



# PRISONS & PANDEMIC

## Shaping Prison's Response through Preparedness

WEBINAR 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2020

### List of recommendations

#### 1. Planning and Preparedness

##### Short Term

- Assist in developing and disseminating improved and more comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), building on the good practice that has been developed in Sindh and Punjab, to guide prison administration on how to effectively prevent and respond to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.
- Assist in developing and improving Disaster Management Policy in prisons, building on existing plans.
- Undertake a regular census/profiling of prisoners' population (building on the profiling of 1,100 prisoners in Sindh in 2018 as well as of women and juveniles in 2019) to identify at-risk groups as well as other categories of prisoners who could benefit from early or conditional release (including those approaching the end of their sentence). Respective findings and priority recommendations should be proactively shared amongst relevant criminal justice actors to support the evidence-based decision-making related to both early release mechanisms as well as the resort to non-custodial measures at large.

##### Medium Term

- Implement the Under-Trial Prisoners reduction targets and institutional action plans developed under the RoL Roadmap to reduce overcrowding.
- Develop prison administration strategies and include integrated modules on contingencies and disaster-response, including the imperative to work with other concerned agencies, such as health and the relevant Criminal Justice Institutions.
- Establish a Research Unit for prisons, building on the Planning Cells in the IGPs Offices or the planned Sindh Prison Policy Board, whose job will be the identification and analysis of challenges faced by prisons and the development of prioritized plans for their solution.

POLICY ACTION NOTE

#### 2. Health Services in Pakistan's Prisons

##### Short Term

- Improve, in collaboration with the Department of Health, sanitation and hygiene in prisons through infection control measures as well as enhanced access to better water and sanitation facilities.
- Provide additional resources under a 'crisis budget' to procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Disaster Management Tools and Equipment and additional targeted training and awareness-raising for prison staff and prisoners.

##### Medium Term

- Improve health services and related facilities in prisons through infrastructural, human resources and capacity-building support. This should include awareness-raising and support related to mental health issues (for example, UTPs may be particularly vulnerable) and the provision of health care services for the reproductive health of women prisoners, mother and baby care units, etc.
- Revise prison rules to allow for the use of tele-health services and other ICT technologies during COVID-19, including for mother and child health care, building on the initiatives underway in Sindh.
- Improve coordination and common working practices for health care (to be formalised with new SOPs/regulations) in conjunction with Health Departments.

### 3. Training

#### Short Term

- Advocate and support (through translation, as required) the institutionalisation of UNODC's e-learning course on the Nelson Mandela Rules into the regular training curriculum for prison officers.
- Develop awareness amongst staff on COVID-19 risks through training sessions and the use of clear communications materials, posters etc. Develop a formal communications channel to UNODC or ICRC to supply relevant information products to Pakistan prisons.

#### Medium Term

- Develop a standardised in-person Prisons Management Training Curriculum (building on the INL work on this completed in 2015). Institutionalise the curriculum and make it mandatory for all prison officers. Also, include modules on 'Disaster Management' and 'Crisis Response'.
- Hold periodic simulations and training on how to manage prisons during a crisis, including on dynamic security, responses to security incidents and other critical situations.
- Hold more regular workshops/webinars to allow prison staff and officials (from related Criminal Justice Departments) to learn from each other and identify and work together to resolve common challenges.

### 4. Inspection of Prisons

#### Medium Term

- The inspection process is too complex; it needs to be simplified and better focused. Inspections need to be carried out against established standards, for example the Mandela Rules. Inspection regime standards need to be developed and applied uniformly across Pakistan to reduce subjectivity.
- Widely disseminate, in this regard, 'UNODC's Checklist on How to Assess Compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules'.

### 5. Coordination/Communication

#### Short Term

- Activate the current district and provincial coordination platforms to conduct regular meetings among criminal justice stakeholders and the judiciary to tackle fundamental issues, impacting prisons as a result of systematic hurdles, such as, procedural delays, case backlogs, excessive pre-trial detention, etc. These coordination platforms are notified by district judges and Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.
- Hold more frequent Steering Committees meetings, particularly in times of crisis under the Rule of Law (RoL) Roadmap to share information, identify and resolve challenges, including with respect to the flow of prisoners and other cross-institutional issues.

### 6. Institutional Readiness

#### Medium Term

- Revise and update the current legal framework, where appropriate, to include the ability to respond to health crises in the most appropriate way, building on the new provisions in the Sindh Prison and Correction Service Rules 2019 since the start of COVID-19.
- Advocate for an enhanced resort to non-custodial measures as a key element of a strategy to address prison overcrowding in Pakistan, including assessment of legal and practical obstacles that stand in the way of implementing non-custodial measures to a greater extent.
- Strengthen the actual capacity of the entities in charge of supervising and/or supporting offenders in the community as well as post-release support service providers, including probation and parole services, building on the 2019 changes in the probation laws in Punjab and Sindh.
- Engage in sensitizing both policy-makers and the general public on the rationale and effectiveness of non-custodial measures for suitable categories of offenders, as well as about the negative consequences resulting from an excessive resort to imprisonment.

The comprehensive approach of UNODC is aligned with Pakistan's vision 2025.

Striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on Peace, Justice and Institutions: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." Also contributing to the SDG Goals 3, 5, 8, 11, 15 and 17.



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