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PRISONERS' RIGHTS

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Prisoner tells court that he was threatened to be infected with HIV: Mr. Jason Chetty, an inmate at a Pietermaritzburg prison, told the Pietermaritzburg High Court that his fellow inmate, Nishendren Vather, who was on trial for murder, threatened to infect him with HIV if he testified against him. Mr. Chetty told court that Mr. Vather confessed to him that he murdered his wife but threatened to infect him with HIV 'anywhere in prison' if he disclosed this information. Mr. Chetty said that one of the reasons why he decided to tell the court the truth was that the investigating officers assured him that his security in prison would be improved. Reported by Sherlissa Peters, 6 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080506104414928C425653 see also

[http://www.witness.co.za/?showcontent&global\[_id\]=6876](http://www.witness.co.za/?showcontent&global[_id]=6876)

Lawyer reminds court of appalling prison conditions: In an attempt to convince the court not to send his client to prison, lawyer William Booth, representing Mr. J. Arthur Brown who is accused of theft, money laundering and fraud, reminded the Cape Town Magistrates Court that prison conditions at Pollsmoor prison in Cape Town were appalling. Mr. Booth also told court that doctors at Pollsmoor prison had resigned, which meant that his client would not receive adequate medical care at the prison for the treatment of the injuries sustained as a result of his assault by other prisoners in a police vehicle. Mr. Booth successfully asked court to order that his client be detained in a police cell instead of prison. Reported by Sapa, 13 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080513145246137C758960

Awaiting-trial prisoner admitted to a private clinic after assault: Mr. J. Arthur Brown, who was awaiting-trial for theft and fraud involving hundreds of millions of rands was allegedly assaulted by fellow prisoners and as a result admitted to a private clinic where he was examined by a doctor and a psychiatrist. Brown's lawyer, Mr. William Booth, said that the injuries inflicted on his client were serious. Reported by Sapa, 15 May 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080515080626473C993768 see also
http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080514060422956C496270

Department to be sued for boy who was allegedly raped in prison: The Centre for Child Law is preparing to sue the Department of Correctional Services for detaining a 15-year-old boy, who was arrested for shoplifting, in a maximum security prison at Westville prison where he was allegedly repeatedly raped by adult prisoners. Adv. Ann Skelton, of the Centre for Child Law, said that the notice of intention to sue had been served on the Department. Justice for Prisoners and Detainees Trust chairman, Mr. Derrick Mdluli, reportedly said that the boy had been detained in Medium B, which is a maximum security prison for sentenced adults. Mr. Mdluli added that there was a very high risk that the boy could have contracted HIV and that he was receiving post-exposure prophylactic treatment. Reported by Sapa, 16 May 2008, IOL, at
http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20080516191718958C904490

Prisoner allegedly sexually assaulted in a police van: Mr. J. Arthur Brown, who is awaiting trial on charges of theft, money laundering and fraud, said that he was sexually assaulted by a fellow prisoner in a police vehicle while transporting them from the Cape Town magistrate's court to Pollsmoor prison. Mr. Brown's lawyer, Mr. William Booth, said his client was receiving anti-retroviral treatment at a private Cape Town hospital. Mr. Booth said that the Department of Correctional Services should put in place measures to ensure that dangerous prisoners are not transported in the same vehicles as non-dangerous prisoners. Reported by Bronwynne Jooste 17 May 2008, IOL, at
http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20080517080937605C785312

Boy who was allegedly raped in prison traumatised: The guardian of a 15-year-old boy who was allegedly repeatedly raped when he was detained in the adult section of Westville Prison said that he was so traumatised that he refused to talk or eat. The Centre for Child law at the University of Pretoria, which is proceeding to institute a law suit against the Department of Correctional Services on behalf of the boy, said that the Department was 'negligent in their handling of the case and says the law stipulates that underage children should be detained in places of safety while awaiting trial'. Reported by SABC News, 19 May 2008, at http://www.sabcnews.co.za/south_africa/crime1justice/0,2172,169852,00.html

Rights body concerned about unnatural deaths in custody: The South African Human Rights Commission expressed concern over the increasing number of unnatural deaths of prisoners. The rights body added that torture continued to be an issue of concern in South African prisons. It called upon the government to ratify various international human rights instruments including the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and also to fulfill its obligations under the treaties it has already ratified. Reported by Sapa, 22 May, 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=6&art_id=nw20080522141018704C368163

