



Report on the **Monitoring of Prisons and Police Stations**



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CRR	Central River Region
DLEAG	Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia
EFSTH	Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital
GAF	Gambia Armed Forces
GID	Gambia Immigration Department
GPF	Gambia Police Force
GPS	Gambia Prison Service
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
KMC	Kanifing Municipal Council
LRR	Lower River Region
NALA	National Agency for Legal Aid
NBR	North Bank Region
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
PIU	Police Intervention Unit
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
SOS	Save Our Souls
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
WCR	West Coast Region

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Human Rights Commission wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the Gambia Prison Service and the Gambia Police Force for their cooperation and support throughout the monitoring exercise. Their openness in granting full access to facilities, detainees, records, and staff greatly enhanced the quality, accuracy, and integrity of the monitoring exercise. The willingness of the officers and management to engage constructively, share information, and respond to inquiries reflects a commendable commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous institutional improvement.

The Commission further acknowledges the important role played by both the Prison and Police Officers who, despite operating under challenging conditions, demonstrated professionalism and courtesy during the visits. Their collaboration ensured that the monitoring exercise was conducted smoothly and in accordance with the Commission's mandate to promote and protect human rights in all places of detention.

The NHRC looks forward to continued partnership with the Gambia Prison Service and the Gambia Police Force in the collective effort to strengthen human rights compliance, improve conditions of detention, and enhance the welfare, safety, and dignity of both detainees and officers across the country.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) conducted its 2025 Monitoring Mission to Prisons and selected Police Stations across The Gambia to assess detention conditions, treatment of detainees, and institutional compliance with national legislation and international human rights standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Degrading and Inhuman Treatment or Punishment (CAT), Women's Act, the Children's Act 2005, and relevant domestic frameworks.

The mission found persistent systemic shortcomings across the detention landscape, most notably: severe overcrowding, deteriorating infrastructure, sanitation breakdowns, inadequate healthcare, weak documentation and case-management systems, and prolonged pretrial detention driven by structural delays in the justice system.

In the prison system, conditions remain far below minimum human rights standards. Overcrowding, understaffing, absence of specialized healthcare services, lack of rehabilitation programmes, and the poor living and working conditions of prison officers significantly undermined safety, discipline, and the protection of detainee rights. Prison officers operate under resource-constrained environments, with limited training opportunities, insufficient equipment, and poor welfare provisions.

At Police Stations, the assessment revealed notable regional disparities in infrastructure, the absence of dedicated child-friendly and gender-sensitive facilities, poor recordkeeping, challenges in the timely granting of bail or access to legal counsel, and instances of detainees being held in cells that fail to meet minimum ventilation and sanitation requirements. The lack of Police Child Welfare Officers and Gender Officers in many stations continues to place vulnerable groups—particularly women, children, and victims of sexual and gender-based violence—at greater risk.

The Report concludes with prioritized, actionable recommendations and a structured follow-up monitoring framework to guide the Government, security institutions, and relevant partners in implementing essential reforms aimed at strengthening human rights compliance and promoting accountability.

Key Findings

A. Prisons

- Persistent overcrowding, especially at Mile 2 and Janjanbureh Prisons.
- Poor sanitation such as non-functional toilets, inadequate bathing facilities, and poor waste management.
- Inadequate healthcare services, with limited medical personnel, shortages of essential drugs, and lack of mental health support.
- Insufficient rehabilitation programmes, including the lack of educational, vocational, or psychosocial support services.
- Weak recordkeeping systems and weak coordination between prisons and prosecutors, contributing to delays in case management and prolonged pretrial detention.

- Insufficient services such as health care, legal aid and access to social services, especially in Jeshwang Prisons juvenile wing
- Dilapidated infrastructure, including failing roofs, broken bedding, unsafe electrical wiring, and poor ventilation and lighting, poor sanitation and hygiene and food quality.
- Inadequate working conditions for prison officers, including staffing shortages, limited training opportunities, lack of protective equipment, low remuneration, and insufficient accommodation and welfare support.

B. Police Stations

- Poor cell conditions, including lack of natural light and ventilation, and inadequate sanitation facilities.
- Delays in granting bail, access to counsel, or notifying family members.
- Inconsistent documentation, with many stations lacking updated arrest/detention registers and custody logbooks.
- Absence of designated gender and child-friendly spaces for interviews and custody, leaving gender and child welfare officers to conduct interviews in open spaces and minors exposed to adult detainees or held in unsuitable environments.
- Inadequate trained Police Child Welfare and Gender Officers in several stations.
- Infrastructure disparities between rural and urban stations, with rural facilities generally in poorer conditions.
- Limited availability of vehicles and logistical resources, affecting timely response and transportation of detainees to court.
- Frequent power outages, lack of water, and overcrowded cells.

