



30 Days Dae Izinsuku

Project of the Community Law Centre

CSPRI '30 Days/Dae/Izinsuku' August 2008

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2008

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SENTENCING

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Lawyer says life imprisonment should be reserved for offenders incapable of rehabilitation: A Legal Aid Board lawyer, Mr. Alan de Jager, told the Grahamstown High Court that a life sentence was too harsh when imposed on an offender capable of rehabilitation. Mr. De Jager's argument followed the High Court's sentencing of his client, Mr. Nonkwenke Sothuko, to life imprisonment for the rape of a seven-year old girl. Reported by Sapa, 1 August 2008, http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080801161621714C624492

See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2368439,00.html

Mastermind of armed R100-million sentenced to correctional supervision: Four members of the gang that robbed an SAA flight of R100 million turned state witnesses and received suspended sentences. Mr. Sean Soobramoney, believed to be the mastermind behind the R100 million Oliver Tambo Airport robbery, and co-accused Mr. Nazir Ishmail, pleaded guilty and were each sentenced to 20 years imprisonment which was conditionally suspended for five years. Ms. Magdalena Moonsammy also pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a five-year suspended sentence and three years correctional supervision. Rokaaya Ebrahim also pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three years correctional supervision. All four will testify against eight other of their co-accused. Reported by Botho Molosankwe, 6 August 2008, IOL at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080806061037334C956221

Drugs used save murderers from life imprisonment: Judge says rehabilitation possible: Two 24- and 28-year old murderers were sentenced to 24-years imprisonment instead of life imprisonment after the judge found that the drug 'tik' had influenced their judgment and that they could be rehabilitated. Another 20-year-old man, who was acquitted of the murder was sentenced to 18 months in a youth centre for assault with the intent to commit grievous bodily harm. Reported by Fatima Schroeder, 8 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080808114939351C895662

See also: http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?click_id=13&set_id=1&art_id=vn20080808055724424C104401

'Waterkloof Four' to report to prison and serve their sentence: Three of the four men, popularly known as the 'Waterkloof Four' who were convicted of the murder of a homeless man were considering giving up their legal struggle and reporting to prison to serve their 12-year sentences after the Supreme Court of Appeal rejected their application to appeal. The three had been consulting with their legal team on whether an appeal to the Constitutional Court remained an option. Their attorneys said they would only approach the Court if there was a legitimate constitutional issue. The fourth accused, Christoff Becker, was seeking an extension of his bail pending an application to appeal in the Constitutional Court. Reported by Phillip de Bruin, Beeld/News24, 10 August 2008, at

http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2373475,00.html

See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2371222,00.html

DA policies to ensure that prisoners serve the sentences they 'deserve': The Democratic Alliance said that should it be voted into power in the forthcoming national elections, it would put in place measures to ensure that crime is stopped before it happens. The party leader, Ms Helen Zille, said that her government would employ more police officers, ensure that crime suspects were tried expeditiously and that those convicted should serve the term that they deserve. She also added that the bail conditions would be stringent for suspects accused of serious crimes. Reported by Sapa, 12 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20080812133009575C367672

Last of 'Waterkloof Four' reports to prison: A day after his three accomplices handed themselves over to the authorities, Mr. Christoff Becker, the last of the so-called Waterkloof Four, was taken to the Pretoria Central Prison to start his 12-year jail term. Mr. Becker was 16 when he and his three accomplices killed a homeless man and assaulted another. Reported by Hanti Otto, 13 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080813060602968C161568 .

See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2374313,00.html

Opinion on delays for Waterkloof Four's prison sentence: When the Waterkloof Four started serving their sentences for the murder they committed in 2001, an opinion was published in Business Day condemning the long delays afforded to the four and the author asks whether black men would have received the same treatment if they had been convicted of the crime. Opinion by Phaladi Seakgw, 15 August 2008, Business Day, at <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/article.aspx?ID=BD4A822770>

Man says 11 life sentences and 146 years in prison is 'nothing': Mr. Mukosi Freddy Mulaudzi who was sentenced to 11 life sentences and 146 years imprisonment for multiple murders and rapes reportedly said that his sentence was 'nothing'. One of the justifications that Judge Godfrey Hetisani of the Thohoyandou High Court in Limpopo gave for imposing such a severe sentence was the Mr. Mulaudzi was incapable of rehabilitation. Reported by Chester Makana, 22 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=827474> see also <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=826522> see also <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=825015>

GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

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Prison official held for rape of 15-year old girl: The Department of Correctional Services said that one of its officials was suspended after allegedly raping a 15-year-old girl in Mpumalanga. The Department launched an internal investigation into the matter. Reported by Sapa, 31 July 2008
http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080731170521232C169847

Department employees investigated for theft while in uniform: Nine Correctional Services employees in Kroonstad were being investigated for allegedly stealing bottles of liquor from a liquor store after a memorial service. The theft was recorded on the store's CCTV and the footage was being used to identify the thieves. The theft apparently took place when a bus took DCS employees from Kroonstad to Groenpunt prison in Deneyville for a memorial service. All members were allegedly dressed in full uniform at the time of the theft. Reported by Tom de Wet, 31 July 2008,
http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2367938,00.html

Post-mortem of exhumed body reveals no foul play: A mistaken date on the death certificate of a woman who died in Westville prison put her family through weeks of anguish. The family had asked for the body to be exhumed and examined after several prison officials gave inconsistent accounts of their daughter's death. But a second post-mortem showed she was not assaulted before her death. The doctor, who conducted the first post-mortem, said that the date on the death certificate was an error. Reported by Mpume Madlala, 11 August 11 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?from=rss_South%20Africa&set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn20080811141958572C220831

Portfolio Committee instructs DCS to advertise tenders for prison food: The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr. Dennis Bloem, said that the Department of Correctional Services had to advertise tenders for the supply of food in prisons. Mr. Bloem and other committee members were concerned that the Department had been reluctant to advertise the tenders after the old tenders had expired. Mr. Bloem also cautioned that the Committee was not to entertain the situation where one company monopolised the supply of food to prisons. Reported by Wyndham Hartley, 7 August 2008, Business Day, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200808070196.html>

Prison warder among three arrested for house robberies and hijacking: Three men, including a prison warder, were arrested in connection with two house robberies and a hijacking in Johannesburg, Gauteng police said. Police were still searching for the two other men suspected of being involved. Two cars stolen in the crime spree were still missing. Reported by Sapa, 11 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080811133733316C789260
See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2373778,00.html

Auditor's General report raises concern over prison conditions: A report by the Auditor General raised concern that the situation at some of South Africa prisons was in contravention of both the country's national and international obligations. The Democratic Alliance said that the report was 'scathing' and that it showed that security at many prisons was unsatisfactory. The report revealed that at some prisons the security doors and cameras were not working, the boilers were a danger to inmates and prison warders, and that the sewage systems put communities near some prisons at a health risk. Reported by I-Net Bridge, 14 August 2008, The Herald, at http://www.theherald.co.za/herald/news/n08_14082008.htm

Politician accused of defrauding ex-prisoners' fund: New Brighton Ward 17 councillor Nonceba Sonjica appeared before the commercial crimes court on 47 fraud charges of defrauding the former prisoners' pension fund. The fund was established to benefit people who had been imprisoned for being political activists. Councillor Sonjica who, according to the state 'never spent a day behind bars', fraudulently claimed to have been a political prisoner and benefited from the fund. Reported by Yolandé Hayward 15 August 2008, The Herald, at http://www.epherald.co.za/herald/news/n10_15082008.htm

Prisoners' rights activist says high profile prisoner treated better than others: Mr. Derrick Mdluli, chairman of the Justice for Prisoners and Detainees Trust reportedly said that when he visited Mr. Schabir Shaik, a convicted fraudster, 'he appeared to be in good health and is definitely being treated far better than other prisoners.' Mr. Shaik was hospitalised at Albert Luthuli hospital. Mr. Mdluli said that he wished all the prisoners were being treated like Mr. Shaik. Reported by Paul Kirk, 19 August 2008, The Citizen, at <http://www.thecitizen.co.za/index/article.aspx?pDesc=75565,1,22>

Senior DCS official suspended over sexual harassment allegations: Mr. Chris Hlatshwayo, a senior official at Barberton maximum security prison in Mpumalanga was reportedly suspended over alleged sexual harassment. Mr Hlatshwayo committed the alleged acts in his office. The Department of Correctional Services spokesperson, Ms Sarie

Peens, confirmed to the media that Mr. Hlatshwayo was being investigated. Reported by Riot Hlatshwayo, 26 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=829925>

