

# International CURE

Newsletter Fall 2011

To Reduce Crime and Uplift World-Wide Justice

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## Who Are the Prisoners?

Consider a quote from the keynote address of Prof. Etannibi E.O. Alemika Ph.D., Prof. of Criminology and Sociology of Law, University of Jos, given at the recent CURE Conference in Abuja, Nigeria,

“Human rights are inherent entitlements of all human beings. Prisoners are human beings and therefore entitled to human rights”....

“Who really are the criminals, a segment of which are incarcerated? The reality of life is that all human beings are criminals – at one time or the other involved in actions that violate the criminal law and liable to arrest, conviction and punishment, if such transgressors had been under surveillance, observed and arrested for the violation of law.

Human beings are not essentially criminals or non-criminals. They are only differentiated, in terms of the frequency of criminal conduct; the nature, type and severity of crime committed, and differences in ability or capacity or privilege to conceal criminality (due to possession of wealth, power, and status) to evade detection, arrest, trial and conviction when involved in crime. Indeed, in all modern states, certain groups of people, such as top national political actors and foreign diplomats, are granted immunity from criminal surveillance and arrest for criminality.

Who are the prisoners? Simply, some individuals who actually violated the law and some accused of violating the law but innocent, yet wrongly convicted and imprisoned. Some individuals accused but still presumed innocent pending trial and judgment but nonetheless subjected to varied deprivations. People in the prisons do not constitute a homogeneous group. It should be realized that most people involved in behaviours or actions that violate criminal laws are never arrested, tried and imprisoned.

I do not in any way trivialize the fact that many people commit very injurious violent crimes that leaves their victims with serious trauma. But many perpetrators of such crimes are not arrested and they live among the population as ‘innocent persons’. Yet individuals who are innocent are convicted to avoidable and unavoidable imperfections of the criminal justice agencies and agents.”

## Multi-Dimensional Poverty

The world seeks peace but is beset with violence, crime, and general disorder. And prisons are overflowing. Why? It is no accident that the majority of persons in the world’s prisons are persons who had been living in poverty. And what is poverty?

The U.N. report, *draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights, dated 6 August, 2010* states that poverty is universally recognized as a multidimensional phenomenon, extending beyond a lack of income to a lack of the basic capabilities to live in dignity.

These current draft guiding principles use the definition of poverty established by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2001, which affirms that poverty is “a human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights”.

The former independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty elaborated on this definition by characterizing poverty as “the combination of income poverty, human development poverty and social exclusion”. Others have included material deprivation, discrimination, and domination.

We can see that frustration, anger, and desperation, stimulated by living in extreme poverty, can sometimes combine to help motivate violent and perhaps unlawful action.

Respect for human rights, and the provision of associated social development, (education, healthcare, job training, justice, infrastructure, etc.) are antidotes of such disorders. Social development based on human rights can serve to both prevent such disorders and to restore, rehabilitate, and reintegrate offenders of civil order.

## Women in Brazil Prisons

*Excerpts from report by Heidi Ann Cerneka  
National Prison Pastoral Ministry  
and Institute for Land, Work and Citizenship (ITTC)*

### Profile of women in prison in Brazil:

- ❖ “Various studies show how much women are part of the statistics of vulnerability and social exclusion: the majority have between 20-35 years of age, are heads of their families, have on average 2 minor children, have a low level of formal education, and their criminal conduct is characterized by lower offensive potential” (CPI- MJ)
- ❖ 95% of women in prison were victims of violence at some point in their lives, be that as children, or later with a partner, husband, or in the hands of the police at the moment of their arrest.

### What most concerns us in relation to women in prison:

- Lack of health care and mental health care
- Issues related to children – custody, care, parenting questions, pregnancy and lactation
- Drugs
- Overcrowding
- Mixed prison units
- Lack of access to justice

### Lack of Health Care and Mental Health Care

1. The majority of the states do not have facilities for psychiatric hospitalization for women in prison.
2. The percentage of women in prison who take controlled substances- for depression, anxiety, or inability to sleep - far exceeds the number of men in prison who take controlled/psychiatric medications
  - a. *In Itabuna, BA – 8.6% of the men’s prison population takes psychiatric medications, while 34% of the women’s population does.*
3. Basic health necessities like toilet paper, feminine hygiene pads – are not available

### Issues Related to Children- custody, childcare, parenting issues, pregnancy and lactation

1. Many women lose custody of their children to the state when imprisoned, and sometimes lose permanent custody to adoption processes- without ever being cited, or given a hearing with the right to defense.

