

"30 Days/Dae/Izinsuku"

"30 Days/Dae/Izinsuku" June 2007

In this Issue:

Prison conditions and security

Governance and corruption

Sentencing

Human resources

Prisoners' rights and deaths

Prison construction

Rehabilitation

Other

Other African countries

Dear Jill

[Top of Page](#)

Prison conditions and security

Unannounced visit by MPs to Pollsmoor uncovers 'very serious' problems with the medical facilities: A fact finding mission by Members of Parliament to Pollsmoor prison in Cape Town observed that there were 'very serious problems with the medical facilities' at the prison. The delegation visited the prison without prior warning and found that many health professional posts were vacant; some essential drugs for serious illnesses, such as tuberculosis, had expired; and that protocols for the administration of drugs were being breached. The delegation said that the prison administration was seemingly uncomfortable with its an unannounced visit and attempted to prevent them from inspecting the medical facilities. Reported by Sapa, 31 May 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070531171920413C885918

Prisoners escaped while doing prison work: The Department of Correctional Services reported to Sandton police that 'two Leeuwkop Prison inmates escaped while doing agricultural work outside the premises in Sunninghill' near Johannesburg. The police did not release the names of the prisoners but said that one was serving a six year sentence and the other an eight year sentence. The police also did not disclose the offences for which the prisoners had been convicted. Reported by Sapa, 5 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070605172432968C297344

Students raped in jail: Three students that the police mistook and arrested for alleged car hijacking were raped while in custody at Pretoria Central Prison. The police arrested the students suspecting them to be car hijackers but when they appeared before court it was established that their fingerprints did not match those on the stolen vehicle and the court released them. The students laid charges of assault against the police. Officials from the Department of Correctional Services were not available for comment. Reported by Pertunia Ratsatsi, 6 June 2007, Sowetan, at

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/article.aspx?ID=484201>

Awaiting-trial prisoners constitute 50% of the escapees: The Department of Correctional Services reported to the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services that 'more than 50% of escapes that take place from correctional centres are committed by awaiting-trial detainees'. The Department, however, noted that 'the numbers of escapes from correctional centres, courts and hospitals have decreased over the past years'. The Department also informed the Portfolio Committee of the strategies that are likely to be implemented to curb prisoners' escapes. These strategies would include the recording of telephone conversations of prisoners. Reported by Sabnews, 5 June 2007, at

http://www.sabcnews.co.za/south_africa/crime1justice/0,2172,150361,00.html

Public Service strike kept more inmates in cells: Inmates who wanted to apply for bail but do not speak or understand English or Afrikaans could not do so for lack of interpreters. Some inmates needed interpreters to explain to them in their mother tongue the court proceedings but interpreters had gone on strike over salary increases. Magistrates ended up postponing most of the cases until the end of the strike when the interpreters would be available again. Reported by Botho Molosankwe, 8 June 2007, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn20070608001005511C992231

South Africa has high number of pre-trial prisoners: The National Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Vusi Pikoli, said that 'the number of awaiting-trial detainees in South Africa remained unacceptably high'. Mr Pikoli was addressing a seminar in Cape Town organised by the Justice Initiative of the Open Society Institute. Pikoli said that 'of the 160 198 inmates in prisons in the country in December last year, just over a quarter were awaiting-trial'. Mr Pikoli said that the Directorate of Public Prosecutions had put in place various strategies that would ensure that the numbers of pre-trial detainees are reduced. At the same seminar, the plight of pre-trial detainees in other African countries and other parts of the world was also highlighted. Reported by Sapa, 8 June 2007, News24 at

http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2126825,00.html see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070608130705384C214859

Correctional Services tackles overcrowding: Correctional Services Minister, Ngconde Balfour, while addressing the National Council of Provinces during the Correctional Services budget vote, said that 'over the last six years the Department had reduced overcrowding in prisons by an average rate of 4.77 % per year.' The Minister said that some of the strategies adopted by the Department to deal with overcrowding include: increasing available bed spaces by nearly 15 percent through renovations; expanding and re-commissioning old prisons; reducing awaiting trial detainees by 22 percent through integrating the criminal justice system; and progressively optimising legal instruments at their disposal. The Minister thanked the National Council on Correctional Services and the Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons for their 'continuous improvement in the Department's services and in strengthening integrated governance.' Reported by Edwin Tshivhidzo, 15 June 2007, BuaNews Online, at <http://www.buanews.gov.za/view.php?ID=07061512151001&coll=buanew07>