UNSENTENCED PRISONERS

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Man awaits trial for 15 months: After awaiting trial for 15 months, Mr. Lionel George pleaded guilty to the charges of taking hostage nine Pretoria News advertising personnel and unlawful possession of a firearm. He was convicted and given a suspended sentence on condition that he submits himself to psychological treatment. Mr. George reportedly suffers from a personality disorder. Reported by Sapa, 31 July 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20080731182817981C510036

Child prisoner appears in court shackled in leg irons: Leeuwkop Juvenile prison's youngest inmate, "Ma-eleven", made a brief appearance at the Randburg magistrate's court. The 14-year-old, shackled in leg irons is charged with grievous bodily harm after he was involved in a prison fight where he cut another juvenile inmate's left cheek with a razor blade. His case was postponed to August 19. Reported by Thandi Skade, 1 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080801055710640C800175

Millions spent daily on awaiting trial prisoners: In its 2007/2008 Annual Report, the Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons revealed that the government spends over R 2 million daily on detaining awaiting trial prisoners. The report also disclosed that many awaiting trial prisoners could not afford to pay bail as little as R 500 and remained in detention. The Inspecting Judge of Prisons, Judge Deon van Zyl, said that the police were at times making unnecessary arrests and that this was contributing to the number of awaiting trial prisoners. Reported by Thanduxolo Jika, 2 August 2008, Daily Dispatch, at <http://www.dispatch.co.za/article.aspx?id=231738>

Prisoner's transfer application from Pollsmoor prison postponed: Mr. J. Arthur Brown's application to be transferred from Pollsmoor prison hospital was postponed. Mr. Brown had been transferred from a private clinic, where he received treatment after reportedly being raped and assaulted, to Pollsmoor prison hospital. His transfer was recommended by district surgeon, Dr. Paul Theron, who told the Cape Town magistrates court that Mr. Brown needed ongoing treatment but was ready for discharge from the private clinic. Mr. Brown wishes to be moved back to a private clinic and planned to launch an application for the transfer in the Cape Town Regional Court but the magistrate postponed the application. Reported by Sapa, 7 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080807162126980C764089
See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2371828,00.html

Thousands of awaiting-trial prisoners to be released: The Deputy Justice Minister Johnny de Lange reportedly said that of the 93869 people awaiting trial in South African prisons 11000 are supposed to have been released.[CSPRI NOTES

THAT THE FIGURE OF 93 869 IS INCORRECT] Thousands of awaiting-trial prisoners remain in detention because they cannot afford to pay bail fees. Reported by Anna Majavu, 26 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=829941>

Awaiting trial prisoner tells court that a ghost told him to become a Satanist: Mr. Morne Harmse, 18, who is awaiting trial at Krugersdorp prison for the murder of a fellow pupil at a technical school, told the Krugersdorp Magistrate's Court that he was told by a ghost to become a Satanist. However, the psychiatrist who assessed Mr. Harmse said that he was depressed and needed mental evaluation at Sterkfontein mental hospital. The court ordered that Mr. Harmse should be evaluated to establish whether he was capable of standing trial. Reported by Sapa, 27 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=831177>

PRISON CONDITIONS

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Human Rights Commission rejects warder's appeal for aid in severely overcrowded prison: The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) reportedly rejected a warder's plea for intervention at the severely overcrowded Mthatha Medium Prison. The prison is reportedly filled four times above its capacity. In one photograph taken by the Daily Dispatch, 300 inmates were crammed into a cell meant for 15 prisoners. The warder allegedly raised the matter with the SAHRC, citing the inhumane conditions prisoners were exposed to. Reported by Thanduxolo Jika and Lubalo Ngcukana, 1 August 2008, Daily Dispatch, at <http://www.dispatch.co.za/specialreports/article.aspx?id=231338>

HIV prevalent among prisoners and the risk of being raped is 90%: Dr Bongiwe Mbuwako who worked at the overcrowded Mthatha Medium Prison, reportedly said that HIV was prevalent among prisoners at that prison. She also reportedly 'confirmed that disease is rife' at the prison and that inmates were issued with condoms and encouraged to use them. The prison warders reportedly said that 'rape was endemic' in the Mthatha Medium Prison to the extent that 'If you spend even a single day in that prison, chances are more than 90 percent that you are going to be raped or sodomised.' Reported on 1 August 2008, Daily Dispatch, at <http://www.dispatch.co.za/specialreports/article.aspx?id=231254>