2. Despite national and international laws protecting the right of an infant to be with his/her mother during breastfeeding, or during a minimum of 6 months (the right is guaranteed for a minimum of 6 months but can be extended up to 7 years if there is no one to care for the child) - babies are still often removed from their mothers because the State does not guarantee this right, sometimes after only 1 day.

### Drugs

1. It is clear that the vast majority of women are in prison for drug-related crimes, and that prison does nothing to help them, or to deal with their chemical dependency (if that is the issue) or their economic problems that may have led them to sell drugs (if that is the issue).
2. An interview with the President of the National Council of Justice stated that “trafficking of drugs is prolific in the prison system. The idea that in prison a person is isolated is not true. The trafficker continues his activity inside the prison, at times with the blessing of the State....Up to 80% of prisoners smoke crack.”
3. The recently adapted drug law (Law n° 11,343, of 23/08/06) makes it possible to send people with chemical dependency to treatment. However, the vast majority still go to prison instead (for lack of treatment options, and for lack of clear criteria).
4. Specific examples and statistics about drugs and prison:
  - 70% of incarcerated women in a study done in a prison in São Paulo, said that they use illegal substances (marijuana, cocaine or crack)
  - In Porto Velho, Rondônia- 90% of the women are in prison for drug trafficking
  - A recent study in the state of Rio de Janeiro by the Public Health Service shows that for every year a person continues in prison, the chance of using cocaine increases by 13%.
  - Two police chiefs in the north of the country made the following statements: “originally, the use and trafficking of drugs has its origins in social problems.” And “the main reason that women are arrested with drugs is that the money from the sale of the drugs helps their family income/maintain their home.”

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## Human Rights of Those Living in Poverty

People must know their rights in order to fight for them. We suggest that fulfillment of rights-based obligations, designed for those living in extreme poverty, can also help to reduce violence and crime and also support rehabilitation and reintegration of many offenders of civil order.

There follows excerpts from the United Nations report of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona. That excellent report can be found on the web at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/15session/A.HRC.15>.

We cite this report because so many of the world's prisoners are, in fact, among those living in poverty – often products of the world's slums and a general lack of investment in social development. Campaigning for human rights thus often amounts to campaigning for the rights of the poor and their opportunities for social development.

Typical problems associated with extreme poverty (paraphrasing excerpts from the U.N. report) include:

- Health consequences, caused by inadequate living conditions, accumulate throughout life and are typically transmitted from one generation to the next.
- Lack of education and job-skill development limit opportunities for decent work. Limited knowledge of official languages and cultural obstacles can result in stigmatization as lazy, criminal, or incompetent, and create further social exclusion.
- Political isolation: unable to exert political influence, and lack of information, persons in poverty typically do not actively participate in decision making processes that affect them.
- Discrimination and stigmatization by persons in power (including public authorities, social workers, teachers, healthcare workers); victims are discouraged from seeking appropriate help and support.
- Violence and limited access to public security and justice systems curtail economic development and increase exposure to corruption and extortion.

- Crises: In general, victims are less able to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from crises such as armed conflicts, health pandemics, natural disasters, and climate change.

### Specific rights-based obligations

(excerpts from the U.N. report)

#### ***Right to recognition as a person before the law.***

Recognition as a person before the law is a human right in itself and crucial for the enjoyment of other fundamental rights and freedoms. Often persons living in extreme poverty lack legal identity documents because, for example, they have no proof of birth or fixed address. Some simply live out of reach of registration processes, others cannot afford costs associated with registration.

Discrimination on various grounds may further prevent persons living in extreme poverty from being registered and having a legal identity. Often the lack of documentation of the parents could result in their children also remaining undocumented. At the same time, if States lack accurate information about those under their jurisdiction they face greater challenges in policy planning.

A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Recommend the allocation of the necessary resources to establish registration systems that are accessible to and adequate for persons living in extreme poverty. Effective registration systems not only require adequate financial and human resources, but must be based on regulatory frameworks recognizing the human right of every person to recognition before the law. Regulatory frameworks must also protect the human right to privacy.
- Recommend the establishment of mechanisms to ensure monitoring and accountability as essential components of registration systems and highlight the importance of a decentralized, flexible and culturally sensitive registration system.
- Give particular attention to addressing the legal, economic, procedural, practical and cultural barriers that impede women, girls, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, minorities, and other groups from registering.

