

INTERNATIONAL PRISON NEWS DIGEST

52nd Edition – July - August 2019

Welcome to the 52nd edition of the International Prison News Digest, our selection of news items from around the world on prison and the use of imprisonment. The Digest is produced bi-monthly and this issue covers the period from 1 July to 31 August 2019.

We aim in the Digest to cover all regions of the world and include new developments in policy and practice, as well as information from official and intergovernmental bodies. News items are grouped regionally. By clicking on the hyperlinks, you can access the news articles in their original form.

Content is sourced solely from English language news stories. Readers wishing to notify us of important news items in other languages are welcome to send us articles with a short summary of key content and we will consider them for inclusion in the next edition. Please note that ICPR is not responsible for the accuracy of external content.

Information on global prison systems can be found on [World Prison Brief](#)

AFRICA

Cameroon: A fire broke out at the Kondengui Central Prison after detainees held a protest in the overcrowded prison. [DW.com, 22 July 2019](#)

Egypt: The price of special permits for family members to visit detainees in Egypt has gone up from three Egyptian pounds (\$0.18) to 15 (\$0.9), a 500 per cent rise. [Middle East Monitor, 17 July 2019](#)

Liberia: Prisoners are often crammed into cells, lack access to regular meals, clean drinking water and medicine, and often rely on family members to bring food on visits. [Liberian Observer, 18 July 2019](#)

Mozambique: Three people were shot dead and seven were wounded after rioting broke out at the largest prison in northern Mozambique. [Yahoo News, 7 August 2019](#)

Senegal: Rights activists have decried overcrowding and outdated conditions in Senegal's jails after two prisoners lost their lives in the main prison in the capital Dakar. [Outlook, 29 August 2019](#)

South Africa: Correctional Services Minister Ronald Lamola says a number of strategies, including infrastructure expansion, are being used to deal with overcrowding in prisons. [SA News, 17 July 2019](#)

South Africa: Overcrowding at prisons across the country means that those awaiting trial or the finalisation of legal proceedings sometimes end up without a bed, bedding or a uniform. [News 24, 18 July 2019](#)

AMERICAS

Brazil: At least 57 people were killed, including 16 who were decapitated, during a gang battle in a prison in northern Brazil. [Kyma.com, 29 July 2019](#)

Cuba: Communist-run Cuba, which has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world, has pardoned 2,604 convicts, according to state-run media. [Euronews, 19 July 2019](#)

United States: A report has found that Muslims in US prisons are being denied basic religious freedoms, such as access to halal food and the right to pray. [Morocco World News, 31 July 2019](#)

United States: The disparity in sentences handed to white and black prisoners has dropped by 80 percent in the past two decades, a study has shown. [Newsweek, 13 August 2019](#)

ASIA

Bahrain: Seventy-five per cent of prisoners at the country's main women's prison are expatriates. [Zawya, 12 August 2019](#)

Cambodia: The Cambodian government is abolishing a controversial "hotel" prison project, according to Ministry of Interior officials. [VOA News, 11 July 2019](#)

China: China is forcibly sterilising women held in its vast network of "re-education" camps which house political and religious prisoners, survivors have claimed. [News.com, 13 August 2019](#)

India: Prisons in Haryana face issues such as overcrowding, undignified body searches, lack of hygiene and menstrual products and racism towards foreign prisoners. [National Herald, 20 August 2019](#)

Indonesia: Indonesian authorities are searching for more than 250 prisoners who escaped a Papua prison which was set ablaze during violent riots. [The News, 21 August 2019](#)

Iran: Prisoners who were once on death row are now able to work during the day and sleep in prison at night after the adoption of a new law. [Iran Front Page, 30 July 2019](#)

Iran: 200 prisoners in Ward 5 of Gharchak Prison for women in Varamin have sent an open letter to the head of the State Prisons Organization protesting the prison's inhumane living conditions. [Center for Human Rights Iran, 30 August 2019](#)

Kazakhstan: A deputy warden and four guards at a penitentiary in southern Kazakhstan have been detained after videos were posted on the Internet showing the brutal torture of a prisoner. [Radio Free Europe, 30 July 2019](#)

Philippines: The government has set aside P3 billion (approximately 19 million USD) to build several jail facilities to ease prison congestion in the country, President Duterte has announced. [Manila Bulletin, 13 July 2019](#)

Tajikistan: Tajikistan has opened a criminal investigation after 14 prisoners died of food poisoning. [Radio Free Europe, 8 July 2019](#)

Thailand: The Justice Ministry is working on a number of initiatives aimed at easing overcrowding in prisons. [The Nation Thailand, 19 August 2019](#)

Uzbekistan: The Uzbek President has ordered the closure of the Jaslyk prison, an institution that has long been associated with torture and human rights abuses. [Radio Free Europe, 5 August 2019](#)

EUROPE

Bosnia & Herzegovina: Bosnia's Justice Minister has announced that the country's long-delayed first state-level prison will open next month – 13 years after the foundation stone was laid. [Balkan Insight, 23 July 2019](#)

Czech Republic: The first Czech open prison has reported record-low reoffending rates. [Czech Radio, 13 August 2019](#)

