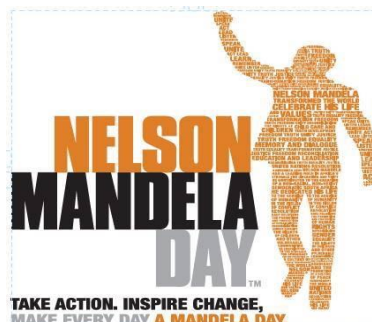


Correctional Services in Southern Africa embrace commitment to the Nelson Mandela Rules



Nelson Mandela International Day, which honors the outstanding contribution of the former South African President to humankind and remembers the 27 years he was deprived of his liberty, is an opportunity to promote humane conditions of imprisonment, raise awareness of prisoners as members of the community, and value the work of prison staff. UNODC is the custodian of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Nelson Mandela Rules emphasize that prisoners remain a part of our society.

Nelson Mandela said: “It is in your hands to make of the world a better place”. Every year on Nelson Mandela Day we are reminded to take the action and inspire change by making a difference in our communities. Throughout the month of July UNODC and the correctional services in Southern Africa organized advocacy events to promote Nelson Mandela Rules and adhering to those rules during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rule 24 stipulates that prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, as well as access to necessary health-care services free of charge.

Ensuring support during COVID-19

A high turnover of prisoners admitted to and released from prison, as well as daily interaction of prisoners with prison officers, health care professionals, service providers and visitors, increases the risk of COVID-19 entering and spreading in prison settings and the wider community. Therefore, the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and products for personal and environmental hygiene, sanitation and disinfection is essential in prison preparedness and response plans.



Ever since the first cases of COVID-19 were reported in March this year, UNODC began delivering preventive supplies and supporting improvements to prison facilities in Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia, to protect people living and working in prison from infection.

While the governments of Southern African countries have made significant progress in integrating prison health with public health systems, many prison systems still lack resources and linkages with national emergency response plans such as for COVID-19.

*UNODC has immediately moved to close this gap by supplying prison systems in **Namibia** with 15 infrared thermometers, 15 boxes of face masks, 100 boxes of gloves, and 25 liters of sanitizer, information and education materials*

In **Zambia** UNODC assisted with 25 infrared thermometers, 200 N95 masks, 500 surgical masks, 2000 surgical gloves, 150 protective work suits, 150 protective shoes, 400 information, education and communication materials, as well as with 100 mattresses, 100 blankets, 200 bed sheets, 4 electric stoves, 10 ventilation fans and washing soap to equip the new wards..



Commissioner Mr Evaristo Kalonga Receiving PPE on behalf of ZCS



UNODC offered Mandela visibility material to the prison guards and directors

Correctional services in **Mozambique** received 650 masks, 1600 surgical and procedural gloves, 25 infrared thermometers, 150 protective face visors and 35 waterproof protective suits. In Mozambique's Maputo Prison, UNODC organized cultural activities, lectures and educational sessions on Nelson Mandela



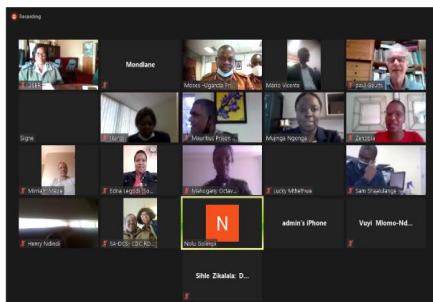
Rules, attended by the prisoners, the Directors of the National Penitentiary Service, the National Director of the Legal Affairs Service, Prison Directors, Directors and staff of Health Care Services, and UNODC Representative Cesar Guedes.

In **South Africa**, UNODC delivered 50 infrared thermometers to the non-profit organizations "TB HIV Care" and "South Africa Partners", both of which provide health services to the National Department of Correctional Services.

In **Malawi**, UNODC supported work to improve the ventilation of prison cells, sanitation facilities and access to water in Chikwawa, Mwanza, Mpyupy, Mangochi, Nkhotakota, Nkhatabay, Kasungu, Maula and Chitipa prisons. This renovation not only contribute to preventing COVID-19 transmission, but also offers long-term benefits for the health and wellbeing of people living and working in prison.



The Chief Commissioner for Malawi Prison Service, Wandika Phiri, inspecting maize harvest sponsored by UNODC, at Mpyupy prison farm



ACSA members move on prevention measures

In July, UNODC in partnership with the African Correctional Services Association (ACSA) held a virtual meeting to discuss actions taken to ensure adherence to Nelson Mandela Rules during the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar was attended by senior prison service managers from 15 ACSA member states.

Dr. Jeremias Armando Cumbe, Mozambique National Penitentiary Service's Director General and ACSA Chair, spoke about the unprecedented challenges for the African prison services amid the COVID-19 pandemic due to overcrowded prisons, poor sanitary conditions and aging infrastructure. He called for immediate measures to decongest the prison facilities and strengthen the health systems in order to control the epidemic and save lives. He added the President of the Republic of Mozambique has granted pardon to 25 terminal prisoners and granted amnesty and pardons to 5,643 prisoners.

Director of Prisons Mr. Moses Kakungulu described the efforts of the Uganda Prisons Service in mobilizing support from international development assistance partners to manage COVID-19 in prisons. Mr. Lucky Mthethwa, Acting Chief Deputy Commissioner: Incarceration and Corrections, and Ms. Mirriam Mabe, Director of Health Services of South African Department of Correctional Services updated the leaders on the current situation with COVID-19: the prevention measures introduced, the creation of a Clinical Health Monitoring Team system and daily updates to the National Command Centre, as well as the establishment of quarantine and isolation sites certified by the representatives from the South Africa Department of Health.

The Malawi Prisons Service is among the few in the region that has conducted self-assessment of compliance with Nelson Mandela Rules with the help of an UNODC toolkit. The assessment identified the following challenges: overcrowding, dilapidated infrastructure with poor ventilation, poor access to health care and prisoner rehabilitation programmes, and under-utilization of prison farms. It also highlighted high recidivism rates due to ineffective rehabilitation services and poor coordination among the criminal justice system agencies.

More information

Nelson Mandela International Day <https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/>

Nelson Mandela Rules <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/175>

UNODC Executive Director's statement <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2020/July/executive-director-statement-on-nelson-mandela-day--18-july-2020.html>

[UNODC's e-learning course on the Nelson Mandela Rules \(access upon registration\)](#)
[Assessing compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules - A UNODC checklist for internal inspection mechanisms](#)