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GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

Information technology and expenditure: ITWeb reported that despite the fact that the Department of Correctional Services has spent more than R700 million on information technology over the past two years, the problems besetting the system "are still far from being solved." Reported by Farzana Rasool, 12 June 2012, at

http://www.itweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55722&A=FIN&S=Financial&O=E&E=curq@gonet.co.za

SENTENCING AND PAROLE

Prisoner resorts to hunger strike: Sunday World reported that a prisoner had resorted to a hunger strike after his parole was revoked moments before his release from prison. The prisoner was reportedly given the date of his release by the Parole Board in July 2011, but was not informed when the Board later changed this decision until shortly before his release. Reported by Amos Mananyeto, 4 June 2012, at <http://www.sundayworld.co.za/news/2012/06/04/paroled-but-still-in-crossbar-hotel>

Pardoning of offenders challenged: IOL reported that the Coalition for Transitional Justice had threatened to take the government to court on the basis that certain prisoners, convicted of serious crimes, were due to be released in terms of the Special Dispensation for Presidential Pardons for Alleged Political Offences, a government initiative created to process applications for pardons from offenders who claimed their offences had been politically motivated. Reported by Ilse Fredericks, Clayton Barnes and Sibusiso Nkomo, 11 June 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/bomb-victims-say-no-to-pardons-1.1315896#.T9r7chePIGR>

Prisoners re-arrested: The Mercury reported that 43 out of the 37 783 prisoners released from prison in terms of mass sentence remissions granted by the President are back behind bars "barely one month" after having left prison. The former prisoners were reportedly re-arrested for charges ranging from rape and attempted murder to theft and kidnapping. Reported by The Mercury, 12 June 2012, at <http://themercury.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/showarticle.aspx?article=790b47d4-f6ef-44eb-bb61-b148e0046311&key=HonZ81IddVS%2fHxuseXrILO%3d%3d&issue=6403201206120000000001001> (Subscription required)

Released offenders likely to re-offend: IOL reported that National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders stated that "half of the 37 783 prisoners" who had been released as a result of mass sentence remissions granted by the President in May 2012 would "end up back in prison as they were ill prepared for reintegration." Reported by Lee Rondganger, 13 June 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/freed-cons-will-soon-be-back-nicro-1.1317880#.T-hjaBePIGQ>

Parole issue brought before court: IOL reported that a prisoner serving three life sentences has made an application to the High Court seeking an order directing the Minister of Correctional Services to make a decision on he may be granted parole. The Correctional Supervision and Parole Board reportedly recommended that he be released on parole "over one year ago" but little has been done to facilitate his release by the Minister, who is required by legislation to approve the release of prisoners on parole sentenced to life-imprisonment. Reported by Louise Flanagan, 21 June 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/prisoner->

[wants-parole-question-answered-1.1324348#.T-MODBePIGR](#)

Minister comments on sentence remissions: News24 reported that the Minister of Correctional Services described the number of prisoners re-arrested after having been released as a result of mass sentence remissions granted by the Presidency as “negligible” and that it would be “idealistic to think that all prisoners had benefited from rehabilitation programmes.” The report noted that the decision by President Jacob Zuma to remit the sentences of certain prisoners was “motivated in part by a desire to combat over-crowding.” Reported by News24, 25 June 2012, at <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Pardoned-prisoner-relapses-no-surprise-Ndebele-20120625>

UNSENTENCED PRISONERS

Awaiting trial policeman back on duty: Die Burger reported that the Rocklands community in the Eastern Cape is concerned that an awaiting-trial policeman, accused of robbery with aggravating circumstances, is back on duty. The community reportedly blames the criminal justice system for the fact that the police officer has been awaiting trial for the past three years. Reported by Die Burger, 4 June 2012, at <http://www.dieburger.com/Suid-Afrika/Nuus/Rower-aan-diens-by-polisie-20120604>

Foreign nationals contribute to prison overcrowding: Sowetan Live reported that the “high number of foreign nationals within South Africa who do not have proper documentation and find themselves in conflict with the laws of the land are contributing to the over-crowding in prisons.” The report added that Johannesburg Prison is currently accommodating 2191 foreign nationals, of which 1552 are remand detainees. The total population of the prison is just under 10000. Reported by Sowetan Live, 11 June 2012, at <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2012/06/11/home-affairs-blamed-for-crime>

