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GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

Minister of Correctional Services delivers inaugural address: IOL reported that the newly appointed Minister of Correctional Services, S'bu Ndebele, gave his inaugural address to the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services during the first week of August 2012. He reportedly noted that there were a number of important issues that needed to be addressed, including overcrowding, staff shortages, the under-spending of funds and misalignment of budget allocations. Reported by Babalo Ndenze, 11 August 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/quest-to-improve-prison-system-1.1360363#>

Salary adjustment overdue: Sowetan Live reported that the Department of Correctional Services has failed to implement a salary adjustment that it was ordered to make over a year ago according to an arbitration order. The matter reportedly originated when prison officials requested the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) to intervene when they realised they were earning R 81249 per annum - when other colleagues were being paid R102927 despite having undergone the same training programmes. Reported by Kingdom Mabuza, 13 August 2012, at <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2012/08/13/prison-guards-in-bid-to-adjust-pay>

"Women's Network" launched: The SABC reported that female officials in the Department of Correctional Services assembled at Grootvlei prison in Bloemfontein on 24 August 2012 for the official launch of the Department's "Women's Network." The Women's Network, a concept adopted by the SADC's Corrections and Prisons Sub-committee during 2011, is aimed at empowering female officials. Reported by The SABC, 24 August 2012, at <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/3a2f29004c765bcb855bfdebc20839bb/Correctional-Services-to-launch-womens-network-20122408>

Parole Officers refused entry into offices: The Sowetan reported that parole officers in Johannesburg were locked out of their offices by the owners of the premises and forced to work on the pavement as a result of the Department of Correctional Services having failed to pay rent for the premises for over five years. The Department reportedly owes the lessor of the building approximately R2 million in rent. Reported by The Sowetan, 27 August 2012, at <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2012/08/27/parole-office-on-pavement>

SENTENCING AND PAROLE

Selebi's medical parole sets promising precedent: Business Day reported that there is a possibility

that seriously ill prisoners may, in time, be able to benefit from the new medical parole regime, as Selebi did. The report focuses on tuberculosis in prisons and the fact that many inmates are seriously ill as a result of the disease's prevalence in prisons. The report argues that the independent medical review board, which was established in March 2012, may increase the likelihood that medical parole will be determined according to medical concerns only, and thus prevent any politically motivated decisions. Reported by Ruth Hopkins, 2 August 2012, at <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=177458>

Government petitioning courts to convert sentences for "petty crimes": IOL reported that prison authorities are in the process of petitioning courts to convert the sentences of female prisoners convicted of petty crimes to correctional supervision. The Minister of Correctional Services is quoted as saying that the Department was prioritizing the cases of pregnant women and women with young children. Reported by IOL, 6 August 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/supervision-for-petty-criminals-1.1357454#.UCBowcWIBXs>

Derby-Lewis to re-apply for medical parole: Times Live reported that Clive Derby-Lewis, one of the men convicted of the murder of Chris Hani, would be applying for medical parole in terms of the new medical parole regime, which came into effect on 1 March 2012. The report added that this is Derby-Lewis' fourth application for release on medical parole. Reported by Times Live, 7 August 2012, at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2012/08/07/hani-killer-fights-on1> An editorial analysis of the medical parole regime was reported at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/editorials/2012/08/07/medical-parole-off-limits-for-chris-hani-s-murderers>

Sentencing policy challenged: Business Day reported that the Minister of Correctional Services conveyed to the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services during one of its briefings that the judiciary needed to "change its perception that incarceration is the best crime deterrent." He reportedly noted that South Africa has the largest prisoner population in Africa, of which 40% are remand detainees. Reported by Business Day, 14 August 2012, at <http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2012/08/14/not-just-judiciary-behind-high-jail-population>

PRISON CONDITIONS

Constitutional Court to decide on case concerning tuberculosis in prisons: allAfrica.com reported that Dudley Lee, an inmate who contracted tuberculosis at Pollsmoor prison in Cape Town has approached the Constitutional Court arguing that the state is responsible for stopping the spreading of tuberculosis in its prisons. The Supreme Court of Appeal handed down a judgment in early 2012 finding that the Lee had failed fulfill the test for "causation" required by the law of delict, thus dismissing his claim against the Department for Correctional Services for damages. Reported by John Stephen, 27 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208270171.html>