Recommend that States introduce awareness-raising campaigns to inform persons living in extreme poverty about registration processes and their importance.

### ***Right to equal and effective access to justice.***

Persons living in extreme poverty are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and abuses and they often, for economic and other reasons, lack the capability to access justice and seek redress for actions and omissions that adversely affect them. They encounter a variety of obstacles,

from being unable to successfully register initial complaints to having court decisions given in their favour not implemented, or only partially implemented. Even when free legal assistance is available, discrimination, linguistic barriers or fear of reprisals are powerful obstacles for persons living in poverty seeking justice and redress. Without effective access to justice, they are unable to seek and obtain a remedy for breaches of domestic law and human rights standards, exacerbating their vulnerability, insecurity and isolation, and perpetuating their impoverishment.

A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Recall State obligations to take all necessary measures to ensure that those living in poverty have equal access to justice, and that justice is dispensed fairly, speedily and without discrimination of any kind.
- Recommend that States expand justice systems and establish accessible procedures, including non-formal dispute resolution mechanisms, in accordance with human rights standards, to support persons living in extreme poverty who are seeking justice. Such measures must take into account the limited capacity of persons living in extreme poverty to pay for services, the congestion in court systems and the efficacy of informal and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Reaffirm that rights enshrined in international human rights instruments, including economic, social and cultural rights, must be justifiable within the domestic legal order.
- Recommend investment in training for judges, lawyers and law enforcement officials in the use of local languages and in addressing the specific needs of different groups living in extreme poverty.
- Recommend the adoption of special measures to ensure the safety and security of persons seeking the support of the justice system.

### ***Right to sanitation and safe drinking water***

Persons living in extreme poverty are disproportionately affected by limited access to safe drinking water with life-threatening consequence. Persons living in poverty, in particular women and children, bear the brunt of lacking

access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Unsafe water and inadequate sanitation compromise dignity, seriously affect health status throughout the life cycle, and hold back poverty reduction, and economic growth.

A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Reaffirm State obligations with regard to ensuring access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.
- Recommend measures to ensure that persons living in extreme poverty have access to a sufficient amount of safe drinking water for personal and domestic use - drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation and personal and household hygiene - to sustain life and health.
- Recall the importance of prioritizing improvements in infrastructure in areas inhabited by persons living in extreme poverty, including improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.
- Recommend organizing large-scale public awareness campaigns promoting and providing information on hygiene.

### ***Right to adequate housing, and protection from forced evictions.***

Persons living in extreme poverty commonly lack adequate housing and security of tenure. They often inhabit land where they are vulnerable to forced eviction without adequate compensation and reparation.

Persons living in extreme poverty tend to inhabit unsafe areas, and are disproportionately exposed to natural disasters or environmental hazards, with life-threatening consequences. In some situations, communities are removed by urban planning efforts to areas where there is inadequate access to livelihoods and services, thus increasing their vulnerability. Some particularly vulnerable groups are homeless and live in public areas and/or urban centres.

A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Recall the immediate and progressive obligations of States relating to the right to adequate housing for persons living in extreme poverty, including measures regarding security of tenure; availability of services, material facilities and infrastructure; affordability; habitability; accessibility; location and cultural adequacy.
- Recommend adopting due process safeguards against forced eviction and other forms of arbitrary or unlawful interference with people's privacy and home, including land.

- Recall that evictions should only occur in exceptional circumstances, and in compliance with national law and international human rights norms and standards.
- Recommend ensuring adequate public expenditure and encourage private sector investment in low-income housing and access to urbanized land programmes to reduce the incidence of homelessness, or unassisted and unplanned settlements.
- Recommend adopting specific measures to ensure a safe and healthy environment in areas inhabited by persons living in extreme poverty, in particular, protecting these areas from climatic and health hazards.
- Recall the importance of prioritizing overall improvements in infrastructure in areas inhabited by persons living in extreme poverty, including all-weather roads and electricity.

### ***Right to work and rights at work.***

Persons living in extreme poverty often lack adequate and secure work. In rural and urban areas alike they experience unemployment, underemployment, unreliable casual labour, low wages and unsafe and degrading working conditions. Women are particularly at risk, as are other groups affected by discrimination, such as migrants and persons with disabilities. Persons living in extreme poverty tend to work outside the formal economy, without any entitlement to social security benefits, such as maternity leave, sick leave, pensions, and disability and widowhood benefits. They commonly work in inappropriate or dangerous conditions for very low wages. Minimum work standards are rarely applied and they face job insecurity, with increased vulnerability to exploitation including bonded or forced labour, arbitrary dismissal and abuse, particularly female workers.