Key Recommendations

For Government & Ministry of Interior

- Prioritize infrastructure renovation and expansion of prisons and police stations to reduce overcrowding and meet international minimum standards.
- Increase budgetary allocation for detention facilities, healthcare services, and rehabilitation programmes.
- Train prison and police recruits on human rights, gender sensitivity, and child protection.
- Provide improved remuneration, accommodation, and welfare packages for detention officers.
- Ensure operational classification and segregation of detainees according to international standards.

For The Gambia Prison Service

- Strengthen healthcare services, including the recruitment of full-time medical staff and regular supply of essential medicines.
- Establish robust documentation and case management systems, incorporating digital recordkeeping where feasible.

- Expand rehabilitation, education, and vocational programmes for detainees.
- Improve food quality and nutrition by introducing a training program for prison cooks and food handlers in partnership training institutions.
- Provide continuous professional development for prison officers.

For The Gambia Police Force

- Upgrade cell conditions, ensuring adequate ventilation, sanitation, lighting, and water supply.
- Establish child and gender sensitive spaces
- Deploy trained Child Welfare and Gender Officers to all stations.
- Standardize all arrest and detention documentation across regions.
- Ensure detainees have timely access to bail and legal representation, as well as contact with their families.
- Strengthen internal oversight and accountability mechanisms to prevent abuse.

For Judiciary & Justice Sector Institutions

- Address delays in the administration of justice, especially for remand cases.
- Enhance coordination between police, prisons, prosecutors and courts to improve case-flow and minimize pretrial detention.
- Expand legal aid services, particularly vulnerable detainees.



The Gambia Prison Service

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Gambia Prison Service and the Gambia Police Force are integral components of The Gambia's criminal justice system and security sector, operating under the oversight of the Ministry of Interior. The primary mandate of the Police is to enforce the law and protect lives and property while the Prison Service manages individuals who are convicted or accused of committing offences. However, the Police and Prison institutions have historically attracted significant concern from both national and international bodies due to allegations of widespread human rights violations during the previous regime.

Revelations from the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) confirmed that the Prisons and Police Stations were notorious places for unlawful detention, enforced disappearances, torture, and other forms of human rights violations. Their conditions were described as appalling, characterized by overcrowded cells, inadequate medical services, poor ventilation, lack of proper sanitary facilities, and a general disregard for the rights and dignity of detainees and inmates.

Section 182 of the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia establishes the Prison Service as an essential component of the criminal justice system, intended to serve as a place for rehabilitation rather than punishment. Section 178(1) of the 1997 Constitution and Section 4 of the Police Act establish the Gambia Police Force to protect life and property, prevent, and detect crime, and apprehend and prosecute offenders. However, the governing legislation, the Prison Act of 1954 and the Police Act of 1949 (Vol. 4 CAP: 20:01) have not undergone significant revision since their enactment, making them outdated and misaligned with international best practices and standards necessary to improve detention conditions.

The Gambia has ratified key regional and international human rights instruments, obligating the State to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of all persons, including those deprived of their liberty. Among these instruments is the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), ratified in September 2018. Additionally, international standards such as 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) provide comprehensive guidelines for safeguarding the rights of detainees and ensuring humane conditions in detention facilities.

Despite these commitments, reports from previous NHRC monitoring exercises and TRRC have highlighted persistent challenges, including overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate healthcare, poor infrastructure, inadequate food and nutrition and prolonged pre-trial detention, which undermine the right to fair trial and due process.

MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established by the National Human Rights Commission Act, 2017, as a permanent and independent institution mandated to promote and protect human rights in The Gambia. Under Section 12 of the Act, some of its core functions include:

- Monitoring, receiving, investigating, and considering complaints of human rights violations.
- Recommending appropriate remedial actions to the Government.
- Assisting in the formulation of policies and laws that guarantee human rights.
- Monitoring compliance with national legislation and ratified international human rights instruments.
- Making recommendations to ensure effective implementation of human rights instruments.