PRISON CONDITIONS

Prison congested: IOL reported that Johannesburg Prison is currently accommodating double the amount of prisoners for which it was designed. There are reportedly 9827 prisoners at the prison, 5111 of which are remand detainees. Reported by Omphithetse Mooki, 11 June 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/prison-battles-to-hold-twice-its-capacity-1.131635>

Closed circuit television cameras in prisons: Sowetan Live reported that “security problems in South African prisons” have prompted the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services to call for the installation of cameras at all prison facilities, including toilets and holding cells. Reported by Katlego Moeng, 11 June 2012, at <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2012/06/11/cameras-for-prisons>

Prisons and tuberculosis: Health24 reported that the country’s prisons have been described as a “melting pot” for tuberculosis infection due to poor ventilation and overcrowding. Tuberculosis rates could reportedly be cut by up to 94% if the government were to reduce overcrowding in prisons. The remarks were reportedly made at a national tuberculosis conference in Cape Town. Reported by Health24, 11 June 2012, at <http://www.health24.com/news/Tuberculosis/1-4011.75042.asp>

Westville prison overcrowded: News24 reported that Westville prison in KwaZulu-Natal is overcrowded. The prison is reportedly accommodating 9 768 prisoners but was designed to accommodate only 6000. Reported by News24, 15 June 2012, at <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Durban-prison-overcrowded-20120615>

Minister comments on prison overcrowding: The New Age reported that the newly appointed Minister of Correctional Services, Sibusiso Ndebele, indicated that he would explore strategies to reduce overcrowding in prisons. The statement was reportedly made during a visit to Westville Prison. Reported by Chris Makhaye, 19 June 2012, at <http://www.thenewage.co.za/53925-1010-53-Overcrowded-prisons-priority-for-Ndebele>

SOUTH AFRICANS IMPRISONED ABROAD

Sentence handed down in Thailand: Eye Witness News reported that a South African national was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment, to be served in a Thai prison, and fined R250 000 for drug trafficking. Reported by Eye Witness, 18 June 2012, at <http://www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/en/2012/06/18/SA%20drug%20mule%20gets%2015%20years.aspx>

Prison conditions criticised: IOL reported that two South African nationals, Poloko Bafedile and Muthusi Mmeko, who spent seven months at Lobatse prison in Botswana, described the conditions of their detention as ‘detestable’. The two were reportedly arrested on charges of murder, which were later dropped. Reported by Poloko Tau, 19 June 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/innocent-in-cell-from-hell-1.1322619#.T-B7XdmdZcs>

REHABILITATION

Portfolio Committee reports back on prison visits: Bua News reported that the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on

Correctional Services reported on the Committee's prison visits to various facilities in Gauteng. He reportedly noted that the rehabilitation programmes at Zonderwater Correctional Centre were "impressive" and that the correctional centre should be a "yardstick of what a correctional centre should be." Reported by Bua News, 8 June 2012, at <http://www.buanews.gov.za/news/12/12060815151001>

Prisoners to set up newspaper: The New Age reported that a media company has agreed to help train prisoners at the Tswelopele Correctional Centre in Kimberley in basic journalism with the ultimate goal of assisting them to set up their own newspaper. Reported by Zandisile luphahla, 21 June 2012, at http://www.thenewage.co.za/54159-1008-53-Inmates_get_a_chance_to_run_their_own_newspaper

OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

ANGOLA

Pledge to increase agricultural production: Angola Press reported that the Home Ministry was considering implementing policies aimed at the increase of agricultural production in prison farms for the purpose of supplying the prisoners themselves and the "service forces" with food. Reported by Angola Press, 2 June 2012, at http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/en_us/noticias/politica/2012/5/22/Home-Ministry-increase-production-prisons.652a0a05-bf0d-4e40-a269-084cf083ed76.html

BURUNDI

Journalist sentenced to life imprisonment: The BBC reported that Hassan Ruvakuki, a journalist, was sentenced to life imprisonment after having been convicted of "terrorism." Ruvakuki's lawyers reportedly insist that he was put on trial for "interviewing a rebel leader." Reported by BBC, 26 June 2012, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18603035>

Thousands benefit from presidential pardon: Radio Netherlands reported that President Pierre Nkurunziza pardoned "several thousand" prisoners in celebration of Burundi's 50th anniversary of independence. Those pardoned include prisoners serving a term of five years or less, women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, prisoners who are over 60 or under 18 and those suffering from a terminal illness. Reported by Radio Netherlands, 27 June 2012, at <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/burundi-president-pardons-several-thousand-prisoners>

