



MONITORING VISITS TO DETENTION FACILITIES



THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION


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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The prison service is part of the criminal justice system and security sector of The Gambia under the Ministry of Interior with the primary mandate to look after inmates that are convicted or accused of committing offences. The prison services have attracted a lot of concern from national and international bodies for its alleged disregard for the human rights of inmates and detainees during the past regime. The recent revelations from the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) process confirmed that the prisons were notorious grounds for torture and other forms of human rights abuses. These conditions were characterized by overcrowded cells, torture, limited medical services, poor ventilation, lack of proper sanitary facilities and general disregard for the rights of the inmates.

Section 182 of the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia creates the prison services of the Gambia as an important body within the criminal justice system and should be a place for the rehabilitation of offenders. The Prison Act of 1954 Vol 4 CAP: 20:01 governs prison services. This law, since 1954, has not undergone any significant revision to embrace international best practices and standards necessary to ameliorate the poor conditions in the prisons.

The Gambia has ratified most of the international human rights instruments which oblige it to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including the rights of prisoners and detainees and ensuring places of detention conform to international standards and norms. A key legal instrument which stipulates the rights of prisoners is the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), ratified by The Gambia in September 2018. Other standards which apply for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment are the “UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment” and the “UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)”

MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Established by the National Human Rights Commission Act 2017, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is a permanent, independent body with the mandate to promote and protect human rights in The Gambia. its core functions include monitoring, receiving, investigating, and considering complaints of human rights violations; recommending appropriate remedial action to the Government; assisting the Government in the formulation of appropriate policies and laws to guarantee human rights.

The NHRC monitors compliance of national legislation with ratified international human rights instruments, including their effective implementation, and makes recommendations to the Government.

Section 20 of the NHRC Act 2017 gives the Commission right of access to places of detention to investigate a human rights violation.

The visits to the three main prisons of the country and detention centres of five selected police stations is in fulfilment of the mandate of the NHRC, and to have first-hand information of their conditions, understand the constraints and challenges of the prison authorities, listen to concerns of the inmates and provide recommendations to the State geared towards positive improvements in the treatment of detainees and inmates. The security and well-being of people deprived of their liberty are under the responsibility of the detaining authority who equally have the guarantee conditions of detention that respect human rights and human dignity. Thus, monitoring detention conditions forms an integral part of the system for protecting persons who are deprived of their liberty.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE VISITS AND AREAS OF FOCUS

The objectives were to:

- a. Assess the conditions under which inmates were being held;
- b. Assess the extent of compliance with established national and international laws in the treatment of inmates;
- c. Encourage the adoption and respect of legal norms and standards that prohibit torture and inhumane treatment of inmates;
- d. Assess the current rehabilitation programs in the prisons;
- e. Assess the challenges faced in the management of prisons in the country;
- f. Explore opportunities for capacity building for Prison staff;
- g. Assess the condition of pre-trial detainees in the remand wing of Mile II Central Prison and Janjangbureh Prison; and
- h. Assess the sanitary conditions in the prison facilities.

The Commission's visit to the prisons focussed on the following areas:

- i) Living conditions of inmates
- ii) Infrastructure
- iii) Visitation Rights/Contacts with the outside world (frequency, duration and regularity, conjugal visit, etc)

- iv) Food/Meals (quality, quantity, variety, frequency)
- v) Conditions of the special wing (Main Yard and Cells of Convicted Prisoners)
- vi) Conditions of the remand wing (size and occupancy level; lighting, ventilation, beds, sanitary facilities)
- vii) Conditions of the Female Wing (size and occupancy level; lighting, ventilation, beds, sanitary facilities)
- viii) Conditions of the Juvenile Wing (size and occupancy level; lighting, ventilation, beds, sanitary facilities)
- ix) Access to Medical/Health care (existence of infirmary, medication, medical staff)
- x) Personal hygiene (showers and their condition; sanitary facilities inside and outside the cells and their cleanliness; bed and beddings, their quality and cleanliness; access to soap and other toiletries)
- xi) Recreational facilities/Leisure activities
- xii) Existence of Library
- xiii) Education and vocational training of prisoners
- xiv) Challenges faced by the prison management and staff

METHODOLOGY OF THE MONITORING VISIT

At every prison and police station, the Commission held a briefing with the senior officers and explained the purpose and objectives of their visit, and the mandate of the NHRC. This was followed by visits to the detention facilities and interviews with the detainees therein; inspection of the sanitary facilities; and inspection of the offices and accommodation of the officers. At every detention facility, the Commission would explain to the inmates the objectives and limitations of the monitoring visit.

