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E-newsletter

February 2015



Welcome to Penal Reform

International's monthly e-newsletter, a round-up of PRI and other penal reform news from around the world and a variety of criminal justice and human rights resources.

The views expressed in the news items below are not necessarily those of PRI.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Criminal justice and Post-2015 Development Agenda: PRI joins a high-level debate at the UN General Assembly

PRI's Executive Director, Alison Hannah, spoke at the UN General Assembly at a high-level debate on '[Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)'. She highlighted the role of poverty as an inhibitor to accessing justice and the need for greater use of alternative sanctions to imprisonment. The thematic debate addressed the question of how to tackle social and economic challenges and promote sustainable development through strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice systems, norms and standards, while combating the threats that undermine them, in particular transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and corruption.

25 February 2015

#CrimePreventionPost2015



Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Other speakers included the President of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, the President of the Economic and Social Council, and the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

"It is the poorest - and the most vulnerable - who are most adversely affected by unfair and inefficient criminal justice systems, which is why the post-2015 development agenda shouldn't ignore criminal justice policy and practice." [Read Alison's blog on this subject.](#)

A webcast of the debate is available online: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

EXPERT BLOG SERIES

PRI promoting
penal reform at the
Crime Congress
2015

To mark PRI's 25th Anniversary and prepare for the [Crime Congress in Qatar in April 2015](#), we are running a series of monthly expert guest blogs, addressing interesting current trends and pressing criminal justice challenges in criminal justice and penal reform.

[How can criminal justice systems from police to probation address the medical](#)

and social care needs of elderly prisoners?

In the tenth expert blog in our anniversary series, Cyrus Ahalt and Brie Williams, Directors of the [Community Ageing Health Project at the University of California, San Francisco](#), discuss the implications of the growing number of older prisoners for health-related policy and practice across criminal justice systems from arrest to reintegration, and argue that policy-oriented research is urgently needed to address the needs of this vulnerable group.



Prison systems need to acknowledge widespread corruption

In January's entry in the series, John Podmore, a former UK prison governor and criminal justice expert, calls for greater recognition and prevention of the widespread corruption occurring in prison systems that seriously hinders the impact of penal reform.

Catch up on [all of PRI's expert blogs!](#)

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Coming up: Side event at the Human Rights Council on overuse of detention

This side-event focuses on the 'Human rights impact of the overuse of detention' and is co-hosted with the Permanent Mission of Austria and Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS). The event seeks to contribute to the report on the human rights implications of over-incarceration and overcrowding to be presented to the Human Rights Council at its thirtieth session (A/HRC/24/12). Panelists will focus on the various human rights implications of the overcrowding, caused by the overuse of detention. The event will take place on **Thursday 19 March, between 13 – 14.30**,

Room XXIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. [Download the flyer.](#)

The CPT at 25: taking stock and moving forward

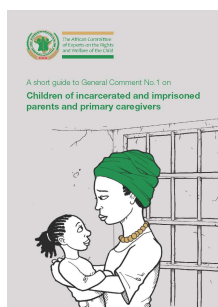
The [European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CPT\)](#) has reached its 25 year milestone. PRI attended a conference to mark this occasion which reflected on the work of the Committee thus far and examined how best it can tackle the challenges ahead including addressing solitary confinement, questions around children in detention and healthcare in prisons.

See also a recent blog for PRI by CPT member for Austria, Julia Kozma: [25 years preventive monitoring of places of detention – has the CPT achieved its goal in Europe?](#)

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

Coming up: Side event on Children of Incarcerated Parents: Developments in Policy and Practice

PRI will take part in a panel discussion at the Human Rights Council to discuss the implementation of the [General Comment issued by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child \(ACERWC\)](#) on Children of Incarcerated Parents. The side event will explore what can be learnt from existing good practice in order to effectively apply the provisions of the General Comment in the region and further afield. **Details: Wednesday 11 March at 13.00 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva** (Room TBC).



PRI and the ACERWC have produced [a short illustrated guide to the General Comment](#).

Book launch: 'Children behind bars'

PRI attended the launch of [Carolyn Willow](#)'s latest book, 'Children behind bars: why the abuse of child imprisonment must end'. Based on wide-ranging research and first-person interviews, this passionately argued book presents the shocking truth about the lives and deaths of children in custody.

Other news and resources:

- **Australia:** [Damning report on juvenile detention](#)
- **Cambodia:** [Hard life for kids in jail](#)
- **Turkey:** [Children torturing children in notorious Turkish juvenile prison](#)

- **UK:** [Criminalising 10-year-olds is no way to run a justice system](#)
- **UK:** [Imprisonment 'turns young offenders into sex criminals'](#)
- **Zambia:** [More cells for juveniles](#)

WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



[Short guide on Bangkok Rules now in Russian](#)

PRI's short guide on the UN Rules for the Treatment of Female Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the 'Bangkok Rules') is [now available in Russian](#). The guide is also available in [English](#) and [Arabic](#).

This illustrated guide shows the profile of women prisoners and why international standards were needed, who the Rules protect, what the Rules say, and who should be involved in their implementation.

[Improving women's healthcare in Kazakh prisons](#)

PRI is currently implementing a programme of work on women's healthcare in prison in Kazakhstan which aims to improve medical provision for women and children in detention. In the first year 1,577 health check-ups and 1,202 consultations with specialist doctors were carried out. 90% of women prisoners are in need of dental care and 30 children were in need of, and have undergone, medical treatment. X-ray equipment was set up in the women's facility and a health unit will shortly be launched in the juvenile facility. The results of the project will support PRI's call for civilian doctors to be deployed in prisons and underline the importance of transferring prison health services to the Ministry of Health.