Pollsmoor prison an 'embarrassment to the Department': The National Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Vernie Petersen, told the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services that the state of Pollsmoor prison's health services was an embarrassment to the Department. The National Commissioner was reacting to a report following an unannounced visit to Pollsmoor by members of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services. The report indicated that some drugs at the prison hospital had expired and the health services were understaffed. Petersen said that the Department had implemented an action plan to deal with the problems, including advertising the vacant positions. The Committee gave the Department 90 days to address the problems at Pollsmoor. Reported by Sibusiso Ngalwa 20 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070620024417950C575918

Inspecting Judge recommends Pollsmoor overhaul: The Inspecting Judge of Prisons, Nathan Erasmus, in his report on the state of Pollsmoor prison's hospital, recommended 'a complete overhaul of the running of the facility.' The Inspecting Judge described the healthcare system at the female prison as 'being in a chaotic state.' Reported by Staff Reporter, 26 June 2007, Pretoria News, at <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3903283>

Governance and corruption

[Top of Page](#)

Jali Commission findings 'demoralised' warders: In its press release accompanying the release of the summary of the Jali Commission's final report, the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI) said that the '... the public (and honest, hard-working officials) had to endure revelation after revelation of dishonest, criminal and corrupt acts by officials of the [Department of Correctional Services]'. CSPRI added that these revelations had a demoralising effects on the staff of the Department of Correctional Services and that for a long time the public will perceive the Department of Correctional Services as a corrupt institution. Reported by Sapa, 4 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070604141945959C135850 see also <http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=482845>

Prison chief to be punished for locking up staff: The head of East London Maximum Prison, Mr Sedrick Amsterdam, allegedly used to lock up his staff to prevent them from 'leaving during working hours'. The spokesperson for the Eastern Cape Department of Correctional services, Zukisa Nduneni, said that the reason why Mr Amsterdam locked up his colleagues during working hours was that 'he did not want the staff members to sort out their personal problems, such as fetching their children from school, during work hours'. She said that disciplinary action would be taken against him and that locking up staff was illegal. Reported by Vuyolwethu Sangotsha, 5 June 2007, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/article.aspx?ID=483092>

Prison officials charged with C-Max prisoner escape: The Correctional Services Commissioner, Mr Vernie Peterson, told the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services that the nine prison officials who were suspended for allegedly aiding Ananias Mathe's escape from Pretoria's C-Max prison are to face internal disciplinary hearings in July 2007. Peterson said that the 'officials had allegedly covered up for each other and delayed investigations into Mathe's escape'. At the same meeting, the Minister of Correctional Services, Ngconde Balfour, said that the Department was facing a big problem of prisoners' relatives smuggling contraband into prisons and that this places warders and prisoners at risk. The Minister also reported that prison escapes had declined. Reported by Sibusiso Ngalwa, 6 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070606062237898C728214

Situation at Pollsmoor prison allegedly out of control: A man who spent six weeks as a prisoner at Pollsmoor prison said that the prison was characterised by drugs, inmates having sex on the floor, and corruption when it came to the distribution of food to prisoners, amongst other things. He described appalling conditions in the prison and a range of poor services. He added that some prisoners spend their time planning further crimes for when they are released. He warned that Pollsmoor is not a place for rehabilitating prisoners. The Department of Correctional Services did not deny the prisoner's allegations but said that it was working hard to improve the prison conditions in South Africa. Reported by Helen Bamford, 9 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070609094255815C460186

Portfolio Committee rejects report on Mathe escape: The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services tabled a report in Parliament concluding that there was a cover-up in the investigation of the escape of Ananias Mathe from C-Max prison last year. The Committee earlier rejected the report from an investigative task team and now proposed the appointment of a new task team to lead the investigation. The Committee pointed out a number of inconsistencies in the task team's report and concluded that DCS officials were involved in covering up the exact circumstances of the escape. The Committee further recommended that the entire shift on duty at the time of the escape, as well as the head of the prison be criminally prosecuted and that disciplinary action against them be expedited. Reported Philda Essop, 20 June 2007, at <http://152.111.1.251/argief/berigte/dieburger/2007/06/20/SK/2/polmathe.html>

National Assembly 'notes' report on investigating Mathe's escape: The National Assembly 'noted' the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services' call for an independent investigation into the circumstances that surrounded the escape of a C-Max prisoner, Ananias Mathe. The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr Dennis Bloem, said that he was 'excited' about the National Assembly's decision. Reported by Angela Quintal, 22 June 2007, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070622104453829C666428

Sentencing

[Top of Page](#)

Prisoner challenges the constitutionality of the parole provision: Paul Van Vuuren, whose death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment after the abolition of the death penalty in South Africa, is challenging the provision of the Correctional Services Act whose retrospective application would prolong his stay in prison before being released on parole. Van Vuuren argues that until 1994, the Department of Correctional Services usually granted those sentenced to life imprisonment parole after 15 years, but this was changed to 20 years in 1994. He opposes the retrospective effect of this. The Constitutional Court ordered him to seek legal representation as this was a matter of great constitutional significance. Reported by Sapa, 4 June 2007, Cape Times, at