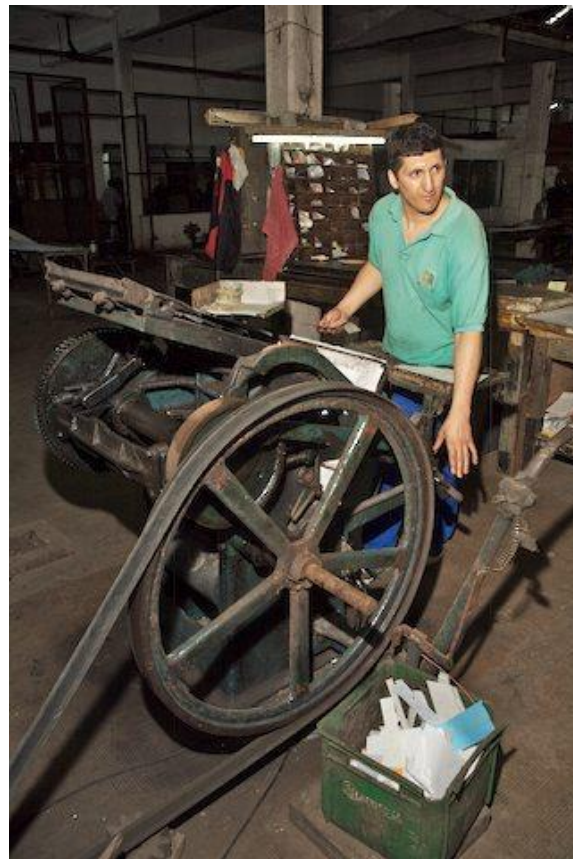
A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Recall State obligations to establish and enforce minimum legal standards and administrative measures to ensure that all workers, in both the formal and informal sectors, enjoy just and favourable conditions of work, including a minimum wage that enables them to secure the essential components of the right to an adequate standard of living; equal pay for work of equal value; safe and healthy working conditions; rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours; and the right to organize and bargain collectively.
- Recommend paying particular attention to the situation of workers in the informal economy and caregivers. Call on States to collect disaggregated data assessing the dimensions of informal and care work.
- Recommend adopting measures to remove impediments to integration into the formal labour market for persons living in

extreme poverty, including by promoting skills development opportunities without discrimination of any kind.

- Recall the obligations to prohibit and eliminate all forms of forced and bonded labour, as well as harmful and hazardous forms of child labour. Recommend that measures to enforce the prohibition of these forms of labour be accompanied by measures to ensure the social and economic reintegration of those affected and to avoid reoccurrence.

- Recall the importance of addressing human trafficking in full compliance with human rights norms and recommend that trafficked persons be protected from further exploitation and harm regardless of their capacity or willingness to cooperate in legal proceedings.



**Argentine prison** photo by Alan Pogue

## **Penal Reform International**

The PRI Newsletter is now available. Topics include abolition of the death penalty, women and prison, torture prevention, alternatives to prison, and justice for children. To subscribe to the PRI newsletter, contact [publications@penalreform.org](mailto:publications@penalreform.org)

***Right to social security.***

Both as a right in itself and as a means to securing other rights, social security is crucial for the respect and protection of the dignity of persons living in extreme poverty, including their right to an adequate standard of living. Social protection can prevent people from falling into extreme poverty by helping them cope with different risks, shocks and crises beyond their control.

Persons living in extreme poverty often cannot enjoy their right to social security, due to inadequate and ineffective social protection programmes. Because they are more likely to work in the informal economy, or to hold insecure, low-paid jobs, they are the least likely to be included in contributory social security systems; despite this, most States lack non-contributory social security systems. Inappropriate targeting mechanisms, complicated eligibility criteria, corruption, and limited geographical outreach or coverage often generate inequalities in access to social security and social assistance.