Estonia: Lawyers in Estonia are opposed to changes in prison regulations which would require a detainee and his or her counsel to be separated by a glass panel. [ERR.ee, 3 July 2019](#)

Ireland: A new recording system has revealed that far greater numbers of prison officers are injured by prisoners than was previously reflected in official statistics. [Irish Examiner, 3 July 2019](#)

Ireland: Some Irish Prison Service (IPS) staff are breaching rules by being drunk on duty and failing to follow procedures for night checks and prisoner escorts. [Independent.ie, 10 July 2019](#)

Ireland: Prison chaplains have pleaded with the Government to cease the “harrowing” practice of locking up people with severe mental health problems. [Irish Times, 15 July 2019](#)

Ireland: Prison officers have blamed the rising number of feuding gang prisoners, the prevalence of crack cocaine and a lack of staff for a sharp increase in violent assaults on staff. [The Irish Times, 19 July 2019](#)

Ireland: Prisoners in the State’s highest security prison unit have almost no social interaction with each other and little to do to pass the time, according to an internal report. [The Irish Times, 13 August 2019](#)

Malta: Drugs have been “eradicated” from prison, Corradino Correctional Facility’s director has claimed. [Times of Malta, 29 July 2019](#)

Russia: The European Court of Human Rights has condemned Russia's 24-hour camera surveillance of prisoners, ruling that it was an arbitrary violation of their right to privacy. [Business Standard, 2 July 2019](#)

Russia: Russian prisoners could soon work at correctional facilities near businesses under a new law that observers were quick to compare to Soviet-era gulag labour camps. [The Moscow Times, 23 July 2019](#)

Russia: Russia’s prison authority has confirmed reports of abuse at Europe’s largest pre-trial detention centre days after new video footage renewed concerns about conditions in Russia’s penitentiary system. [The Moscow Times, 16 August 2019](#)

Switzerland: Switzerland’s top court has ruled that money earned in prison cannot be confiscated to cover legal costs. [Swissinfo, 13 August 2019](#)

Turkey: Turkey’s Justice Ministry is constructing 114 new prisons, and 23 more prison projects are in the bidding process. [Ahval News, 15 July 2019](#)

Turkey: After being alerted to the torture of 20 prisoners by guards at a correctional facility in Elazığ, the prison administration instead investigated the tortured prisoners for disciplinary breaches. [Stockholm Center for Freedom, 19 August 2019](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

England and Wales: Assaults in youth prisons in England and Wales have risen by almost two-thirds over the last five years, a Guardian analysis has found. [The Guardian, 21 July 2019](#)

England and Wales: Jails-within-jails designed to prevent extremists from radicalising vulnerable prisoners are undersubscribed, staff at the specialist units have told officials. [The Guardian, 22 July 2019](#)

England and Wales: Nearly one in seven prisons in England and Wales have been judged to have a performance of "serious concern" - the highest proportion since ratings began. [BBC News, 25 July 2019](#)

England and Wales: More than 18,000 prisoners are living in cells designed for fewer people as overcrowding fuels violence in jails, a charity has warned. [Independent, 1 August 2019](#)

England and Wales: Children in prison are twice as likely to have special educational needs as those in the general population, new figures reveal. [Independent, 4 August 2019](#)

England and Wales: Prisons in England and Wales are to receive £100m to improve security and cut crime, the government has said. [BBC News, 13 August 2019](#)

England and Wales: People with mental health conditions and learning disabilities will be better protected from the misuse of chemical restraint in prison following a legal challenge. [Politics Home, 20 August 2019](#)

Northern Ireland: Concerns have been raised over an increase in the number of women being held in Northern Ireland's only female prison. [BBC News, 23 July 2019](#)

Scotland: As many as three quarters of detainees in Scottish prisons went without attending a single education or skills class in the past month. [Scottish Legal News, 5 July 2019](#)

Scotland: Scotland's prisons are nearly at full capacity, putting undue pressure on prisoners and staff, immense strain on budgets and restricting access to rehabilitation. [The Guardian, 15 July 2019](#)

Scotland: The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) has suspended a scheme offering prisoners extra support when leaving jail. [BBC News, 25 July 2019](#)

Scotland: Prisoners are to be given the vote for the first time in Scotland since a blanket ban was ruled a breach of their human rights. [The Herald, 1 August 2019](#)

Scotland: The prison watchdog will be asked to oversee a review into control and restraint training in jails following the death of a prisoner that a sheriff ruled was "entirely preventable". [The Scotsman, 30 August 2019](#)

OCEANIA

New Zealand: Corrections staff across the country will work up to three 12-hour shifts in a row as part of a new rostering system being rolled out. [Stuff.nz, 7 July 2019](#)

New Zealand: The Waitangi Tribunal has found a law change that took the vote away from prisoners breaches the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. [Waatea News, 12 August 2019](#)

New Zealand: Specialised Māori mental health units, more whānau and iwi engagement, and targeted treatment for Māori at high risk of reoffending are part of an overhaul the Government's approach to reduce the rate of Māori imprisonment. [NZ Herald, 19 August 2019](#)