Prisoner admitted to critical care unit: Mr. Schabir Shaik, a Durban businessman serving a 15-year prison sentence for fraud, was admitted to the critical care unit of Durban's Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital. Shaik's brother, Mr. Mo Schaik, reportedly said that he was admitted because of fears that his high blood pressure could lead to heart problems. Mr. Mo Shaik said that those who wanted to know the details about his brother's health status should contact the Department of Correctional Services. Reported by Sapa, 26 May 2008, SABC News, at http://www.sabcnews.com/south_africa/general/0,2172,170352,00.html

GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

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Prison gang syndicates allegedly threaten law enforcement officers: Councillor Pieter van Dalen, head of the Copperheads, the Cape Town unit set up to fight cable theft, said that members of his unit had reportedly received death threats, possibly from syndicates connected to prison gangs. Councillor van Dalen added that his unit was aware of the existence syndicates linked to prison gangs that were controlling the cable theft market. He assured residents that authorities were working tirelessly to deal with the criminals and bring cable thefts to an end. Reported by Lynnette Johns, 11 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080511084126368C308231

Police officer to stand trial for allegedly interfering with evidence of parolee's breach of parole conditions: Former Goodwood Police Station Commander, Mr. Siphiso Given Hewana, was to stand trial for allegedly interfering with the alleged drunk driving case against a parolee, Mr. Tony Yengeni. Mr. Yengeni, the former African National Congress Chief Whip, at the time of the arrest was on parole and one of the parole conditions was that he was banned from driving on a public road in the early hours of the morning. Mr. Hewana allegedly instructed his subordinates to record that Mr. Yengeni had been arrested at 9.00 pm instead of 12.30 am. Hewana is to stand trial for attempting to defeat the ends of justice, incitement or conspiracy to commit perjury and interfering with a drunk-driving investigation. Reported by Sapa, 16 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20080516171000892C166494

Corruption part and parcel of the Department of Correctional Services, Committee Chairperson: The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, Mr. Dennis Bloem, reportedly said that corruption was 'part and parcel of the uniform of Correctional Services.' Mr. Bloem was reacting to a report by the Special Investigating Unit which documented various cases of corruption in which numerous senior ranking Department officials were implicated. The Special Investigating Unit revealed that corrupt activities affected many sectors of the Department, ranging from contracts worth millions of rand to medical aid schemes. Reported by Deon de Lange, 21 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20080521055328977C816999

REHABILITATION

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Department ordered to reinstate karate training in prison: Grahamstown High Court Judge Clive Plasket ordered the Department of Correctional Services and the head of Mdantsane Prison in the Eastern Cape to allow a prisoner, Mr. Bruce Ehrlich who is serving a 15 year prison sentence for sexual offence, to reinstate his karate development training programme. The prison authorities had ordered Mr. Ehrlich to halt his karate training programme because the section of the gym he was using for the training was to be turned into a maximum security facility for juveniles. The Court held that denying Mr. Ehrlich an opportunity to continue with his karate lessons was a violation of his human rights. Reported by Legalbrief, 14 May 2008, at <http://www.legalbrief.co.za/article.php?story=20080514090755418>

Prisoners warn children against crime: Two female prisoners at Sun City Prison in Johannesburg participated in a crime prevention programme known as 'Pillar to Post' in which they called upon school children to avoid crime. The two prisoners, one serving a sentence for being an accomplice to a murder and the other for drug trafficking, told the learners that they should avoid crime because being in prison was not a good experience. They also advised the learners to listen to their parents' advice. Reported by Angelique Serrao, 15 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080515121242375C339938

SECURITY AND ESCAPES

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Awaiting trial prisoners escape from court: Johannesburg Police spokesman, Captain Julia Classen, said that the police were looking for three alleged bank robbers who escaped from the Johannesburg Magistrate's court. Captain Classen added that the escapees overpowered and assaulted the investigating officers and the court orderly before the escape. She appealed to any member of the public who knew the whereabouts of the escapees to contact the nearest police station. Reported by Sibongile Mashaba, 6 May 2008, Sowetan, at <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=760806>