Section 20 of the NHRC Act 2017 gives the Commission the right to access all places of detention to investigate allegations of human rights violations. In line with this mandate, the Commission conducts regular monitoring visits to Prisons, Police Stations, and other detention facilities to:

- Assess conditions of detention and treatment of detainees and inmates and their compatibility with human rights standards.
- Identify challenges faced by Prison and Police authorities in the execution of their mandates.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to improve compliance with national and international human rights norms, standards, and best practices.

Monitoring detention conditions is, therefore, a critical component of the NHRC's mandate and forms part of the national system for protecting people deprived of their liberties. In November 2025, the Commission monitored the three (3) Prisons (Mile II, Jeshwang and Janjanbureh) and thirty (30) Police Stations.

AIM/FOCUS OF THE COMMISSION'S MONITORING VISITS

The Commission's visits to the Prisons and Police Stations were aimed at assessing their conditions and compliance with human rights standards. The monitoring focused on the following key areas:

1. Living Conditions of Inmates: Overall environment and comfort within detention facilities.
2. Infrastructure: Physical state of buildings and facilities.
3. Visit by Family and Contact with the Outside World: Frequency, duration, and regularity of visits.
4. Food and Nutrition: Quality, quantity, variety, and frequency of meals provided.

5. Conditions of Specific Wings: Main Yard, Remand Wing, Female Wing, Juvenile Wing, and Security Wing.
6. Access to Medical and Health Care: existence of an infirmary, and availability of medication, medical staff and healthcare services.
7. Personal Hygiene: Conditions of the sanitary facilities inside and outside cells; cleanliness of beds and bedding; access to soap and toiletries.
8. Availability of recreational facilities and leisure activities: Opportunities for exercise and recreation.
9. Library Facilities: Availability and accessibility of reading materials.
10. Education and Vocational Training: Programmes available for skill development and learning, and ongoing schooling/education.
11. Challenges Faced by Prison Management and Staff: Operational and resource-related difficulties.
12. Pending Court Cases and Appeals: Status of legal proceedings for inmates.

The objectives of the Monitoring Mission were to:

1. Assess the living conditions of inmates and detainees in all places of detention, including the Prisons and Police Stations.
2. Determine the extent to which detention facilities adhere to established national laws and international human rights standards governing the treatment of detainees, including the Nelson Mandela Rules.
3. Assess operational and resource-related challenges in the management of detention facilities.
4. Examine the conditions of pre-trial detainees in the Remand Wings of Mile II Central Prison, Jeshwang Prison, and Janjangbureh Prison.
5. Assess the availability and effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes within the Prison system.
6. Assess existing opportunities for capacity building for Prison staff in Prisons Management, human rights and other relevant areas.
7. Assess the state of sanitary facilities and hygiene practices in all detention facilities.
8. Assess the conditions in Police cells, treatment of detainees, record-keeping, and officers' adherence to the rule of law and due process.
9. Assess the status of legal proceedings for inmates, including pending cases and appeals.

POLICE STATIONS



At the police stations/ Detention Centers visited, the monitoring teams conducted activities such as examining the conditions of cells and sanitary facilities, reviewing Station Diaries and other relevant documentation, interviewing both the Station Officers and detainees present, and assessing compliance with constitutional safeguards such as family contact and access to legal representation or legal aid. The teams also assessed the availability and adequacy of food provided to detainees and documented challenges observed on-site, including operational or resource constraints faced by officers.

METHODOLOGY OF THE MONITORING VISIT TO THE PRISONS

A qualitative, standards-based checklist guided the assessment, structured in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules. Four (4) teams, each comprising a Commissioner, Legal Officer, Investigating Officer and other officers of the Commission, were formed, with each team assigned specific LGAs to cover. Team A visited Mile II Prison and selected Police Stations in Kanifing Municipality; Team B monitored Jeshwang Prison and selected Police Stations in West Coast Region; Team C visited selected Police Stations in North Bank and Lower River Region; and Team D monitored Jangjanbureh Prison and selected Police Stations in Central River and Upper River Regions.

Following the visits, the Commission prepared a comprehensive report that captured observations, challenges, and recommendations for improvement and reforms of the monitored detention facilities in line with international human rights standards and best practices.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AT PRISONS AND POLICE STATIONS/DETENTION FACILITIES

PART I: FINDINGS- PRISONS

Mile II Central Prison

Mile II Central Prison continues to face severe challenges in meeting International Human Rights standards for the care and treatment of prisoners. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate health care, poor ventilation and lighting and prolonged pre-trial detention remain critical issues. While there have been improvements in inmates' visitation rights and access to vocational training programmes, psychosocial support and rehabilitation programmes remain inadequate or non-existent. The inspection found that the Security Wing and the cells within the Main Yard remain in poor condition. These areas did not have adequate ventilation, insufficient lighting, and deteriorating infrastructure that pose risks to detainees' health and safety. Additionally, the Female Wing lacked several essential facilities, including adequate sanitation.



