



30 Days Dae Izinsuku

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Greetings Clare

PRISON CONDITIONS

Children in Pollsmoor: The Mail and Guardian reported that children incarcerated at Pollsmoor prison are forced to deal with many challenges, including gangsterism, malfunctioning toilets, overcrowding, sexual abuse, a shortage of school teachers, lack of formal access to education as well as a lack of pre and post-release support programmes. The report states that as a result of a lack of support young people leaving South Africa's prisons have an estimated recidivism rate of 50%. Reported by Ilham Rawoot, 16 November 2012, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-16-00-children-in-pollsmoor>

South African prisons overcrowded: Times Live reported that the Minister of Correctional Services warned that South Africa's prisons are overcrowded and "overused," adding that South Africa had the largest prison population in Africa, ranking number nine in the world. He reportedly made these comments at a national colloquium on overcrowding in prison centres. Reported by Times Live, 19 November 2012, at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/11/19/prisons-overcrowded-and-overused-minister>

Overcrowding in correctional centres "a major problem": The SABC reported that overcrowding is a major issue facing the Department of Correctional Services. This was reportedly demonstrated by the fact that most correctional centres are forced to accommodate more inmates than for which they were originally designed. Reported by SABC, 24 November 2012, at <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/1b87ac004d906783a437f5e570eb4ca2/SA-on-drive-to-alleviate-overcrowding-in-prisons-20122411>

Department of Correctional Services facing financial loss in damages claims: IOL reported that damages claims for assault and deaths in detention against the Department of Correctional Services lodged by prisoners and/or the relatives of deceased prisoners amounted to R24.7 million and R300 000 respectively for the 2011/2012 financial year. Reported by Michael Mpofu, 30 November 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/prisoners-claim-r24-7m-for-assaults-in-jail-1.1433632>

REHABILITATION

Inmates to build schools: allAfrica.com reported that inmates "will soon be utilised more to build and furnish schools in South Africa." The policy announcement was reportedly made by the Minister of Correctional Services at a two-day national colloquium aimed at dealing with overcrowding in correctional centres. Reported by allAfrica.com, 20 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211200314.html>

Department of Correctional Services to establish trading unit: Business Day Live reported that the Department of Correctional Services plans to establish a trading entity that will offer products and services ranging from furniture, clothing, steel works and food. The Minister for Correctional Services reportedly stated that such an entity would assist inmates in acquiring the skills they need to make them productive members of society upon their release from prison. Reported by Ernest Mabuza, 20 November 2012, at <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2012/11/20/prisons-department-to-set-up-trading-unit-to-boost-training-of-inmates>

UNSENTENCED PRISONERS

Lengthy pre-trial detention: The Citizen reported that two unsentenced detainees have been made to wait 18 months for their trial to resume after the presiding magistrate retired during their trial. The report states that the two accused are calling for the case to be withdrawn on the ground that their right to a fair trial has been infringed. Reported by Grethe Koen, 17 November 2012, at <http://www.citizen.co.za/citizen/content/en/citizen/local-news?oid=353531&sn=Detail&pid=334&Two-Uppington-detainees-awaiting-trial-%96-since-2009>

SENTENCING AND PAROLE

Number of prisoners serving life sentences on the increase: Times Live reported that the number of prisoners serving life sentences has increased by almost 2 400 percent since 1995: from 433 to 10 314 in 2012. According to the National Council of Correctional Services, prisoners serving life sentences are worsening overcrowding as they are only eligible for parole after serving fourteen years. Reported by Times Live, 19 November 2012, at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/11/19/number-of-lifers-in-prison-has-jumped-2400-percent-since-1995>

SOUTH AFRICANS IMPRISONED ABROAD

South African citizens stranded in Brazil: The New Age reported that more than 20 South African nationals who have completed prison terms are stranded in São Paulo because they have no money to return home. Reported by Zodidi Mhlana, 2 November 2012, at http://www.thenewage.co.za/68272-1007-53-South_Africans_live_in_drug_mule_hell