Awaiting trial prisoners escaped: Eastern Cape police spokesperson Captain Jackson Manatha said that nine awaiting trial prisoners escaped from Centane police holding cells. Captain Manatha said that the police realised that the prisoners had escaped when they went to serve them food. Police released the names of all those who escaped and warned community members against arresting the escapees but advised that they should rather report their whereabouts to the police. Reported by Sapa, 12 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080512142901602C588521

UNSENTENCED PRISONERS

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Bail law is not the problem, researcher reminds ANC President: Ms Louise Ehlers, the Programme Director of the Criminal Justice Initiative at The Open Society Foundation for South Africa, expressed her concern over ANC president, Mr. Jacob Zuma, statement 'that the issue of bail for those accused of rape and murder needs to be looked at.' Ms Ehlers said that problems associated with bail in South Africa should not be attributed to the law relating to bail 'but rather in its application - too few magistrates, too little investigation done prior to bail hearings, poor coordination between prosecutors and investigating officers, among others.' She added that since 1995 South Africa's bail laws have been amended to make it more difficult for suspects to be released on bail. Opinion by Louise Ehlers, 1 May 2008, Mail & Guardian, at http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=338046&area=/insight/insight__comment_and_analysis

Department ordered to transfer prisoner from sentenced to awaiting trial prison section: The Johannesburg High Court ordered the Department of Correctional Services to transfer Mr. Gary Beuthin, an inmate awaiting trial on charges of attempted murder and kidnapping, from Johannesburg Prison's Medium B Section for sentenced prisoners to the Medium A Section for awaiting trial prisoners. However, at the time the order was made the prisoner was not in court although the Department of Correctional Service's lawyer told the court that the prisoner was in attendance. Reported by Sapa, 6 May 2008, The Citizen, at <http://www.citizen.co.za/index/article.aspx?pDesc=64551,1,22> see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080506115534931C494085

Many awaiting trial prisoners don't get bail because they give wrong addresses, Magistrate: While attending a workshop at which researchers Vanja Karth and Jean Redpath released their findings on the factors leading to the increased numbers of awaiting trial prisoners not being released on bail, Pretoria magistrate Dreyer van der Merwe reportedly said that 'most of the offenders that could be out on bail can be released on warning, subject to them complying with regulations. The problem is many offenders give us wrong addresses and other personal information, which leads to them disappearing. That is one of the reasons why they are not being granted bail. We also have to take into consideration whether the offender will be a threat to the public.' Magistrate van der Merwe added that offenders without legal representation could also get bail if they complied with relevant procedures and were honest. Reported by Lesego Masemola, 8 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080508055035730C690270

Court orders awaiting trial prisoner to be taken to hospital: Cape High Court Judge, Siraj Desai, suspended proceedings for about two hours to allow a murder accused, Mr. Abdoer Emjedi, to consult a district surgeon. This followed Mr. Emjedi's advocate, Adv. Laureen Abrahams, informing the Judge that her client was not feeling well because his body was aching and he was feverish. The district surgeon's report indicated that the accused was suffering from stress but could stand trial. However, Emjedi's advocate refuted the report arguing that her client needed to see a private doctor for a proper examination. The Judge agreed with the advocate and adjourned the matter. Reported by Sapa, 8 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=vn20080508054354306C438670

24-hour courts could be a solution to overcrowding, lawyer: Senior Counsel Sharise Weiner wrote in defence of the establishment of 24-hour courts to expeditiously deal with some petty and serious offences as a means to address the growing number of prisoners awaiting trial. She argued that such courts would be staffed by acting magistrates or judges and practicing lawyers on a voluntary basis. Such courts should have the jurisdiction to sentence convicted offenders to prison and for correctional supervision. She cautioned, however, that the legislation establishing such courts should guarantee that the accused person's rights, such as the right to prepare his defence, are not violated but that if any limitations were imposed on such rights, they should be constitutionally defensible. Opinion by Sharise Weiner, SC, 13 May 2008, Legalbrief, at <http://www.legalbrief.co.za/article.php?story=20080513080815652>

PAROLE AND SENTENCING

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Parolee's alleged drunken driving case postponed: The Goodwood Magistrate's Court, Cape Town, postponed the case in which a parolee, Mr. Tony Yengeni, is charged with drunken driving. It is alleged that Mr. Yengeni, former African National Congress Chief Whip, while on parole after being convicted of fraud, drove under the influence of alcohol. One of his parole conditions was that he may not use liquor or drugs other than those described by a doctor. Reported by Sapa, 5 May 2008, The Citizen,