Figure 1: Number or Roll of Prisoners at the Time of Visit

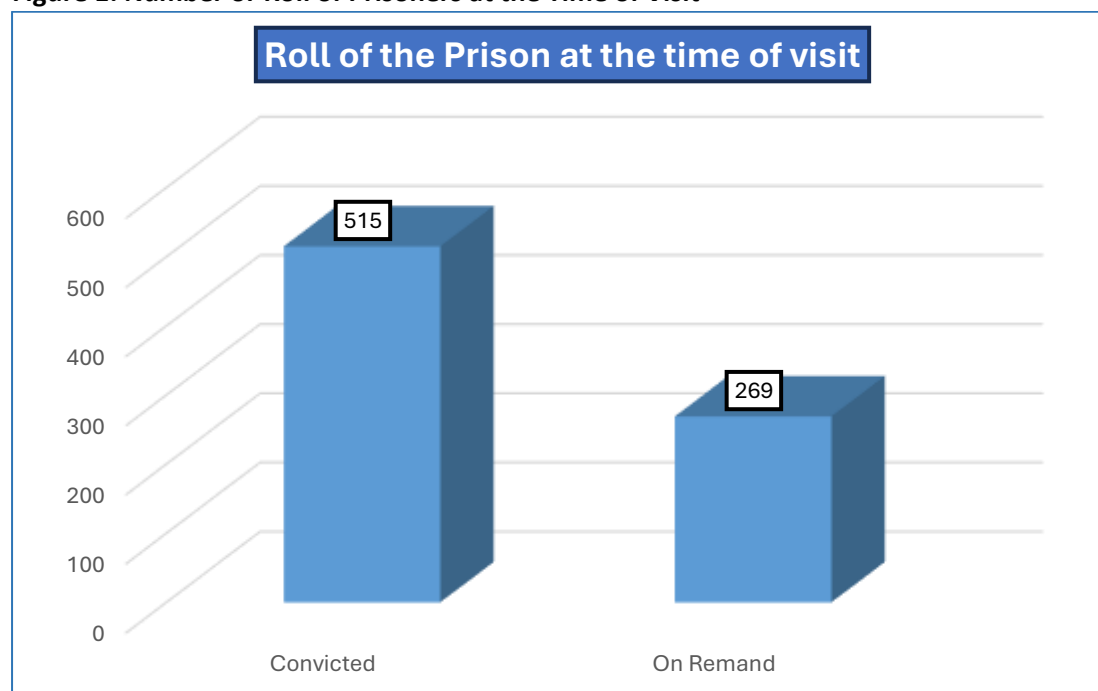
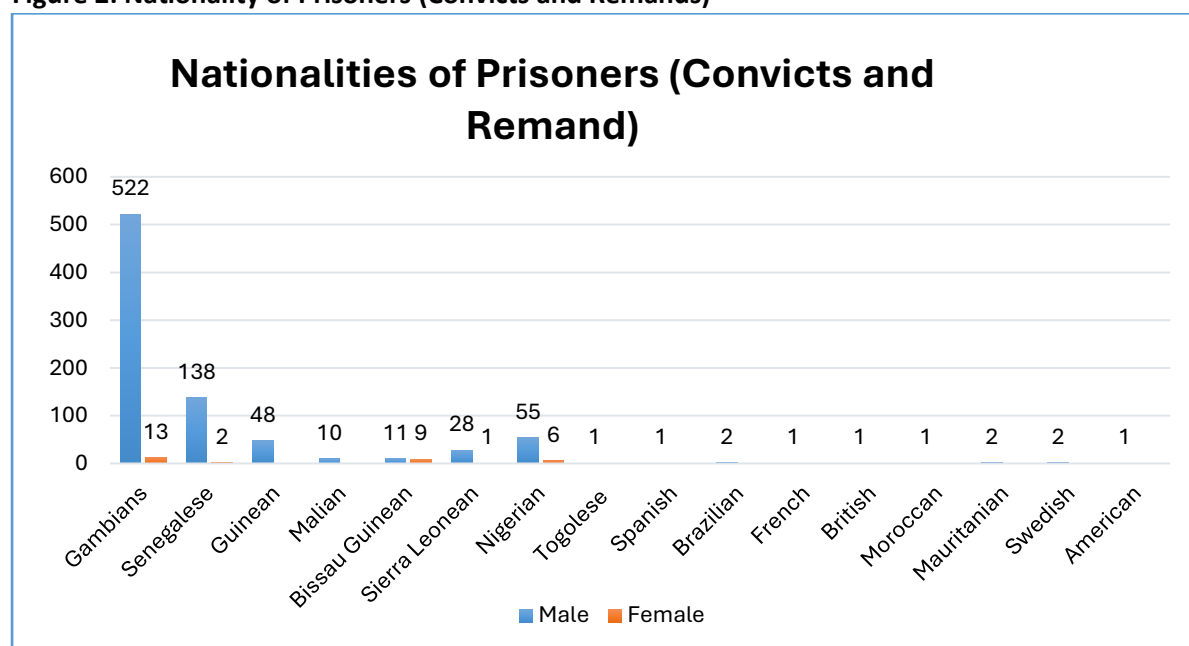