<http://www.capetimes.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3865067>

Bill to empower Regional Courts to impose minimum sentences: The controversial minimum sentences 'are set to become a permanent feature' of the South African legal regime. Minimum sentences have been linked to the increased prison population in South Africa but Parliament is to debate the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Amendment Bill which, if passed, will empower Regional Courts to impose life imprisonment. Many jurists have argued that minimum sentencing legislation interferes with judges' sentencing discretion but the Department of Justice maintains that though such a law limits the discretion of judges, it does not eliminate such discretion. Reported by Wyndham Hartley, 13 June 2007, Business Day, at <http://www.businessday.co.za/Articles/TarkArticle.aspx?ID=2831418> see also

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200706130379.html>

see

also

http://www.epherald.co.za/herald/news/n04_18062007.htm

"No parole for child killers": The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr Dennis Bloem, called for the amendment of sentencing laws in South Africa, so that those 'monsters' who rape and kill children should serve 25 years in prison before being considered for parole and that after serving the 25 years, parole should not be automatic. Some members of the Portfolio Committee called for the reinstatement of the death penalty for offenders who rape and kill children. Reported by Janine Stephen, 27 June 2007, The Mercury, at <http://www.themercury.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3904416>

Human resources

Prison staff threatened to join strike: Prison staff threatened to join the public service strike if public service wage demands had not been resolved. The president of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru), Zizamele Cebekhulu, warned that 'Popcru members were also workers, concerned about their salaries, and did not want the dispute to go on forever.' Cebekhulu said that it was because of the need to provide safety and security to South Africans that they are prevented from joining the strike. Reported by Sapa, 13 June 2007, Sunday Times, at

<http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=489003>

see

also

http://www.theherald.co.za/herald/news/n05_15062007.htm

Prison Staff not expected to strike: Spokesperson for the Department of Correctional Services, Manelisi Wolela, said that the Department did not expect prison staff to join the public service strike. He said that 'we' communicated with staff, reiterating the implications for them if they went on strike.' The Department was monitoring the developments around the strike. Reported by Sapa, 13 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070613092800232C575204

Labour Court barred prison officials from striking: The Labour Court issued an interim order prohibiting members of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) from joining the public service strike. The court also ordered Popcru leadership to communicate the prohibition notice to all its members. Reported by sabcnews, 15 June 2007, at

<http://www.sabcnews.co.za/economy/labour/0,2172,150983,00.html>

also

see

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=493252>

Department of Correctional Services' strategies to retain scarce skills: Officials of the Department of Correctional Services told the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services that competition for scarce skills such as medical practitioners, psychologists, and pharmacists made it difficult for the Department to recruit and retain such skills. The officials added that in order to efficiently utilise the limited number of skilled personnel in those areas, the Department considered 'centralising recruitment and management of scarce skills in regions to ensure appropriate deployment of services where they are needed most.' The Department was also considering, among other things, increasing supervisory and junior management capacity to achieve greater compliance with policy and regulatory frameworks. Reported by Sapa, 19 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?art_id=nw20070619173416145C527125

Correctional Services Minister threatened to sue doctor: The Correctional Services Minister, Ngconde Balfour, said that he contemplated legal action against a medical doctor who works at Pollsmoor prison who accused him of ordering the suspension of the prison's hospital head. Dr Paul Theron alleged in his letter that was addressed to a senior prison official and a copy of which was given to Balfour when he visited Pollsmoor, that the suspension order came 'from the head office and ultimately from the office of the Minister, Mr. Balfour.' It was also alleged in the letter also that the suspension amounted to victimisation. Reported by Zama Feni, 21 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070621120453957C719950

Prisoners' rights and deaths

Prisoner dies of smoke inhalation: Police said that Moses King Menzi, who was serving a 15-year sentence for murder at St Alban's Maximum Security prison, died of smoke inhalation after setting his mattress alight during the night. The prisoner called for help but it was too late for officials to come to his rescue. Reported by Sapa, 5 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=2936&art_id=nw20070605172501423C577334

see also <http://www.sowetan.co.za/article.aspx?ID=484135>

Prisoner found dead in his cell: An awaiting-trial prisoner was found hanged with a tracksuit drawstring from the ventilation system in the holding cells of the Pietermaritzburg High Court. The man whose name was not released to the media immediately was accused of armed robbery and attempted murder. The police and members of the Independent Complaints Directorate are investigating the circumstances that surrounded the prisoner's death. Reported by Ingrid Oellermann, 7 June 2007, IOL at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070607031817128C586899

