



International Centre for Prison Studies

ICPS NEWS DIGEST

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Welcome to the ninth 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 May to 30 June 2012. Please click on the blue highlighted words to access the news reports.

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Prison populations

More than 57,000 people are in prison in [Cuba](#), according to a rare report about the prison population published by the Communist Party newspaper, Granma. The article said efforts had been made to improve prison conditions, that 23,000 prisoners had prison jobs and were being paid, and that rehabilitation programmes were underway with education and training being provided at all levels. The report came as a UN panel held a hearing on [Cuba](#), where the panel said that it “continues to be supremely concerned by reports received about the... overcrowding, malnutrition, lack of hygiene and... adequate medical attention.”

Not to be confused with people in state and federal prisons, the number of prisoners in local jails in the [US](#) has dropped for the third consecutive year, reaching its lowest level since 2002. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics report the number of prisoners in local jails fell by 1.8%, from 748,728 to 735,601 between June 2010 and June 2011. About 61%, or nearly 488,000 of those prisoners were awaiting trial.

[Mozambique](#)'s prisons are currently holding 16,881 prisoners, which is more than double their capacity, the Justice Ministry has revealed. Of this number 6,415 prisoners are awaiting trial. The Justice Minister is chairing a meeting to discuss the chronic overcrowding, which will look at alternative penalties to imprisonment.

The Commissioner General of Prisons in [Uganda](#) has blamed the criminal justice system for the increasing congestion in the country's prisons, which are currently at 250 percent capacity. He noted that 52 percent of prisoners are awaiting trial and appealed to the agencies that deliver justice to harmonise their activities to ensure that there is faster dispensation of justice. Similarly, the Controller-General of the [Nigerian](#) Prisons Service has said that delays in justice dispensation have contributed to congestion in the country's prisons, where 47,200 out of the 53,100 prisoners were awaiting trial.

South [Australia](#)'s justice system has the highest remand rate of any state in the country, as one in three prisoners is unsentenced. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows an average 679 of the state's 2,108 men and women in custody were unsentenced in the first three months of this year. Legal experts say the remand rate of 32 percent, eight percent above the national average, is the result of understaffing, inefficiency and poor court infrastructure.

A report from [Belize](#) states that 414, or nearly 30 percent, of the 1,324 prisoners at June 7th were on remand, with some saying they had been in prison for four or five years without their cases being resolved, and the longest prisoner on remand having been there for nine years.

A study conducted by a prison advocacy NGO in [Malta](#) found that one in every four prisoners is under preventive arrest awaiting trial. The study found that 83 percent of them had never been in prison before and almost half never requested bail. A quarter of them had been granted bail but could not raise the money so had to be remanded in custody. Almost half had been held for more than six months, 21 percent for between a year and two years, 13 percent between two and four years and three percent for more than four years.

[Italy](#)'s Justice Minister has said that the prisoner population in Italian prisons dropped by 3,000 in the past three months, thanks to the prison reform decree.

The Pacific Island state of [Samoa](#) is to pardon 35 prisoners to mark the 50th anniversary of its independence from New Zealand, while the government of [Nepal](#) has decided to release 232 prisoners from various jails across the country on the occasion of the Republic Day. The Department of Prison Management said the prisoners who have served half of the jail term in a disciplined way would be exempted from their remaining term and let free.

[Turkmenistan](#)'s president has ordered the release of 1,000 prisoners, the second prison amnesty this year, while the president of [Burundi](#) has pardoned several thousand prisoners in order to address prison overcrowding and celebrate the country's 50th anniversary of independence. The decree states that those serving a sentence of five years or less are set free, along with women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, prisoners who are over 60 or under 18 and those suffering from terminal illness. The pardon does not apply to prisoners serving time for armed robbery, illegal possession of firearms, threatening state security, war crimes, crimes against humanity or rape.

The population of aging and elderly prisoners in the [US](#) has increased by 1,300 percent over the past 30 years, with nearly 125,000 prisoners aged 55 or older now in prison according to a report by the American Civil Liberties Union. One of the authors of the report said unless dramatic changes are made to sentencing and parole policies the number of older prisoners could reach as high as 400,000 by 2030 posing a tremendous threat to state and federal budgets.

