff and improved infrastructure.

Severe overcrowding in prisons in Victoria, [Australia](#), has meant that prisoners are being held in police stations. The police stations have capacity for 100 prisoners but are holding up to 330 per day, meaning prisoners are being held in interview rooms. The head of the Police Union said 42 shifts a week are being lost at each station where prisoners are being held,

and the Police Association voiced concerns that the police are not trained to be prison officers and tending to prisoners is a drain on resources.

The four prisons in northeast [Hungary](#) are 200 percent overcrowded according to an Interior Ministry spokesman who announced plans to increase capacity at the prisons and also to build a new 1,000 capacity prison in the region. There are over 18,300 prisoners in the country, some 5,700 more than capacity.

The [French](#) government has announced plans to expand and reinforce the use of probation to reduce the number of people being held in the country's overcrowded prisons. The government is also creating 6,500 new prisons places and abolishing mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines.

A delegation from the Superior Council of the Judiciary who visited [Haiti's](#) National Penitentiary found that 95 percent of the prisoners there were awaiting trial. Only 4.6 percent of the 4,000 prisoners at the prison had been sentenced, and there were only 152 staff to look after them. Haiti's prisons hold nearly 10,000 prisoners but only have capacity for around 2,400.

The number of people held in [US](#) federal and state prisons decreased by 1.7 percent between 2011 and 2012. This is the third consecutive year that the number has fallen. About half of the decline occurred in California, which has decreased its prison population in response to a Supreme Court order to relieve prison overcrowding. Eight other states, including New York, Florida, Virginia and North Carolina also showed substantial decreases, and more than half the states reported some decrease.

The [Vietnamese](#) government has announced it will release more than 15,000 prisoners to mark its 68th National Day celebrations. The amnesty is one of the country's largest in recent years. The [Iranian](#) Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamanei granted amnesty to 1,249 prisoners on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of the Shiites 12th and last Imam, Hazrat Mahdi. The President of the [United Arab Emirates](#) ordered the release of 973 prisoners to mark the start of Ramadan, while the Ruler of Dubai ordered the release of 625 prisoners.

The [Sri Lankan](#) president has ordered that prisoners over the age of 60 who have been imprisoned for minor offences should be pardoned and released. The decision will help to reduce the number of people held in the country's overcrowded prisons.

Three quarters of women serving short prison sentences in [Ireland](#) have experienced violence and abuse as a child or adult, according to a new study of female offenders. The survey also reveals high rates of homelessness, depression and substance abuse. Almost half of the women who took part in the survey have no formal education and had little or no history of employment.

Health

Jail officials in California, [US](#), were given permission by a District Court Judge to force-feed hunger strikers who were entering their seventh week of a state-wide protest against prison

conditions. This is the second time prisoners have launched a hunger strike to protest against the state's practice of housing some prisoners for years in high security segregation units called Security Housing Units.

A report released by the [Australian](#) Human Rights Commission has found that people with a mental health disorder or cognitive impairment in New South Wales are six to nine times more likely to be in prison than those without a disability, but early intervention could save millions of dollars and prevent people from spending a lifetime in the criminal justice system. The report found that 87 percent of young people in NSW prisons have a mental health condition (including alcohol or drug related problems) compared with 22 percent of the general population.

A significant number of prisoners in [Australian](#) prisons suffer from chronic disease or mental health problems, according to new research. The figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show 32 percent of prisoners have a chronic disease, with asthma and hepatitis among the most common. Twenty percent suffered from both hepatitis B and C, while more than 25 percent of prisoners are referred to mental health services when they arrive in prison. Also in [Australia](#), a study has found that young people just released from prison are up to 20 times more likely to die than those in the community. Of the young people studied who died after release from prison, nearly all were preventable deaths due to drug related causes or suicide.

The [Canadian](#) Correctional Investigator has called for the government to commit to moving severely mentally ill prisoners out of federal prisons and into secure psychiatric hospitals run by the provinces and territories. He said while Correctional Service Canada (CSC) does send some prisoners to psychiatric hospitals the system is not consistent and is "very imperfect right now." A spokeswoman for the CSC said the prison service is "exploring partnerships that will ensure necessary care is provided for those with acute mental illness in other facilities without requiring long term commitment or new construction."