SUMMARIES OF DISCUSSIONS HELD AND OBSERVATIONS ON KEY FOCUS AREAS OF THE VISIT

A. ACCOMMODATION/LIVING CONDITIONS

We observed overcrowding in all the facilities visited, remand detention and imprisonment.

At the time of the visit Mile II Prisons had 213 detainees accommodated in 11 separate cells. Its Remand Wing, a cell, which was made to accommodate only five (5) persons at a time, now accommodates on average about 20. Some of them in the overcrowded cells who were interviewed alleged that they lie against each other in order to sleep at night, while others would wait until those sleeping wake up to have a space to sleep. At the Main Yard of the Mile II Prison, one of its biggest facilities which accommodates only male convicts, the Commission equally observed overcrowding. Similar situations were observed in Jeshwang and Jangjanbureh Prisons.



Inmates at Jeshwang Prisons complained about bed bugs infestation although the delegation was informed that public health officials occasionally go to the prisons to spray the premises with insecticide. Some of the mattresses used by the inmates are old and worn out.

The conditions of the prisons, more especially the cells, need immediate improvement and rehabilitation.

B. FOOD/MEALS OF PRISONS

The inmates interviewed in all the prisons revealed that their feeding have improved tremendously, compared to the feeding they used to receive before 2017. Inmates in all prisons complained of being served insufficient food. Some inmates at the Main Yard of Mile II Prison complained that they normally receive their lunch beyond the normal time, that is, around 5pm instead of 2pm.

The Commission however did not speak to a dietician or nutritionist at the prison to verify the quality of the food and nutritional value, but hope to do so in subsequent visits.



C. PERSONAL HYGIENE

a) State of the toilets/sanitary facilities

The conditions of all the toilets or sanitary facilities in all the prisons and detention centres left much to be desired, as they were in a very bad state. The stench in the cells was overwhelming, and some of the toilets had dysfunctional taps.

The remand wing of Jeshwang Prison had 57 detainees at the time of the visit, served by 4 toilets and bathrooms. The detainees use the bathrooms to launder their clothes.

b) Inadequate soap and toiletries

Detainees in all the prisons, more specifically from detainees in the Remand Wing and Convicts in Mile II Prisons complained that laundry soap, blankets and uniforms they were supplied with were insufficient.



D. ACCESS TO MEDICAL/HEALTH

Both Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons have offices used as clinics. The former clinic for Jangjanbureh Prisons, built by a former Governor of the Region, is now used by prison officers for accommodation. The Medics (prison officers trained to serve as health assistants) of the clinics of Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons complained about the lack of medical equipment and tools, and of shortages of drugs/medicine necessary for their effective service delivery. There is little or no privacy for patients at the Jeshwang Prison 'clinic' as it is not occupied by only medics, but also instructors that work in the tailoring workshop.

Jangjanbureh Prison has no clinic and depends entirely on the Jangjanbureh Health Centre, which is directly opposite the prison, and which serves as its main referral whenever inmates need medical attention. When the health centre does not have the required medicines, families of inmates may be contacted to buy the prescribed medicine. In some instances, proceeds from the prison bakery, operated by prison officials and built in 2015, are used to buy medicine for the inmates. Medications are kept by the prison authorities and given to the inmates in accordance with the prescriptions from the health centre.

The clinic of the Mile II Prison mainly depends on the Ministry of Health for the limited medical supplies. In the case of inmates with more serious health or medical conditions, the clinic relies on an ambulance to transport inmates or detainees to the nearest hospital and where necessary to the mental health institution (Tanka Tanka).

Jangjanbureh Prisons does not have its own vehicle to transport sick inmates referred to Bansang Hospital for treatment; it relies on the ambulance of Jangjanbureh Health Center for referrals. However, the Prison faces enormous difficulties when Prison Officers have to accompany inmates for their medical follow-ups as it does not have its own vehicle for this purpose. Jeshwang Prison has a mini ambulance for transporting inmates to hospitals. However, it was observed that the ambulance at Jeshwang is very small.