<http://www.citizen.co.za/index/article.aspx?pDesc=64410,1,22> see also

http://www.mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__national/&articleid=339448

Justice Minister appeals against order to release political prisoners: The Justice and Constitutional Development Minister, Ms Bridgette Mabandla, appealed against the Pretoria High court decision ordering her Department to expeditiously consider the amnesty applications of close to 400 political prisoners. The Inkatha Freedom Party, which took the Department to Court over the prisoners' applications, accused the Minister of ignoring the prisoners' applications for over four years. Reported by SABC News, 9 May 2008, at

http://www.sabcnews.co.za/south_africa/crime1justice/0,2172,169159,00.html

Judge optimistic that juvenile offender will be rehabilitated after 8 years: Acting Judge Peter Rowan of the Durban High Court, while sentencing a 16-year old boy to 8 years' imprisonment at Ekuseni Youth Correctional Centre in Newcastle for the murder of a 9-year old niece, said that he hoped that the boy would use his prison experience to start a new life and become a constructive citizen. The boy, who pleaded guilty for the murder, told the court that he committed the offence because he had lost his temper after being taunted by his victim that he was living in a house that belonged to her mother. Reported by Tania Broughton, 26 May 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn20080526060100682C662375

OTHER

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Department sues airline: The Department of Correctional Services filed a multimillion-rand damages claim against Interlink Airlines for failing to fly the Department's staff to Canada to participate in the World Police and Fire Games because the plane chartered was not airworthy. In the papers before the Pretoria High Court, the Department argued that in the oral agreement concluded with Interlink, the latter was supposed to provide an airworthy aircraft but that a few hours before the scheduled departure, the Civil Aviation Authority refused to clear the plane to take off because it was defective and had not even been cleared with the Canadian authorities to land in Canada. Reported by Zelda Venter 29 April 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn20080429054503326C932619

New Inspecting Judge of Prisons appointed: The Department of Correctional Services announced that Cape Judge Deon van Zyl was appointed as the new acting Inspecting Judge of Prisons with effect from 1 May 2008. Judge Van Zyl reportedly said that he was looking forward to the new challenge and also to serve South Africa in that regard. The Minister of Correctional Services, Ngconde Balfour, said that he was confident that Judge Van Zyl would execute his duties as expected because he had a record of upholding the promotion and protection of human rights. Reported by Legalbrief, 5 May 2008, at

<http://www.legalbrief.co.za/article.php?story=200805052145359> see also

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw20080505142746711C513398

Prisoner allegedly steals from tourist: The Wynberg Regional Court in Cape Town heard that an inmate at Pollsmoor prison, Mr. Maurice de Grandhomme, fraudulently acquired a huge sum of money from a tourist whom he deceived that he would help her in the purchase of property at the De Zalze Golf Estate in Stellenbosch. At the time of the alleged fraudulent activities, Mr. De Grandhomme, being a reputable golfer, had been assigned by the prison authorities to take care of the kiosk at the golf driving range at Pollsmoor prison. Mr. de Grandhomme informed his alleged victim that he was in prison for violating the Exchange Control Act, but did not disclose to her that he was also serving a prison term for fraud. Reported by Sapa, 21 May 2008, IOL, at

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080521160719932C110827

Department hosts international forum on prison reform: Senior prisons and corrections officers from various African countries attended a forum in Pretoria at which they discussed strategies of ensuring that prisons and corrections played a more rehabilitative role for inmates. The participants hoped that their strategies would be endorsed by the Africa Union. South Africa's Correctional Services Commissioner, Mr. Vernie Petersen, while speaking about the forum said that the prisons officers were meeting to share experiences on how they could better rehabilitate offenders. Reported by Hopewell Radebe, 27 May 2008, Business Day, at

<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/topstories.aspx?ID=BD4A773658> see also

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080527144407662C235176

Correctional Services help victims of xenophobia: The National Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr. Vernie Petersen, ordered the various Correctional Centres in Gauteng to provide bread, soup and vegetables to hundreds of victims of the xenophobic attacks who were displaced from their homes and were being housed in the Vosloorus Community Hall in Gauteng. Commissioner Petersen also expressed outrage at the attacks saying that these were also the activities of opportunistic criminals. Boksburg Correctional Centre in Kempton Park supplied 39 sponge mattresses that are manufactured at the centre, 300 loaves of bread from its bakery and soup to the victims. Other centres were also in the process of organising themselves to make a contribution. Press release by Government of South Africa, 27 May 2008, at