Hindu prisoners claim to be discriminated against: Hindu prisoners at Westville Prison claimed that they were being discriminated against by the prison authorities. One of the Hindu prisoners alleged that unlike their Muslim and Christian colleagues who are allowed to worship, for them they are not allowed to do so. The prisoner also alleged that events to mark Hindu festivals were prohibited but that Muslims and Christians were allowed to observe their holy occasions. Reported by Annie Dorasamy, 31 August 2008, Sunday Tribune, at <http://www.sundaytribune.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=4586538> see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080831092311482C450585

PAROLE AND MEDICAL PAROLE

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High profile prisoner's ongoing hospital stay concerns Parliament: The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr. Dennis Bloem, expressed concern that Mr. Schabir Shaik, a businessman serving a 15-year prison term for fraud, had been in hospital for the past five months and that his condition did not appear to be improving. Mr. Bloem said Mr. Shaik could not remain in hospital for the duration of his 15-year sentence and a solution had to be found. Reported by Sapa, 4 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080804153414751C383604

See also: http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080805151951123C442100 see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20080817102610994C374431

CSPRI to Parliament: delays in medical parole for terminally ill prisoners a serious concern: MPs and the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI) expressed serious concerns at the delays in processing parole applications for terminally-ill inmates. Mr. Lukas Muntingh of CSPRI said there had been a surge in the number of inmates dying of natural causes while waiting to be considered for medical parole. He urged the Department of Correctional Services to expedite applications for medical parole and spare terminally ill prisoners from dying in prison. Reported by Siyabonga Mkhwanazi, 6 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080806055515868C801643

Early medical parole for terminally ill prisoners considered: Chairperon of the Parole Review Board, Judge Siraj Desai, said moves to change the law and allow terminally ill inmates to be released early from prison on compassionate grounds are under consideration. At the same time, Mr. Schabir Shaik's brothers appealed for the Durban businessman's release from prison, citing life-threatening illness as the reason. Shaik's family said he suffers from a genetic affliction of the vascular system which also led to the death of both his parents. Shaik received a 15-year-sentence for fraud and corruption in 2005. Since he entered prison, he has spent most of his time in hospital.

Reported by Siyabonga Mkhwanazi, 11 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20080811054223675C135469 .

See also: http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080810081907829C689982 AND http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2369786,00.html

Parliament reviews medical parole for prisoners: The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services scrutinised the issue of medical parole for terminally ill prisoners. Correctional Services Minister, Mr. Ngconde Balfour, warned the Committee to tread carefully in considering amendments to legislation around medical parole. Any discussion of Schabir Shaik's case was quashed by the committee chair. The Committee heard that a total of 50 inmates were released on medical parole during the 2007/08 financial year, and 81 the year before; 1249 inmates died in prison in 2006, and 1056

during 2007. Reported by Richard Davies, 12 August 2008, Citizen at <http://www.citizen.co.za/index/article.aspx?pDesc=73917,1,22> see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080812134830178C115823

Trade Union condemns the release of prisoner on parole: The Confederation of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, said that the release on parole of a prisoner, Mr. Mark Scott-Crossley, who was serving a five -year prison term for throwing the body of his former worker into a lion enclosure was a clear indication that 'those who are rich and white will continue to be treated differently to those who are poor.' Mr. Scott-Crossley was released after serving three of the five years to which he was sentenced when the Supreme Court held that there was no evidence that the victim of his crime was alive at the time he was thrown into the lion enclosure. Reported on 21 August 2008, The Press Association, at <http://ukpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5jQetfD6cqXmBlASZZul3aiWhRquA> see also http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5hX_xKzW9cK-rDXp0pJI5ead42QaAD92MSDKG3

Rights body questions the parole procedure followed to release Scott-Crossley: The Chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission - Mr. Jody Kollapen, said that the Department of Correctional Services should have taken various factors into consideration before they released Mr. Mark Scott-Crossley who had served three years of his five-year prison term for throwing the body of his former employee into a lion enclosure. Mr. Kollapen said that the parole board should have taken the following factors into consideration: 'the seriousness of the crime he committed; the power relations between him and the workers he instructed to assault and dispose of Chisale's body; the fact that he was not a model prisoner and also his race.' The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr. Dennis Bloem, also questioned the circumstances under which Mr. Scott-Crossley was released. Reported by Ido Lekota, 27 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=830725>