Health

The government in the state of Punjab, [India](#), is setting up de-addiction centres in the eight central jails in the province. The health department will provide medication and psychiatrists and will work closely with the prisons department to establish the centres. The plan has come in response to a request from the Punjab and Haryana high court for an explanation on steps being taken to curb drug abuse inside prisons after violence broke out in Kapurthala jail in November when a drug addicted prisoner died. Following the violence a medical officer from the jail submitted an affidavit to the court stating that 80 percent of prisoners in the jail were drug addicts.

In [South Africa](#) some 298 prisoners are potential candidates for medical parole under the new policy which came into effect on March 1. Under the policy a medical parole advisory board has been appointed, an independent panel made up of medical doctors who consider and decide on all medical aspects in the applications for placement on parole on medical grounds. Only after their input can a parole board consider such an application.

In the [US](#) the state of Massachusetts has recently eliminated more than \$1 million for HIV testing and education in county jails. The cuts will make a big impact in the county jail system and those prisoners returning to the community. Many prisoners that have been exposed to the virus are unaware they carry the disease and risk the safety of others in the community.

Six more prisoners have been infected with hepatitis C at the Alexander Maconochie Centre in [Australian](#) Capital Territory with Corrections Health saying that intravenous drug use was the most likely source of infection in all but one of the new cases. The new cases have reignited the debate over needle exchange programmes for prisoners.

The UN Committee Against Torture has criticised [Canada](#)'s treatment of prisoners with mental health issues. The committee found that Canada has inadequate infrastructure to deal with the rising and complex needs of prisoners with mental illness, and continues to use inappropriate and extensively prolonged solitary confinement to deal with them. The committee recommended that Canada increase the capacity of mental health treatment centres, abolish the use of solitary confinement for persons with serious mental health issues, and otherwise ensure that solitary confinement is limited and subject to judicial oversight.

A groundbreaking mental health unit in [Ireland](#)'s Mountjoy prison is said to have greatly improved care for prisoners and boosted compliance with international human rights standards. The establishment of the unit in December 2010 has led to a significant fall in the

use of special isolation cells, the overuse of which had been criticised by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

Treatment of prisoners

The Ombudsman in [Georgia](#) has asked the chief prosecutor to investigate suspected cases of prisoner mistreatment at Ksani prison. The request came after the ombudsman's inspectors met hundreds of prisoners who reported physical and verbal abuse for violations of the prisons rules. The Ombudsman's last annual report dealt extensively with the problem of prisoners being mistreated, but led to no reaction other than closing down two prisons and raising the maximum limit on prisoners in many others, thereby increasing the problem of overcrowding.

In the [US](#) a former prisoner who says she was shackled at the ankles in an ambulance while in labour prior to the birth of her daughter despite the objections of medical personnel has filed a suit against the Nevada Department of Corrections. The suit cited what it described as shocking indifference to "wholly obvious, serious medical needs." The prisoner was shackled again ten minutes after giving birth, and was unable to receive physical therapy for a pulled groin muscle.

Also in the [US](#), California's prison system is facing an unprecedented lawsuit which accuses it of operating an unconstitutional and "uniquely harsh regime" in which hundreds of prisoners have spent a decade or more in solitary confinement. A complaint has been filed on behalf of ten men housed at Pelican Bay prison, who collectively have spent over two centuries locked up alone, the bulk of that time in the cramped windowless cells of the Secure Housing Unit. One plaintiff has been in solitary confinement for 33 years.

Prisoners at the Vienna Correctional Center in Illinois, [US](#) have also filed a lawsuit alleging human rights abuses described as "stomach churning." The lawsuit claims that rather than fix broken windows the state boards them up, depriving prisoners of natural light and fresh air. Mice, rats, millipedes, cockroaches and other vermin run free, and food contains rodent faeces and mould. Some of the toilets and sinks do not function or drain properly due to leaking or clogged pipes. Rust coloured water comes out of these sinks which the prisoners use to brush their teeth, wash their faces and clean their dishes. Broken toilets are left filled with faeces, sometimes for weeks.