Government “working” on prisoner transfer deals: The New Age reported that following a request from Cabinet, a memorandum in support of the approval of the adoption of a South African policy position on the prisoner transfer arrangement has been completed. The report notes that once a policy position is adopted by Cabinet, the specific nature of agreements would be negotiated on a case by case basis. Over one thousand South African nationals are reportedly serving sentences abroad. Reported by Zodidi Mhlana, 7 November 2012, at http://www.thenewage.co.za/68881-1007-53-Prison_deal_might_help_locals_in_foreign_jails

OTHER

Medical personal taken hostage by inmates: IOL reported that a doctor and a nurse, both prison personnel, were taken hostage by two inmates during a ward round at 11am on Monday 19 November 2012. Police and emergency personnel were reportedly on the scene soon afterwards but negotiations went on late into the night. Reported by IOL, 19 November 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/talks-continue-in-hostage-crisis-1.1426551>

OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

CAMEROON

Majority of inmates awaiting trial: Africa Review reported that about 80% of inmates in Cameroon’s prisons are pre-trial detainees due to excessively lengthy investigative processes and court backlogs. The report notes that a study by the Cameroon branch of Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) estimates that this figure has increased by 20% over the last two years. It states too, that despite the enactment of the “new” 2007 Criminal Procedure Code, based on the “presumption of innocence,” the situation in prisons is systematically getting worse. Reported by Yuh Timchia, 15 November, 2012, at http://www.africareview.com/News/Majority_Cameroon_prisoners_still_awaiting_trial/-/979180/1533876/-/125ix68z/-/index.html

CONGO

Government accused of torture: AFP reported that torture is practised "systematically and everywhere" during arrests and whilst suspects are detained in police custody. It noted that although Congo has signed the United Nations Convention against Torture, it had not yet fully aligned its legislation with its provisions. Reported by Junior Kannah, 1 November 2012, at <http://za.news.yahoo.com/torture-systematic-everywhere-congo-ngo-183004744.html>

DEMOCRATIC

REPUBLIC

OF

CONGO

MONUSCO finances two new sections at Songololo prison: Reliefweb reported that the MONUSCO mission financed the building of a new female and juvenile wing at the Songololo prison in the Bas-Congo province. These two new sections will promote compliance with national legislation which requires separation between these two categories of prisoners. Original report in French. Report by Maimouna Traoré, 1 November 2012, at <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/la-monusco-dote-la-prison-de-songololo-bas-congo-de-deux-nouveaux>

EGYPT

Calls to end torture: Reuters reported that thousands of pro-democracy activists assembled in Cairo on 3 November 2012 demanding an end to the rough treatment in Egyptian prisons and calling for a ban on torture in the new constitution. Reported by Shaimaa Fayed, 3 November 2012, at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/11/03/uk-egypt-torture-idUKBRE8A20BZ20121103>

GHANA

Relief sought for death row inmate: allAfrica.com reported that the Nigerian High Commissioner to Ghana, Ademola Seyi Onafowokan, requested the Ghanaian President to exercise the prerogative of mercy in relation to a Nigerian national on death row. The report noted that Yakubu Bello from Niger State was sentenced to death for murder on 2 November 2010. Reported by Kate Da Costa, 17 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211170616.html>

KENYA

Petty offenders to be released: The Star reported that the Judiciary and Prisons Department launched a programme intended to decongest prisons. The programme will reportedly see to the release of “thousands of offenders” who have been sentenced to less than one year imprisonment provided they are willing to engage in community service for the remainder of their sentence. Reported by Mosoku Geoffrey, 3 November 2012, at <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-94026/judiciary-and-prisons-set-petty-offenders-free>

Rehabilitation schemes being promoted: The Guardian reported that prisoners in Kenya are being rehabilitated through schemes such as making clothes and building furniture. It noted that an additional initiative sponsored by the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) is enabling them to farm their own crops. Reported by Sawsan Bastawy, 28 November 2012 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/journalismcompetition/prisoners-find-roots-rehabilitation?INTCMP=SRCH>

LIBERIA

Monrovia Central Prison in bad shape: allAfrica.com reported that two inmates who were released from Monrovia Central Prison have described the conditions there as “deplorable”. The report noted that the prison has many problems such as a shortage of medical drugs, poor diet, inmate drug abuse and tuberculosis related infections. Reported by George Borteh, 6 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211060997.html>