A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Recall State obligations to allocate the necessary resources and develop comprehensive social security programmes to provide universal, noncontributory social assistance as part of the minimum core content of the right to social security.
- Recommend creating a basic set of essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, to be paid to the most vulnerable to provide minimum income security and access to essential health care.
- Stress the relevance of adopting measures to ensure that groups at greater risk of poverty, such as children, women, persons with disabilities and older persons, are prioritized by assistance schemes. Also call for specific initiatives to guarantee that women have access to social security schemes, including social pensions, without having to depend on a "male breadwinner" through which household needs are calculated and channelled.

***Right to education.***

Education is a crucial means by which people can escape poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education levels strongly and positively correlate with better employment opportunities. Students coming from families living in extreme poverty are more likely to drop out of school, or not even attend it in the first place, in favour of engaging in income-generating activities, including begging, or helping with household chores. The economic consequences of not finishing primary or secondary school are enormous and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Girls are particularly affected: more commonly denied their right to education, they often end up in domestic

work, early marriage and childbearing and rearing, which in turn increases impoverishment.

A revised version of the draft guiding principles should:

- Recall the State obligation to immediately ensure free and compulsory primary education for all, within safe reach and without indirect costs. Such obligations require implementing policies on both the demand and supply sides: on the supply side, providing the necessary school infrastructure (buildings, adequate services and facilities including sanitation, water, and electricity for low-income settlements); on the demand side, ensuring that families and communities are not dependent on child labour to live in dignity.
- Recommend progressively ensuring the availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and quality of education in all forms and at all levels. This includes allocating resources in priority towards persons living in extreme poverty, for example with proactive measures to combat school dropout and to compensate for socio-economic disadvantage.
- Recommend taking special measures to ensure the education of girls, children with disabilities, minorities, refugees, stateless persons, and those living in remote areas and slums, as being especially vulnerable and marginalized.
- Recommend reviewing and reforming legislation to ensure consistency between the minimum school leaving age and the minimum age of marriage and employment.



Argentine prison *photo by Alan Pogue*

## World Justice Project Rule of Law Index™

After four years of intensive development, testing, and vetting—including interviewing 66,000 people and over 2000 experts in 66 countries—the World Justice Project is ready to publicly release the second annual *WJP Rule of Law Index*™.

The *Index* provides detailed information and original data regarding a variety of dimensions of the rule of law, which enables stakeholders to assess a nation's adherence to the rule of law in practice, identify a nation's strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other countries, and track changes over time.

The *WJP Rule of Law Index*™ 2011 Report, the second of an annual series, was released on June 13, 2011 in Washington DC and will be presented the next week at the World Justice Forum III in Barcelona.

For more information on the *WJP Rule of Law Index*™, please download the [WJP Rule of Law Index](#)™ 2011 report (just Ctrl+Click the italics).

## The Quaker View of Social Reintegration

*Excerpts from*

<http://www.quaker.org/qcea/prison/social-reintegration-ex-prisoners.htm>

The past work of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) on the *Women in Prison* project (2007), and our research into the use of *Alternatives to Imprisonment* (2010), brought into focus the dysfunctions of prison systems in many European countries. In many cases prisons are overcrowded, and if there is a unifying philosophy beyond that of simply coping with record prison populations, it is retributive. QCEA's past work has focused on the idea, much-repeated in international agreements and treaties on the issue, that prison should be rehabilitative, preparing prisoners for their release back into society in a way that facilitates a life without crime.

This implies engaging with prisoners in a way that stresses their humanity, potential for good, and capacity for change. Prisoners are disproportionately drawn from among the most disadvantaged sectors of society, and while this does not excuse crime, it does at least in part

explain why it recurs. This is a vision that takes in all stages of the criminal justice process.

In sentencing, it means acknowledging that prisons as currently administered damage as many prisoners as they help, inflicting an unacceptable cost on their families and dependents who may have played no part in prisoners' crimes. Except where there is a pressing case for imprisonment on the grounds of public protection, it means using prison only as a measure of last resort. It means using custodial sentences only after having already tried a range of effective non-custodial sanctions and support programmes. Within prisons, it means listening to offenders' needs and wishes, and facilitating their contact with the support and advice that will help them plan for the period after their release from prison. It means running the criminal justice system as if prisoners' children and families mattered, since the maintenance of positive family links is strongly linked with lower reoffending. And on release, it means not simply opening the prison gates and throwing prisoners out into the world with little or no preparation or support. These services are not cheap, but they are necessary. Epidemic levels of reoffending, along with the spiraling costs of imprisonment, mean they are indispensable.