Both Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons have medics that were trained at Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital.

E. VISITATION RIGHTS/CONTACTS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

i. Contacts with Family Members

Gambian inmates who were interviewed indicated that their visitation right is now respected unlike before 2017 when restrictions were placed on the number of times they could be visited by relatives and loved ones. Inmates are now allowed visits on all days except on Sundays, and once a month for convicts (it was once every three months during the previous regime).

However, non-Gambian inmates who were interviewed complained that they have lost contact with their families since their detention. The prison authorities at Jeshwang Prison indicated that they assist non-Gambians to reach their families. However, this is difficult given the lack of any program to facilitate this process. They also highlighted that most embassies in The Gambia conduct annual visits to the prisons to speak to their nationals. This opens up an avenue for non-Gambians to reach out to their families.



ii. Conjugal Visitation Rights

The Commission inquired if convicts are allowed conjugal visitation rights and the frequency of such a visit. However, prison authorities indicated that such a right is at present not available to the convicts. About the practice of sodomy amongst the prisoners, the prison authorities are not sure of its prevalence or existence although they indicated it could be happening therein.

F. AVAILABILITY OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES/LEISURE ACTIVITIES FOR INMATES

Of the three prisons visited, only Mile II Prisons had a sort of a recreational facility for the inmates, including a basketball pitch. At Jeshwang Prisons, inmates are not allowed to go out for recreational purpose because the perimeter fence of the prison is short and there is fear the prisoners could climb over the fence and escape. This leaves them in the cells for 24 hours. Jangjanbureh Prison does not have any recreational facility and the Commission was not shown any indoor games used by the inmates. However, the Juvenile Wing has a basketball lawn that is used by juvenile inmates to play soccer in the evening.

G. EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL AND LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES FOR PRISONERS

Mile II Prison, as part of its rehabilitation efforts, has a vocational training centre that is housed within the premises. The Centre offers trainings to inmates on livelihood skills such as tailoring, plumbing, electrical installation, entrepreneurship, welding, and Information Communication Technology (ICT). So far, it has trained or graduated 23 (twenty-three) inmates on electrical installation and 43 (forty-three) inmates trained on electrical installation, tailoring, plumbing and ICT.



There is an ongoing training of 80 (eighty) inmates on satellite installation, plumbing, tailoring, entrepreneurship, construction as well as ICT. The main donors of the Centre have been Insight Training Centre, MRC Holland and GIZ.

Despite the availability of these trainings to inmates at Mile II Prison, very few of them benefit from the training due to lack of space and inadequate learning equipment. Most of the inmates spend the whole day in the Main Yard without doing anything useful.

The Commission noticed that Jeshwang Prison does not have a welding workshop even though prisoners were seen welding under a mango tree with tools borrowed from Mile II Prison. Work is only carried when the prison needs a repair work to do. The officials also indicated that there is no program on skills training for the inmates at Jeshwang and Janjanbureh.

Janjangbureh Prison does not have any vocational or livelihood skills training centre for its inmates.

H. EXISTENCE OF LIBRARY FACILITIES WITHIN THE PRISONS

Mile II Prison has a library which is housed in a small room within the Main Yard with very limited space. Consequently, inmates can only borrow books but cannot read them inside the library. Both Jeshwang and Janjangbureh Prisons do not have a library.

CONDITIONS OF THE JUVENILE WING AT JESHWANG PRISONS

The Juvenile Wing in Jeshwang serves as the only prison for juvenile offenders in the whole country. The facility has two cells for convicts and remanded detainees. At the time of the visit 23 inmates were held, 5 of whom were convicts and 18 remanded and undergoing trial in various courts. The youngest person on remand at the time of the visit was said to be 14 years' old who has been charged with stealing. The longest serving juvenile detainee in remand is jointly charged with adults for alleged robbery with violence and has already spent 1 year 6 months in detention. Three of the children on remand are charged with murder. The common charges recorded amongst the juvenile prisoners were theft, robbery with violence, and assault causing grievous bodily harm.