Figure 2: Nationality of Prisoners (Convicts and Remands)



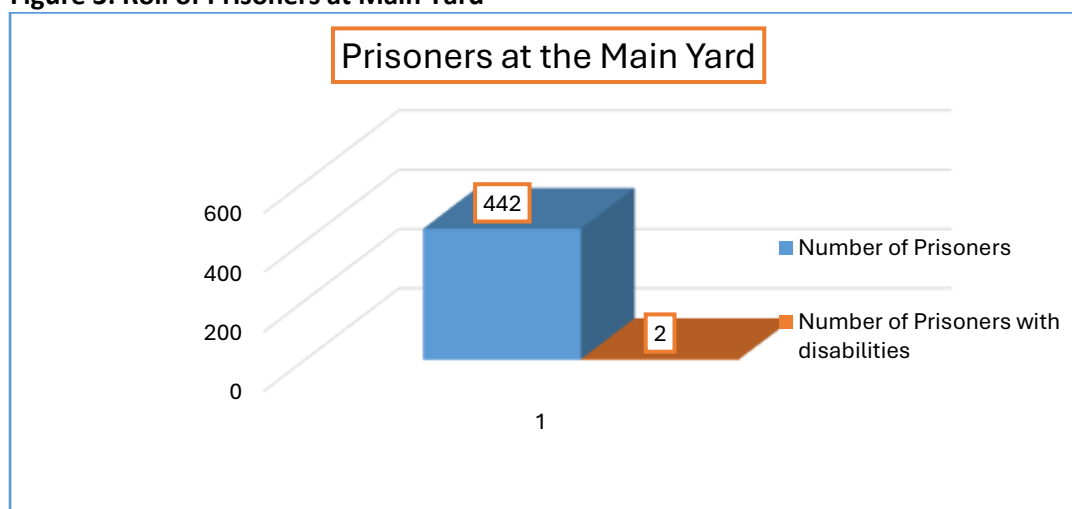
At the time of the visit, Mile II Central Prison had a total of 784 inmates, of which 515 were convicted prisoners and 269 on remand (see figure 1). The prisoners were composed of a range of nationalities with majority being Gambians (522 male and 13 females), and the rest being Senegalese (138 males and 2 females), Nigerians (55 males and 6 females), Guineans (48 males) and Seirra Leoneans (28 males and 1 female) and other nationalities including South Americans, Europeans and 1 American (see figure 2).

Main Yard

Figure 3 below shows that Mile II Prison Main Yard which contains only male prisoners, had a total of 442 prisoners, including 2 persons with disabilities. However, there are only 6 cells with an average of 74 prisoners per cell.



Figure 3: Roll of Prisoners at Main Yard



All six (6) cells of Main Yard were overcrowded. Although the acceptable capacity of each cell is a maximum of 33 inmates, at the time of the visit, Cell No.1 had 67 inmates; Cell No.2 had 67 inmates; Cell No. 3 had 87 inmates; Cell No.4 with 76 inmates; Cell No.5 had 88 inmates; and Cell 6 was accommodating 59 inmates. The cells were in very poor condition, with inadequate ventilation, poor lighting, and worn-out mattresses which were bedbugs and lice infested.

The monitors also found about 20 young men in the Main Yard who said they were charged and remanded for loitering. They claimed to be under eighteen years of age, although this could not be verified.