The Department of Correctional Services may be taken to court over the treatment of HIV positive prisoners: The AIDS Law Project (ALP) threatened to take the government and the Department of Correctional Services to court if they failed to provide treatment to HIV positive prisoners who needed it. The ALP warned that the lives of HIV-positive prisoners were in danger unless the Department of Correctional Services provided them with the treatment. The ALP also said that they would have preferred to settle the issue of prisoners' treatment out of court but that the government seemed not to be taking its promises seriously. Reported by Anso Thom, 7 June 2007, Health-e, at

<http://www.health-e.org.za/news/article.php?uid=20031686>

Prisoners complain about Legal Aid Board: In 2006 the 'independent prison visitors (IPVs) employed

by the Office of the Inspecting Judge recorded 22 615 prisoner complaints concerning legal representation'. Many magistrates allegedly believe that some lawyers of the Legal Aid Board do not offer sufficient legal representation to their clients. This is attributed to, among other things, the fact that they have too many cases to deal with. Some Legal Aid Board lawyers that represent clients allegedly lack the necessary experience and others 'just don't care'. Reported by Mariechen Waldner, 16 June 2007, City Press, at

http://www.news24.com/City_Press/News/0,,186-187_2131356,00.html

Department of Correctional Services fights HIV/AIDS: The Department of Correctional Services in the Provinces of Free State and Northern Cape hosted a ceremony in remembrance of those who have died of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses. The Department said that it had started distributing ARVs to those prisoners who needed such treatment and that five of its prisons across South African had been accredited to provide ARVs to HIV positive inmates. Reported by BuaNews, 18 June 2007, at

<http://www.buanews.gov.za/view.php?ID=07061815151005&coll=buanew07>

Human Rights Commission to fight for political prisoners' rights: The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) told Parliament that the South African Human Rights Commission was willing to join it in its bid to ensure that political prisoners in South Africa were granted a presidential pardon. The IFP said that the Human Rights Commission was so distressed about the Minister of Justice's violations of the rights of these political prisoners and it was considering appearing as amicus curiae (friend of the court) should the IFP take the Minister to court over the matter. Reported by Sapa, 19 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?art_id=nw20070619183501159C994794

Justice Department 'forgot' man in prison for three years: A Port Elizabeth man, Jonathan Zealand, spent almost three years at St Alban's prison because the Justice Department 'forgot to tell [the Department of] Correctional Services [that] he had been released.' In August 1999 Jonathan Zealand was acquitted of murder 'but he remained in St Alban's Prison because the registrar at the Grahamstown High Court negligently failed to issue a warrant for his release until December 8, 2004.' The Supreme Court of Appeal held that Zealand's right to freedom was violated. Zealand said that he would sue both the Justice and Correctional Services departments for unlawful detention. Reported by Piet van Niekerk, 26 June 2007, The Herald Online, at

http://www.theherald.co.za/herald/news/n01_26062007.htm

Prison construction

[Top of Page](#)

Government to spend R6bn on private prisons: Correctional Services Minister, Ngconde Balfour, said that government would contract private companies to construct and manage five new prisons over the next few years. But some government officials are uncomfortable with private companies building and managing prisons saying that they are foreign-owned. The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr Dennis Bloem, said that the Committee was yet to take a position on private prisons on the grounds that the existing two private prisons are proving to be very expensive. Reported by Peter Honey, 8 June 2007, Financial Mail, at

<http://secure.financialmail.co.za/07/0608/features/efeat.htm>

Rehabilitation

[Top of Page](#)

Former prisoners and Correctional Services warn learners against crime: The Department of Correctional Services teamed up with former prisoners and called upon learners at Luyolo Primary School in Soweto to avoid committing crime. The former prisoners told the learners that crime had disastrous consequences, such as shattering their future expectations. Reported by Staff, 31 May 2007, Sowetan, at

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=478626>

Call for prisoners to be offered paid work: The National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (Nicro) called on the Department of Correctional Services to explore the possibility of providing paid jobs to petty offenders in a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services. Nicro suggested that such jobs would include operating call centres and waste recycling. Nicro added that offering paid jobs to offenders would be essential for their rehabilitation and reintegration and would also reduce the recidivism rate. Nicro called on the government to make funds available for the programme. Reported by Sapa, 12 June 2007, Citizen, at

<http://www.citizen.co.za/index/article.aspx?pDesc=41078,1,22>

see

also

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=489951>

Other

[Top of Page](#)

Reform school allegedly tortures pupils: Nine children at Ethokomala Reform School in Mpumalanga 'were allegedly beaten by their minders and then thrown into an adult jail?after a police raid on their school'. The Pretoria High Court heard that the pupils had been tortured, intimidated and starved by the school administration. The school administration also allegedly detained pupils in isolation rooms and

assaulted them. The Court ordered that the pupils should be released immediately. The Centre for Child Law of the University of Pretoria called upon the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Education to investigate the conduct of the school authorities. Reported by Karyn Maughan 2 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20070602104528154C946940