- **Status of the toilets:** The Juvenile Wing has 4 toilets shared by convicts and remand detainees. Due to poor hygiene, sanitary conditions and lack of running water, the stench of urine and faeces were overwhelming. All the toilets needed a complete overhaul.
- **Sleeping arrangements:** All the detainees sleep on mattresses placed on concrete platforms.
- **Delayed Appearance in Court:** The following juvenile detainees expressed their concerns to the delegation:
 - a) Boy, 16 years, charged with robbery with violence, alleged that he did not have any effective communication with his lawyer.
 - b) Boy, 17 years, charged with possession of a prohibited drug, alleged that he has not gone to court for nearly 3 months.
 - c) Boy, 17 years, charged with murder, complained about the efficiency of his representation.

(Actual names withheld but can be available on request)

CONDITIONS OF THE FEMALE WING

Mile II Central Prisons has a designated female wing specifically for female convicts and those on remand, (above the age of 18 years). Jeshwang does not have any female wing. Janjangbureh has converted a former chapel within the prisons into a female wing. At the Female Wing of Mile II Prison, the Commission found a remandee who claimed to be less than 18 years although the Commission could not ascertain her age.

I. PROLONGED DETENTION AND DELAYED COURT APPEARANCE (ALLEGED)

Some of the remandees who spoke to the Commission, at both Mile II and Jangjangbureh Prisons, complained of their prolonged detention and the slow pace of their trials in the courts. The following remandees at the Remand Wing of Mile II Prisons voiced out their prolonged detention and delayed court appearances:

- a) **Male:** Charged with robbery and the case file is with Attorney General's Chambers for advice;
- b) **Male:** charged with homicide and he does not understand the nature of the charge against him;
- c) **Male:** charged with murder and had not gone to court for over four months;
- d) **Male:** charged with rape and had not gone to court for three months;
- e) **Male:** charged with murder in relation to the caste-system problem in Garawol, and does not understand the charge against him;
- f) **Male:** charged with a sexual offence against a fourteen-year-old girl and he alleged that he does not understand the nature of the charge against him; and
- g) **Male:** charged with rape and had not gone to court for two months;

The following prisoners expressed concerns about their trials and convictions viz:

- a) **Male:** serving four years highlighted that he has difficulty understanding the computation of his sentence;
- b) **Male:** expressed that he wants to appeal against his conviction but cannot have access to his records of proceedings; and

At Jangjanbureh Prisons, the Commission received complaints from remand detainees who have spent a lot of time in remand due to slow court processes. Their situation is further complicated by the absence of a High Court in Central River Region, North Bank Region and Lower River Region.

At the Remand Wing of Mile II Prison, some of the detainees interviewed alleged that they have been in remand for about 7 years; while others alleged that they were brought to the remand with unsigned remand warrants. At the time of the visit, these allegations could not be verified from the records of the Prison.

Some inmates at the Main Yard of Mile II Prisons complained that their appeals have been pending for a few years since their convictions.

J. COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE FOR INMATES AT JANGJANBUREH PRISON

Jangjanbureh Prison has a Complaint handling procedure in place and is overseen by the chief officer. Inmates can lodge complaints about their welfare or relationship with other inmates. The major types of complaints received are computation of sentences, health and other conditions.

K. ISSUANCE OF LICENSE AND REMISSION TO CONVICTS

The Commission was informed by officers at Jangjanbureh Prisons that licenses and remissions are given to only Gambian convicts. A License allows one-third of a prisoner's sentence to be reduced subject to good behaviour. However, the Commission received a complaint that non-Gambian convicts do not enjoy license for their sentences.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PRISON AUTHORITIES AND STAFF

1. Budget Support from the Government

The prisons high command informed the Commission that the budget allocation to the three (3) prisons, namely Mile II Central Prison, Jeshwang Prison and Jangjanbureh Prison, is never adequate as the bulk of the allocation goes into purchase of feeding for the inmates and very little for operational, administrative and developmental matters. It was revealed that the Gambia Prisons Service's approved 2020 budget GMD 34 is insufficient for the annual sustenance and maintenance of the 3 Prisons.

2. Vehicles/Transportation

The authorities in all three prisons lamented the lack of vehicles which have tremendously hampered their operational activities, including transporting inmates to and from the courts, to health facilities and in facilitating their administrative duties. The Commission saw several derelict vehicles at Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons, especially ambulances. The Commission noticed that the prisons utilise a lot of firewood for cooking for which they need transportation. At the time of the visit, the only available vehicle at Jangjanbureh Prison, which is used for both operational and administrative purposes, had a breakdown.