Newspaper questions parole of high profile prisoner: The Sowetan newspaper questioned the circumstances under which Mr. Mark Scott-Crossley, who was sentenced to five years in prison for throwing his former employee's body into a lion enclosure, was released. The Sowetan reports that the family of the man whose body was thrown into the lion enclosure was not consulted by the Parole Board before Mr. Scott-Crossley was released. The Sowetan also alleges that Mr. Scott-Crossley 'jumped the parole queue' and that during his stay in prison he was found guilty of assaulting another prisoner. Reported on 28 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=831499>

Man whose parole caused controversy starts community service: Mr. Mark Scott-Crossley who was released on parole after serving three years of his five year prison term for throwing his former employee's body into a lion enclosure, started doing his community service, which is one of his parole conditions. Mpumalanga police spokesperson, Superintendent Abie Khoabane, said that Mr. Scott-Crossley worked at Acornhoek police station's garden for four hours per week. Reported by Riot Hlatshwayo, 28 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=831586>

Man who confessed to murdering Mozambican President paroled: Mr. Hans Louw, a Namibian national, who confessed that he played a role in the assassination of the former Mozambican President, Samora Machel, was released on parole from Pretoria Central prison where he was serving a 28-year prison sentence for a murder he committed as an employee of the Civil Cooperation Bureau. Though Mr. Louw confirmed that he had been paroled, the Department of Correctional Services refused to comment on his release. Reported by Mpikeleni Duma, 29 August 2008, Sowetan, at

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=832365>

PRISON LABOUR

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Democratic Alliance will bring back prison labour, says Zille: Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Helen Zille announced her party's criminal justice plan, should the party win the election in the Western Cape. The plan reintroduces the prison labour system, which requires inmates to work to cover the costs of their detention. Zille said, under the Constitution, provinces can make their own laws and implement their own policies. The party's spokesperson on correctional services, James Selfe, said that prisoners would repay their debts to society through labour. "This will not only give prisoners skills they can use outside prison, but allow them to atone partly for their crimes and cover the costs of their detention," Selfe said. Reported by Boyd Webb, 13 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080813054902574C541056 .

Democratic Alliance prison labour labelled as 'slavery': Analyst Terry Bell argued that the DA's proposed prison labour is slavery by a new name. He said that there was evidence from countries such as the United States of America that prison labour was an incentive for the prison authorities to keep prisoners, including petty offenders, in detention for longer than necessary because of the profit they make from their labour. COSATU and POPCRU also criticized the prison labour proposal. Opinion by Terry Bell, 15 August 2008, Business Reporter, at <http://www.busrep.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=553&fArticleId=4559694>

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Former prisoner encourages children to stay away from crime: Mr. Allan Heyl, a former member of the Stander gang who spent 27 years in prison following a string of bank robberies, addressed a group of children at the launch of Primedia's "Crime Line Life's Good Roadshow", a nationwide initiative sponsored by LG aimed at sending a message to youth and junior school pupils to say no to crime. Reported by Thandi Skade, 8 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080808061243932C795855

NGO that provides offender reintegration services awarded R33 million: The National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (Nicro) was awarded R33-million by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund in Cape Town. Nicro diverts 16 000 youths from the criminal justice system each year but says with a recidivism rate of 91 percent,

there needs to be more effective reintegration of offenders into society. The donation will help programmes at 50 Nicro service points around the country, assisting about 300 000 individuals each year. Reported by Zara Nicholson, 9 August 2008, Cape Argus, at <http://www.capeargus.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=4550176> see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080809085202227C235720

Prisoners request digital television: A group of 12 prisoners at Durban's Westville Prison applied to have DStv installed in their cells. The prisoners said they would pool money to pay for the subscription, reported an unnamed prison official. KwaZulu-Natal Correctional Services said the department would oppose the DStv application. Mr. Dennis Bloem, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services was also opposed. He reportedly said that "If we allow DStv in prisons, they will become holiday resorts". Reported by Chris Makhaye, 10 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080810093651873C533435

Prison warder commits murder-suicide in full uniform: A 28-year-old prison warder, wearing his full uniform, shot his 23-year-old girlfriend four times in the chest and hand, and then turned the gun on himself. He left a suicide note in his pocket in which he asked his girlfriend's parents to celebrate their deaths. Murder and inquest dockets have been opened. Reported by Thabisile Khoza, 12 August 2008, News24, at http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2374683,00.html