CAMEROON

New prisons to be built: CRTV reported that the Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, Laurent Esso, authorised the establishment of two prisons in Yaounde and Douala respectively. The new prisons will reportedly assist in decongesting the central prisons in the two cities. Reported by Kilian Ndah Ndifan, 1 June 2012, at http://www.crtv.cm/cont/nouvelles/nouvelles_sola_fr.php?idField=11255&table=nouvelles&sub=national

Prisoner sells jewellery: Camer.be reported that a prisoner at Douala prison has been crafting jewellery whilst imprisoned. The profits from his sales reportedly afford him access to better quality food and the necessary means to pay the fine that the sentencing court ordered. Original report in French. Reported by Blaise Djouokep, 22 June 2012, at <http://www.camer.be/index1.php?art=19962&rub=11:1>

Mantoum prison provides rehabilitation programme: Camer.be reported that the detainees at Mantoum prison are farming the land surrounding the prison buildings, which, in turn, provides them with much needed skills to ensure their successful reintegration into society. The conditions of detention at Mantoum are reportedly much better than at other prisons in the country. Original report in French. Reported by Guy Modeste Dzudie, 28 June 2012, at <http://www.camer.be/index1.php?art=20067&rub=11:1>

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Forum for prison reform in Goma: Radio Okapi reported that a forum has been created for the purpose of developing sustainable prison reform in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The forum was initiated by the American Bar Association and the National Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and brings together state and non-state actors from Maniema, and North and South Kivu. Original report in French. Reported by Radio Okapi, 31 May 2012, at <http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2012/05/31/goma-forum-pour-la-reforme-des-conditions-carcerales/>

Overcrowding in Mbuji-Mayi: Radio Okapi reported that the overcrowded central prison of Mbuji-Mayi creates a serious risk of illness and famine. The prison, originally built for 150 prisoners, currently accommodates over 700 prisoners. Original report in French. Reported by Radio Okapi, 2 June 2012, at <http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2012/06/02/mbuji-mayi-la-surpopulation-de-la-prison-expose-les-detenus-aux-maladies-la-famine/>

Prisoner deaths in Bas-Congo: Radio Okapi reported that the NGO 'Community for the promotion of human rights' denounced the poor treatment of detainees, which reportedly led to several deaths, in Bas Congo. The NGO has called on the authorities to put a stop to the torture and other ill-treatment of detainees, prohibited by both international and domestic law. Original report in French. Reported by Radio Okapi, 8 June 2012, at <http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2012/06/08/une-ong-denonce-les-morts-dhommes-dans-des-cachots-du-bas-congo/>

Prisoners escape: Radio Okapi reported that MONUSCO registered 136 cases of escape from three prisons in the Equatorial Province. The fact that the prisons are in a poor state repair reportedly enabled the prisoners to escape. Original report in French. Reported by Radio Okapi, 10 June 2012, at <http://radiookapi.net/societe/2012/06/10/equateur-les-evasions-dans-les-prisons-la-base-de-linsecurite-selon-la-monusco/>

GHANA

Lengthy remand detention: GhanaWeb reported that "thousands of remand prisoners" were being held past the expiry date of their arrest warrants and "warrants of commitment." Human rights organisations have reportedly "called on the prison authorities and the police to educate remand prisoners about the rights they have under the law. Reported by GhanaWeb, 17 June 2012, at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/artikel.php?ID=242192>

KENYA

Remand detainees and overcrowding: The Star reported that Vice President Musyoka called on judges and magistrates to order "affordable bail terms in order to decongest prisons." He reportedly added that overcrowding in prisons is exacerbated by remand detainees who are unable to afford the bail terms imposed on them. The remarks were reportedly made during the launch of the "Community Service Order decongestion programme" held at the Nairobi Remand Prison on 4 June 2012. Reported by The Star, 5 June 2012, at <http://www.the-star.co.ke/national/national/78940-vp-kalonzo-launches-programme-set-to-decongest-prisons-and-remand-facilities%3E>

LIBYA

Prisoners detained without charge: Al-Monitor reported that about 300 prisoners at the "illegal" Tajura prison have been detained since October 2011 without being charged or brought to trial, despite the fact that the new interim government recently "took over" the running of the prison. Reported by Mustafa Fetour, 18 June 2012, at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2012/al-monitor/in-libya-legalizing-kidnapping-a.html>