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/ASIN-7F2M84?OpenDocument>

Algeria

Women detained in inhumane conditions: A member of a Moroccan delegation to New York told human rights activists that unwed pregnant women and single mothers were being detained in a secret facility in Tindouf, a south-western province in Algeria. Mr. Brahim El Selem reportedly said that the detention centre, which he visited more than once, was a hole between two hills and was made out of mud bricks. He also alleged that the women could only leave the facility if their toddlers reached two years of age, or when they got a man to marry them. Reported by Dominique Soguel, 28 May 2008, Women's enews, at <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/3615/context/archive>

Ghana

Constitution protects prisoners' right to vote: The Africa Co-ordinator of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Nana Oye Lithur, called on the Electoral Commission to work hand in hand with the Ghana Prisons Service to ensure that prisoners voted in the general election. Ms Nana Lithur added that the Constitution protected every citizen's right to vote and prisoners who were of voting age and sound mind should also exercise that right. The Minister of State at the Ministry of the Interior, Nana Obiri Boahen, was also of the view that prisoners had the right to vote. Reported by Daily Graphics, 26 May 2008, at <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/200805/16655.asp>

Mozambique

Over 20 inmates died: The Prison Director of Chimoio penitentiary in the central province of Manica, Mr. Francisco Mathe, told journalists that over 22 inmates, some awaiting trial, had died in the last four months essentially due to lack of medical care. Mr. Mathe reportedly said that most of them died of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/Aids-related illnesses and that two committed suicide. Mr. Mathe added that although the prisoners' death could be attributed to the lack of medical care at the prison, prison waders were also to be blamed for failing to take the prisoners to the nearest hospitals for fear that they could escape. Reported on 7 May 2008, by M & G, at http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/health/news/article_1403897.php/Over_20_dead_for_lack_of_medical_attention_in_Mozambique_prison

Malawi

British High Commissioner concerned about poor prison conditions: While speaking at the General Assembly of the Human Rights Consultative Committee, the British High Commissioner to Malawi, Mr. Richard Wildash, said that although the Malawian government had improved its human rights record since 1993, the conditions under which prisoners were being detained were 'very pathetic' which had contributed to the deaths of many prisoners. Prisoners in Malawi were reportedly served one meal a day and many were suffering from various illnesses, including Tuberculosis and HIV/Aids. Reported by Josh Ashaz and Prince Jamali, 5 May 2008, Nyasa Times, at <http://www.nyasatimes.com/index.php?news=166>

President says prison conditions are 'horrible': In his State of the Nation Address, the President of Malawi, Mr. Bingu Mutharika, said that his government was aware that the prison conditions in the country were horrible. Mr. Mutharika attributed the appalling prison conditions in the country to the increasing crime rate. He promised that his government was to introduce business skills courses in prisons to equip prisoners with such skills so that they could become economically independent after serving their sentences. Reported by Praise Liomba, 20 May 2008, Nyasa

Times at <http://www.nyasatimes.com/index.php?news=336>

Democratic Republic of Congo

Rights body alleges that awaiting trial prisoners were tortured to death: In an open letter to the Minister of Defence and Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Amnesty International alleged that several awaiting trial military officers were tortured and denied medical attention which led to their death. Amnesty International also alleged that many others were being detained in appalling conditions and those interviewed had visible torture marks and their health was deteriorating. Amnesty International Open Letter, 13 May 2008, at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGAFR620042008> see also http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=136&art_id=nw20080514081007610C412210

Zimbabwe

Union leaders battled for bail: Two Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) leaders, Mr. Lovemore Matombo, the President, and Mr. Wellington Chibebe, the Secretary General, who were awaiting trial for allegedly inciting people to rise against the government, were denied bail. According to a ZCTU spokesperson 'the presiding magistrate said the two men were not eligible for bail and had to remain in custody in the interest of justice'. Their lawyer said that he was going to petition the High Court to order their release on bail. Reported by Sapa, 12 May 2008, IOL, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3045&art_id=nw20080512162241369C580415