Correctional Services Minister condemns non-prisoners who wear prisoners' uniform: The Correctional Services Minister, Ngconde Balfour, accused non-prisoners who wear prisoners' uniforms of 'glorify[ing] the status and the wrong acts of offenders' and of 'masquerading and personifying prisoners.' Balfour also added that 'wearing of offender or prisoners' uniform in public places and gatherings should be condemned in the strongest possible way'. The Minister's statement followed the arrest and brief detention of a prisoners' rights activist, Mr Golden Miles Bhudu, at Cape Town International Airport, for wearing an orange prisoners' overall in public. The Minister added that the 'orange uniform... is only worn by those sentenced prisoners and offender[s] who have wronged, maimed, raped and murdered people in families, communities and society at large' and that it is illegal for any person who is not a prisoner to wear such a uniform. Reported by Sapa, 12 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070612193059389C632685 see also <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3880662>

Man aged 80 charged with smuggling forbidden substance into prison: The father of a C-Max escapee, Annanias Mathe, was charged in the Pretoria Magistrates court for allegedly smuggling forbidden substance into prison. Zaphanias Mathe (a Mozambique citizen) though granted bail of R 500, had to remain in custody as his visa had expired. His lawyer said that if it was established that the substances he was trying to smuggle into the prison were not dangerous, then the prosecution would have a weak case against his client. Reported by Sapa, 19 June 2007, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20070619114915306C109715

Repatriation Centre contract to be revised: The Department of Home Affairs will next year revise its contract with a private company, Leading Prospects (Pty) Ltd, which was contracted to operate Lindela Repatriation Centre on behalf of the government. Home Affairs said that the contract obliges it at all times to pay Leading Prospects a full fee, even when the Repatriation Centre was not operating at full capacity. Reported by Clive Ndou, The Citizen 30 June 2007

<http://www.citizen.co.za/index/article.aspx?pDesc=41722,1,22>

also

see

<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/national.aspx?ID=BD4A497521>

Other African countries

[Top of Page](#)

Rwanda

Number of babies increased in Kigali Central Prison: Kigali Central Prison was home to 48 babies at the end on May 2006 and the prison Director, Mr Dativa Nyangenzi, said that 'the [number of children] children living in the prison has increased drastically'. The Director said that some babies were born in prison but that others came with their mothers. Mr Nyangenzi also added that the law prohibits children from being separated from their mothers before they reach the age of three years even when such mothers have been sentenced to prison and that this is the reason why there are many babies in the prison. The Director added that the prison was taking good care of the babies and provided them with special meals. Reported by R. Mukombozi and G. Agaba, 28 May 2007, New Times, at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200705290390.html>

Kigali Central Prison to be relocated: The government of Rwanda is planning to relocate the Kigali Central Prison and other prisons from the city to areas where prisoners would be able to engage in productive activities such as agriculture. The Minister of Internal Security, Sheikh Musa Fazil Harerimana, said that the government of Rwanda will fund the construction of the new prisons and that some donors had also expressed interest in funding the construction. The minister also added that state-of-the-art prisons would be constructed to host foreign prisoners in case the need arose. Reported by Felly Kimenyi, 6 June 2007, New Times, at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200706070225.html>

The Gambia

Director of Prisons sent to jail: The Gambia's Director of Prisons, David Colley, was sent to one of his jails on theft charges. Colley allegedly stole a generator almost three years ago and D27, 000.00 in cash, which is said to belong to his own department. Mr Colley pleaded not guilty but said that he was in court for charges that he was not aware of and that he had not been able to contact his lawyer. Reported by

The Gambia Journal, 13 June 2007, at

http://www.thegambiajournal.com/artman/publish/article_1062.shtml see also

<http://www.javno.com/en/world/clanak.php?id=52480>

Nigeria

Nigerian Prisons Service reforms prisons: The Nigerian Prison Service has put in place various measures to reform prisons to achieve its objective of 'confinement, reformation and rehabilitation of persons legally interned under internationally accepted standards'. The Prisons Service 'embarked upon training of after care service officers, appointment of schedule officers and increase in the provision of tools for discharged inmates.' The Prisons Service has also improved the welfare of its staff in order to boost their morale. Non-governmental organisations working in prisons and penal reform have also been contacted by the government to help in reforming Nigerian prisons. Reported by Chinwe Oloto, 4 June 2007, This Day, at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200706050083.html>