From volunteering as prison visitors and chaplains, to working as probation officers and prison governors, to conducting research and pioneering innovative rehabilitative methods: Quakers know the system and the problems within it. We are neither naive nor blind to the challenges involved. But we do reject the idea that retributive punishment deters reoffending. At present, offenders are placed in bursting prisons, offered no opportunity to identify the factors leading to their offending, and given little or no support to address these problems. It is scarcely surprising that many struggle to live as law-abiding citizens after their release. Society as a whole needs to demand more of prisoners, in the form of desistance from crime; to achieve this, prisoners must be involved as full partners in planning the services and changes necessary to their rehabilitation.

[Click here to download the full report \(PDF - 1.76 MB\)](#)

[Click here to download the Executive Summary and Recommendations only \(PDF - 93 kB\)](#)

## The International CURE 2011 Platform

That Platform, reflecting the work of the recent CURE International Conference, is presented in five parts on the CURE website, <http://www.internationalcure.org/> (find it under "helpful publications"):

- Who are the prisoners?
- Integrating Past Experience and Current Perspectives
- **CURE's 48 Ways Forward** to transform justice and prison systems
- CURE's Primary Correctional Development Goals
- Spreading Justice and Dignity

The heart of the platform is the **48 Ways Forward** to transform justice and prison systems from primarily Retribution to primarily Restoration, Rehabilitation and Reintegration.

It's all in a Power-Point [slide show](#) on the web that also includes major reported problems and a statement of guiding principles in each of five problem areas:

1. Justice system operations (6 Ways Forward)
2. Over crowding and alternatives to incarceration (7 Ways Forward)
3. Abuse of prisoners (11 Ways Forward)
4. Health care and the spread of disease (8 Ways Forward)
5. Rehabilitation and reentry (16 Ways Forward).

note: a FREE Power-Point Viewer is available at <http://microsoft-powerpoint-viewer.en.softonic.com/>

## Women in Brazil Prisons

(continued from page 2)

### Overcrowding

While the women's prison population has increased dramatically in recent years, the number of prison beds has not accompanied this increase.

1. And because women are a small percentage of the prison population, many states have only one or two women's prisons, which means that they are often far from their families, and lose the possibility of contact with their children (because there are no public telephones).

- The Bom Pastor (Good Shepherd) prison in Recife has a capacity of 160 and is currently with 600 women.
- The São Paulo women's prison has a capacity of 251, and currently has 950 inmates.

"Mixed" Prison Units- units where both male and female inmates are housed

1. Some mixed prison units have separate wings for men and women, and have female guards and staff for the women's wing.
2. Most mixed prison units, however, have no differentiated treatment, staff or facilities to accommodate the women's population, and either separate women and men by cells, or sometimes even keep them in the same cell.
  - a. In Ilheus, Bahia – the jail itself is absolutely uninhabitable, and in addition, has one women's cell which opens to the same patio as the three men's cells. The jail has no lights- the cells only have candles, and one of the women was 5 months' pregnant.
  - b. In 2007, an adolescent (15 year old girl) was held in the same cell with 24 men for more than 30 days, who tortured her and repeatedly forced her to have sex in order to receive food (in the state of Pará).

### Minors/Adolescents

In many smaller cities, under aged adolescents are held in the same cells as adults, for lack of facilities.

### Lack of Legal Assistance

1. Many states have far from adequate number of public defenders- in the state of Amazonas, there are no public defenders outside of the capital. Thus inmates either pay for often mediocre legal assistance, or wait years for a hearing.
2. Ananduá, PA- of the 552 women in prison- 408 of them had not yet been sentenced (almost 80%)
3. States maintain pre-trial prison for many cases that are non-violent crimes, and could easily be released to respond in liberty.

## **GHANA PRISONERS MAY VOTE IN THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS**

*by Kassi Djeinzou Augustin, Ghana CURE International*

For decades prisoners have been generally deprived of their Human Rights and Civil liberty in many countries all over the world. Prisoners voting right remain even a taboo issue among our rulers' prison development programmes. Today, with the evolution of the world and particularly the nations, the Ghanaian Government just gave a great nod on its prison service management as the will to struggle progressively on behalf of the inmates' welfare.

Recently the Minister of Communications, Haruna Iddrisu, has asked the authorities of the Ghana Prisons Service to comply with the Supreme Court ruling to permit prisoners to vote in the next elections. The Minister Iddrisu believes that voting remains an important means of teaching inmates democratic values and that will improve their condition of living.

