



# INTERNATIONAL PRISON NEWS DIGEST

## 44<sup>th</sup> Edition – March - April 2018

Welcome to the 44<sup>th</sup> 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 March to 30 April 2018.

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

**Ghana:** Prisoners on death row at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison have pleaded with the President for clemency, describing prison conditions as “unbearable”. [Ghana Web, 13 March 2018](#)

**Kenya:** More than 5,000 petty offenders are set to leave jail and engage in community work as part of efforts to decongest prisons. [Daily Nation, 4 April 2018](#)

**Liberia:** Justice Minister promises to tackle pre-trial detention. [Front Page Africa, 12 March 2018](#)

**Libya:** Armed groups in Libya are killing and torturing detainees in prisons, some nominally under government control, where thousands of civilians are being unlawfully held. [Africa News, 10 April 2018](#)

**South Africa:** Specialised tactical officers were called into Leeuwkop prison after a gang related riot left one prisoner dead and another critically injured. [Times Live, 13 March 2018](#)

**Swaziland:** A murder suspect in Swaziland has remained incarcerated for nine years without being brought to trial because he cannot afford to pay bail. [ENCA, 26 April 2018](#)

**Zimbabwe:** President Emmerson Mnangagwa has granted amnesty to some 3,000 prisoners in a development aimed at helping to decongest the country's prisons. [Zimbabwe Daily, 21 March 2018](#)

## AMERICAS

**Bolivia:** At least six prisoners died and more than 20 were injured while attempting to resist a police search. [US News, 14 March 2018](#)

**Bolivia:** The president of Bolivia has introduced a new amnesty and pardon decree to congress in an attempt to alleviate the country's prison crisis. [InSight Crime, 6 April 2018](#)

**Brazil:** Gunmen attacked a prison in northern Brazil while trying to enable a mass escape of prisoners, setting off a gun battle with the police that killed 20 people and injured at least four. [The New York Times, 10 April 2018](#)

**Brazil:** The disproportionate surge in Brazil's female prison population is an alarming sign of a wider global trend. [The World Weekly, 13 April 2018](#)

**Canada:** Canada's prison system is struggling with a dangerous gang population that is becoming increasingly diverse and more difficult to manage. [CBC News, 25 March 2018](#)

**Guatemala:** Authorities in Guatemala say that a riot left seven dead and 25 injured at an overcrowded prison in the country's south. [Yahoo News, 27 April 2018](#)

**Mexico:** Six police officers, a prisoner and an unidentified man died following a prison riot in Veracruz, according to state authorities. [Mexico Daily News, 2 April 2018](#)

**United States:** A record number of people exonerated for crimes they did not commit were put in prison because of official police, prosecutorial, or government official misconduct. [Independent, 14 March 2018](#)

**United States:** Seven prisoners in a maximum-security prison in South Carolina were brutally killed with homemade knives. [The Guardian, 16 April 2018](#)

**United States:** Puerto Rican civil rights groups and the families of prisoners are demanding the government stop its plan to send a third of the island's prisoners to prisons on the mainland US. [Buzzfeed, 25 April 2018](#)

**Venezuela:** Sixty-eight people died in a prison riot in northern Venezuela. [IOL News, 29 March 2018](#)

## ASIA

**Bangladesh:** Over a third of prisoners in Bangladesh's overpopulated jails are there for offences linked to drugs. [United News of Bangladesh, 21 March 2018](#)

**Iran:** Detainees in Iran appear to be systematically subjected to torture and abuse, including sexual violence, according to a UN report. [i24 News, 5 March 2018](#)

**Israel:** The state has requested that the High Court of Justice give it a nine-year extension, to fulfil the order to give each prisoner a minimum of 4 square metres of cell space. [The Jerusalem Post, 5 March 2018](#)

**Israel:** The head of Israel's Public Defense has ordered all public defenders to argue that no one should be sent to prison until the facilities meet the minimum standards set by the High Court of Justice. [Haaretz, 26 March 2018](#)

**Israel:** Transgender prisoners will no longer be kept in isolation, the Israel Prison Service has announced. [Haaretz, 17 April 2018](#)