Prison chief allegedly involved in terror campaign: A Zimbabwe-based human rights organisation, the Zimbabwe Peace Project, reported alleged that the Zimbabwe prisons chief, Mr. Paradzai Zimondi, was funding and feeding the ruling party's militias who were allegedly terrorising and murdering opposition supporters in Mashonaland East Province. The project's director, Jestina Mukoko, said that they were aware that Mr. Zimondi was feeding the militias on his piggery farm. Mr. Zimondi was not available for comment. Reported by Nqobizitha Khumalo, 12 May 2008, SW Radio, at <http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/zimprisons120508.htm>

Kenya

Prisoners do not want their babies taken away: Female prisoners with babies at Kodiaga Prison in Kisumu reportedly said that they did not want to be separated from their children when the children reach the age of four years. However, prison authorities said that the law required that at the age of four children should be separated from their imprisoned mothers and either be sent to the mother's relatives or to children's homes. Some prisoners with children also said that they found it challenging to buy things like clothes for their children as some rarely received support from their relatives or friends. Reported by Mangoa Mosota and Emmah Onditi, 19 April 2008, The Standard online, at <http://www.eastandard.net/mag/mag.php?id=1143985083&catid=4> see also http://www.joyfields.org/newsandarticles/kenya_prisons_parenting.html

Senior prison officials suspended: Nine senior prison officials were suspended for inciting thousands of other warders to take part in a four-day strike that crippled the country's major prisons. They would remain suspended until their trial was finalised. The government, on the other hand, agreed to improve the working conditions of the prison warders who had gone on strike. Reported by IOL, 30 April 2008, at http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=87&art_id=nw20080430090951621C614247 see also

<http://nairobiChronicle.wordpress.com/2008/04/28/prison-warders-mutiny-sign-of-trouble/>

Prison warden allegedly tortured by the army: A warden at Bungoma Prison alleged that he was tortured by Kenyan army officers because his brother belonged to a rebel group. Prison warders also accused the army of torturing rebel suspects and 'frequently dumped' such victims at prisons. The army, however, denied the allegations. Reported on 2 May 2008, The Nairobi Chronicle, at <http://nairobiChronicle.wordpress.com/2008/05/02/mt-elgon-military-operation-draws-concern/>

Government advised to privatise prisons: One commentator in the Kenyan media, Oliver Mathenge, suggested that the government should consider exploring the possibility of engaging private companies to construct and run some of the prisons. Mr. Mathenge suggested that many countries in the world, including South Africa and the USA, had contracted private companies to run some of the prisons. He argued that privately run prisons offered better rehabilitation programmes compared to those operated by the government. Opinion by Oliver Mathenge, 2 May 2008, The Nation, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805010775.html>

Vice President urges communities to reintegrate prisoners: On his visit to Lingata Women's Prison to inaugurate various rehabilitation programmes, Kenyan Vice President, Mr. Kalonzo Musyoka, reportedly said that society could be instrumental in reducing recidivism and overcrowding in prisons if it reintegrated former prisoners. He urged the prison authorities and other stakeholders to initiate programmes that would further the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. Mr. Musyoka also added that prisoners still had rights and should be treated humanely. Written by VPPS, 14 May 2008, KBC, at <http://www.kbc.co.ke/story.asp?ID=50082>

Uganda

Surveillance cameras to be installed in prisons: Uganda Prisons spokesman, Mr. Frank Baine, said that the Prisons Service would soon finalise the installation of closed-circuit television cameras in ten selected facilities to monitor inmates in those prisons closely. Mr. Baine said that the prisons in which the cameras were to be installed were: Luzira, Kigo, Mbale, Jinja, Soroti, Arua, Gulu, Kakyeka, Masaka and Tororo. Mr. Baine. He added that these prisons were selected because they held large numbers of inmates 'who needed to be closely monitored.' Reported by Charles Ariko, 19 May 2008, The New Vision, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/628847>

Prisons to be relocated: The Commissioner of Prisons, Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, said that the two prisons at Kigo and Kirinya were to be relocated. Kigo Prison was constructed on land that the Buganda Kingdom wanted to be returned, while Kirinya's prison's land was given by the Government to an investor in 2007. Dr. Byabasaija said that the prisoners in the two prisons could not be relocated to other prisons due to shortage of space. Reported by Henry Mukasa and Chris Kiwawulo, 19 May 2008, The New Vision, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/628849>