More than half of [New Zealand](#)'s prisons have now joined other primary healthcare practices in meeting the standards set for New Zealand's general practice. Hawke's Bay prison has become the latest facility to meet 'Aiming for Excellence', the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners standards for general practice. The Corrections Director of Offender Health said health services in prisons are part of the wider community, functioning alongside local hospitals and other providers to form healthy communities.

A new study published by the International Journal of Drug Policy has found that as many as 80 percent of prisoners in [Swiss](#) prisons consume cannabis, something that the prison staff are fully aware of, with most feeling that it has a positive effect on the overall prison environment. Staff said they feel cannabis is a relatively safe and peaceful drug, and believe cracking down on its consumption will lead to an increase in violence and harder drug use.

Treatment of prisoners

A video posted on social media in [Angola](#) shows prison guards viciously beating around 30 prisoners in Luanda's central prison, with the assistance of police and firefighters. The

Angolan Interior Minister issued a statement announcing an investigation to find the perpetrators of the attacks. Human rights organisations say torture and police violence are common in the country's prisons.

[North Korean](#) defectors have been giving international investigators harrowing accounts of brutality and abuse in the country's prisons. A UN panel has begun interviewing witnesses in the South Korean capital, Seoul, and will move onto Japan. One of the first witnesses to testify spoke of how he had been forced to watch the execution of his mother. The North has been accused of human rights violations, including torture, abductions and running prison camps. The panel is due to present its report to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2014.

The Diyarbakir branch of the [Turkish](#) Human Rights Association (IHD) has released a report detailing 872 cases of human rights violations in prisons in the eastern and south eastern regions of the country in the first six months of 2013. The report details cases of ill treatment and torture, and raises concerns about the large number of very ill prisoners.

The Western [Australian](#) government has conceded that strip-searching juvenile prisoners who are being held in an adult prison up to four times a day is "alarming" and seems "excessive" but has backed away from taking immediate action, saying it is "an operational issue." The prisoners – the majority of whom are Indigenous – were transferred to Hakea prison after damaging many cells at the Banksia Hill juvenile detention centre in a riot in January. Families and supporters have long questioned the legality and ethics of the arrangement, which subjects prisoners to rolling lockdowns, strip-searches and denies sufficient rehabilitation programs. There are also serious concerns about the mental well-being of the detainees.

The Interior Ministry in [Uzbekistan](#) is reported to have adopted new rules regarding the living conditions of prisoners. The new regulations will allow prisoners to marry in prison, and after their wedding the prisoner will be given a conjugal visit of up to three days, usually inside the prison, with his or her spouse. Prisoners' close relatives will also have the right to obtain written and verbal information about their loved one's health, and learn about what specific punishments are being applied by prison authorities. Requests are, in theory, to be satisfied immediately. Uzbek prisons have been heavily criticised for mistreatment of prisoners, endemic torture, overcrowding and corruption.

Torture and inhumane methods of confinement are rife in [Kazakhstan](#) according to a new report by Amnesty International. The report details concerns about prison conditions and the "use of solitary confinement in a manner that might amount to a breach of human rights standards." Amnesty recommends the establishment of an independent body to investigate allegations of human rights abuses and torture, and ensuring prison conditions meet international standards. In August more than a dozen prison guards and high ranking prison officials in [Kazakhstan](#) were convicted of torturing a prisoner to death by severely beating and then crucifying him.

The office of [Tajikistan](#)'s human rights ombudsman has provisionally agreed to allow NGOs to go into prisons to investigate reports of torture. The ombudsman has approved plans for

the Coalition Against Torture and the Human Rights Institute to set up a monitoring team, although arrangements have yet to be formalised in writing. At present the ombudsman's office is the only institution in the country with a legal mandate to inspect detention facilities.

In his annual report the [Irish](#) Inspector of Prisons has expressed concerns about a number of issues in the country's prisons, including the low level abuse of prisoners. Warders are criticised for shouting and using "un-parliamentary language" at prisoners, not attending to call bells and being indifferent to reasonable queries or requests raised by prisoners. The Inspector also criticised disciplinary sanctions imposed upon prisoners, including loss of privileges such as increased contact with the outside world, activities and classes for up to 60 days, punishments which he described as being out of line with accepted best international practice.