3. Electricity Supply for the Prisons

Prison officers complained about the erratic nature of the electricity supply to all three prisons. Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons have their own standby generators but are constantly breaking down.

Jangjanbureh Prison had solar panels that were supplying the whole prison with electricity. However, the Commission was informed that these panels have not been working or functioning for nearly six months. The lack of an alternative source of electricity for the Prison presents a risk of prisoner escape at night.

4. Office Spaces

The Commission examined the offices of the Prison Officers in all the 3 prisons and police stations visited. Apart from the tight spaces, most of the offices lacked basic, functioning equipment such as computers, laptops, photocopiers and printers.

5. Consultation and Involvement of Prison Officers (and Prison Service) Regarding Prisoners who benefit from the Prerogative of Mercy

It was brought to the attention of the Commission that in many instances, Prison Officers (and the Prison Service) who work directly with prisoners and are au fait with their character in prison are not adequately consulted or involved when prisoners are being considered under the 'prerogative of mercy' exercise, stipulated in Section 82 of the 1997 Constitution.

6. Staff Quarters (Accommodation) of Prison Officers at Mile II Prison

The Commission visited the staff quarters of the Prison Officers at Mile II Prison. The buildings looked dilapidated while the bathrooms were in a horrible condition with showers and toilets that need urgent repair. The Commission was informed that some of the officers who used to live at quarters had to move out because of the bad conditions of the building.

7. Prison Leadership and Management

The delegation had discussions with the inmates about the prisons management and leadership, and majority of them commended the current leadership of the prison services for treating them well. They appreciated the positive improvements being undertaken in the prisons. The visitation rights have improved without any complaint of solitary confinement or torture.



VISITS TO THE POLICE STATIONS (EXAMINATION OF THEIR DETENTION FACILITIES)

Purpose and Objectives of the Visits to the Police Stations

The objectives were to:

- a) Assess the condition of detainees in Police custody;
- b) Assess the sanitary conditions in the Police facilities.
- c) Assess the extent of compliance with established laws in the treatment of detainees;
- d) Assess the extent of compliance with international standards on treatment of detainees; and
- e) Assess the challenges faced in the management of crimes in the country.

The Commission visited the following Police Stations: Banjul Police Station, Kairaba Police Station, Serre Kunda Police Station, Jangjanbureh Police Station and Brikamaba Police Station. At each Station, the delegation held discussions with the police officers and examined the cells, as well as, their various offices.

Below are the observations regarding the police custody detention centers:

L. Conditions of the detention cells and their toilets

- **Kairaba Police station:** The cells were smelly and dark with poor ventilation. The floor of the cells had water and moisture. It was not possible to ascertain where the water was coming from, but the floors of all the cells were wet. The only toilet for detainees also emitted strong stench and human waste. This odour could be smelled from the entrance to the Charge Office of the station. At the time of the visit, surprisingly the facility did not have any detainee.
- **Banjul Police Station:** The station had a big detention room with cells inside. At the time of the visit, the detention room had nine (9) detainees. It was dark and smelly. Though the ventilation of the cell was better, its only big window exposed the remandees to mosquitoes. The Commission inspected the small and dark cells in the station which, it was informed, were no longer in use.

However, a detainee who is suspected to be mentally challenged is put in one of the cells pending their transfer to the mental health institution (Tanka Tanka) for observation.

The adjacent toilets were had bad odor and were unfit for human use.

- **Brikamaba Police Station:** It has two cells but only one is being used to keep detainees. At the time of the visit there were no detainees in that particular cell. It was dark, small and with poor ventilation. There are no toilets within the Police Station. The Station Officer indicated that due to the state of the cells, detainees are taken to Bansang Police Station where they await trial.
- **Jangjanbureh Police Station:** It has only one cell which is somewhat spacious. At the time of the visit, there were no detainees in the cell. The cell did not have its own toilet. Detainees use the toilets in the police yard.
- **Serrekunda Police Station:** there was only one cell behind the police counter on entry. There was only one detainee involved in a motor vehicle accident. The cell had two toilets that were dirty and smelly.

M. Separate Detention Cells for the Sexes, particularly Children

Jangjanbureh, Kairaba, Serre Kunda and Brikamaba Police Stations have only one main cell; no separate cells for children or women detainees. According to the officers interviewed, women and children detainees are usually kept behind the counters where they are visible from the entrance.