Female Wing



Figure 4: Number of Prisoners at Female Wing



At the time of the visit, the Female Wing of Mile II Central Prison had a total of 31 prisoners – 14 convicts and 17 on remand- in 3 cells, with an average of 10 inmates per cell.

Conditions of the cells: Living conditions within the facility remain critically inadequate. The cells are extremely narrow and do not allow any degree of privacy for the inmates. The Wing also lacks a yard where inmates could spend time outside the cells during the day.

Conditions of the Sanitary Facilities, and Availability of Sanitary Materials and Uniforms: The condition of the sanitary facilities remains poor. At the time of the visit, there were four (4) toilets and four bathrooms. Inmates stated that the state of the toilets had not improved since the previous monitoring visit. However, the female inmates reported that they have

each been supplied a set of uniforms and also receive two bars of soap weekly for laundry. While Prison Management provides clothing, toiletries, sanitary pads, and other hygiene items, the inmates complained that the supply is inconsistent and often insufficient. Some inmates indicated that they produce craft items which the female officers sell on their behalf. The proceeds are then used by the Prison management to purchase essential hygiene products such as sanitary pads, deodorants, toothbrushes, and toothpaste for the inmates.

Quality and Quantity of the Food: The inmates complained about the quality of the food they are served, which they described as inadequate and non-nutritious. Some of the inmates stated that the meals they are given are sometime “not fit for human consumption” and thus prefer the foods that their families bring them.

Access to Health Care Services: There is no dedicated health-care facility for the female inmates. They rely on the Prison’s clinic which offers limited gynecological services. Mental health care services are entirely absent, further limiting access to essential gender responsive care.

Treatment of the Inmates: The inmates did not report any case or incidence of physical abuse by the Prison officers. However, they complained about the overall condition of their cells, which they described as harsh and distressful.

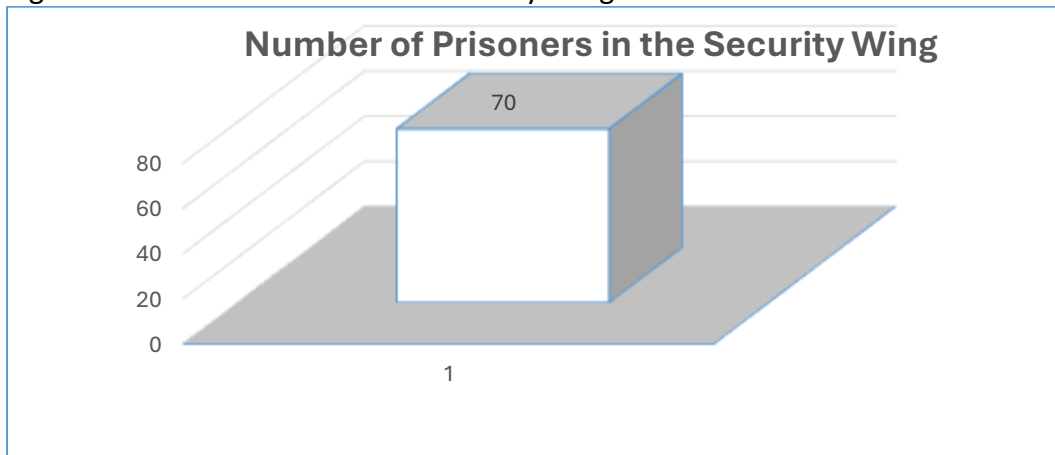
Like the male inmates, the female inmates do not also have conjugal visits. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes remain severely limited in the Female Wing, leaving women with minimal opportunities to acquire the skills and support necessary for successful reintegration upon release. Unlike their male counterparts, who have increasing access to various vocational activities, female inmates reported that no formal vocational training programmes are currently available to them. They particularly noted the absence of key skills building activities that are typically essential for women’s rehabilitation, such as:

- Hairdressing and braiding, which remains one of the most marketable skills for women seeking economic independence after incarceration.
- Tailoring and sewing, which would enable women to acquire practical skills that can generate income in both formal and informal sectors.
- Craftmaking and small-scale production skills (e.g., beadwork, tie-dye, soapmaking), which are common income generating skills in community settings.
- Basic literacy, numeracy, and continuing education, which are essential for empowering women and expanding their opportunities outside prison.
- Life skills and psychosocial support programmes, including counselling, trauma informed support, communication skills, and reintegration preparation.