To win this great challenge, it should not be only restricted to the Ghana Prison Service, which is an important institution of the Government. GPS really needs constant collaboration with other useful arms such as the Judicial Service, the Police Service and the Social Welfare Department to carry out its policies and programmes relating to the Penal System.

In awaiting the Electoral Commission's modalities on the issue, the Chief Public Relations Officer of the Ghana Prison Service, Atsem expressed satisfaction with attention being given to a part of the inmates' problems.

In addition, the Supreme Court in a key decision on March 24<sup>th</sup> last year gave the opportunity to remand prisoners in the country to exercise their franchise. To strengthen and uphold its decision, the court briefed the Electoral Commission (EC) to go along with a Constitutional Institution (C I) to create the legal framework that makes easier the inclusion of prisoners in the voters register for the next General Election.

Voting Right is becoming true for Ghanaian Prisoners indeed. This kind of State initiative should be encouraged again in other fields of the prisoners' worries in our country.

## **De-Militarization & Prisons**

According to the Global Issues' website, over the past decade, there has been a 45% increase in global military expenditures. Hunger, violence and climate change, etc. have also increased at an alarming rate. Every year, the world spends \$1.4 trillion dollars on weapons. With a fraction of that we could reform prisons, cut poverty, fund schools, provide health care, and protect the environment. "One year of global military spending could pay the UN's budget for 732 years"

The estimated cost of achieving the MDGs (the UN's Millennium Development Goals) is \$135 Billion. This includes programs to reduce extreme poverty, like programs for education and health care, *which are also vital for prison reform.*

All nations should reconsider their military spending and reallocate more money to poverty eradication and social development. We need an immediate allocation from the military spending budget of the amount required to implement the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.



Argentine prison photo by Alan Pogue

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## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The full text of the following papers, presented at the International CURE Conference February 21-24, 2011, in Abuja, Nigeria, are now available at [www.internationalcure.org](http://www.internationalcure.org) (find "International CURE 2011 Conference" under "CURE Reports" in that CURE website)

**CONFERENCE KICK-OFF** *By Charles Sullivan*

**HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PRISONERS' RIGHTS** *By Prof. Etannibi E.O. Alemika Ph.D.,*

**MASS INCARCERATION, HARSH PUNISHMENT AND CONFRONTING INJUSTICE:  
The Demand for Global Reform** *By Bryan Stevenson*

**THE DILEMMA OF PRISON OVERSIGHT** *By Elizabeth Alexander*

**PRETRIAL CHALLENGES and the poverty factor** *By Maurice Alexander*

**THE NECESSITY TO IMPLEMENT ADEQUATE AND GENUINE PRISON REFORMS** *By Kassi Djeinzou Augustin*

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE** *By Nathaniel Awuapila*

**SAFETY FOR WOMEN IN PRISON DURING PREGANCY, LABOR AND DELIVERY** *By Jean Basinger,*

**PRISON CONDITIONS: CONAKRY GUINEA** *By James Emile GBALLET*

**TEXAS AFTER VIOLENCE PROJECT; persons affected by severe violence** *by Celeste Henery, PhD*

**STANDARDS FOR MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE IN POLICE LOCKUPS:  
POTENTIAL ROLES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS** *By Charles Hounmenou, Ph.D.*

**THE KSM PRISON MINISTRY: OUR EXPERIENCE & PROPOSALS FOR REFORM** *by Bro. John A. Jideonwo*

**THE ETHIOPIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM, CURRENT REFORMS, ASSESSMENT, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**  
*By: Demelash Kassaye*

**THE ROLE OF THE CHURCHES AND MOSQUES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM/ PRISON REFORMS**  
*By Fr Enyeribe Oguh, SJ*

**THE ROLE OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN PRISON AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS**  
*By Don John O. Omale (PhD)*

**THE ROLE OF FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN EX-CONVICTS' REHABILITATION PROCESS.**  
*By Pastor Vincent Omegba*

**PRE TRIAL DETENTION**

*To view the power point presentation by Martin Schoenteich, click: [PRE TRIAL DETENTION](#)*

**TREAT, TRAIN, EMPLOY**

*A Simple Approach to Rehabilitation and Reintegration; Investment in Treatment, Job Training, and Employment  
By Rev Simon Ibezimchi Udemgba Ph.D.*

**CLOSING COMMENTS** *by Charles Sullivan*