Prisoners' rights activist who helped a prisoner to escape to be sentenced: The Wynberg magistrate court will on 9 September 2008 sentence Mr. Golden Miles Bhudu, president of the South African Prisoners' Organisation for Human Rights (SAPOHR) and four others for helping a prisoner to escape. Mr. Bhudu and his three co-accused were found guilty for helping an Israeli citizen to escape from lawful custody. Reported by Penwell Dlamini, 19 August 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=824840>

Nelson Mandela visits prison where he was detained: As one of the activities to mark his 90th birthday, Mr. Nelson Mandela visited the Drakenstein prison outside Cape Town where he was detained for the last 14 months preceding his release. During his visit, he unveiled a bronze statue which was erected to recognise his fight for freedom in South Africa. He was accompanied by some of his family members. Reported by Clare Nullis, 21 August 2008, Associated Press, at <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/20080821-0854-southafrica-mandela.html> see also <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=827573>

Prisoners warn learners against crime: Prisoners at Westville prison warned school children against involving themselves in criminal activities. The inmates' spokesperson Mr. Sabelo Ntshembeni reportedly said that 'school violence is breeding criminals and we feel we can play a role in addressing this problem. Prison is not a nice place to be and that is what should be preached to youngsters committing crime, especially at school level.' The anti-crime programme is supported by the Department of Correctional Services and the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department. Reported by Mercury Reporter, 28 August 2008, at <http://www.capeargus.co.za/?fSectionId=3571&fArticleId=vn20080828055107957C229825> see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080828055107957C229825

Former anti-apartheid activist applauds churches for re-integrating prisoners: Former anti-apartheid activists, Rev Allan Boesak, praised churches for implementing programmes for reintegrating offenders. Speaking at the Action for a Safe South Africa Convention, Rev. Boesak reportedly said that 'local churches are doing good work and what happens within a

community is usually successful, such as the reintegration programmes for prisoners.' Reported by Eleanor Momberg, 31 August 2008, Sunday Tribune, at <http://www.sundaytribune.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=4586583>

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Cameroon

Cameroon prison called 'Hell on earth': Chronic overcrowding, open toilets, awful food, unchecked corruption, violence and sexual abuse at Cameroon's New Bell prison all contribute to the country's most populated prison being called "hell on earth" by inmates and rights activists. In June, 16 prisoners were killed while trying to escape. Hardened criminals mix with other prisoners while child prisoners are regularly raped by adults, said a local rights activist. The prison's head admitted that sanitation hardly existed with an acute shortage of water, open drains and toilets, and regular flooding. More than 70 percent of the detainees are defendants awaiting judgment. Some have been waiting for several years for a ruling. Staff report, 8 August 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=86&art_id=nw20080808071916492C836645

See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,,2-11-1447_2372079,00.html

100s of escape tools seized at Cameroonian prison: Police raids at a major prison in Cameroon revealed hundreds of escape tools, including screwdrivers, saws, knives, and police uniforms. Other items included counterfeit money, alcohol and 60 cell phones. A computer was also found in the cell of a death row inmate. A police source said the prison currently imprisoned prominent figures, including a number of former ministers and high-ranking officials imprisoned after a 2004 corruption crackdown. The prison has space for about 1 000 inmates, but houses more than 4 000, according to police. Staff reporter, 13 August 2008, News24, at

http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,,2-11-1447_2374774,00.html

Prison fire kills nine inmates: Nine prisoners reportedly died in a fire that gutted part of New Bell prison in Duala, Cameroon's economic capital. The prison authorities said that the fire started at around 4:00 in the morning. The prison is housing four times more prisoners than its capacity; it lacks toilets and prisoners lack sufficient bedding. Reported on 20 August 2008, AFP at http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hKEPY_BjfiJzfoKA9fXSfZkaLnAA

Prisons in a sorry state: Many prisons in Cameroon are reportedly plagued by many problems, such as overcrowding and dilapidated and old infrastructure, and insufficient rehabilitation programmes for prisoners. The Superintendent of the Douala Central Prison, Joseph Tsala Amongou, reportedly said that his prison has serious infrastructure problems, such as cracked walls and that the electrical and water supply was out of order. Officials from other prisons also reported that prisoners under their care were living in poor conditions. Reported by Brenda Yufeh, 27 August 2008, Cameroon Tribune, at