The absence of these programmes means that female inmates do not benefit from the same level of rehabilitation support available to men. As a result, they face greater challenges in preparing for release, rebuilding family relationships, and reintegrating into their communities. Many expressed concern that without structured vocational and psychosocial support, they are at increased risk of economic hardship, stigma, and reoffending upon returning to society.

SECURITY WING

Figure 5: Number of Prisoners in Security Wing



Historically, the Security Wing housed high-risk convicts and political detainees. It now primarily accommodates inmates who require isolation, including those with long-term or severe sentences. At the time of the visit, there were seventy (70) prisoners all males at the Security Wing comprising Gambians and other nationalities. Many of the inmates have been convicted of serious offences such as murder and rape.

Conditions of the Cells: The Security unit at Mile 2 has 12 cells, which at the time of reporting collectively housed approximately 70 inmates, resulting in an average of about 5 to 6 inmates per cell. The cell sizes are extremely small, measuring between 2m × 1.5m and 3m × 2m—and found to be dark, poorly ventilated, and structurally deteriorated. Inmates reported severe and persistent infestations of rats, cockroaches, and mosquitoes within the cells, creating an environment that is unsafe, unhygienic, and profoundly degrading.

JANJANGBUREH PRISON

Janjangbureh Prison is the third major prison in The Gambia, located in the Central River Region (CRR). At the time of the monitoring visit, the Prison housed a total of 104 inmates, consisting of 58 convicted prisoners and 46 remand detainees housed in two large cells. No information was provided indicating that any of these inmates were female. Therefore, based on the available data, there were no female inmates recorded within the total population. Additionally, the nationalities of remand detainees were documented as follows: Gambians (33), Guineans (7), Senegalese (4), Malian (1) and Sierra Leonean (1).



Regarding its Staff roll, Janjangbureh Prison has 55 officers, composed of 45 male officers and 10 female officers.