Prisoners at Prey Sar prison in Phnom Penh, [Cambodia](#), now have free access to clean drinking water thanks to a cooperative project between the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, the General Department of Prisons and the International Committee of the Red Cross which funded the project. Each prisoner is entitled to receive ten litres of clean water per day. Previously prisoners in the country's largest and most overcrowded prison only had free access to water from a ground pond that contained flooding runoff and rainwater and was used for latrines and washing.

In [Latvia](#), prisoners in Daugavgriva Prison's Daugavpils sector have gone on a hunger strike over badly washed plates and utensils in the prison. Prisoners who violate prison rules are placed in an isolation cell where they may not take their own utensils but have to use those

provided by the prison, which are often badly washed and expose the prisoners to the risk of infection with intestinal diseases and hepatitis A and E.

Amidst the deepening financial crisis in [Greece](#), the state budget for many prisons has decreased to a minimum for some months resulting in hundreds of prisoners being malnourished and surviving on the charity of local communities. In Corinth the nearby military camp has stopped supplying food to the prison as they do not have enough food to feed the soldiers let alone the 84 prisoners so groups of local residents have been collecting food to give to the prison. The prisons in Patra and Alikarnassos have also been experiencing food supply problems as the prisoners who cannot afford to buy food from the prison canteen are left without food.

A report on [Argentina](#) by the Centre for Legal and Social Studies suggests that successive governments have failed to find a humane way of running the prison system. The report describes cases of humiliating treatment, torture, beatings, arbitrary transfers, excessive punishment, lack of hygiene and lack of access to healthcare in the country's prisons. The report's authors criticise political and judicial authorities for denying the problem and turning a blind eye, and criticise public indifference to the serious violations of human rights that occur in the prisons.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has published its Report on the Human Rights of Persons Deprived of their Liberty in the [Americas](#). The report identifies the following as the most serious and widespread problems in prisons and other detention facilities in the region: overcrowding; deficiencies in physical conditions of detention and the lack of basic services; the high incidence of prison violence and the lack of effective control by those in charge of security; the use of torture in the context of criminal investigations and the excessive use of force by those in charge of security at the prisons; the excessive use of preventive detention, which has direct repercussions on prison overcrowding; the lack of effective means of protection for vulnerable groups; the lack of work and educational programmes and the lack of transparency in the mechanisms of access to these programmes; and the corruption and lack of transparency in prison management.

A report by Human Rights Watch found conditions in [South Sudan](#)'s prisons to be grim, as prison infrastructure is rudimentary and in some cases damaged or crumbling. Cells are unhygienic, severely overcrowded and lack sufficient ventilation. Prisoners do not get enough to eat and in some prisons water is in short supply. Prisoners who fall ill rarely receive proper care unless they can afford to pay for it themselves, and prisoners reported that prison officers routinely beat them with sticks, canes or whips for disciplinary infractions.

[Zimbabwe](#)'s 46 prisons are below international standards, a senior prison commander has said. The government is unable to upgrade the prisons in the country due to a lack of funding. The commander said there was a need to rehabilitate dilapidated infrastructure, improve sanitation, provide vehicles for officers and improve the working conditions and welfare of officers and prisoners.

Staff and prisoners at the Nanaimo Correctional Centre in [Canada](#) marked their fourth annual National Aboriginal Day celebrations at the jail. The celebrations, along with regular aboriginal programming, is credited with reducing racial tension in a jail whose prisoner complement is between 28 and 30 percent native.

Prison violence

In the [US](#), New Mexico officials have released a video aimed at helping prisoners avoid being sexually assaulted while in prison. All current and incoming prisoners are required to watch the video, which gives tips on preventing rape, including staying away from gambling and avoiding flirting with guards. The video also tells prisoners what to expect if they are raped, from physical reactions to emotional effects, and walks them through the process of reporting sexual assaults.

Tilburg prison in the [Netherlands](#) is too full and this leads to unacceptable levels of violence, according to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture. The report states that the overcrowding leads to some cells housing eight prisoners, while the tension is further increased because prisoners of very different backgrounds are put in the same cell. The Committee wants the prison to house fewer prisoners per cell.