Conditions in [Yemeni](#) prisons are substandard, with prisoners lacking the most basic of needs, according to the Head of the Rehabilitation and Correction Authority. He reported that 92 percent of the prisoners were between the ages of 18 and 35, and 20 percent of prisoners suffered from contagious and chronic diseases. A human rights activist said that prisons lacked water and sanitation, are overcrowded, and health facilities are not isolated meaning that diseases are easily transmitted.

The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture has published its report of a visit to the Corradino Correction Facility, [Malta's](#) only prison. The report found major shortcomings in several areas of the prison, in particular with regard to the state of repair of the cells and access to natural light. The situation was exacerbated by overcrowding and the lack of organised activity for many prisoners.

In the [US](#), doctors sterilised 148 female prisoners in California between 2006 and 2010 without required state approvals, with many of these women reporting that they had been coerced into receiving the surgery, according to the Centre for Investigative Reporting. The California Medical Board has been asked to investigate the physicians involved in unapproved sterilizations to determine whether any disciplinary actions or license revocations were warranted.

Prison violence

A baby was among 31 people killed when a fight broke out between rival gangs at an overcrowded prison in Santa Cruz, [Bolivia](#). The baby was living with his parents at the maximum security prison which houses around 5,000 prisoners. The incident began when a group of prisoners broke into a wing of the prison to fight a rival group. The riot ended in a fire which was set off by exploding propane tanks. Subsequent [reports](#) suggest that 29 of those killed were awaiting trial.

A fight between prisoners in a prison in Nuevo Laredo, [Mexico](#), left eight prisoners dead, while two dozen prisoners were injured in a riot and subsequent fire in a prison in the [Chilean](#) city of Quillota.

Rioting broke out in two overcrowded prisons in [Burundi](#) leaving one civilian and one prisoner dead, and at least 16 others wounded. The riot at Mpimba prison, the country's largest, was sparked by disciplinary measures taken against 13 prisoners who had rioted in July when their food rations – a small portion of beans – had been halved.

The [Honduran](#) president ordered the army to take over the country's main prison after fighting there left at least three gang members dead and 12 people injured, including three guards. A police official said the fighting began when a prisoner aimed a gun at a gang member causing other gang members to pull out guns, including at least two AK-47s. The riot and militarisation of the prison came a day after a report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights said that prisoners control the country's prisons because the state has abandoned its role in rehabilitating people convicted of crimes.

Security forces in [Bahrain](#) used batons, tear gas, pepper spray and stun grenades against prisoners protesting against their conditions, injuring 40 people. The prisoners were protesting over being deprived of family visits and other grievances.

More than 50 prisoners escaped from a youth detention facility in Sao Paulo, [Brazil](#), following a riot in which around 29 staff members were held hostage and the facility's director was taken to hospital with cuts to the head and bruised ribs. Also in [Brazil](#), two prisoners were killed during a fight between rival gangs of prisoners in Itaparina.

Five people were killed in a riot at Tanjung Gusta prison on [Indonesia](#)'s Sumatra Island that led to the escape of over 100 prisoners. Police say the violence was sparked by a power cut that left prisoners without water. The following month a riot broke out at the Labuhan Ruku prison in North Sumatra, [Indonesia](#), during which prisoners set fire to the prison and 30 prisoners escaped.

Prisoners threw rocks and took the prison chief hostage during a rare uprising at a prison in [Vietnam](#). Local media reported that one prisoner attacked a police officer with a metal stick and at least 50 others raided the kitchen. An official reported that the prisoners revolted because of complaints over food.

Developments in rehabilitation

A report by the RAND Corporation in the [US](#) has found that prisoners who receive general education and vocational training are significantly less likely to return to prison after release and are more likely to find employment than peers who do not receive such opportunities. The findings, from the largest ever meta-analysis of correctional educational studies, suggest that prison education programmes are cost effective, with a \$1 investment in prison education reducing imprisonment costs by \$4 to \$5 during the first three years post release.