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200808270884.html>

Government to construct new prison: The vice Prime Minister of Justice, Mr. Amadou Ali, announced that the government will construct a new prison in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital, and also renovate the old prison in that area. The new prison is expected to be completed next year and will accommodate about 2000 prisoners. Reported by Yemti Harry Ndienla, 28 August 2008, My News, at <http://www.mynews.in/fullstory.aspx?storyid=9357>

Prisoners allegedly have to pay to use prison toilet: Rev. Sister Jacky Atabong of the Catholic Prison Apostolate reportedly said that because of the lack of enough toilets at New Bell prison in Duala, some prisoners have to pay to use the toilet. Rev. Sister Atabong added that the prison was overcrowded to the extent that many prisoners were sleeping outside even when it rained. She said the prison authorities served poor quality food to inmates and that some prisoners suffering from infectious diseases were being detained in the same cells as those who were healthy. Reported by Ireneaus Chia Chongwain, 28 August 2008, L'Effort Camerounais, at <http://www.leffortcamerounais.com/2008/08/the-new-bell-pr.html>

Uganda

Universities admit prisoners: 68 prisoners were admitted to several universities in Uganda. The prisoners registered for various courses including law, education, social sciences, business administration, mass communication, tourism, social work and social administration, human resource management and information and communication technology. The universities will ensure that the prisoners complete their courses through distance learning. The prisoners' education was being sponsored by a number of institutions. Reported by Fortunate Ahimbisibwe and Roderick Ahimbazwe, 7 August 2008, New Vision, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/643533>

Prisons chief says courts responsible for prisons overcrowding: The Commissioner General of Prisons, Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, reportedly said that courts are to be blamed for overcrowding of prisons. Dr. Byabasaija said that courts should decide cases expeditiously if overcrowding is to be reduced. He said that the construction of new prisons would not solve the problem of overcrowding if courts were not concluding cases in time. Reported by Emmanuel Kajubu, The New Vision, 22 August 2008, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200808230078.html>

Morocco

Death-row inmates allegedly imprisoned in 'catastrophic' conditions: Moroccan human rights activists described the prison conditions under which prisoners on death row are being detained as 'catastrophic' and 'worse than execution itself.' This was after their visit to the prison where these inmates are detained. They said that the prison was overcrowded, the inmates lacked access to medical care, there were no rehabilitation programmes and they were constantly in fear of being executed. The activists added that even prisoners whose death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment were being detained in the same catastrophic conditions. Reported by Abderrahim El Ouali, 19 August 2008, IPS, at <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=43598>

Benin

Prison conditions allegedly 'horrible': A Canadian student who did humanitarian work at some prisons in Benin said that the conditions under which the prisoners were being detained were 'horrible' and also 'emotionally draining.' The student was also 'struck' by the fact that several prisoners had been awaiting trial for many years. Other students also did humanitarian work at the prisons, which included disinfecting the prisons and handing out medication to the inmates. Reported by Fred Sherwin, 19 August 2008, Orléans Online at <http://www.orleansonline.ca/pages/N2008081901.htm>

Botswana

South Africans killers not to be sentenced to death: Two South Africans and a Botswana national on trial for murder in Botswana, pleaded guilty to killing a woman after robbing her at her shop. They have already spent six years in jail awaiting trial. Botswana assured South Africa that the three will not receive the death penalty. Reported by Sapa, 12 August 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080812091000262C983839 See also: http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2374270,00.html

Guinea

Human Rights Watch says that prison system is 'dilapidated and abuse-ridden': Human Rights Watch welcomed the newly appointed Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souaré with a letter calling upon his government to address several human rights concerns including the 'dilapidated and abuse-ridden prison system.' The rights watchdog alleged that torture was common in prisons and the prison conditions were below internationally acceptable standards. Press release by Human Rights Watch on 14 August 2008 at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2008/08/14/guinea19609.htm>

Nigeria

Hundreds of Nigerians in foreign prisons: The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, said that hundred of Nigerians were serving prison terms in different countries. The Minister said that '1,469 Nigerians were serving various prison terms in UK prisons, 15 in Libya and six in Afghanistan prisons. Maduekwe also said 20 Nigerians are facing death sentences in Indonesia, while one was executed in Saudi Arabia recently.' Editorial on 15 August 2008, The Punch, at <http://www.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art200808142331676>

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