Prisoners cut their arms and stomachs and went on hunger strike protesting against abuse of power by prison officials in Ivatsevichy prison colony in [Belarus](#), according to a letter sent by the prisoners to a local newspaper. The protest began after the prisoners had been severely beaten by guards when they had refused to return to their cells because a water pipe had burst and the cell was wet and unsuitable for habitation. The deputy director of the Corrections Department said that the guards were allowed to use force and special weapons and that it was not up to the prisoners to choose which cells they lived in.

Prisoners in Santa Marta, [Colombia](#), seized control of the prison by burning mattresses, clothing and other paraphernalia. They rioted in protest at the poor conditions in the prison, their primary complaint being that they had not received adequate medical treatment for more than five months. They also complained of inedible food, undrinkable water and overcrowding in the cells. The protest finally ended when prison officials reached an agreement with the prisoners to end the riot.

A series of recent fires in at least five detention centres in [Turkey](#) has raised questions about living conditions in the country's prisons. Thirteen prisoners died in a fire in the southeastern province of Sanliurfa when prisoners set fire to their mattresses to protest cramped and unsuitable living conditions. A day later prisoners in the same prison again set fires in the dormitories, injuring 42 prisoners. No one was hurt in a prison fire in the southern province of Karaman but the prisoners had to be evacuated, and similar fires were reported at prisons in Gazantep, Adana and Osmaniye.

Sexual misconduct by male correctional staff toward prisoners at Alabama's Tutweiler Prison for Women in the [US](#) is "commonplace" and has resulted in numerous women becoming pregnant while imprisoned, a complaint filed by the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) with the US Department of Justice alleges. In interviews with more than 50 women

prisoners EJI said it discovered “frequent and severe officer-on-inmate sexual violence” ranging from women being coerced into performing sexual favours in exchange for contraband to rape by a male correctional staff member while another male officer served as a lookout.

In more positive news the [US](#) Department of Justice has issued the first comprehensive federal rules aimed at “zero tolerance” for sexual assaults against those held in prisons, jails and other places of detention. A government study has found that sexual violence may afflict one out of every ten prisoners in the US.

In [Lebanon](#) prisoners broke out of the cage in which they were held in the courtroom of the Baabda Justice Palace and threatened to harm the judge and other courtroom staff. At least two of the prisoners deliberately cut themselves with glass. The men were protesting the delay in their legal proceedings. Internal Security Forces surrounded the courtroom and negotiations began which were concluded when the judge promised to speed up the judicial proceedings of the prisoners and they surrendered and were returned back to Roumieh Prison.

Developments in rehabilitation

In Hanoi, [Vietnam](#), a centre to help reintegrate ex-prisoners into society has been officially opened. The centre, the first of its kind in the country, has been set up by the Vietnam Lawyers Association and aims to supply supportive services such as legal aid, vocational training and employment advice for ex-prisoners.

A new vocational block at the prison at Northward in [Grand Cayman](#) aims to revive rehabilitation efforts and give prisoners practical skills, after the original prison workshop was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan. Prisoners will be able to learn relevant skills and will also receive certification for their work.

In [Afghanistan](#) a Kabul-based transitional house has been set up for women leaving prison. At the shelter women are provided with vocational training and literacy classes to help them to develop life skills and secure employment that will guide them towards being stable and independent.

Prisoners in four federal prisons in [Brazil](#) will be able to earn four days off their sentence for every book they read. They will be able to read up to twelve works of literature, philosophy, science or classics to trim up to 48 days off their sentence each year. They will have up to four weeks to read each book and write an essay which must “make correct use of paragraphs, be free of corrections, use margins and legible joined up writing.” According to a Sao Paulo lawyer, who heads a book donation project for prisons “A person can leave prison more enlightened and with an enlarged view of the world... without doubt they will leave a better person.”

