



SOUTHERN SUDAN PRISONS SERVICE BULLETIN

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Snapshot of the Prison Population

THE PRISONS SERVICE COLLECTS MORE DETAILED DATA ON THE PRISONERS.

Prison managers can hardly manage their institution without good and accurate information on the prisoners. It is important to have good prisoner registers, an up-to-date and reliable prisoners' file system, and an ability to collect and analyze data on the prison population. Accurate information is also crucial for the protection of inmates' rights.

Without good data on the total number of people held in custody, their classification, along with information on their age, gender, health and needs, it is hard for prison managers to plan properly, to identify their need for resources, set budgets, manage health and safety issues, and develop appropriate education and treatment programmes.

At the operational level, prison population information enables prison managers to plan daily activities such as meals, medical treatment and cell allocations, as well as determine appropriate staffing levels, staff deployment, and individual responsibilities. At the strategic level, up-to-date information on the size and profile of the prison population guides managers in planning the development and delivery of prison services, such as health care, vocational training, education, and rehabilitation programmes, as well as relevant personnel support.

Over the last year or so the Prisons Service has worked hard to improve its information management system. In addition, as an interim measure to produce badly required data, the Service has conducted a survey of the inmate population in selected institutions. This newsletter is devoted entirely to presenting the results of that survey of inmates conducted by the SSPS staff with the assistance of UNMIS and ICCLR advisers.



Training Workshop in Juba, 26-28 May 2008 - The registry officers came to Juba for training on how to administer the survey; this was part of a larger training session on prisoner data collection and management.

The Survey

In addition to the Juba Central Prison, eight major state prisons were assigned to participate in the survey. They were: Aweil, Bor, Malakal, Torit, Rumbek, Bentiu, Yambio and Wau.

A simple survey instrument was developed and printed for use by registry officers in each of the participating prisons. The survey instrument was designed to collect data from prisoners’ files as of the 31 May, 2008. The following is a snapshot of the inmate population in these institutions as of the end of May 2008.

Highlights on Survey Results

On May 31, 2008, a total of 2,085 prisoners were found in the nine prisons surveyed. 151(7.2%) of them were women. 41 percent of the prisoners were awaiting trial and 59 percent of them had already been sentenced for a criminal offence. In total, there were 32 children of varying age accompanying their mothers in prison.

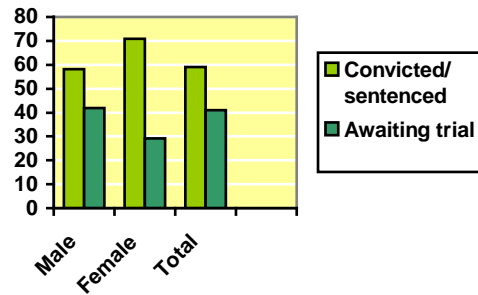


Table1
Total Population by Gender and Detention Status

	Males	Females	Total
Convicted/sentenced	1126	107	1233 (59.1%)
Awaiting trial	808	44	852 (40.9%)
Total	1934 (92.8%)	151 (7.2%)	2085 (100%)

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the prison population by gender and by detention statuses (remanded or sentenced prisoners).

Population by Prisons

The following table provides detailed data for each of the nine prisons.

Table 2
Inmate Population in Each One of the Nine Prisons

Prison	Awaiting Trial		Convicted/Sentenced		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Aweil	65	7	112	7	191
Bentiu	78		168	3	249
Bor	37	4	107	12	160
Juba	279	12	241	21	553
Malakal	56	1	115	2	174
Rumbek	86	6	126	16	234
Torit	56	4	61	31	152
Wau	135	8	122	13	278
Yambio	16	2	74	2	94
Total	808	44	1126	107	2085

Note: The figures for Juba exclude prisoners who are condemned to death and that for female prisoners is not very accurate from the source. The number of condemned prisoners on that day at Juba Prison was 34. (Source UNMIS Advisers Daily Report)

Age of Prisoners

The survey revealed the majority of prisoners were between the age of 21 and 35 years. In fact, that age bracket included 57 percent of the total prisons population. According to prison records, a total of 199 (9.5%) prisoners were 18 years old or younger. This is the group which may be classified as juvenile prisoners. Information on the prisoners' age was not available for 118 of the prisoners surveyed; 82 of them were inmates at Rumbek Prison. It was also noted that committal document from courts did not typically indicate how old the offender is and that left it to prison officials to interview the prisoner and record his or her age.

Accurate data on age is difficult to obtain in a society where literacy levels are low; this calls for more training for prison reception/intake officers on how to probe for information on age. The youngest prisoner identified, aged 10, was found at the Juba Prison (male) and he was awaiting trial for theft. The oldest prisoner was found in Malakal (male), aged 76, awaiting trial for murder.

