

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist



International

[AWARENESS](#)

MAY 2011 MONTHLY FOCUS FILE:

[ADVOCACY](#)

WOMEN AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

[ACTION](#)

*(click on the tabs to the right for each section; click the section titles to
'close' each file and return here)*

[USEFUL LINKS](#)

[AWARENESS](#)

UNODC Handbook on women and imprisonment

The main focus of the handbook is female prisoners and guidance on the components of a gender-sensitive approach to prison management, taking into account the typical background of female prisoners and their special needs as women in prison. In view of the significant rise in the rate of women's imprisonment in many countries worldwide, the handbook also provides an overview of measures that could be taken to reduce the female prison population.

<http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/women-and-imprisonment.pdf>

SI Statement on Women and Criminal Justice

This month's focus is on the particular difficulties faced by women (and girls) in criminal justice systems around the world. To learn more about these issues, read the SI statement recently developed for the 2011 Crime Commission.

[SI Statement for 2011 Crime Commission.pdf](#)

ADVOCACY

Report from the 20th Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

SI UN Representatives Roswitha Benesch and Dora Vrdlovec attended the Crime Commission where women and trafficking, women and criminal justice and the Bangkok Rules were up for discussion.

The Bangkok Rules (Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders) were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2010. The Bangkok Rules recognise that female prisoners have significantly different needs to their male counterparts. Among other issues they cover such demands as security risk assessments and the provision of gender-specific healthcare services.

To learn more about these issues and the current debate at the UN read the report below, written exclusively for the Monthly Focus File:

-----START OF REPORT-----

The 20th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

April 2011

The 20th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice met in Vienna in mid April. The priority theme was child protection and the internet, but women and criminal justice was also up for discussion with several important side events organised to explore the issue further. Here are the main points relating to women and criminal justice from our SI UN Representatives, Roswitha Benesch and Dora Vrdlovec.

Crime Commission 2011 – Women and Criminal Justice

Bangkok Rules on Women Prisoners

High-ranking Thai officials and a representative of the Quaker UN Office from Geneva invited

NGOs to a very important Side Event on the “Bangkok Rules on Women Prisoners – and

Beyond” (Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2010).

The majority of women prisoners usually come from socially disadvantaged communities and groups. In some societies women have less access to education than men and have fewer legal rights. This may be reflected in particular vulnerability to being deprived of their liberty, for reasons including lack of information on rights and options.

The Bangkok Rules recognise that female prisoners have significantly different needs to their male counterparts. Among other issues they cover such demands as security risk assessments and the provision of gender-specific healthcare services. Visit the following link for more information:

<http://www.quno.org/humanrights/women-in-prison/womenPrisonLinks.htm>

SI delivered a Statement on the Bangkok Rules asking for their immediate implementations.

The Statement can be read here: <http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/resources/sistatements-and-reports>.

Penal Reform International supported a session of the Quakers on a similar topic. Since

2003, Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) has been highlighting issues related to the specific needs and rights of women prisoners and children of incarcerated parents.

International Crime Prevention – Trafficking

The main agenda item relating to women and criminal justice looked at the integration and coordination of efforts by the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and by member states in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Disappointingly, it was noted that “the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocols hereto (dealing with Trafficking of Human beings, especially women and children) has still not been ratified or acceded by all Member States”. This means that a far reaching, coordinated global approach to trafficking is still some way off.

In Resolution 20/4 States Parties are encouraged to fully implement these treaties which seek to work against trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime. It also requests UNODC to study new forms and dimensions of transnational organized crime and to analyse new and emerging challenges, in order to support evidence-based policy guidance.

“Recognizing that transnational organized crime has diversified globally and represents a threat to health and safety, security, good governance and the sustainable development of Member States,

Emphasizing that all States have a shared responsibility to take steps to counter the threat of transnational organized crime, including through international cooperation and in cooperation with relevant institutions such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 65/232 of 21 December 2010, entitled “Strengthening the

United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity”, in which the Assembly expressed its grave concern at the negative effects of transnational organized crime, including smuggling of and trafficking in human beings, narcotic drugs and small arms and light weapons, on development, peace and security and human rights, and at the increasing vulnerability of States to such crime,

Stressing the need for universal implementation of the United Nations Convention against

Transnational Organized Crime,⁵⁸ its protocols,⁵⁹ and the United Nations Convention against

Corruption, as well as additional cooperation between Member States and private sector entities”