Prisoners at Vega Alta women’s prison in [Puerto Rico](#) are reducing their sentences thanks to their daily work of sewing “HeelCondoms”, colourful and varied accessories that fit on to the heels of women’s shoes to completely change their original appearance. By sewing the

produce women prisoners can reduce their sentences by ten days for every month of work, and they will also receive \$5 from the designer of the HeelCondoms for each day of work.

An education organisation hopes to set up libraries in seven of [Cambodia](#)'s prisons. The group, Sipar, hopes to have the libraries finished by the end of the year, in an effort to educate prisoners so that they might better integrate with society on their release. The ultimate goal is to have libraries in all of the country's 26 prisons by 2014, serving more than 15,000 prisoners nationwide.

In [Algeria](#), where 75 percent of the prison population are under the age of 30, efforts are being targeted towards the young prisoners to improve their level of education with the aim of aiding their reintegration back into society and deterring them from committing more crime. The authorities are using different methods to encourage the prisoners to participate in education, for example by rewarding a prisoner if they read a book. Prisoners also have the possibility of a presidential pardon if they manage to obtain a diploma or even a degree during their time in jail.

A partnership in [South Africa](#) between Tswelopele Correctional Centre in Kimberley and the Media Development and Diversity Agency will help train prisoners in basic journalism with the ultimate goal of assisting them to set up their own newspaper. Educational facilities at the prison will also be expanded.

Prisoners in [Trinidad and Tobago](#) will get the chance to have their voices heard via their own radio station – Rise Maximum Radio. Rise, which stands for Rehabilitating Inmates Seeking Empowerment – will be located at the maximum security prison in Arouca and will serve to boost the self esteem of prisoners and encourage them to be a part of something positive.

The [Sri Lanka](#) Prisons Department has organised an inter-prison cricket tournament for prisoners in the country's jails. A spokesman of the Prisons Department said the cricket tournament was part of the rehabilitation process for the prisoners, and that the winning teams and talented individuals would be presented with trophies and other gifts.

Prisoners at the Women's Community Correctional Center in Hawaii, [US](#) are helping to put 60,000 pages of historical Hawaiian newspapers online by manually typing copy from microfilm into searchable databases. Under the project prisoners who transcribe stories will get to include their name as a transcriber and dedicate the work to a loved one. The work will also help the prisoners to reconnect with the state's rich history and culture and expand their knowledge.

In [Canada](#), researchers are hoping that a graphic novel written by six juveniles in a British Columbia jail can help break the revolving-door syndrome in prisons and encourage literacy among young offenders. The novel follows the experiences of a young man who fights to get his life back on track while his brother and friends are trying to pull him back into a life of crime. A counsellor at the jail, who started the initiative, said "the goal of the project was to both encourage literacy and find a way for repeat offenders to get across to their peers that there is a way to get out and stay out."

Prison authorities in [Uganda](#) have tackled the shortage of soap in the country's prisons by setting up a soap making venture. Over 25 prison staff, 30 prisoners from Luzira Women's Prison, 30 from Kampala Remand Prison and 80 from Luzira Upper Prison have been trained in soap making under the project. The initiative will reduce the costs the government incurs in buying detergents for use in prisons, and will give the prisoners skills they can use on release.

The prisons department in the state of Tamil Nadu, [India](#), has decided to assign the name of a prisoner to each plant in jails across the state to make the prisoner responsible for caring for the plant until it grows into a tree. It is hoped that prisoners, especially those with depression, will benefit from the activity.

Women prisoners in the maximum security prison in Juba, [South Sudan](#) are learning to sew under a pilot project introduced by the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. The women undergo week long training in sewing skills, both by hand and machine as well as how to cut cloth using patterns. The programme is currently training three women and nine prison officers in sewing 800 new uniforms for women prisoners to be distributed across the country. The project is an ongoing one, so those who have been trained will then train others. The prisoners will receive a training certificate once they complete the programme which will help them to find work on release.

A sheriff in Georgia, [US](#) has created what is believed to be the country's first county jail devoted to military veteran prisoners who have committed crimes after returning from serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among the partnerships being set up is a link to Veterans Court, a community group that works with veterans in prison suffering from mental illness. The jail will also provide those soon to be released with advice and support as they transition back into the community.