More than three thousand prisoners in the [Dominican Republic](#) have formally started learning to read and write as part of a national literacy campaign which aims to provide universal access to education. Launching the initiative the Presidency Minister said "[Prisoners'] right to literacy is as legitimate as that of any other citizen and denying them this would be as unfair as adding another sentence to the one they are already serving."

A draft National Education Policy Bill has been submitted to the Parliamentary Education Promotion Committee in [Myanmar](#). The Bill includes a section on 'informal education' under which prisoners will be allowed to study while in prison through distance learning courses. The Bill will be put before Parliament in the next session.

Ohio has become the latest [US](#) state to allow prisoners to purchase and use mini-tablet computers while in prison, a move intended to better connect those in prison with their friends and families on the outside. At least six other states permit the practice, which proponents say will deepen prisoners' ties with the community and keep them up to date with modern technology.

Prisoners in [Ireland](#) may soon be able to take education courses in their cells through a Wi-Fi connection. The Prison Service is exploring the possibility of introducing a wireless connection to cells to allow prisoners to take courses outside of normal prison school hours. Access to the internet would be completely restricted to educational content. The Department of Justice is currently consulting with those in the industry to assess the feasibility of the proposals.

Through a partnership between the Aboriginal Housing Office and the commercial arm of the corrective Services Industries, Indigenous prisoners are building modular homes for Aboriginal communities in New South Wales, [Australia](#). Many are part of the Gundi programme which supports Indigenous prisoners by giving them practical skills and the formal qualifications to go with them in a range of construction related jobs, including carpentry, plumbing and electronics. The programme aims to improve the job prospects for prisoners on release while also addressing a serious housing shortage in remote areas, where a lack of qualified tradespeople has contributed to overcrowding for many Indigenous families.

A [Brazilian](#) fashion designer has trained 18 prisoners to produce knitting and crochet work for her Doiselles label in collaboration with the Arisvaldo de Campos Pires maximum security prison. The prisoners receive one day off their sentence for every three days of knitting they undertake, as well as learning skills they can use when released. The initiative is also an opportunity for the prisoners to earn money as they are paid a starting salary of 75 percent of Brazil's minimum wage. A quarter of what they earn is put aside and paid to them when they are released from prison.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is working with the [Kyrgyzstan](#) State Service for the Fulfilment of Punishment (GSIN) to create work for prisoners. The 14 prison colonies are producing razor wire, pasta, cinder blocks, paving squares and clothing. The GSIN is working on raising sheep and cattle as well as growing vegetables, grain, legumes and animal forage crops. Several more prison colony food production facilities will open this year. By law, prisoners working in prison receive the national minimum wage.

Eighteen prisoners at Bantek Semi-Open Prison in [Zimbabwe](#) have graduated after completing a one year tobacco farming course. The partnership between the Prison Service and the Tobacco Research Institute started in 2008 and has seen 141 prisoners graduating.

A group of prisoners from Christchurch Women's Prison in [New Zealand](#) have been learning to use a tractor in an initiative that will help them gain employment on release. The seven prisoners undertook a two day course which covered both the theory and the practical sides of tractor driving. Meanwhile prisoners at Rimutaka prison in [New Zealand](#) took part in a "Prison Gate to Plate" event in which they were trained by a top chef to create a meal for guests including the Corrections Minister and business leaders. The event was part of an initiative to convince company leaders that prisoners could be employed on release.

At the Department of Corrective Services Mardella dairy farm in Western [Australia](#) eight prisoners work to process and package milk to be supplied to all the prisons in the state, while another ten prisoners work on the farm side of the operation. Working in the prisons milk supply system is considered a sought after job and prisoners have to earn the right to work there. Those prisoners involved in the dairy generally have their own rooms due to the early starts and late finishes. There is a strict no-violence policy and prisoners are never allowed to speak loudly to the cows.

Around 2,000 prisoners in [Peru](#)'s largest prison took part in a parade to mark the country's independence holiday. The prisoners spent three months practising for the parade and the mood inside the prison after the procession was described as one of "jubilation and satisfaction." Besides marking the anniversary, the parade was also to celebrate the completion of improvement projects carried out by the prisoners, including the re-tiling of a hallway and the recovery of 4,000 square metres of green space within the prison. The prison warden said the programme of improvements and activities is aimed at the 60 percent of prisoners he thinks are capable of rehabilitation.