Minister of Justice concerned about number of young detainees: allAfrica.com reported that whilst on a visit to the Monrovia Central Prison, the Minister of Justice expressed concern over the large number of youth who are being sent to prison for minor crimes. She reportedly stated that young detainees who are in prison for petty offences need to be given a second chance through the probation service to enable them rejoin society. Reported by allAfrica.com, 28 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211291106.html>

LIBYA

Migrants forced to pay for release: News24 reported that a group of asylum seekers from Eritrea, recently rescued off the coast of Malta, were forced to pay to be released from a Benghazi prison, only to be held against their will and forced onto an overcrowded boat with little food and water. Reported by News24, 18 November 2012, at <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Migrants-forced-to-pay-for-release-20121118>

MADAGASCAR

Prisons in poor condition: allAfrica.com reported that prisoners in Madagascar are forced to deal with a number of serious challenges, including overcrowding, poor nutrition, poor infrastructure, poor rehabilitative facilities and a high level of corruption and smuggling. Reported by allAfrica.com, 21 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211211046.html?viewall=1>

MALAWI

Most detainees unaware of right to bail: The Sunday Times reported that the Blantyre-based Centre for Human Rights, Advice and Assistance, an organisation which focuses on the rights of prisoners, has said that most prisoners are unaware of their right to bail, a condition that leads to congestion in the prisons. Malawi's prisons reportedly hold over 12 000 inmates

against a projected population of only 5 500. Reported by Jack Mcbrams, 4 November 2012, at <http://www.bnltimes.com/index.php/sunday-times/headlines/national/12219-most-prisoners-unaware-of-bail-rights-ngo>

Magistrates' fuelling overcrowding in prisons: The Sunday Times reported that a High Court Judge stated that magistrates are contributing to the congestion of prisons by rejecting bail applications. The remarks were reportedly made at the opening of a workshop for magistrates on access to justice. Reported by Golden Matonga, 9 November 2012, at <http://www.bnltimes.com/index.php/daily-times/headlines/national/12334-magistrates-unjustifiable-bail-rejections-fueling-prison-congestions>

Sex workers unite: News Track India reported that sex workers in Malawi, who are frequently arrested and charged with minor offences, such as loitering and disorderly conduct, have united to fight harassment and improve access to healthcare by launching a registered alliance. Reported by News Track India, 10 November 2012, at <http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/11/10/112--Aids-ravaged-Malawi-s%20ex-workers-unite-to-improve-health-care-access-.html>

MALI

Sharia law imposed: News24 reported that Islamists in north-eastern Mali have imposed a form of Sharia law, which includes the stoning of unmarried couples, the amputating of thieves' hands and the whipping of drinkers and smokers. Reported by News24, 14 November 2012, at <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Rebels-dont-want-law-across-entire-Mali-20121114>

MOROCCO

French citizens incarcerated in Moroccan prisons complain of conditions of detention: Slate Afrique reported that French citizens detained in Moroccan prisons have lodged complaints in relation to the lack of access to health care, sufficient food, bed space, poor sanitary conditions, and rampant corruption. The detainees have also stated that their diplomatic services have failed to provide them with any assistance. Original report in French. Report by Zineb El Rhazoui, 26 November 2012, at <http://www.slateafrique.com/98945/maroc-tanger-prison-francais-satfilage-drogue-cannabis-droits-hommes>

Prison statistics released: La Vie Eco reported on the statistics of the Moroccan prisons population, presented by the country's penitentiary administration to the Moroccan parliament in November 2012. The data reveals, amongst others, that the prison population has grown by 16.5% in the past four years, that 46% of detainees are awaiting trial, that 60% of detainees are sentenced to less than two years imprisonment and that 2.4% of detainees are female. MPs reportedly called on the government to develop a strategy to improve the prison system in the country. Original report in French. Report by MAP, 21 November 2012, at <http://www.lavieeco.com/news/actualites/46-des-70-675-pensionnaires-des-prisons-au-maroc-sont-en-detention-provisoire-23857.html>