MALAWI

Use of non-custodial sentences encouraged: The Nyasa Times reported that the Malawi Judicial Service has indicated that judges and magistrates should use various "non-custodial" alternatives when sentencing offenders in order to reduce the tax costs on accommodating prisoners. Reported by Nyasa Times, 10 June 2012, at <http://www.nyasatimes.com/malawi/2012/06/10/malawi-judiciary-to-encourage-non-custodial-sentences/>

MOROCCO

Seminar on reintegration of offenders: Maghreb Emergent reported that the Mohamed VI Foundation organised a three-day seminar on the reintegration of offenders aimed at developing more efficient rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. The seminar reportedly brought together government and organisations from civil society. Original report in French. Reported by Maghreb Emergent, 30 May 2012, at <http://www.maghrebemergent.info/actualite/fil-maghreb/12723-maroc-journees-de-la-reinsertion-socioprofessionnelle-des-detenus-a-oujda.html>

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique and Zimbabwe to exchange prisoners: The Zimbabwean reported that the Mozambican and Zimbabwean governments would be signing an agreement facilitating the exchange of prisoners between the two countries. Reported by Leona Mwayera, 20 June 2012, at <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/zimbabwe/58985/moz-zim-to-exchange-prisoners.html>

Prisons overcrowded: allAfrica.com reported that Mozambique's prisons are currently holding 16 881 prisoners, which is more than double their capacity. The reported added that 6415 of the 16 881 prisoners are remand detainees. Reported by allAfrica.com, 21 June 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206210037.html>

Significant portion of budget spent on pretrial detention: allAfrica.com reported that 90 percent of the National Prisons Service budget is spent on remand detainees and prisoners serving custodial sentences that could have been sentenced to non-custodial alternatives. Reported by allAfrica.com, 28 June 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206280111.html>

NIGERIA

Prisoners tortured to death: Leadership Nigeria reported that two remand detainees at the Lafia prison were tortured to death by prison officials following the detainees' attempt to escape. Reported by Leadership Nigeria, 19 June 2012, at

http://leadership.ng/nga/articles/27747/2012/06/19/2_lafia_prison_inmates_allegedly_tortured_death.html

Prison decentralisation discussed: The Tribune reported that members of the House of Representatives expressed divergent views on the decentralisation of prisons, which would authorize each of the 36 states in the country to build and operate their respective prisons without interference from the Federal Government. Reported by Jacob Segun Olatunji and Kolawole Daniel, 21 June 2012, at <http://tribune.com.ng/index.php/news/42914-reps-differ-on-prison-decentralisation>

Prisoners escape during prison raid: Radio Netherlands reported that “attackers with guns and explosives” raided an unnamed prison in the north-eastern city of Damaturu, killing four prison officials. Forty prisoners reportedly escaped during the raid. Reported by Radio Netherlands, 24 June 2012, at <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/prison-raid-frees-40-inmates-restive-nigerian-city>

Prison population increasing: Punch reported that the prison population in Nigeria is on the rise. According to the Prisons Service there are reportedly 53100 prisoners in prisons across the country, 47200 of which are remand detainees. The report noted that the Deputy Controller of Prisons had said that “efforts were being made to offload the inmates.” Reported by Leke Baiyewu, 24 June 2012, at <http://www.punchng.com/news/prison-inmates-increase-to-53100/>

RWANDA

Gacaca courts praised: allAfrica.com reported that the United Nations commended the Gacaca courts for reducing the enormous backlog of genocide-related cases and thereby reducing prison overcrowding. Reported by Edwin Musoni, 18 June 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206180117.html>

SUDAN

Rehabilitation programme for female prisoners: Al Arabiya reported that the Swedish Prison and Probation Service is funding a project wherein female prisoners will be given the opportunity to take a week-long training course in sewing skills. Reported by Nadia Mayen, 7 June 2012, at <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/06/07/219243.html>

Sudanese women sentenced to death by stoning: The Star reported that a woman was sentenced to death by stoning after having been convicted of adultery. The woman reportedly did not have access to legal representation and had limited knowledge of Arabic, the language in which the proceedings took place. Human rights activists have reportedly provided assistance in appealing the sentence. Reported by Alexander Dziadosz, 31 May 2012, <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/1203649--young-woman-sentenced-to-death-by-stoning-in-sudan>.