The parole system in [Malaysia](#), introduced in 2008, is working and has helped ease congestion in prisons nationwide and given prisoners a second chance at life according to the Prisons Director. He said that recently 169 prisoners undergoing rehabilitation programmes for parole were sent for community service at places such as mosques, old people's homes and orphanages, while 22 prisoners stayed at the department's halfway house in Johor Baru which gave them the opportunity to find employment.

Prison reform groups have praised the [New Zealand](#) government's \$5 million funding boost for rehabilitation work. The Corrections Minister said that drug and alcohol addiction services for prisoners would be extended to all prisoners, education and employment training in prisons would be expanded and there would be greater support for prisoners to find work on release.

Sentencing and the law

The [US](#) Supreme Court has ruled that mandatory sentences of life without parole for juveniles violate the constitution's bar on "cruel and unusual punishment." However the Court refused to go a step further and categorically bar all sentences of life without parole for juveniles.

Also in the [US](#), a study by the Pew Center on the States has shown that prisoners released in 2009 served an average of nine additional months in prison, or 36 percent longer, than those released in 1990. Though most states increased the length of stay between 1990 and 2009, the overall change varied widely between states. In Florida prison terms increased by 166 percent, in Virginia by 91 percent and in North Carolina by 86 percent. Eight states reduced their overall time served, including Illinois by 25 percent and South Dakota by 24 percent.

The Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) of [Ghana](#) has cited the Ghana Prisons Authority for gross violations of the rights of remand prisoners and called for immediate measures to address it. The HRAC says that there are a huge number of remand prisoners held past the expiry of their warrants of commitment. Such warrants are only valid for 14 days but some prisoners remain in prison for years after their warrants expire. The Centre called on authorities to educate remand prisoners about their rights, to maintain adequate records of prisoner warrants and to ensure that upholding the law and protecting the rights of remand prisoners is a priority within the criminal justice system.

Flawed processes and unlawful detentions in [South Sudan](#)'s prisons reflect the urgent need to improve the new nation's fledgling justice system, according to a Human Rights watch report. A third of the country's prison population of approximately 6,000 has not been convicted of any offence or in some cases even charged with one, but are detained, often for long periods, waiting for police, prosecutors and judges to process their cases. The vast majority of detainees have no legal representation because they cannot afford a lawyer and the country has no functioning legal aid system. Judges pass long sentences and even condemn to death people who, without legal assistance were unable to understand the charges against them.

Despite marked progress in a number of areas of the justice sector some challenges remain, according to an EU report on [Georgia](#). The report says the main problem relates to the strong position of the prosecutor and the lack of independence of the judiciary. This is evidenced by very high conviction rates (98 percent), though the number of acquittals did increase slightly compared to 2010. The EU advised Georgia to continue the reform of the judicial system and enhance the independence and effectiveness of the court, as well as provide further liberalisation of the criminal law policy and practice in accordance with Council of Europe standards.

An Amnesty International report on [Liberia](#) found that long delays in the judicial system led to appalling overcrowding in prisons, as most detainees were awaiting trial, suffering inhumane conditions. The report said inadequate police investigations, a shortage of public defenders, poor case management, corruption and a judiciary that lacked the capacity to hear cases in a timely manner contributed to a backlog in the criminal justice system.

New federal research in the [US](#) is giving momentum to the call for reduced penalties and more rehabilitation for drug offenders – including juveniles – across the nation. A study funded by the National Institute of Justice found that alternatives to handling drug cases, such as specialised courts that usher more people into rehab, can sharply drop recidivism

rates, scale back on overall crime and produce deep cost cuts in an overwhelmed criminal justice system.

The Attorney General of [Barbados](#) has pledged his commitment to the establishment of a Drug Treatment Court on the island, which he believes will reduce the level of crime in society by dealing with the root causes of criminality.

The [Portuguese](#) Ministry of Justice is aiming to alter the Revision Code for Sentences and Freedom Depriving Measures to allow foreign prisoners to serve less time, particularly if their sentence includes expulsion from Portugal. The proposed alteration will include the immediate departure of prisoners after serving half of their sentence, if that sentence is equal to or less than five years in prison, or after serving two thirds if their sentence is for more than five years.