SOUTH AFRICANS IMPRISONED ABROAD

South African nationals arrested: The Jakarta Globe reported that South African nationals were arrested at Sam Ratulangi Airport in Manado, Indonesia, for attempting to smuggle USD 862 800 worth of crystal methamphetamine into the country. Reported by The Jakarta Globe, 11 August 2012, at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/indonesia-arrests-two-south-africans-for-attempted-smuggling-of-rp-78-billion-of-crystal-meth/537494>

REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation programmes criticized: The SABC reported that Sekwanele Association, an organization consisting of former prisoners, has criticised prison rehabilitation programmes following the release of statistics that indicate that the number of parolees who were re-arrested between 2010 and 2011 was well over 1000. Reported by The SABC, 19 August 2012, at <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/af5888004c683bbf9d19bf3aace18556/Former-prisoners-criticise-rehabilitation-programmes-20121908>

OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

ALGERIA

New prisons: Algerie1.com reported that the Department of Penitentiary Affairs announced that five new correctional facilities, with a total capacity of 7000 beds, would be opened before the end of 2012 in order to alleviate overcrowding. Original report in French. Reported by Lila Ghali, 16 August 2012, at <http://www.algerie1.com/actualite/lalgerie-aura-5-nouvelles-prisons-avant-fin-2012/>

CAMEROON

Lack of regulations: Quotidiens Mutations reported that the Human Rights Commission visited the central prison of Yaoundé and criticised the presence of infants in the women's wing. The Commission called for the adoption of legislation regulating the situation of infants in correctional facilities, and the provision of adequate staff and equipment. Original report in French. Reported by Léger Ntiga, 1 August 2012, at <http://quotidien.mutations-multimedia.com/201208011260/1260-Prison-centrale-de-Yaounde-Cinq-enfants-en-detention-de-fait.html>

Rehabilitation of children: Jade Cameroun reported that a programme intended for the rehabilitation of children in prison has been established by a non-governmental organization, Chasoh. The NGO reportedly provides training and materials to children in order for them to take part in arts and crafts and learns new skills. The programme has reportedly assisted 150 children and provided them with some financial autonomy. Original report in French. Reported by Christian Locka, 8 August 2012, at <http://www.jadecameroun.com/news.php?detailAct=256>

Detainees pay for transport to court: Jade Cameroun reported that detainees at the Fouban Prison are forced to pay their own transport costs for the purpose of attending court as there are no official government vehicles available. Those appearing at the local court reportedly walk handcuffed and escorted from the prison, in full view of the public. Original report in French. Reported by Anne Matho, 17 August 2012, at <http://www.jadecameroun.com/news.php?detailAct=259>

DEMOCRATIC

REPUBLIC

OF

CONGO

Criminal justice reform: Radio Okapi reported that the European Union is financing a programme aimed at building new courts as well as contributing to the refurbishment of prisons. The programme is reportedly worth 47 million Euros and will take place over a period of four years. Original report in French. Reported by Radio Okapi, 31 July 2012, at <http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2012/07/31/lunion-europeenne-debloque-47-millions-deuros-pour-la-reforme-de-la-justice-en-rdc/>

Fifteen escape military detention: Radio Okapi reported that 15 detainees escaped from military detention in Gemena on 18 August 2012. They had reportedly all been convicted for acts committed as members of the rebel group, MLIA, and sentenced to 25 years imprisonment. The detainees reportedly escaped from detention before being transported to the military court to attend their appeal hearing. Original report in French. Reported by Radio Okapi, 21 August 2012, at <http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2012/08/21/gemena-15-insurges-du-mlia-sevadent-de-la-prison-centrale/>

EGYPT

Allegations of inhumane treatment: Al Arabiya News reported that various human rights organisations have revealed that prisoners are being subjected "inhumane" treatment. The report stated that the prisoners are forced to drink water with soap, which causes severe vomiting and diarrhea, as a way to ensure that their stomachs do not contain "prohibited items". Reported by Omar Abdel Gawad, 13 August 2012, at <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/08/13/232015.html>