Accused gives birth at court: Mrs. Gorreti Kemigisha, who was awaiting trial for affray, gave birth to a baby girl outside the magistrate's court. The court warders, the magistrate and other volunteers all helped in one way or another to ensure that she gave birth safely. The baby girl was reportedly named 'Miss Court Juliet Korukiko'. The magistrate was reportedly moved by the circumstances and ordered that the accused and her child be taken to hospital for better medical care. The prosecution later withdrew the charges against the Mrs. Kemigisha. Reported by Darius

Magara, 29 May 2008, The New Vision, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/630703>

Sudan

Rebel leaders allegedly detained in poor prison conditions: A UK based human rights organisation, the Darfur Centre for Human Rights and Development, alleged that Justice and Equality Movement rebel group members were being detained by the Sudanese government in life threatening prison conditions. The rights body also alleged that the detainees were being tortured and denied food and water. Reported by Sudan Tribute, 23 May 2008, at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article27253>

Nigeria

State Chief Judge pays prisoners' fines: On his visit to Dekina prison in Kogi State, the Chief Judge, Justice Umaru Eriat, was told that two prisoners had been sentenced to prison for 10 years because they could not afford to pay fines and that the prison authorities needed his help for the prisoners to be released. The Chief Judge immediately paid the prisoners' fines and they were released. He also ordered the release of a prisoner who had been awaiting trial since 2004 but whose file had been misplaced. The Chief Judge also released several other inmates on bail and warned Judges against sentencing petty offenders to prison unnecessarily. Reported on 26 May 2008, This Day online, at <http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=112460>

Sierra Leone

Prisoner awaiting deportation from Pakistan: Officials at the Punjab Prison Department in Pakistan reportedly said that a Sierra Leonean was one of the 48 foreign prisoners who had completed serving their sentences but were waiting for their countries to process the required travel documents to enable them to return to their respective countries. The prison officials said the Sierra Leone embassy was one of the embassies they contacted to take back their national but there was no response from them. They added that they were contemplating paying for the prisoners' travel expenses to their home countries if such countries were too poor to afford the travel expenses. Reported by Shafiq Sharif , 26 May 2008, Daily Times, at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C05%5C26%5Cstory_26-5-2008_pg13_1

Botswana

Prisoner escaped: Assistant Superintendent Chalebgwa Gachala of Ghanzi police station reportedly said that a 25-year-old prisoner, Mr. Ice Gosiame, escaped from prison and that the police was looking for him. He appealed to members of the public to volunteer any information that may lead to the arrest of the prisoner who was serving a one-year sentence for stealing spare motor parts. Reported by Bopa, 7 May 2008, BOPA, Daily News, at http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20080507&i=Police_hunt_for_prison_escapee

Prison closed for lack of water: The Commissioner of Prisons and Rehabilitation, Mr. Herman Kau, said that the Baines Drift Prison was temporarily closed for lack of drinking water and that the prisoners were relocated to nearby prisons. Mr. Kau said that once the water supply was reinstated, the prison will reopen. Reported on 9 May 2008, BOPA, at <http://www.gov.bw/cgi->

[bin/news.cgi?d=20080509&i=Water_supply_forces_prison_closure](http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20080509&i=Water_supply_forces_prison_closure)

Juvenile offenders escaped: The Principal of Ikago Centre, a rehabilitation institution for boys between eight and eighteen years who committed serious crimes and could not be sent to prison, Mrs Mosidi Bolebantswe, said that the Centre is finding it a big challenge to rehabilitate the boys because of their unruly behaviour. Mrs. Bolebantswe said that some of the boys miss classes, and others escaped from the Centre to go back to their respective villages and commit further offences. Reported by BOPA, 12 May 2008, at http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20080512&i=Minors_abscond_from_rehabilitation_centre

President visited prison: Botswana President, Lt General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, visited Mahalapye Maximum Security Prison during the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Department of Prisons and Rehabilitation. Many inmates asked the President to grant them parole and reduce their prison sentences. They assured the President that they had been rehabilitated and would never reoffend. The President promised to meet the relevant Minister and discuss how to respond to some of the prisoners' requests. Reported by BOPA, 12 May 2008, at http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20080512&i=Inmates_look_to_Khama

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