Firm introduces high-tech for prisons: FrankWilson Consulting, a United States based technology services and outsourcing firm, unveiled an innovative software package design that would change the way the Nigerian Prisons Service conducts its work. The package is called 'Jail-Park' and it 'offers a successful inmate management and reporting system that could radically change the present deplorable condition of Nigerian prisons and evolve a reliable data base for prison administrators and the government. It could also assist the nation to have a data base of everyone that has ever been to prison and make the ex-[prisoner] controversies involving public officials a thing of the past'. Reported by Onwuka Nzeshi, 27 June 2007, This Day, at <http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=82119>

Liberia

Life not easy for Charles Taylor in prison: Former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, who is in The Hague to stand trial for allegedly masterminding human rights atrocities in the Sierra Leonean civil war, leaves a lonely life in his detention in The Hague. Mr. Taylor complained about the food he was being served saying that it lacked an African taste, he usually associated with a Congolese war-lord, Thomas Lubanga, but the two speak different languages, Taylor English and Lubanga French, and the weather is chilly. Taylor also feels socially isolated. Reported by Alexandra Hudson, 31 May 2007, Reuters, at

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L31697300.htm>

United Nations Mission in Liberia decries prison conditions: The United Nations Mission in Liberia said in its Human Rights Report released in May 2007 that Liberian prisons faced various problems, the major one being overcrowding. The report added that 'the prison system is deplorable to the extent [that] it lacks adequate facilities, logistics and trained personnel, and that, conditions in the detention facilities were generally well below the minimum standards recognized internationally.' The report indicated that inmates do not have adequate access to sanitation and basic medical care and that there were no separate facilities for the detention of juveniles. Reported by Melissa Chea-Annan 17 May 2007, The Inquirer, at http://www.theinquirer.com.lr/news_details.php?recordID=3057 also see <http://allafrica.com/stories/200705170564.html>

Assistant minister refutes report on poor prison conditions: The Assistant Minister of Rehabilitation and Corrections at the Ministry of Justice, Fatumata M. Sheriff, said that she was disappointed that she did not receive a copy of the report by the United Nations Mission in Liberia about the prison conditions in that country. The Minister said that the report was erroneous to suggest that the prisoners were not being looked after properly. She said that the prisoners were being fed well and that their medical problems were being addressed by nurses stationed at the various prisons. The Minister also conceded that overcrowding was still a problem in prisons but that the courts were also contributing to this problem by not finalising cases. The Minister said that the government had put in place various measures to address overcrowding and these included renovating old prisons to accommodate more prisoners and training more staff to work at the renovated prisons. Reported by Melissa Chea-Annan, 21 June 2007, The Inquirer, at http://www.theinquirer.com.lr/news_details.php?recordID=3088

Charles Taylor wants African food at the International Criminal Court: Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, who is in The Hague to stand trial for allegedly masterminding human rights atrocities in the Sierra Leonean civil war, said that he would prefer African food to European food. Mr. Taylor said that the food served to him in detention does not have an African taste and that he would prefer cooking for himself. The detention authorities promised to ensure that an expert is enlisted to provide the type of food that Taylor would prefer but that it would depend on the availability of such foodstuff in the Dutch markets. Reported by Alexandra Hudson, 6 June 2007, Reuters, at

<http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnL06735167.html>

Tanzania

Prisons overcrowded in Zanzibar: Overcrowded prisons were cited among some of the setbacks for improving Zanzibar's legal system. This was raised by some of the participants at a one-day workshop aimed at assessing the Director of Public Prosecutions office's performance in Zanzibar. An official from the Prisons Department, Mr Zaharan Mbarouk, while commenting on overcrowding said that 'prisons were too congested. A cell for five people accommodates ten or more, who are mostly charged with minor offences. It is a waste of government resources. Let us find a solution as soon as possible'. Reported by Issa Yussuf, 18 June 2007, Daily News, at

<http://www.dailynews-tsn.com/page.php?id=7336>

Prison warders to transport awaiting-trial prisoners to courts: The Principal Commissioner of Prisons, Mr Nicas Banzi, said that the Prisons Department would take over from the police and start transporting awaiting-trial prisoners to courts. Mr. Banzi said that this procedure will first be tried in Dar es Salaam and the nearby districts and, if successful, be rolled-out to the whole country. He also added that the vehicles and necessary equipment for the initiative had already been secured and he called upon prison warders to be ethical when they take up this new responsibility. Reported by Daily News Reporter, 20 June 2007, Daily News, at

<http://www.dailynews-tsn.com/page.php?id=7353>

Kenya

Life without conjugal rights meaningless says prisoners: Some of the prisoners serving life sentences in Kenya were visited by their spouses on 'family day' and many said that they would prefer to enjoy their conjugal rights when their spouses visited them. The prisoners said that though the prison authorities provided them with the necessary food, clothing and that they were not being mistreated generally, it would be vital if they were allowed to exercise their conjugal rights with their spouses. The prison authorities said that conjugal rights would only be enjoyed when the government establishes suitable facilities. Reported by Mathias Ringa, 2 June 2007, The Standard, at