Release of detained journalists: Bloomberg reported that on 23 August 2012, President Mohamed Mursi issued a decree barring the detention of journalists awaiting trial. Pursuant to the decree, the prosecution reportedly ordered the release of Islam Affi, Editor in Chief of the independent newspaper, Al-Dostour. Reported by Tarek El-Tablawy and Nadeem Hamid, 24 August 2012, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-23/egypt-s-mursi-bars-detention-of-journalists-awaiting-trial-1-.html>

ERITREA

Detainees die in prison: IOL reported that three journalists, who had been imprisoned for over a decade, died in prison in Eritrea. The journalists had been detained in the notorious desert prison, Eiraeiro, in the north-east of Eritrea. The report quotes a spokesperson for Reporters Sans Frontiers as saying, "In Eritrea, journalists have been thrown in prison just for daring to express their opinion...Some have been

held for more than 10 years and are disappearing one by one." Reported by IOL, 30 August 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/jailed-journos-die-in-prison-1.1372945>

GAMBIA

Death row prisoners to be executed: Radio Netherlands reported that the President stated that "all those already sentenced to death for crimes" would be executed. He reportedly added that the execution of all 47 prisoners on death row would be complete by the middle of September 2012. Reported by Radio Netherlands, 20 August 2012 <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/gambia-execute-all-death-row-prisoners-september> Also reported at <http://www.jollofnews.com/20120819gambia-to-start-executing-criminals-and-terrorists.html>

Executions carried out: The Quad-City Times reported that on 25 August 2012 the government executed nine of 47 prisoners on death row. Although the executions have been widely condemned by human rights organisations, Gambia's "highest Islamic body," the Gambia Supreme Islamic Council, has endorsed President Yahya Jammeh's recent decision to execute nine death row inmates. Reported by Quad-City Times, 25 August 2012, at http://qctimes.com/news/world/africa/gambia-civil-society-executed/article_f0de5b63-1d1d-5807-a991-14f7dd3fa338.html

Call to stop executions: The Chicago Tribune reported that on 26 August 2012, the European Union called on Gambia to stop executing death row inmates. Reported by Sebastian Moffett and Pap Saine, 26 August 2012, at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-08-26/news/sns-rt-us-gambia-executions-eubre87p04j-20120826_1_halt-executions-death-row-president-yahya-jammeh See also <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hOkPjYYbnUSVxKc-20U8w6wz-DaQ?docId=CNG.920e8a13476be3a11efb34bddca5037d.cf1/http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/28/u-n-slams-stream-of-executions-in-gambia/http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/28/u-n-slams-stream-of-executions-in-gambia/>

Prisoners not given fair trial: Amnesty International reported that many of the prisoners executed by the government had been found guilty without having had access to legal representation and had been charged with politically-motivated offences. Reported by Amnesty International, 28 August 2012, at http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=20303

GHANA

Lengthy remand detention: Vibe Ghana reported that research conducted by Amnesty International Ghana (AIG) in September 2011 revealed that about 3 000 people in the country had been in remand detention without trial from three to seven years. The report noted that the director of AIG had stated that most of the people on remand were extremely poor and thus unable to afford legal representation. Reported by Vibe Ghana, 7 August 2012, at <http://vibeghana.com/2012/08/07/thousands-in-ghana-are-on-remand-without-trial-amnesty-international/>

IVORY

COAST

Ivorian prison raided: IOL reported that unidentified gunmen attacked a prison in Abidjan leading to the release of a number of prisoners detained there. The country is reportedly "struggling to cope with near daily raids against army and police installations." Reported by Loucoumane Coulibaly, 17 August 2012, at <http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/gunmen-raid-ivorian-prison-1.1364334>

LIBERIA

Prison overcrowding: allAfrica.com reported that Monrovia Central Prison is currently accommodating 1015 prisoners despite the fact that it was designed to accommodate only 375. Approximately 90% of the prisoners at the Central Prison are remand detainees. Reported by Winston Parley, 14 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208140667.html>