MOZAMBIQUE

Thousands unlawfully imprisoned: allAfrica.com reported that Amnesty International released a report which shows that thousands of people are being held in Mozambique's prisons despite not having been found guilty of a crime. It noted that many of those imprisoned are poor, have no access to lawyers and thus languish in prisons with no recourse to justice. Moreover, the prisons are reportedly overcrowded with poor sanitation, medical care and few opportunities for learning and training. Reported by allAfrica.com, 22 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211220233.html?viewall=1>

NIGERIA

Calls for criminal justice reform: Vanguard reported that the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adoke, has called for the "urgent reform of the criminal justice sector in Nigeria," stating that "efficient justice delivery is central to the national economic growth and development." The Attorney General reportedly made these statements at the opening ceremony of a two-day national consultative workshop on the proposed Administration of Criminal Justice Bill, where delays in the criminal justice system, pre-trial detention and awaiting trial inmates were on the agenda. Reported by Ikechukwu Nnochiri, 10 November 2012, at <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/11/adoke-calls-for-urgent-reform-of-nigerias-criminal-justice-sector/>

Concern over extra-judicial killings: The Nigerian Human Rights Commission recently raised the issue of the extra-judicial killing of detainees, of which 5000 are reportedly summarily killed by the police every year. The officers responsible for such killings are reportedly never punished. The Deputy Commissioner of Police reportedly acknowledged that the allegations of such killings were true, but that the numbers were incorrect. Reported by John Didymus, 25 November 2012, at <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/337615#ixzz2DeY14315>

SUDAN

Justice system fails prisoners: AFP reported that many of the prisoners on death row claim that they were not given adequate legal representation or representation at all. The report sets out the poor conditions in which the prisoners are

detained, without basic necessities, sanitation, adequate clothing, bedding or nutrition. Reported by Hannah McNeish, 1 November 2012, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g-zLqjV9bxSmS534CEYZxrhN7gA?docId=CNG.2e298d49afcc3d35e8ec4c52af974a57.251>

Calls to abolish death penalty: allAfrica.com reported that the death penalty debate in South Sudan has gone global, with a group of South Sudanese and human rights groups urging the young nation to join the majority of United Nations members that have abolished the death penalty in either law or practice by placing a moratorium on all executions. Reported by allAfrica.com, 5 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211050561.html>

TANZANIA

Conjugal visits to be allowed: allAfrica.com reported that the Ministry of Home Affairs has plans to grant conjugal rights to prisoners in order to reduce sexual abuse in prison facilities. Reported by Christopher Majaliwa, 2 November 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211030279.html>

UGANDA

Hunger strikes in prison: Reuters reported that two prisoners died whilst in custody. The prisoners were reportedly among dozens of Islamist prisoners on hunger strike in protest over prison conditions. Reported by Tarek Amara, 17 November 2012, at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/11/17/uk-tunisia-salafist-idUKBRE8AG05A20121117>

ZAMBIA

Prison to benefit from electrification project: Times reported that the Monze open air prison will be connected to the national grid and enjoy the benefit of electricity. The report noted that the prison, which holds a total of 71 inmates and 16 prison staff, has, over the years, grappled with challenges such as poor lighting, obsolete heating and cooking facilities due to lack of electricity. Reported by Miriamimba, 16 November 2012, at <http://www.times.co.zm/?p=19798>

ZIMBABWE

Police officer faces assault charges: The Herald reported that a policeman was arrested for allegedly assaulting a suspect in custody until she bled from the ears. The suspect was reportedly facing allegations of theft. Reported by The Herald, 6 November 2012, at http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56548:assaulting-suspect-lands-policeman-in-the-dock&catid=46:crime-a-courts&Itemid=138#.UJjWG9kxGQ

Police arrest activists: The Mail and Guardian reported that three employees from a human rights group were arrested in a crackdown on non-governmental organisations allegedly opposed to the policies of one of the three parties in the government of national unity. Reported by Mail and Guardian, 7 November 2012, at <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-07-activists-arrested-in-zim-in-fresh-crackdown-on-ngos/>

Human rights groups fear torture: Business Day reported that there are fears that violence and torture aimed at human rights groups will increase as the country edges closer to presidential elections set to take place next year. Reported by Business Day Live, 26 November 2012, at <http://www.bdlive.co.za/world/africa/2012/11/26/zimbabwean> rights groups fear rise in intimidation