Banjul Police Station has a separate cell for minors and female detainees. It also has a secured enclosure opposite its main counter where women and children are detained during the day.

Officers at Serre Kunda Police Station indicated they transport female and children detainees to Brusubi Police Station for custody.

1. Operational Vehicles and Office Equipment

The officers met and interviewed at all the five (5) Police Stations expressed the urgent need to have more vehicles for operational purposes such as arrest and visiting crime scenes. They also lack office equipment like computers, printers and fingerprint machine. Brikamaba Police Station has only one vehicle even though many of their court cases are heard in Jangjanbureh or Bansang. Therefore, transportation of police prosecutors to and from the courts is hampered.

The Child Welfare Unit at Serre Kunda Police does not have the requisite facilities to investigate Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV).

N. Small and Congested Offices

The offices seen at the various Police Stations were not spacious. Offices meant for one were sometimes shared by officers from various units thereby making them very congested. The office that the Police Child Welfare Unit of the Serrekunda Police uses for investigating Sexual and Gender Based Violence does not accord privacy to victims.

O. Challenges of Brikamaba Police Station

Brikamaba Police Station is situated in a rented house, sandwiched by all kind shops of some sort. The building itself is in a dilapidated situation. The Police Officers interviewed, including the Station Officer, lamented on the lack of a vehicle for operational purposes, the difficulties they have in feeding detainees due to the lack of petty cash, their poor living conditions, the lack of a tap at the police station, the irregular court sittings in the area, the expensive rental charges and staff's lack of life insurance coverage and transport allowance.

CONCLUSION

This report captures the visit of the Commission to Mile II Prison, Janjanbureh Prison, Jeshwang Prison and selected police detention facilities across the country. during these visits, the Commission observed that the conditions of all the prisons and police stations did not live up to international human rights norms and standards relating to the rights of detainees and prisoners. The Commission received complaints on various aspects from prisoners and detainees dealing with issues of prolonged detention in remand, legal representation and overall conditions of detention. This was followed by inspection of the sanitary and detention facilities. The Commission noticed that accommodation, limited office spaces and lack of vehicles were major problems for prison and police officers. While the Commission observed many challenges in the prisons and police detention facilities, it did not receive complaints of allegations of torture, use of inhumane means of restraint and use of solitary confinement. The constitutional limit of 72 hours' detention without trial all police officers the Commission met.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE PRISONS

1. **Renovation of existing prisons and Construction of a modern prison:** The current prison infrastructure is dilapidated and there is serious overcrowding in all the three prisons. There is the urgent need to renovate all existing prisons and the need to build a new, modern prison facility which meets international standards.
2. **Food:** While there has been improvement in the quality of the food served to inmates, there is room for improvement. The quantity and variety would need improvement as some inmates complained about these. There is the need to hire a nutritionist or dietician for each of the prisons who would be responsible for the meals of the inmates. Since the prisoners are their own cooks, there is the need to purchase for them labour saving devices to ameliorate the hardship they encounter.
3. **Sanitary facilities and toilets:** There is the urgent need for the Government to embark on massive renovation of all the sanitary facilities in all the prisons and detention facilities in police stations.
4. **Medical/Health Care:** The infirmaries or 'clinics' at both Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons require upgrading to better standards and constant and adequate medical stocks needed for the medics to provide immediate first aid and primary care to sick inmates. All the prisons should have a medical doctor who regularly visits to do medical check-ups on the inmates.
5. **Need to construct Female and Juvenile Wings in all Prisons:** There must be female and juvenile wings constructed in all the prisons.
6. **Speedy disposition of cases at the courts:** Due to overcrowding in all the prisons there is need for the Ministry of Justice to coordinate a committee to consider this issue and come up with recommendations to decongest prisons. There is also the need for the Judiciary to ensure the expeditious disposition of cases.
7. **Provision of operational vehicles:** The government needs to purchase adequate vehicles such as ambulances, for the operations of the prisons. All the three prisons visited do not have operational vehicles which is hampering their work and prison management.
8. **Regular health inspection of the Prisons:** The Ministry of Health should put in place a mechanism which would ensure regular inspection of the prisons, to advise the Government on what are needed to maintain the highest standard of health and hygiene in the prisons, and the prevention of bed bug infestation.