LIBYA

Eight prisoners escape: Aljazeera reported that eight prisoners escaped from a prison in Tripoli following a gunfire attack. Those who escaped were reportedly awaiting trial prisoners. Reported by Aljazeera, 2 August 2012, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/08/2012811233441945325.html>

Prison conditions criticised: The Guardian reported that there are about 400 asylum seekers being held

in a detention centre near the coastal city of Benghazi. The detainees are from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia and were caught whilst trying to flee to Europe. The prisoners reportedly lack essential necessities such as water and food. Reported by John Hooper, 23 August 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/23/asylum-seekers-libya>

MOROCCO

King donates money to prisoners: allAfrica.com reported that King Mohammed VI has donated funds for the purpose of catering for female prisoners, particularly those with small children, to the Oukacha prison in Casablanca. Reported by allAfrica.com, 10 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208110247.html>

Prisoners pardoned: allAfrica.com reported that King Mohammed VI granted royal pardons to 562 prisoners in commemoration of the holy month of Ramadan. Reported by allAfrica.com, 19 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208190501.html>

MOZAMBIQUE

Transfer of Zambian infant born in prison: Mwebantu reported that a Zambian prisoner gave birth in a Mozambican prison and that the two countries were in the process of organizing the transfer of the child and its placement into foster care. Reported by Mwebantu, 15 August 2012, at <http://www.mwebantu.com/2012/08/15/pregnant-zambian-prisoner-gives-birth-in-a-mozambican-jail/>

NIGERIA

Prisoners on death row: Punch reported that a total of 126 prisoners are on death row at Jos Prison and waiting for the dates of their respective executions. The report notes that a senior official at Jos Prison stated that some of the prisoners on death row had appealed their sentences, while others had exhausted all legal opportunities for reprieve. Reported by Punch, 1 August 2012, at <http://www.punchng.com/news/126-condemned-persons-awaiting-execution-in-jos-prison>

Food security project at prisons: Leadership Nigeria reported that the Federal Government has unveiled plans to engage over 200 000 inmates to boost agricultural production across Nigeria. The report added that the project would give prisoners the requisite "reformation skills" and assist prisoners upon their release to secure employment. Reported by Christiana Esebonu, 2 August 2012, at http://leadership.ng/nga/articles/31474/2012/08/02/fg_engage_200000_prison_inmates_agriculture.html

Notable bail ruling: The Times reported that on 2 August 2012, a Nigerian court ruled that "a person could not be held in detention simply because the authorities had problems monitoring movement in and out of the country." The applicant had been detained awaiting trial for 28 months on the grounds that he was a "flight risk." The Court ruled that there was no meaningful reason to continue his detention, least of all the fact that the government was unable to monitor its borders efficiently. Reported by Waylon Johnston, 3 August 2012, at <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120803/local/Bail-conditions-breached-Nigerian-s-human-rights.431292%3E>

RWANDA

Hospital to treat prisoners: allAfrica.com reported that the Kanombe Military Hospital in partnership with the Rwanda Correctional Services has commissioned a programme intended to treat the 3400 prisoners diagnosed with eyesight problems. The treatment reportedly includes correcting eye sight problems as well as the provision of glasses for those in need of them. Reported by allAfrica.com, 8 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208080411.html>

SENEGAL

Poor conditions of detention: Seneweb.com reported that during a visit of a Senegalese government delegation to Mauritania, several Senegalese citizens detained there complained of the poor conditions to which they were subjected. The detainees reportedly requested that government officials take steps to ensure their transfer back to Senegal. Original report in French. Reported by Seneweb.com, 7 August 2012, at http://www.seneweb.com/news/Afrique/prisons-mauritaniennes-les-detenus-senegalais-vivent-l-rsquo-enfer-lors-de-leur-sejour-carceral_n_73951.html

Ambassador recalled: The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation reported that Senegal had recalled its

Ambassador to Gambia in protest against the execution of two Senegalese nationals who were on death row in a Gambian prison. Reported by The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, 28 August 2012, at <http://www.gbcghana.com/index.php?id=1.1033965>