[http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143969409&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

[mnu=details&id=1143969409&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143969409&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

Sudanese prison staff to be trained in Kenya: More than 800 Southern Sudan prison officers will be trained at the Prisons Staff Training College in Ruiru, Kenya. The training follows a memorandum of understanding that was signed between the governments of Southern Sudan and Kenya. The training would cover areas such as management, disaster preparedness, post-conflict management and procurement. Reported by James Ratemo, 22 June 2007, The Standard, at

[http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143970270&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

[mnu=details&id=1143970270&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143970270&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

Death row inmates suffered mistrial: Mr Kamau Kingara, the Executive Director of the Oscar Foundation, said that 'about 1,000 death row convicts suffered mistrial and miscarriage of justice from independence to date'. This was during the launch of the report entitled 'Condemned to Die'. Mr Kingala also said that over 1 700 death sentences in Kenya have been commuted to life imprisonment between 1963 and 2007. Reported by Edith Fortunate, 25 June 2007, The Standard, at

[http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143970394&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

[mnu=details&id=1143970394&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143970394&catid=159&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

Prisons reform in Kenya: Since 2003, when the new government came into power in Kenya, various reforms have taken place in the prison sector. These reforms have included allowing relatives to visit inmates without being intimidated by warders, prisoners being allowed to wear trousers instead of shorts, the media being allowed to visit prisons and report on what is taking place in prisons, and constructing prisons in which prisoners could be detained under humane conditions. However, the problem remained that there are high numbers of awaiting-trial prisoners due to backlogs in both the Magistrate and High Courts. Reported by Kiburi Kago, 25 June 2007, The Standard, at

[http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143970378&catid=15&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

[mnu=details&id=1143970378&catid=15&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef](http://www.eastandard.net/archives/index.php?mnu=details&id=1143970378&catid=15&PHPSESSID=5c4d9d4a2b7b86f6c50f861e84c53eef)

Angola

Supreme Court Chief decries prison conditions: Angolan Supreme Court Chief Justice, Cristiano André, 'expressed dissatisfaction at the social conditions of prisoners in Bie's provisional penitentiary.' Bie's penitentiary is undergoing renovations and thus the need to find alternative accommodation for the prisoners. At a meeting with the local justice officials, the Chief Justice said that 'the real conditions of Bie's penitentiary inmates are not good enough, including the premises of the prison that is provisional'. Reported by Angola Press Agency, 13 May, 2007 at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200705140775.html>

Ethiopia

Swedes allegedly tortured in Ethiopian prisons: Three Swedish citizens who were detained in Ethiopia for four months were allegedly tortured and they informed the Swedish Foreign Ministry officials about the torture. The Swedish Foreign Ministry, however, denied that they had been informed by the three detainees of the alleged torture while in Ethiopian prisons. Reported by The Local, 16 June 2007, at

<http://www.thelocal.se/7624/20070616/>

Uganda

Inmates allegedly prefers jail to bail: The Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament of Uganda heard that many inmates prefer to remain in prison than to be granted bail because they assume that if

they stay longer in prisons their accusers would either lose interest in the cases or some witnesses would die. However, the Public Accounts Committee also heard that as much as 90% of the inmates are too poor to afford bail and that this is the real reason for their lengthy detention. Reported by Mary Karugaba, 6 June 2007, The New Vision, at

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/569118>

Prison officials allegedly tortured prisoner to death: Prison officials at Malukhu Government Prison in Mbale district have been accused of torturing an inmate, Faizal Kirunda, to death. Relatives of the deceased alleged that there were wounds on the deceased's body. However, the prison authorities refuted the allegations of torture saying that the prisoner died of diabetes. Relatives of the deceased reported the matter to the police for investigation. Reported by Ahmed Wetaka, 11 June 2007, The Monitor, at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200706110847.html>

3000 petty offenders sent to community work: In its efforts to address overcrowding in prisons, the Ugandan judiciary has since 2001 sent more than 3000 petty offenders to community service instead of prison. Those responsible for supervising the implementation of the community service programme, however, complained that in some instances the programme could not be implemented properly because of delayed funding from government. Reported by Frederick Kiwanuka, 25 June 2007, The New Vision, at

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/19/572471>

Bedbugs and lice increase rapidly in prisons: The acting Eastern Region human rights chief, Mr Charles Kweniri, said that bedbugs and lice had increased in some of the prisons in his jurisdiction and that 'inmates have multiple sores and skin rashes caused by the vermin'. Reported by The New Vision, 26 June 2007, at