The resolution also requests that:

“the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to provide support to the Conference and its working groups, including the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons and the Working Group on the Smuggling of Migrants in their work related to the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons

Protocol and the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol;”

Member States are urged to contribute to the “full and effective implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons” (GA resolution 64/293). (Resolution 20/3). Extracts of the Resolution follow:

Expressing its serious concern at the increasing number of reported incidents of trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General on preventing, combating and punishing trafficking in human organs,⁵⁶ which concluded that there was a lack of reliable data in that regard,

Aware of the fact that socio-economic factors such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity provide fertile ground for trafficking in persons, and reiterating that comprehensive crime prevention policies, together with social, economic, health, education, justice and human rights policies, must address the root causes of the crime of trafficking in persons,

Recognizing the need to promote, by harmonizing the efforts of Member States and relevant international organizations and institutions to implement the Global Plan of Action, the universal ratification and full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention, as well as of other relevant international instruments that address trafficking in persons, and to reinforce the implementation of existing instruments against trafficking in persons,

Welcoming the launch of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which will operate as a subsidiary fund of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 64/293, and acknowledging previous and ongoing contributions to other funding sources that support efforts to combat trafficking in persons ...

Urges Member States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of priority, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention;

Calls upon Member States to address the demand that fuels trafficking in persons for all forms of exploitation with a view to eliminating such demand and, to that end, to enhance preventive measures, including legislative measures, to deter exploiters of trafficked persons and to ensure that they are held accountable;

To read the full resolution 20/3, visit
http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ_session20/E2011_30_auv_.pdf

A UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons has been launched and is managed by UNODC. It supports actual, on-the ground humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of trafficking.

SIDE EVENTS:

Freedom of religion in prison was discussed after Mr. Fedotov and H.E. Cardinal Schönborn agreed for a greater cooperation between the Church and the UNODC, for example in dealing with Human Trafficking.

The panel on how to prevent Violation of children's rights in police custody and pre-trial detention was organised by UNODC and the Juvenile Justice Panel. States were encouraged to integrate Children's issues into their overall rule of law efforts. Deprivation of liberty of children should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. The panel provided the opportunity to sensitise the audience to the consequences of pre-trial detention.

In an Informal Dialogue of the Vienna NGO Alliance on Crime Prevention and Criminal

Justice with the UNODC Executive Director, Mr.Fedotov stressed the interest of UNODC to always communicate with NGOs

May 2011

-----END OF REPORT-----

Learn about the Women in Prison campaign, to help create the changes women need in the criminal justice system. Although this is a national institution, the ideas and campaigns can be done anywhere!

<http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/index.php>

"Taking the most hurt people out of society and punishing them in order to teach them how to live within society is, at best, futile. Whatever else a prisoner knows, she knows everything there is to know about punishment because that is exactly what she has grown up with. Whether it is childhood sexual abuse, indifference, neglect; punishment is most familiar to her."

Chris Tchaikovsky - Former prisoner and founder of Women in Prison

Learn about the advocacy campaign Enhancing the Lives of Female Inmates ('ELFI') and the work of activist Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand.

<http://elfi.or.th/>

http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=92793447386

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/enhancing-lives-of-female-inmates.html>

ACTION

Host a mini film festival to learn more about women and the criminal justice system and things you can do! Watch these videos produced by UNODC.

Kabul - Women Behind Bars

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qloj8h0VDXQ&feature=player_embedded#at=132

Making Standards Work

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-zRr4lLpqA&feature=player_embedded

Crime Prevention Works

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSkXCUYsLAc&feature=player_embedded#at=12

And, watch this amazing video created by the **Enhancing Lives of Female Inmates (ELFI)**

<http://elfi.or.th/media-video.html>

USEFUL LINKS

UNODOC's work on improving criminal justice systems

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/index.html?ref=menuside>

UNODOC's work on HIV in prison

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/hiv-aids/prison-settings.html?ref=menuside>

Enhancing the Lives of Female Inmates ('ELFI') and the work of activist Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand:

<http://elfi.or.th/>

Women in Prison campaign, to help create the changes women need in the criminal justice system.

<http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/index.php>

Women's Justice Taskforce report (UK) June 2011

“The government must speed up the closure of women’s prisons, reduce unnecessary imprisonment of women and pump the funds released into genuinely effective services for female offenders, according to a new report from an independent taskforce.”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13666066>