

AFRICA PRETRIAL JUSTICE MONITOR



Africa Pretrial Justice Monitor

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Notice Board

Report on Libya: The International Legal Assistance Consortium has released its 'Rule of Law Assessment Report, Libya 2013'. One of the report's findings is that the justice sector faces extreme challenges. One of these is the fate of roughly 8000 'conflict-related' detainees being held without charges or representation. The absence of security for justice sector personnel has led judges and prosecutors to delay indefinitely the processing of detainees' cases. The report is available at <http://www.ilac.se/2013/05/09/ilac-assessment-report-libya-2013/>

Amnesty International report on Mali: Amnesty International have released a report entitled 'Mali: Preliminary Findings of a Four Week Mission, Serious Human Rights Abuses Continue'. The report documents the human rights abuses that have occurred since the French armed intervention and focuses in particular on extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, illegal detention and torture. The report is available at http://www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_23226.pdf

Radio station on criminal justice issues: The Wits Justice Project, a university-based investigative journalism project focusing on prisons, has launched a radio station wherein various issues around pretrial justice will be discussed. The show is broadcast every Tuesday at 1:30pm on Thetha FM (100.6) and is also available via youtube, at <http://www.youtube.com/witsjustice>

Country reports on violence against children: Penal Reform International has released eight country research reports dealing with policy and legislation to prevent and address violence against children in detention. Tanzania and Uganda feature as two of the eight countries. The reports are available at <http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=9bbf03ee88683fbb10143c20e&id=6f326968cb&e=38958f83cd>

Country Reports

EGYPT

Amnesty International critical of court rulings: Amnesty International has released a blog post on its website regarding a recent court ruling wherein a one-year prison sentence was handed down against a prominent opposition activist. Amnesty has called for the conviction to be quashed and has criticized the violent oppression of freedom of expression of opposition activists in general. The post was published on 17 June 2013, at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-activist-faces-jail-sentence-boqus-charges-2013-06-17>

SOUTH AFRICA

Criticism of Minister's budget speech: The Saturday Star featured a response to some of the comments that the Minister of Correctional Services made during his budget speech, in particular, the fact that the country's overcrowded facilities 'was indicative of a proactive and successful NPA.' The article illustrates why South African prisons are plagued by overcrowding and why it should not be considered a barometer of successful prosecutions. Reported by Ruth Hopkins and Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi, 8 June 2013, at http://www.iol.co.za/saturday-star/full-prisons-not-just-due-to-effective-npa-1.1529382#_UdK73NhsRWA

Electronic monitoring: The Engineering News reported that a locally patented device, Remand Revolution, is a system that uses mobile phones to track and communicate with offenders and parolees. The system comprises of an ankle bracelet tracking system and a portable alcohol monitoring device. The designing of the device was reportedly prompted by extreme overcrowding in prisons. Reported by Joanne Taylor, 21 June 2013, at <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/new-stay-at-home-system-for-low-risk-criminals-2013-06-21>

Legal problems with system management contract: ITWeb reported that there are 'questions' surrounding the contract that the Department of Correctional Services agreed to in implementing the Remand Detainee Offender Management System. Although DCS has already spent R17 million on the project, there is reportedly 'little to show for it'. Moreover, the company contracted to make the system is reportedly suing DCS for money still owed to it for work done. Reported by Marine Jacobs, 19 June 2013, at http://www.itweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65017:no-answers-in-offender-system-dispute

Child detention highlighted: eNCA News reported on an event at which both the UNHCR and Lawyers for Human Rights emphasised the often-overlooked plight of children in administrative detention centres, South Africa included. The report noted that hundreds of thousands of children fleeing war, violence, famine and poverty are affected by immigration detention and often end up at Lindela, with only a few lawyers available to come to their assistance. Reported by eNCA News, 21 June 2013, at <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/child-detention-highlighted>

SOUTH SUDAN

Civilians unlawfully detained: Human Rights Watch published a post on their website regarding the South Sudanese soldiers' response to the armed violence that has occurred in the Lakes State. Soldiers have reportedly unlawfully detained and ill-treated more than 130 civilians since February 2013. Suspects are reportedly held in harsh conditions for months without charge and, at times, beaten. Reported by Human Rights Watch, 24 June 2013, at <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/24/south-sudan-rough-justice-lakes-state>

ZIMBABWE

Diversion programmes for juveniles: allAfrica.com reported that the Attorney-General announced that the government would be 'making provisions to channel cases involving juveniles from the formal justice system to extra-judicial programmes as a way of protecting the minors.' The announcement was reportedly made at the launch of the Zimbabwe Pre-Trial Diversion programme for juvenile offenders. The Attorney General reportedly noted that the target group of the programme would be young persons who have been arrested for offences not considered to be serious. Reported by Freeman Razemba, 3 June 2013, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306030363.html>

OTHER

African migrants detained in Israel: Bloomberg Business Week reported that hundreds of African migrants are being detained at a detention centre in the desert in southern Israel. Detainees' families are reportedly only allowed to visit once a week and women and children are forced to sleep in a 'prison-like' compound. Israel is reportedly a 'magnet for asylum seekers and economic migrants and although the 'physical conditions at the Israeli detention camp appear harsh, large numbers of refugees face much worse around the region.' Reported by Daa Hadid, 24 June 2013, at <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2013-06-24/israeli-detention-center-for-africans-a-prison>

Global Campaign for Pretrial Justice

On any given day, an estimated three million people around the world are behind bars awaiting trial. Many will spend months and even years in detention - without being tried or found guilty - languishing under worse conditions than people convicted of crimes and sentenced to prison. To address the over-reliance on pretrial detention and promote greater access to legal assistance, the Global Campaign for Pretrial Justice is working to gather empirical evidence to document the scale and gravity of the problem; pilot innovative practices and methodologies, to identify effective, low-cost solutions; and build a forum for sharing knowledge among practitioners, researchers and policymakers. For more information on the Global Campaign for Pretrial Justice, please visit http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/focus/criminal_justice/projects/globalcampaign

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<http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/clc-projects/civil-society-prison-reform-initiative/>

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