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/17/572543>

Swaziland

Inmate sentenced to 14 months for attempting to escape from prison: Five of the nine inmates who attempted to escape from Nhlanguano Remand Centre were convicted by the Nhlanguano Senior Magistrate and sentenced to 14 months in prison without the option of a fine for attempting to escape from lawful custody. The prisoners pleaded guilty to the charge but argued that their attempted escape was triggered by the conditions under which they were being detained. They argued that the prison authorities never allowed them to consult with their lawyers or to meet with their relatives. The magistrate held that those were not acceptable excuses for the attempted escape. Reported by Starsky Mkhonta, 6 June 2007, The Swazi Observer, at

<http://www.observer.org.sz/main.php?id=35259§ion=main>

Namibia

Prohibited items smuggled into prisons: Many prohibited items such as drugs, knives, cell phones and bottles are allegedly smuggled into Namibian prisons. In an effort to bring this to an end, the Minister of Safety and Security, Peter Tsheehama, said government has put in place strategies such as subjecting all items brought for prisoners to undergo thorough security checks to prevent the smuggling of the prohibited items into the prisons. The Minister said that some corrupt prison and police officials also helped inmates to smuggle such items into prisons. Reported by Surihe Gaomas, 31 May 2007, New Era, at

<http://www.newera.com.na/archives.php?id=16104> see also

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200705310118.html>

Namibian prisons 'manufacturing' criminals: Engelhardt Ngatikare, who served 10 years in one of Namibia's prisons, told a national conference on human rights that Namibian prisons were far from being rehabilitation centres but were places where hardened criminals are manufactured. He said that many things such as cruelty, rape and drug abuse happen in prisons but nothing is done by the officials to bring these practices to an end although the officials are aware of the situation. Reported by Petronella Sibeene, 22 June 2007, New Era, at

<http://www.newera.com.na/archives.php?id=16407>

Libya

Libyan fears torture in prison: A Libyan national, Abdul Rauf al-Qassim, who was cleared for release from Guantánamo Bay, refused to leave the facility for fear that if he went back to Libya he would either be killed or subjected to torture while in prison. Libya is allegedly believed to be using torture in interrogating and punishing some of the detainees though its new allies in the war on terror, such as the USA and Britain, seem not to be concerned about its human rights record. Reported by Andy Worthington, 16 June 2007, Counterpunch, at <http://www.counterpunch.org/worthington06162007.html> also see

http://www.midmopeaceworks.org/2007_06_01_articlesarchive.php#2249965836862639643

Burundi

Prisoners to be released: Burundian President, Pierre Nkurunziza, and rebel leader, Agathon Rwasa, reached an agreement in Tanzania that rebel prisoners should be released by the government for the peace process to be finalised. Both leaders however did not agree on the date when such prisoners will be released but they agreed to remain in touch with one another for the smooth implementation of the agreement. Reported by Associated Press, 17 June 2007, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/06/18/africa/AF-GEN-Burundi-Holdout-Rebels.php>

Sierra Leone

Violating prisoners' rights a threat to peace: The United Nations in its report titled 'Behind Walls: An Inventory and Assessment of Prisons in Sierra Leone' said that the failure by Sierra Leone to protect the rights of prisoners is a threat to that country's peace and stability. The report indicated that many inmates have no access to adequate food, prisons are overcrowded and poor hygiene is a common feature in Sierra Leone prisons. The report indicated that a large number of prisoners are awaiting-trial. The report also revealed that 'many prisoners had been in lock-ups for two years without indictment or a court appearance, including a sizeable number of children. About 90% of prisoners interviewed in the country's 13 prisons did not have any legal representation during their trials.' Reported by BBC News, 22 June 2007, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6229494.stm>

Fair use notice

CSPRI 30 Days/Dae/Izinsuku contains copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorised by the copyright owner. The material is being made available for purposes of education and discussion in order to better understand prison and related issues in South Africa. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in relevant national laws. The material is made accessible without profit for research and educational purposes to subscribers/readers. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this Newsletter for purposes of your own that go beyond "fair use", you must obtain permission from the copyright owner. CSPRI cannot guarantee that the information contained in this newsletter is complete and correct or be liable for any loss incurred as a result of its use. Nor can the CSPRI be held responsible for any subsequent use of the material.

CSPRI welcomes your suggestions or comments for future topics on the email newsletter.

Tel: (+27) 021-7979491

<http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/cspri>



[Subscribe Me](#) [Unsubscribe Me](#) [Change My Details](#) [Visit our website](#)
[Invite a Friend](#) [Terms and Conditions & Privacy and Anti-Spam Policy](#) for subscribers
Please report abuse to abuse@easimail.co.za
© Easimail 2007. All Rights Reserved.

e@simail
email marketing solutions