Other news and resources:

- **Cambodia:** [New report. 'Childhood behind bars'](#) from [Licadho](#)
- **Cambodia:** [Mothers could see pardons](#)
- **Iceland:** [No Icelandic prison for women](#)

- **Northern Ireland:** [New women's prison facility under construction](#)
- **Oman:** [Call to change attitudes towards female inmates](#)
- **UK:** New briefing from [Prison Reform Trust](#) on [employment for female offenders](#)

DEATH PENALTY AND ALTERNATIVE SANCTIONS

Two new publications ...



Strengthening death penalty standards



Strengthening death penalty standards

While the global trend is towards abolition of the death penalty altogether, where it is still applied international law, jurisprudence and practice require that certain minimum standards are applied. How can we strengthen these international minimum standards on the application of the death penalty?

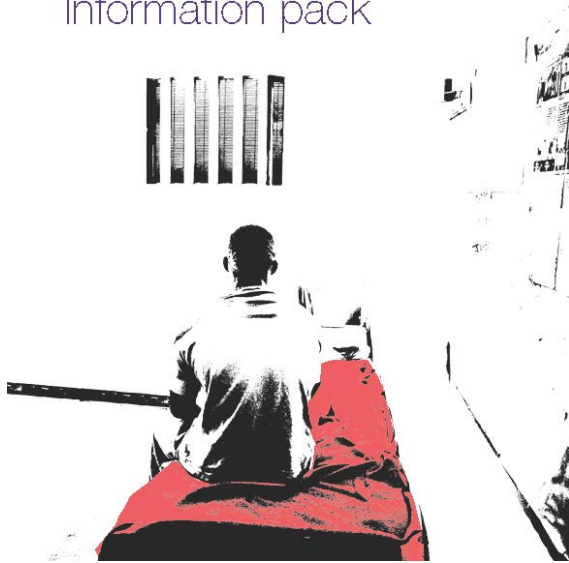
PRI's new study examines recent developments nationally, regionally and internationally and suggests ways that death penalty standards can be or have been improved.

Alternatives to the death penalty Information Pack

A **new edition** of our popular short guide to the fundamental issues and arguments linked to introduction of alternative sanctions following abolition of the death penalty.

It reviews current trends in the application of long-term and life imprisonment, highlighting relevant international and regional human rights standards and provides examples of good practice.

Alternatives to the death penalty Information pack



Death penalty conference in India

PRI joined partners and colleagues at a conference held in partnership with [PRAJA \(Penal Reform and Justice Association\)](#) in New Delhi, India on 21 February. With a theme of 'Moving Towards the Abolition of the Death Penalty in India', the conference opened discussions about the judicial, legal and moral arguments surrounding abolition and the Indian justice system. It heard keynote speeches from Vivien Stern of the Upper House of the UK Parliament and Shri Ram Jethmalani of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, as well as interventions from judges, lawyers and academics.

Coming up: Side event on strengthening standards at the Human Rights Council

Panelists will discuss ways in which national and international standards related to the death penalty could be changed and improved to better protect the rights of those affected. This side event is co-sponsored by the governments of Mexico and Switzerland and features presentations by the [UN Special Rapporteur on torture](#) and the [Quaker United Nations Office](#), discussing various problematic aspects of the death penalty as it stands. **Details: Monday 9 March, 12.00 in Room VII of the Palais des Nations in Geneva.** [Download the flyer.](#)

Other news and resources:

- **Asia:** [Asia-Pacific countries most prolific users of death penalty. Amnesty report shows](#)
- **Papua New Guinea:** [Indonesia and Thailand ready to help PNG on death penalty](#)
- **Somaliland:** [Government to execute death penalty cases](#)
- **USA:** [US authorities execute two mentally disabled prisoners in one week](#)

- **USA:** [Pennsylvania's governor suspends the death penalty](#)
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CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

[PRI presents on health in prisons to the Commonwealth Secretariat](#)

PRI participated in a Panel Discussion on Universal Health Coverage. Our intervention focused on the difficulties for prisoners in accessing healthcare services. Unsanitary and overcrowded prisons, lack of or limited health services, the increased risk of contracting communicable diseases such as TB and HIV, and higher levels of drug and alcohol dependency make prisoners an especially at-risk group in terms of access to health.

Other news and resources:

- **Australia:** [Portable prison cell prototype unveiled in NSW as Government struggles to manage rising number of inmates](#)
 - **Bermuda:** [Pioneering prison scheme reaps rewards](#)
 - **Bulgaria:** [Bulgaria shows no progress in addressing prison system deficiencies](#)
 - **Denmark:** [Cramped, old prisons need changing](#)
 - **Europe:** [Annual European prison statistics](#)
 - **New Zealand:** [Prison shower-cams breach privacy](#)
 - **Russia:** [Siberian prison fends off competition to be named Russia's best prison](#)
 - **Somalia:** [How to better reintegrate detainees into society](#)
 - **UK:** [Sexual assaults in prisons in England and Wales on the rise, figures reveal](#)
 - **USA:** [When architecture causes suffering](#)
 - **USA:** [Texas prisons overuse solitary confinement, report says](#)
 - **USA:** [BJS survey finds 40 per cent of prison and jail inmates reported current chronic medical problems](#)
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INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

We are looking for a part-time Research and Communications Intern to join our team based in central London. This is an excellent opportunity for either a student or graduate seeking a career in human rights to gain solid experience and develop their skills. [Please visit the PRI website for more information and details on how to apply.](#)

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