A lack of housing opportunities for recently released prisoners in New South Wales, [Australia](#), is likely fuelling a cycle of disadvantage and imprisonment, according to a new report. By interviewing former prisoners across the state the Public Interest Advocacy Centre found that more than a third of those released from prison spent their first night 'sleeping rough.' The report suggests that without better programmes to support reintegration back into society, life in prison can seem like a safer option.

Sentencing and the law

Changes to the bail laws in [New Zealand](#) which have been passed by Parliament mean that those accused of serious violent, sexual or drug offences will now have to persuade a judge that the community would be safe if they were to be given bail. Previously the onus was on the Crown to show why defendants should be held in prison. Opponents to the bill argued that people would be locked up for longer on the presumption that they would offend again in future – a breach of the Bill of Rights Act.

The [Maldivian](#) Parliament has passed the prison and parole bill at the third attempt after it was returned twice by the president for consideration. The bill aims to strengthen the prison

system and to ensure that the rights of prisoners are protected. The bill allows for the creation of a separate institution called the Maldives correctional service which will run the prisons, and sets down regulations for how it will function. It also includes the provision of vocational training for prisoners and the creation of a safe and secure environment.

An [Italian](#) Senate bill amendment proposes house arrest instead of prison while awaiting trial for those accused of certain crimes such as stalking, perjury, illegal political financing and abuse of office. The move is aimed at reducing the number of people held in the country's overcrowded prisons.

The [Swedish](#) Justice Ministry has introduced proposals to tighten the laws to allow courts to sentence people to life imprisonment in the majority of murder cases. The Minister said changes to make sentencing stricter back in 2009 had not gone far enough, as the number of life sentences had decreased rather than increased, and that "life in prison should be the normal punishment for murder." The proposals do not include calculations for how much an increase in life sentences would cost Sweden's Correctional Services.

Legislation introduced by the [Irish](#) government would drastically reduce the number of people being sent to prison by the courts for non-payment of fines by allowing fines to be paid in instalments over 12 months. When a person defaults on the fine an attachment order can be made requiring the person's employer to collect the fine from their wages to be paid to the court. Figures show that a total of 8,300 people were imprisoned in 2012 because they had not paid their fines. However the Prison Service noted that the number of people imprisoned at any time for non-payment of fines constituted an "extremely small" part of the prisoner population as the sentences were so short.

A set of bills passed by the [Japanese](#) Diet will introduce within three years a suspended sentence and probation procedure for convicted people who fall into certain categories. Currently those who receive prison sentences are either imprisoned or have their sentences suspended. The new system falls between these two sentences. It will be applied to people who would be given three year sentences or shorter under the current system — mainly drug users and people facing prison terms for the first time. Under the new system, a court could give, for example, two years imprisonment with six months suspended and two years probation. After 1½ years of imprisonment, the prisoner would be released. Courts will decide at the outset whether a person should be given probation during and after the period of the suspension. Drugs users, for example, will undergo an education program to address their addiction and receive help in finding a residence and a job during the time their prison terms are suspended and they are on probation. The new system aims to facilitate rehabilitation and to reduce recidivism.

Following the [US](#) Supreme Court ruling in 2012 in the case of Miller vs. Alabama that mandatory life sentences for people under the age of 18 are cruel and unusual punishments and therefore unconstitutional, at least 11 states have now revisited their sentencing laws. Generally, juveniles sentenced for murder in those states will now be eligible for a parole hearing after serving a mandatory minimum sentence of around 25 years.

[Moldova](#)'s constitutional court has banned the use of chemical castration to punish convicted paedophiles, ruling that it represents a violation of fundamental rights. A law providing for chemical castration for those convicted of sexual abuse of children under the age of 15 was pushed through last year, but the court has now ruled that the procedure represents medical intervention against a person's will and therefore breaches human rights legislation.

[Cambodia](#) does not have a separate juvenile justice system, meaning children and young adults between the ages of 14 – 18 are tried in adult courts and held in adult prisons. The director of the NGO Licadho notes that juveniles are often held in pre-trial detention for petty crimes such as theft or minor drug offences and then handed disproportionate sentences at trial. Reports suggest abuse and corruption are rife and only those with money are entitled to certain 'privileges' such as extra recreation time, decent food and regular family visits. In 2002 the Cambodian government drafted the Juvenile Justice Law which is said to incorporate reform around non-custodial sentencing of minors and their diversion from the traditional justice system. To date it remains in parliament and any specific details of the law have been kept from the public.