[Costa Rica](#)'s Constitutional Court has ruled that prison officials must allow a male prisoner to dress in women's clothing. The ruling followed an appeal by David Avila Ulloa, who changed his name to Sherlyn Tatiana, after prison officials forbade him to dress as a woman. The justices said in their ruling that Avila may dress "as a woman or in the way that he wants, provided that such clothing is not obviously scandalous or such that it affects the order or the security of the penal centre."

Prison policy

The state jail manual of Maharashtra, [India](#), is to be amended after 33 years, and for the first time prisoners will be categorised by their offences and educational qualifications. Rehabilitation of prisoners and new education programmes are included in the manual, which also suggests a new diet chart for prisoners. The manual also has a new chapter on dynamic security, where policemen will be asked to interact with prisoners to find out if they are being threatened.

In Canberra, [Australia](#), prisoners at the Alexander Maconochie Centre who earn money in a new work release programme will have to pay their keep. The programme allows some low release prisoners out of the jail each day for up to three months to work or volunteer in the community. Any prisoner in paid work will have board and lodgings deducted by the government from their trust account, and deductions may also be made to pay outstanding court fines or mandatory child support payments.

In [Canada](#) the federal government will charge prisoners more money to stay in prison beginning next year as part of a number of changes to prison life announced by the Public Safety Minister. Charging more for room and board, getting rid of incentive pay for certain types of prison work and ensuring prisoners are charged for their phone calls are among the changes the Minister says will save a total of more than \$10 million a year.

Prisoners in [Bermuda](#) will have to pay for their second set of clothing, underwear and footwear if a proposed plan moves forward. The government will also cease to pay for health insurance coverage for all prisoners. The Minister of Justice announced the plans as cost cutting measures.

Officers in all [New Zealand](#) prisons are to have access to pepper spray. The decision follows a 12 month trial in 2011 which the government said found pepper spray to be an effective tactical option and deterrent, reducing the risk of injury to both staff and prisoners in some potentially violent situations. Also in [New Zealand](#), a proposal to extend strip search powers in prisons has been slammed as needless, degrading and possibly dangerous by the corrections union. A select committee heard that procedures for searching prisoners for contraband were sufficient, and removing safeguards could lead to an increase in violence. The Corrections Amendment Bill would remove the need for officers to get permission from a prison manager before searching a prisoner, and officers would also be required to perform more invasive procedures for all strip searches.

Several hundred prison guards in [Bulgaria](#) assembled in front of the Justice Ministry in Sofia to demand better working conditions and higher payment. Among the grievances the guards voiced is the excessive number of prisoners each one of them has to take care of, long working hours as well as failure to pay the additional statutory benefits the state owes them. The Ministry of Justice subsequently issued a statement that the state budget for 2013 will include the funds requested by the protesting workers.

In the [Philippines](#) all jails except the New Bilibid Prison will be required to make their expenditures and donations publicly available. They will also have post the total jail population, resources, funds and how donations given by private individuals and groups are being utilised. The support of the private sector, church organisations and other government offices is being called upon for help in tracking or auditing funds and donations intended for the jails.

[Sri Lanka](#) has signed prisoner exchange agreements with four countries – Pakistan, India, the Maldives and the United Kingdom. As the first phase of the exchange Sri Lanka will release 22 prisoners and return them to Pakistan.

In [India](#), Punjab prison authorities have submitted a proposal to the state government to allow prisoners to have conjugal visits with their legal spouses. The proposal states that special houses will be constructed inside the jail premises to ensure privacy for prisoners during the visits. A high court senior advocate said allowing such visits would be an important step in reforming prisons in the state.

In [Australia](#) the New South Wales government says it is seeking to increase public confidence in the state's prison system by appointing an Inspector of Custodial Services to provide independent oversight of prisons, juvenile detention facilities, police cells and prison vans. The inspector will report on each prison at least every five years and each juvenile detention centre at least every three years.

If you have any feedback or would like to unsubscribe from this News Digest please contact Helen Fair Helen.fair@icps.essex.ac.uk