Table 3, below, shows the distribution of prisoners by age groups (in 5 year intervals), by type of detention and by gender.

Table 3
Population by age, type of detention, and gender

Age	Awaiting Trial		Convicted (Sentenced)		Total	%
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Below 15	20	-	14	1	35	1.7
15 -18	66	4	83	11	164	7.9
19- 20	62	4	103	18	187	8.9
21- 25	181	8	297	32	518	24.8
26- 30	156	7	257	18	438	21.0
31-35	90	4	132	9	235	11.3
36- 40	73	9	79	10	171	8.2
41-45	50	-	58	3	111	5.3
46-50	27	-	36	2	65	3.1
51-55	17	1	6		24	1.2
56-60	10	1	4		15	0.7
Over 60	4	-			4	0.2
Not Recorded	52	6	57	3	118	5.6
Total	808	44	1126	107	2085	100

Length of Sentences

The next table presents the data on the length of the sentence of imprisonment which sentenced prisoners were serving, including prisoners sentenced to death. Life sentence is included in the class over 5 years.

Half of the prisoners were serving a sentence of one year or less. 184 prisoners (or 15 percent of the total number of sentenced prisoners) did not serve a sentence of imprisonment, but were detained for failure to pay a fine or compensation order either in terms of money or a number of cows. This is the number of persons who are reportedly in prison for failure to pay a fine or compensation order and therefore have to remain in prison for as long as they, their family or relatives fail to pay the fine or compensation that has been ordered. Under the present system, some prisoners who are unable to pay the fine or compensation may well have to remain in prison indefinitely. At the time of the census, they represented 8.8 percent of the total inmate population in the nine prisons surveyed.

Table 4
Length of Sentence for Convicted Prisoners

Length of Sentence	Number of Prisoners	Percentage
Less than 6 months	312	25.0
6 months - 1 year	310	24.8
>1 Year – 2 years	150	12.2
>2 Years - 5 years	190	15.2
>5 yrs (including life sentence)	40	3.2
Fine or compensation only	181	14.5
Death penalty	65	5.2
Total:	1,248	100.0

Note: The figure for those under death sentence includes 34 who were in Juba Prison.

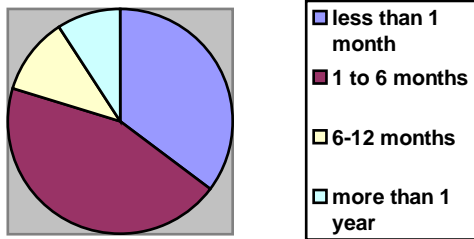
Length of Time Awaiting Trial or Disposition

The data from seven prisons was analyzed to determine the length of time prisoners had already spent in detention awaiting trial on the day of the survey. The prisons were Rumbek, Yambio, Bentiu, Torit, Wau, Malakal and Aweil. The combined population of prisoners awaiting trial in these institutions included 534 inmates. In the case of 43 of these inmates, prison records did not contain a date of admission and, since it was not possible to determine the length of time these prisoners had spent in prison while awaiting trial, they were excluded from further analysis. There were therefore 491 prisoners in the seven prisons on remand for whom it was possible to calculate the length of imprisonment up to that point in time. 60 percent of these prisoners had spent 3 months or less awaiting trial. Only 9 percent of them had already spent more than one year awaiting trial or disposition.

Table 5
Length of Detention while Awaiting Trial

Period of time already spent awaiting trial at the time of the survey.	Number of prisoners awaiting trial	Percentage
1 Month and less	171	35
>1Month - 2 Months	78	16
>2Months – 3 Months	49	10
>3Months – 6 Months	93	18
>6Months -1Year	55	11
>1Year - 2 Years	36	7
More than 2 Years	9	2
Total	491	100

Length of Sentence



Generally speaking, it was the cases which involved more serious offences, in particular murder cases, which took the longest to proceed to trial. Table 5 shows the amount of time spent awaiting trial in prison. It includes both male and female prisoners.

Offences

The data obtained from the various prisons on the offences involved in each case was not always very reliable. The data could be analyzed for five of the seven participating prisons namely Aweil, Yambio, Bentiu, Wau, and Malakal. Table 6 below presents the ten most common offences and number of prisoners serving sentences or awaiting trial for the offences.

Table 6
Type of Offence Involved

Offences	Convicted		Awaiting Trial		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Murder	133	4	159	10	306 (38%)
Stealing	141	7	62	2	212 (26.3%)
Debtor	60	5	22	1	88 (10.9%)
Theft	67	1	8	-	76 (9.4%)
Adultery	36	4	30		70 (8.7%)
Causing injury	4		16		20 (2.5%)
Fighting	10		4	-	14 (1.7%)
Drunkenness	8	2			10 (1.2%)
Manslaughter	10	-	-	-	10 (1.2%)
Total	469	23	301	13	806

The analysis revealed that the most common offences for which prisoners had been found guilty (sentenced prisoners) or were accused of (remanded prisoners) in these institutions is murder, followed by theft. This was true of both the male and female prisoners.