SOMALIA

Detainees in Hargeisa prison: The Guardian reported that a prison in Hargeisa, built to accommodate those charged and convicted of piracy, is currently accommodating 313 prisoners, including 17 detainees found guilty of piracy in the Seychelles and flown to Hargeisa in March 2012. The report added that the Seychelles is the only country willing to allow pirates captured anywhere beyond its territorial waters to be put on trial within its own jurisdiction. Reported by The Guardian, 23 August 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/23/inside-somaliland-prison-pirates?newsfeed=true>

SUDAN

Sentenced to death by stoning: Radio Netherlands reported that a court in Khartoum sentenced a 23 year-old woman to death by stoning for committing adultery. The woman is reportedly shackled in prison with her six-month-old baby. Reported by Radio Netherlands, 2 August 2012, at <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/article/shackled-sudan-mother-sentenced-stoning>

TANZANIA

Establishment of legal aid umbrella body: allAfrica.com reported that the government of Tanzania recently launched a "legal aid secretariat". The report describes the secretariat as a "temporary body" that will eventually bring about the formulation of a legal aid policy and law as well as becoming the regulatory body for paralegals. Reported by Masembe Tambwe, 29 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208290405.html>

TOGO

Protesters freed: News24 reported that the government had released 119 people that were detained during rallies organised by an opposition coalition and which led to clashes between police and demonstrators on 26 August 2012. Reported by News24, 27 August 2012, at <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Togo-frees-119-detained-during-protests-20120827>

UGANDA

Prison visits suspended: allAfrica reported that the Uganda Prisons Service has suspended visitations in prison units until the country is declared to be free from the extremely contagious Ebola virus. Reported by allAfrica.com, 2 August 2012, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201208021050.html>

Prisons face food shortages: The Monitor reported that Ugandan prisons are "overflowing with inmates" yet food allocations to feed the prisoners fall way below the recommended daily minimum. Congestion levels in prisons have reportedly increased from 121% to 217%, representing an increase in prisoners' daily average population from 31 046 in the 2010/2011 financial year to 32 967 in 2011/2012. Reported by Isaac Imaka, 9 August 2012, at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Overcrowded-prisons-facing-food-shortages/-/688334/1474842/-/emskr6z/-/index.html>

Emphasis on rehabilitation: New Vision reported that the Minister of Internal Affairs told prison officials from East Africa that prisons should aim to deliver correctional services, counseling and equip prisoners with skills to enable them to transform into better citizens. The comments were reportedly made during the opening of the third meeting of the East African Community Chiefs of Prisons and Correctional Services. Reported by Raymond Baguma and Jeff Lule, 9 August 2012, at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/633925--EAC-Prisons-need-training-to-combat-trending-crimes-.html>
Also reported at <http://thecitizen.co.tz/news/49-general-elections-news/24948-minister-urges-sharing-of-ideas-prison-services-in-ea.html>

ZAMBIA

Sustainable food production: The Times reported that the Zambia Prisons Service is setting up a milling plant in Kabwe, a development intended to increase sustainability in the provision of food to prisoners. Reported by Nchimunya Muganya, 10 August 2012, at <http://www.times.co.zm/?p=8158>

ZIMBABWE

Post for executioner remains vacant: News Day reported that the government has not yet been able to fill the post of executioner, despite having advertised the post for over one year. There are reportedly 60 prisoners on death row and it is likely, the reported added, that those on death row will have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. Reported by News Day, 9 August 2012, at <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2012-08-09-no-takers-for--hangmans-job/>

Allegations of overcrowding refuted: New Zimbabwe reported that the Head of the Prison Services refuted the claim that the country's prisons are overcrowded, insisting that conditions were improving. The report notes that local human rights groups claim that the country's 55 prisons accommodate approximately 22 500 inmates against an official capacity of 17 000. It is estimated that 30% of the prison population is awaiting trial and many detainees have remained in pre-trial detention for up to ten years. Reported by New Zimbabwe, 10 August 2012, at <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-8732-Zimondi-denies-prisons-overcrowded/news.aspx>



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