9. **Educational/Vocational Skills Training Center:** There is the need to establish Educational/vocational skills training centers in all the prisons.
10. **Library:** There is the need to establish well equipped libraries in all the prisons.
11. **Recreational Facilities:** There is the need to establish recreational facilities in all the prisons. Prisoners should be allowed some time out during the day to take part in recreational activities.
12. **Budgetary increments:** There is the need for the Government to ensure that all the prisons have adequate budgetary allocations for recurrent and programme matters.
13. **Improvement of the Staff Quarters at Mile II Prisons:** The Government should carry out massive renovation at the staff quarters of Mile II Prisons to make it habitable and fit for purpose.
14. **Ratification of OPCAT:** It is urgent that The Gambia ratifies OPCAT, which obligates States Parties to put in place a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to prevent torture and other forms of ill-treatment at the domestic level.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE DETENTION FACILITIES AT THE POLICE STATION (POLICY CUSTODY)

1. Renovate the cells at the Police stations, including their sanitary facilities. They also need to be well ventilated and their windows secured to prevent mosquitoes from entering therein.
2. Build a new Police Station for Brikamaba or rent for it a more spacious, conducive building which would have many offices that can be used for various purposes.
3. In conformity with international standards and the Children's Act 2005, all police stations should have separate detention facilities for men, women, boys and girls. The Government should ensure that when the current police stations are being renovated or new ones are being built, this standard is taken into account.
4. To carry out their work effectively and efficiently, every police station should have functioning vehicles for operational and administrative purposes.
5. Office equipment like computers, printers, fingerprint machine, facilities to investigate Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) are requisite for effective police work. It is important to make these available in sufficient quantity to every police station.
6. Police Child and Gender Welfare Officers work with vulnerable and often traumatized members of society. As such, every police station should ensure that these officers have their own offices in which they can carry out their work in privacy.

FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations would be made by the Commission. Regular monitoring visits would be conducted. In subsequent visits, experts from other agencies and Civil Society may be requested to join the monitoring visits.

Delegation that visited Jeshwang Prisons and Kairaba and Serre Kunda Police Stations

1. Mrs Jainaba Johm, Vice Chairperson, NHRC
2. Mr Imam Baba Leigh, Commissioner, NHRC
3. Mr Mansour Jobe, Senior Legal Officer, NHRC
4. Ms Matilda Mendy, Deputy Executive Secretary, NHRC
5. Mr Sainey Bah, Legal Officer, NHRC
6. Ms Mam Demban N Jobe, UN TJ Office
7. Ms Marian George, UN TJ Office

NHRC Delegation that Visited Mile II Central Prison and Banjul Police Station

1. Mr. Emmanuel Daniel Joof, Chairman, NHRC
2. Mr. Njundu Drammeh, Commissioner, NHRC
3. Dr. Cherno Omar Barry, Executive Secretary, NHRC
4. Mr. Omar Nyang, Director of Programmes and Resource Mobilization, NHRC
5. Mr. Modou Sowe, Investigator, NHRC
6. Ms. Ida Perrson, UNTJ Office
7. Ms. Awa Peters, UNTJ Office
8. Supt. Habib Sanyang, Gambia Police Force

Delegation that visited Janjangbureh Prison, and Janjangbureh and Brikama-Ba Police Stations

1. Mr Emmanuel D Joof, Chairperson
2. Mr Imam Baba Leigh, Commissioner
3. Mr Njundu Drammeh, Commissioner
4. Dr Cherno Omar Barry, Executive Secretary
5. Mr Mansour Jobe, Senior Legal Officer
6. Ms Matilda Mendy, Deputy Executive Secretary
7. Mr Sainey Bah, Legal Officer
8. Mr Modou Sowe, Investigator
9. Supt. Habib Sanyang, Gambia Police Force

Prisons visited	Date of visits
Mile II Central Prison	12 December 2019
Jeshwang Prison and the Juvenile Wing	12 December 2019
Janjangbureh Prison	13 December 2019

Police Stations visited	Date of visits
Kairaba Police Station	12 December 2019
Serrekunda Police Station	12 December 2019
Banjul Police Station	12 December 2019
Janjangbureh Police Station	13 December 2019
Brikamaba Police Station	13 December 2019

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