A Senator in the [Philippines](#) has introduced a bill that would mean that courts would be responsible for arranging the placement and guardianship of the children of those sent to prison. The aim is to mitigate the emotional, psychological and social impact that imprisonment can have on parents and children.

The [Venezuelan](#) Minister of Penitentiary Services has announced an extension to the 'Cayapa' plan which aims to address the country's long standing problem with prison overcrowding, and particularly the issue of the length of time prisoners are held awaiting trial. The plan involves public lawyers visiting prisoners and their families, interviewing them, analysing their cases and dealing with those cases where a prisoner has not yet received a trial.

In [Kenya](#) the organisation Kituo Cha Sheria is training prisoners to become paralegals so they can represent their fellow prisoners in appeals. In Kenya the majority of people accused of a crime face court without a lawyer and therefore have no idea of what to plead or how to defend themselves, meaning that often they receive much harsher sentences than they would if they had had a lawyer. The paralegals can lodge appeals and represent their fellow prisoners in court. Kenya's Chief Justice has praised the scheme saying "the paralegals in prisons and outside prisons must play a role in the administration of justice."

Prison policy

In a major shift in criminal justice policy, the [US](#) Government has moved to ease overcrowding in federal prisons by ordering prosecutors to omit listing quantities of illegal substances in indictments for low-level drug cases, sidestepping federal laws that impose strict mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related offences. The Attorney General announced the new policy as one of several steps intended to curb soaring levels of spending on prisons and help correct what he regards as unfairness in the justice system. He also introduced a related set of Justice Department policies that would leave more crimes to

state courts to handle, increase the use of drug-treatment programs as alternatives to incarceration, and expand a program of compassionate release for elderly prisoners who were imprisoned for non-violent crimes and have served a large portion of their sentence.

A radical \$60 million programme focused on diverting funds away from prisons and into crime reduction in targeted communities has been unveiled by the [Australian](#) Green Party. Under the plan, \$10 million over four years would be spent in establishing a National Centre for Justice Reinvestment and \$50 million would be used to fund a Justice Reinvestment Grants Programme over four years.

The Home Ministry in [Bangladesh](#) is considering proposals to make all the jails in the country into 'corrections centres'. If the proposal is approved changes will be made in many areas such as the treatment of prisoners by staff and the living standards of prisoners. As part of the reforms prisons will introduce projects to enable prisoners to become self reliant to prepare them for release.

The [Czech Republic](#) cabinet has approved a draft amendment to the penal law that will reduce the number of types of prison from four to two; those with a tougher high security regime for people convicted of serious crimes, and the rest which will have a less strict regime. The bill will now be debated by parliament.

Christchurch Men's Prison will be the first in [New Zealand](#) where prisoners will now have to pay \$2 a week to rent televisions. The Justice Minister expects the scheme to pay for itself within three years with savings and any profits being reinvested in the development of two prison education channels. The channels will "support the delivery of literacy and numeracy and rehabilitation" to prisoners.

In [Iceland](#) people who are given a prison sentence by the court join a waiting list and go to prison when space becomes available. However due to a shortage of space an increasing number of prison sentences are expiring before the individual has served time in prison. Currently 455 people are waiting to serve their sentences. Up to 19 sentences could expire this year, up from nine last year and six in 2011.

The [Irish](#) Penal Reform Trust has called on the Irish Prison Service to reduce the use of solitary confinement in prisons. The Trust said holding a prisoner in isolation for more than 22 hours a day should only be used "as a measure of last resort in very exceptional cases and for as short a time as possible." Their response came after the Prison Service disclosed that 211 prisoners were spending more than 22 hours a day locked up, some in solitary confinement and some in shared cells.

The [Turkish](#) Justice Ministry has revealed that the majority of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) prisoners are effectively being held in solitary confinement and are not allowed to join in activities with other prisoners. The Ministry has also announced plans to build a separate facility for LGBT prisoners.

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