This is somewhat surprising since in most African countries the most common offences for which people are generally incarcerated are usually property related offences (theft, stealing, house breaking, etc) while murder and manslaughter tend to be amongst the least commonly reported offences.

The combined population of the five prisons surveyed was 986. A total of 806 (81%) of these inmates had been (or were alleged to have been) involved in one of the following most common offences: common murder, adultery, stealing, theft, debt, assault, drunkenness, causing injury, manslaughter and fighting. Some unusual offences (in small numbers) listed were: non payment of dowry, impregnating a woman, and possession of narcotics.

Mentally ill

The administration of prisons in Southern Sudan is supposed to include institutions for mentally ill to be called mental asylums. Currently there is no mental asylum in the region and mental patients both criminal and non-criminal are institutionalized in prisons. The majority of the mentally ill individuals in prisons are found in the Juba Central Prison. Table 7, below, shows the distribution of mentally ill individuals found in the prisons by age and gender. Table 8 shows the distribution of mentally ill prisoners by the type of authority which committed them to prison.

Table 7
Mentally Ill Prisoners by Age and Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Under 15	-	-	-
15-18	-	-	-
19-20	1	1	2
21-25	3	-	3
26-30	1	2	3
31-35	8	1	9
36-40	16	1	17
41-60	-	-	-
Over 60	1		1
Not Recorded	1		1
Total	31	5	36

Table 8
Authority Committing Mentally Ill to Prison According to Prison Records

Authority	Prisoners
High Courts	2
Magistrate Courts	5
County Courts	2
Attorney Generals	3
Police	24
Total	36

Legal Representation of Prisoners

This information was not accurately collected during the survey and requires verification through a supplementary enquiry. However the results show that none of the prisoners awaiting trial in the nine prisons surveyed had legal representation for their cases. This includes prisoners awaiting trial for serious offences such as murder.

Conclusion

The survey confirmed some of the prison managers' general perceptions about the inmate population, but also contradicted some of the assumptions that they were prepared to make, e.g. in relation to the nature of the offences for which the prisoners were most often held in custody. The monthly report that the new prison information system will soon allow each prison to produce and to communicate with the Prisons Service headquarters some accurate data on changes in the prison population. This will be particularly important for monitoring the impact of the new initiatives that are currently being planned in order to introduce alternatives to incarceration, review remand cases, and find alternative care arrangements for mentally ill people. The survey offers a starting point for some key planning exercises.

UNMIS and ICCLR Assist Female Prisoners in Southern Sudan



UNMIS UNMIS Corrections Adviser Ruth Munyao and International Centre for Criminal Law Reform (ICCLR) lecturer, Vivienne Chin, are collaborating in a “Pads for Prisons Project”, to provide reusable sanitary towels to female prisoners. The lack of hygienic sanitary pads was identified as a significant health problem by UNMIS Corrections Advisers and a sustainable solution was developed with ICCLR and their partner, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The project will train female prisoners to make reusable sanitary pads and eventually distribute these to all prisons in Southern Sudan.

While providing staff training in Juba, as part of the UNODC Prisons Support Project, Ms Chin discussed issues relating to the management of vulnerable prisoners, including females. On her return to British Columbia in Canada, she approached a local female prison who were very enthusiastic about supporting female prisoners in developing countries. This resulted in some trial designs for reusable pads made from recycled materials. The Canadian prison initially made 20 pads which were sent to Southern Sudan and tried by female prisoners at Juba, who were extremely pleased. The Canadian prison has since manufactured several hundred pads and these have been distributed to female prisoners in Juba and Torit.

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As part of the project, UNODC has provided two sewing machines and are arranging for female prison staff and prisoners to be trained in manufacturing pads. A Canadian seamstress in charge of their prison project will visit Juba in November to train prison staff on manufacturing pads. The trained staff will then train prisoners and other staff from each state. UNODC will also provide hygiene equipment to the prisons, to ensure that the reusable pads are properly sanitized. The Pads for Prisons Project will continue with the cooperation of UNMIS Corrections, UNODC, ICCLR, the Prisons Service of Southern Sudan and the Canadian prison until a sustainable program exists for providing hygienic reusable sanitary pads to all female prisoners.

The survey reported in this newsletter was part of a project funded by the Government of Canada and the collaboration between the Sudan Prisons Service and:



International Centre for
Criminal Law Reform and
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