SOUTH SUDAN

Call to improve conditions: Reuters reported that Human Rights Watch had released a report in which it was stated that “flawed processes, unlawful detention and dire conditions” in South Sudan's prisons reflect the urgent need to improve the new nation's criminal justice system. Reported by Reuters, 22 June 2012, at <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/news/south-sudan-arbitrary-detentions-dire-prison-conditions>

SWAZILAND

New prison under construction: The Observer reported that a new prison is being built at Ka-Langa. It is expected that the new prison will improve overcrowded conditions at the only other prison in the area, the Big-Bend Correctional facility. Reported by The Observer, 18 June 2012, at <http://www.observer.org.sz/index.php?news=39838>

TANZANIA

Rate of re-offending in Tanzania: allAfrica.com reported that between 30 to 35 per cent of former prisoners are re-arrested for committing crimes every year. These findings were reportedly released at an annual meeting for senior prison officials in Der es Salaam. Reported by Rose Athumani, 7 June 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206070769.html>

UGANDA

Education in prison: allAfrica.com reported that there are currently 1053 prisoners enrolled for education classes at Luzira Upper Prison. The article notes that prisoners who partake in such programmes have a better chance of successfully reintegrating back into society. Reported by Petride Mudoola, 9 June 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206100063.html>

Judiciary to blame for congestion: New Vision reported that the Commissioner General of Prisons has blamed the criminal justice system for the increasing prison population. He was quoted saying that “prisons are overcrowded because criminal justice systems are not disposing of cases in time.” The remark was reportedly made at the African Commissioners of Prisons Executive meeting held during the week of 7 June 2012. Reported by Petride Mudoola, 14 June 2012, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/631951-prisons-boss-blames-judiciary-over-congestion.html>

Soap-making project commenced: New Vision reported that a number of prisoners from the Luzira Upper Prison have been trained

in soap-making by the prison authorities. The initiative was intended to meet the “present demand for soap”, which is “far beyond the annual budgetary allocation.” Reported by Petride Mudoola, 15 June 2012, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/631616-prisoners-turn-soap-makers.html>

Death penalty opposed: New Vision reported that the Uganda Prisons Services (UPS) has chosen to challenge and oppose the death penalty in Uganda. A spokesperson for the UPS reportedly stated that the mandate of the UPS is to ensure “safe custody” and to “reform and re-integrate.” The remarks were made at the Uganda Human Rights Commission’s forum on the rights of detainees. Reported by Joyce Namutebi, 21 June 2012, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/632188-prison-authorities-oppose-death-penalty.html>

ZAMBIA

Allegations of corruption in pardon process: The Daily Mail reported that President Sata recently pardoned 2318 prisoners, who were chosen upon recommendation from prison officials. Prisoners at Lusaka Central Prison have alleged, however, that the system through which recommendations are processed, is corrupt, and have requested that investigations be made into such corruption. Reported by Charles Musonda, 10 June 2012, at <http://www.daily-mail.co.zm/?p=5141>

ZIMBABWE

Lack of legal representation: News Day reported that there are many prisoners in local prisons who were tried and convicted without having had access to legal representation. The report noted that the cost of legal assistance is far too high for the average person in Zimbabwe. Reported by Philip Chidavaenzi, 5 June 2012, at <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2012-06-05-many-in-jail-for-lack-of-legal-representation/>

Value of independent oversight: News Day reported that Human Rights Commissioner, Japhet Ndabeni Ncube, stated in a public lecture that the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission should visit the country’s prisons unannounced to get first hand information on conditions of detention. The Commissioner described prisons as “dirty” and stated that prisoners were treated inhumanely. Reported by Bridgette Bugalo, 4 June 2012 at <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2012-06-04-zhrc-should-visit-prisons--ncube/>

Police cells inspected: The Zimbabwean reported that five Supreme Court Judges inspected the Harare Central Police Station cells to ascertain their conditions after Women of Zimbabwe Arise petitioned the court to declare the cells “degrading and uninhabitable.” Reported by the Zimbabwean, 15 June 2012, at http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/human-rights/58870/supreme-court-inspects-filthy-police.html?utm_source=thezim&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=latestarticles also reported at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206220975.html>

Bail ruling still to be made: The Zimbabwean reported that a bail ruling in relation to charges against 29 MDC-T activists in connection with the killing of a police officer has yet to be made. The report added that the activists have been in remand detention for over a year. Reported by The Zimbabwean, 15 June 2012, at http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/zimbabwe/58871/police-accused-again-of-tampering.html?utm_source=thezim&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=latestarticles

Construction of prison is delayed: allAfrica.com reported that construction of Zimbabwe’s first open prison for women has been postponed “indefinitely due to the unavailability of funding.” It is hoped that once completed, the prison will serve as an “ideal” custodial facility for female prisoners with children. Reported by allAfrica.com, 26 June 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206260975.html>



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