



INTERNATIONAL PRISON NEWS DIGEST

51st Edition – May - June 2019

Welcome to the 51st 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 May to 30 June 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

Chad: One prisoner was killed and five others were wounded in an attempted jail breakout in western Chad. [Business Standard, 24 June 2019](#)

Egypt: Egypt's Prisons department announced it would release 2,002 prisoners on the first day of Eid al-Fitr under a presidential decree. [Egypt Today, 5 June 2019](#)

Nigeria: Petty offenders will no longer be sentenced to prison terms, the Chief Judge of Lagos State, Justice Opeyemi Oke has said. [The Nation, 6 May 2019](#)

South Africa: A new study has found that the number of prisoners awaiting trial is 'disproportionately' high in the Western Cape, and that overcrowding in prisons continues to be a major issue. [Daily Maverick, 28 May 2019](#)

South Africa: More than 550 prisoners die in the country's prisons every year, a seminar on prison deaths has revealed. [IOL, 24 June 2019](#)

Zimbabwe: Hundreds of suspects are languishing in remand prison, some for over a decade with neither a remand nor trial date due to incompetence by State officials. [New Zimbabwe, 9 May 2019](#)

Zimbabwe: A prison in Zimbabwe has applied to grow cannabis to fund its operations. [iAfrica, 4 June 2019](#)

AMERICAS

Brazil: Fifty-seven prisoners died in riots at four prisons in western Brazil. [CNN, 28 May 2019](#)

Brazil: The President has dismissed the 11 members of the National Mechanism for Preventing and Combating Torture which monitors violations of rights and acts to prevent torture in penitentiaries. [Folha de S. Paulo, 12 June 2019](#)

Brazil: The government of Rio de Janeiro state has expanded an unpaid work scheme for prisoners that human rights experts have denounced as illegal. [Reuters, 26 June 2019](#)

Canada: Prisoner isolation will remain legal for now after Canada's top court granted Ottawa's urgent request to allow the current law to stay in force for the time being. [The Globe and Mail, 16 June 2019](#)

Colombia: Dramatic overcrowding and sub-human living conditions in Colombia's prison system are the result of the country's failing justice system, according to think tank Dejusticia. [Colombia Reports, 15 May 2019](#)

Ecuador: At least six prisoners were killed in a prison in Ecuador in violence between rival gangs. [Al Jazeera, 31 May 2019](#)

Guatemala: At least seven people were killed and 17 injured after shooting broke out at a prison near Guatemala City. [VoA, 7 May 2019](#)

Paraguay: A riot at a prison in Paraguay left 10 prisoners dead and 10 wounded. [Business Standard, 17 June 2019](#)

United States: New York is now providing free phone calls from jails, making it the first major US city to eliminate fees for prisoner calls. [AP, 1 May 2019](#)

United States: New York is going to restrict the use of solitary confinement in state prisons, despite failing to pass legislation that would have prohibited putting a prisoner in isolation for more than 15 consecutive days. [NBC New York, 21 June 2019](#)

Venezuela: At least 29 prisoners died after clashes broke out at a prison inside a Venezuelan police station. [BBC News, 25 May 2019](#)

ASIA

Afghanistan: Fighting between prisoners and Afghan policemen during a drug search operation in the country's largest prison left four prisoners dead and several injured. [Euronews, 14 May 2019](#)

Hong Kong: Hong Kong's prison authority is studying a scheme to give all prisoners a tablet computer so they can email friends and family on the outside. [South China Morning Post, 17 June 2019](#)

Iraq: Iraq's prisons are overcrowded and lack proper care for detainees, according to the state human rights watchdog. [The National, 20 June 2019](#)

Israel: Some 60 percent of the 1,389 sex offenders imprisoned in Israel in 2017 were not enrolled in any kind of therapy program and will be released into the community without treatment. [Haaretz, 7 May 2019](#)

Israel: Israel's prisoners are often kept in facilities "unfit for human residence" and sometimes face illegal punitive measures such as being tied to their beds for hours or even days at a time. [The Times of Israel, 12 May 2019](#)

Maldives: The home ministry has formed a committee to oversee prison reforms recommended by an audit of jails in the Maldives. [Maldives Independent, 6 June 2019](#)

