

AFRICA PRETRIAL JUSTICE MONITOR



Africa Pretrial Justice Monitor

February 2014

The Africa Pretrial Justice Monitor is published by the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative, Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape, with the support of the Open Society Foundations Rights Initiative Global Criminal Justice Fund.

In this Issue:

[Notice Board](#)

[Country Reports](#)

Notice Board

Report on torture in Togo: The Atlas of Torture project, headed by the Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, published its final report on the project in Togo. The project gives a brief overview of the gaps and needs identified in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment in the country. The report is available at http://www.univie.ac.at/bimtor/dateien/EIDHR_Atlas_of_Torture_Togo_Final_Report_2013.pdf

Penal Reform International newsletter: PRI released its February 2014 newsletter. The newsletter contains information on the upcoming 25th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council which will include a side event on the review of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The Special Rapporteur on Torture will be presenting a report on the aspects of the review that involve torture and ill-treatment. The newsletter is available at <http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=9bbf03ee88683fbb10143c20e&id=b5e897c469&e=a373a320e1>

Country Reports

EGYPT

Allegations of torture: The Daily News reported that a coalition of domestic human rights organisations have called for the immediate investigation into the alleged torture and sexual assault of detainees arrested during the third anniversary of the 2011 revolution. The report notes that 79 of the detainees being held at the Abu Za'abal Prison have complained of being tortured by officials. Reported by Rana Taha, 12 February 2014, at <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/02/12/update-human-rights-organisations-decry-alleged-savage-torture-sexual-assault-detainees/>

LIBERIA

Heavy court roll backlogs: The Liberian Observer reported that during the official opening of certain criminal courts at the Temple of Justice Judge Johnson noted 442 out of 832 inmates at the Monrovia Central Prison were remand detainees. She reportedly stated that the challenge before the criminal courts for the first court term would be the effective administering of the large backlog of criminal cases. Reported by Abednego Davis, 1 February 2014, at <http://www.liberianobserver.com/legal/832-pre-trial-detainees-central-prison>

LIBYA

Detainees escape: Aljazeera reported that 92 prisoners, many of whom are were political detainees, escaped from a prison in Zliten. The report notes that only four officials were charged with watching over 220 offenders and detainees in the prison which made the escape relatively easy. Nineteen detainees were reportedly recaptured, two of whom were wounded when officials opened fire. Reported by Aljazeera, 15 February 2014, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/02/scores-prisoners-escape-libya-jailbreak-201421581633493412.html>

NIGERIA

Slow pace of criminal justice system highlighted: Punch reported that during a conference entitled 'An overview of the Management of Police Welfare Insurance Scheme-challenges and opportunities', the Controller-General of the Nigerian Prisons Service lamented the slow pace of the justice system. He noted that the burdened justice system was responsible for prison overcrowding and led to discontentment and frustration among inmates. He also noted that the prison service had lost many of its officials as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East. Reported by Olusola Fabiya, 26 February 2014, at <http://www.punchng.com/news/slow-justice-responsible-for-prison-congestion-cg/>

Poor conditions of detention: Voice of America reported that human rights organisations in Nigeria have complained of extremely poor and inhuman conditions of detention in prisons. The bulk of the prison population is comprised of remand detainees, who are thus an important contributing factor to the serious problem of overcrowding. The report notes that

there are frequent complaints from inmates of beatings and killings. Reported by Heather Murdock, 10 February 2014, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/rights-groups-allege-abuse-in-nigerian-prisons/1848366.html>

SOUTH AFRICA

Increase in protest killings: The Burger reported that according to the Independent Policing Investigative Directorate there has been a sharp increase in complaints against the police since 2007. The report also notes that, on average, police officials are killing one protester every four days. Nine fatal shootings alone have reportedly occurred in 2014 alone. Reported by The Burger, 6 February 2014, at <http://www.dieburger.com/nuus/2014-02-06-l-meer-klages-oor-polisie> (Original in Afrikaans).

Missing dockets delay prosecutions: The Citizen reported that the testimony of a prosecutor at the Khayelitsha Commission brought to light the frequency with which police officials fail to provide dockets to prosecutors on time. The report notes that many criminal matters are ultimately struck off the roll or the charges withdrawn as a result of the delayed arrival of or missing dockets. The frequent and repeated postponements of trials reportedly amount to an infringement of the right to a speedy trial. Reported by The Citizen, 6 February 2014, at <http://citizen.co.za/123059/missing-dockets-hamper-prosecutors-inquiry/>

Journalist detained: IOL News reported that a journalist was detained by police officials at the Nyanga Police Station after having taken pictures of police officials photographing a man who had been seriously injured by a group of residents in Philippi. The Western Cape MEC for Community Safety reportedly urged the Independent Policing Investigative Directorate to look into the matter as the conduct of the police officials in detaining the journalist amounted to 'questionable conduct.' Reported by IOL News, 6 February 2014, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/plato-wants-journalist-detention-probed-1.1643154#.UwyT84VfMc>

Foreign national sues SAPS: The Cape Argus reported that a Somali rights activist has sued the Minister of Police for damages he suffered when he was allegedly assaulted by seven police officials. The report notes that he was assaulted whilst trying to record the registration number of the police van on the scene of the search for two Somali men. Reported by The Cape Argus, 16 February 2014, at <http://capeargus.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/showarticle.aspx?article=c1b0c16bâ–â–8093â–â–41bdâ–â–92c1â–â–41fcf67b4f49&key=cbmun1X7JJh6PtCCafIhw%3d%3d&issue=69852014021500000000001001> (subscription required)

Activist detained: Eyewitness News reported that a Ugandan doctor and gay rights activist was detained for 48 hours by South African officials before being granted an exceptional skills visa. The activist initially applied for asylum as a result of the pending of the coming into force of legislation criminalising homosexuality. He later abandoned that application. Reported by Eyewitness News, 21 February 2014, at <http://ewn.co.za/2014/02/21/Ugandan-gay-rights-activist-granted-work-permit>

ZIMBABWE

Poor conditions of detention: allAfrica.com reported that three MDC-T activists were released from prison on bail after having been detained for 33 months in Chikurubi Maximum Prison. The former detainees reportedly conveyed information regarding the extremely poor conditions of detention. The report notes that many die in prison every day due to acute food shortages and a high rate of communicable diseases. Reported by Elias Mambo, 7 February 2014, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201402071320.html>

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

Fair Use Notice

Africa Pretrial Justice Monitor contains copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorised by the copyright owner. The material is being made available for purposes of education and discussion in order to better understand prison and related issues in Africa. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in relevant national laws. The material is made accessible without profit for research and educational purposes to subscribers/readers. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this Newsletter for purposes of your own that go beyond "fair use", you must obtain permission from the copyright owner. CSPRI cannot guarantee that the information contained in this newsletter is complete and correct or be liable for any loss incurred as a result of its use. Nor can the CSPRI be held responsible for any subsequent use of the material.



CSPRI welcomes your suggestions or comments for future topics on the email newsletter.
Tel: (27) 021-9592950
<http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/clc-projects/civil-society-prison-reform-initiative/>

If this email was forwarded to you and you would like to receive these newsletters in the future, please click [here](#) to subscribe.

[Update my details](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