**Myanmar:** Myanmar President Win Myint has granted amnesty to more than 8,500 prisoners. [The Daily Progress, 17 April 2018](#)

**Oman:** Conjugal visits have been permitted for prisoners at two Oman prisons for the first time in the history of the Sultanate. [Times of Oman, 17 March 2018](#)

## EUROPE

**France:** France will build thousands of new jail cells and use electronic tagging more widely under reforms being pursued by President Emmanuel Macron. [Reuters, 6 March 2018](#)

**Germany:** Prisons across all German states are seriously overcrowded, according to a media report. [The Local, 25 April 2018](#)

**Ireland:** Political factors and fears of adverse public reaction play a significant role in determining if long-serving prisoners are kept in jail, according to an extensive new study. [The Irish Times, 20 March 2018](#)

**Ireland:** Twenty-six severely mentally ill patients are being kept in prisons because there are no beds available to them at the Central Mental Hospital. [RTE, 29 April 2018](#)

**Luxembourg:** The relatively small number of female prisoners means that they are receiving substandard rehabilitative services. [Delano, 5 March 2018](#)

**Romania:** Tackling “appalling” conditions in Romania’s prison system should be made a condition of the Eastern European country assuming the EU presidency. [EU Reporter, 6 March 2018](#)

**Romania:** A draft bill that outlines alternative ways to serve prison sentences, including weekend jail and home detention, has been passed by the Chamber of Deputies’ Judicial Committee. [Romania Insider, 24 April 2018](#)

**Russia:** The Russian government has cut its federal prison financing programme by nearly half. [The Moscow Times, 17 April 2018](#)

**Turkey:** The number of workshops employing prisoners in jails across Turkey has reached 1,700, with more than 50,000 prisoners working in them. [Hurriyet Daily News, 20 March 2018](#)

## UNITED KINGDOM

**England and Wales:** Prison governors are to be given a refreshed system of “carrot and stick” incentives and sanctions to control prisoners’ behaviour. [The Guardian, 6 March 2018](#)

**England and Wales:** Less than a third of prison officers in England and Wales have completed new suicide and self-harm training aimed at preventing more deaths in custody. [Buzzfeed News, 15 March 2018](#)

**England and Wales:** The use of electronic tags on offenders has increased, as the number of prisoners has dropped to its lowest level in seven years. [BBC News, 6 April 2018](#)

**England and Wales:** Leading doctors have called on the government to abolish the solitary confinement of children and young people in the youth justice system. [Independent, 17 April 2018](#)

**England and Wales:** Self-harm and violent attacks have hit record levels in prisons across England and Wales as campaigners warn of a “system in crisis”. [Independent, 26 April 2018](#)

**England and Wales:** The nation’s prisons have lost officers with about 70,000 years of experience between them in less than a decade, it has emerged. [The Guardian, 29 April 2018](#)

**Northern Ireland:** Prisoners had to help care for fellow prisoners due to staff shortages at Northern Ireland’s high-security prison. [BBC News, 29 April 2018](#)

**Scotland:** Concerns have been raised about the number of pregnant women who have served short-term prison sentences in Scotland in the last five years. [Independent, 14 April 2018](#)

## OCEANIA

**Australia:** A dramatic increase in repeat offending may partly be responsible for a 50% increase in the number of female prisoners being held in New South Wales prisons. [The Guardian, 21 March 2018](#)

**Australia:** The number of prisoners awaiting trial or sentencing in Victoria has almost doubled since the current government came to power. [The Age, 23 April 2018](#)

**Australia:** A programme designed to teach parenting and life skills to incarcerated mothers in rural New South Wales has seen the recidivism rate drop to a sixth of the national average. [News.com.au, 30 April 2018](#)

**New Zealand:** The Corrections Department says it did not foresee the recent, rapid rise in the female prison population. [Stuff.co.nz, 1 March 2018](#)

**New Zealand:** Conditions at Christchurch Women's Prison have improved, but concerns remain over security cameras in cell toilet areas and the impacts of rising prison numbers. [Stuff.co.nz, 4 April 2018](#)

**New Zealand:** A new report by the Ministry of Justice reveals Māori are eleven times more likely to face prison time once convicted. [Radio NZ, 19 April 2018](#)