Myanmar: Police in Myanmar shot at least four prisoners and injured several others during a prison riot. [AA, 9 May 2019](#)

Tajikistan: Three guards were killed during a riot at a high-security prison in Tajikistan. [BBC News, 20 May 2019](#)

Vietnam: The National Assembly has voted against allowing companies to organise work for prisoners outside their prisons. [VN Express, 15 June 2019](#)

EUROPE

Belgium: Guards in detention facilities in Belgium went on strike to bring attention to their working conditions and denounce overpopulation in prisons and inadequate infrastructure. [Brussels Times, 7 May 2019](#)

Ireland: Prisoners are sleeping on mattresses on the floors of Irish prisons due to overcrowding, the Prison Officers Association has said. [The Journal, 2 May 2019](#)

Ireland: The Inspector of Prisons said it is repeating recommendations on the deaths of vulnerable prisoners “over and over again” but that prison authorities do not appear to be taking steps to prevent such fatalities recurring. [Irish Examiner, 15 June 2019](#)

Ireland: Only one prison inspection report has been published in the last five years and no inspections have been conducted in five jails over the last 10 years, the Inspector of Prisons has said. [Irish Examiner, 18 June 2019](#)

Finland: Finland's Criminal Sanctions Agency (Rise) wants to increase support for rehabilitation to help prisoners return to civilian life. [YLE, 19 June 2019](#)

Georgia: The Ministry of Justice has signed a grant agreement with a charity to fund a program that will remove tattoos from incarcerated juveniles and formerly incarcerated adults. [Georgia Today, 14 May 2019](#)

Malta: Just under half of the prisoners at Corradino Correctional Facility had a history of drug use prior to being jailed. [Times of Malta, 7 June 2019](#)

Ukraine: Four prison guards have been injured in what Ukrainian law enforcement authorities said was a riot by prisoners at a penitentiary in the Odesa region. [Radio Free Europe, 27 May 2019](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

England and Wales: Prison officers who smuggle drugs and mobile phones into prisons will be among those targeted by a specialist taskforce set up to tackle staff corruption in jails. [The Guardian, 4 May 2019](#)

England and Wales: More prisoners in England and Wales will be able to leave prison for a day or overnight in order to take jobs. [BBC News, 28 May 2019](#)

England and Wales: Prisoners are waiting for as long as a year to access secure beds in psychiatric hospitals, despite guidance stating they should be transferred within 14 days. [HSJ, 28 May 2019](#)

England and Wales: Prisoners are living in squalid and inhumane conditions in buildings that are unfit for purpose. [The Guardian, 5 June 2019](#)

England and Wales: Family ties are “utterly indispensable” and must be strengthened if women caught up in the prison system are to avoid reoffending, according to a Ministry of Justice report. [The Guardian, 18 June 2019](#)

Scotland: The suicide rate in Scottish prisons has been underestimated, with delays in determining causes of death providing a misleading picture, according to research. [The Scotsman, 23 May 2019](#)

Scotland: The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) is facing "significant pressures" over its budgets, staffing levels and handling of rising prison populations. [The Herald, 28 May 2019](#)

Scotland: Scotland is set to become the first part of the UK to allow prisoners who are still behind bars the right to vote. [iNews, 21 June 2019](#)

Scotland: Two Scottish prisons are starting a pilot scheme to help prisoners with job advice and claiming benefits as they near their release dates. [BBC News, 27 June 2019](#)

OCEANIA

Australia: New South Wales prisons are cramming dangerous numbers of prisoners into cells, re-opening obsolete jails, and spending vast amounts of money to cope with an overcrowding crisis. [The Guardian, 24 May 2019](#)

Australia: Model prisoners at Canberra's jail will be appointed as delegates to raise issues with management about their conditions, programmes and services. [Canberra Times, 26 June 2019](#)

New Zealand: Two prisons in Northland and Hawke's Bay will shift to a Māori-focused model at a cost of almost \$100 million over four years. [Newshub, 10 May 2019](#)

New Zealand: Otago prison has been criticised for use of pepper spray and CCTV monitoring of toilets. [Stuff.nz, 27 June 2019](#)