Figure 6: Number of Remandees and Convicts at Janjangbureh Prison

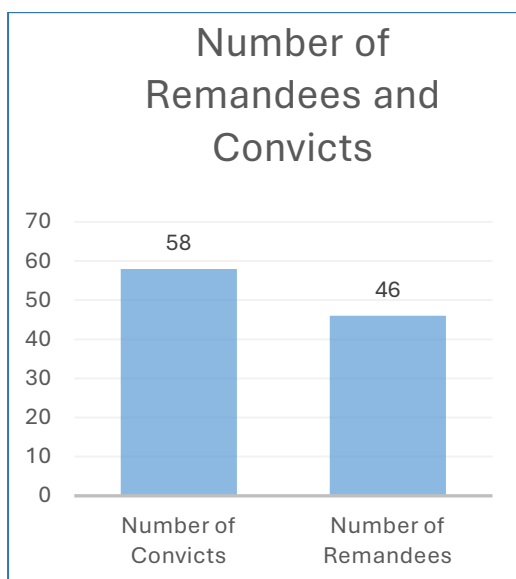


Figure 7: Nationalities of Prisoners on Remand

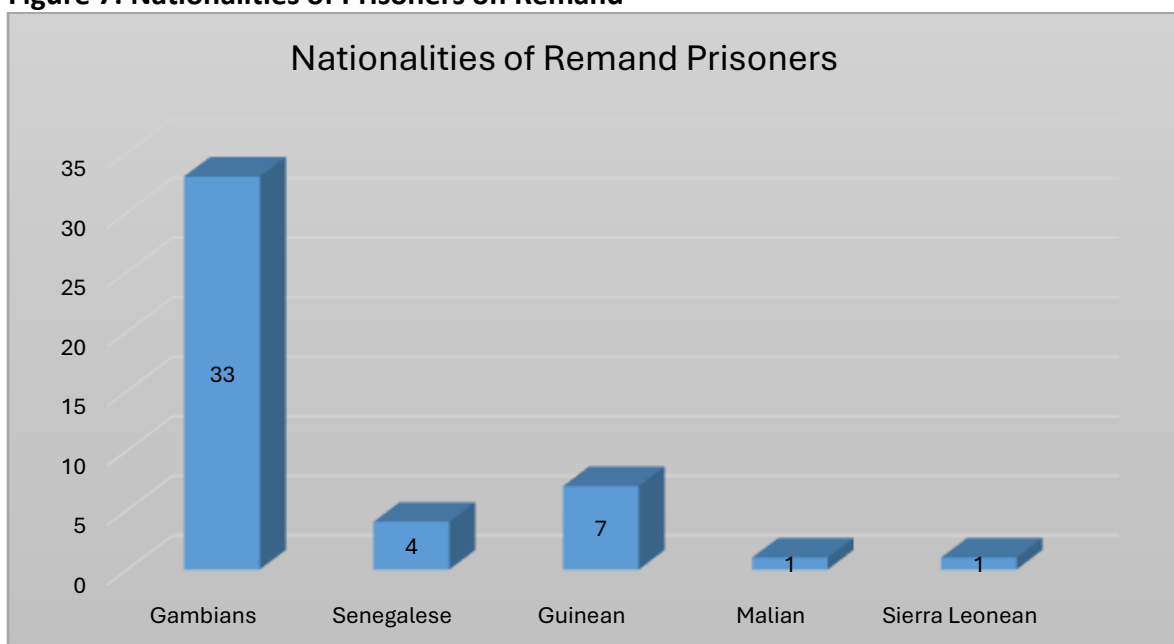
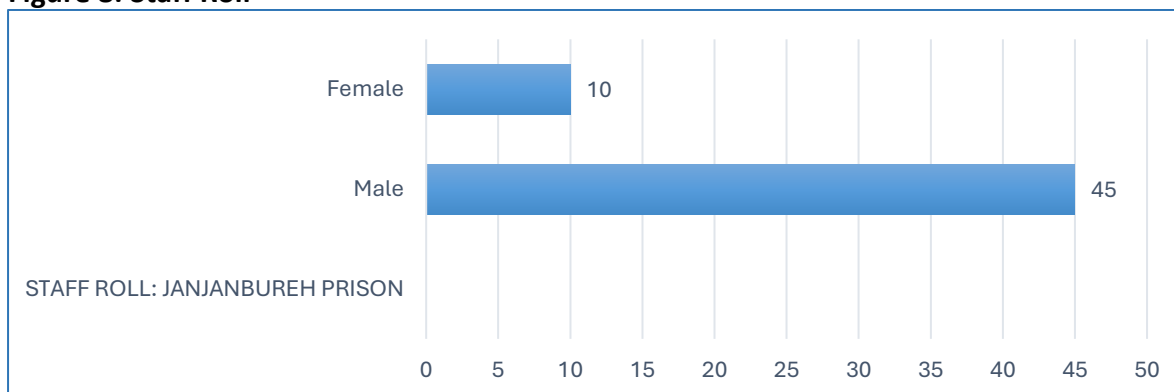


Figure 8: Staff Roll



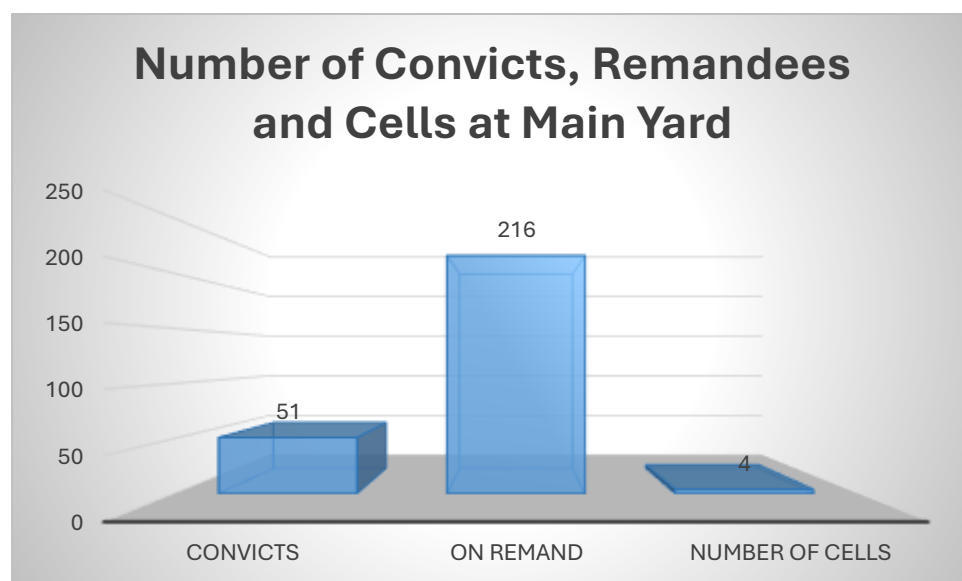
The Staff roll comprise ten female officers and forty-five males.

JESHWANG PRISON



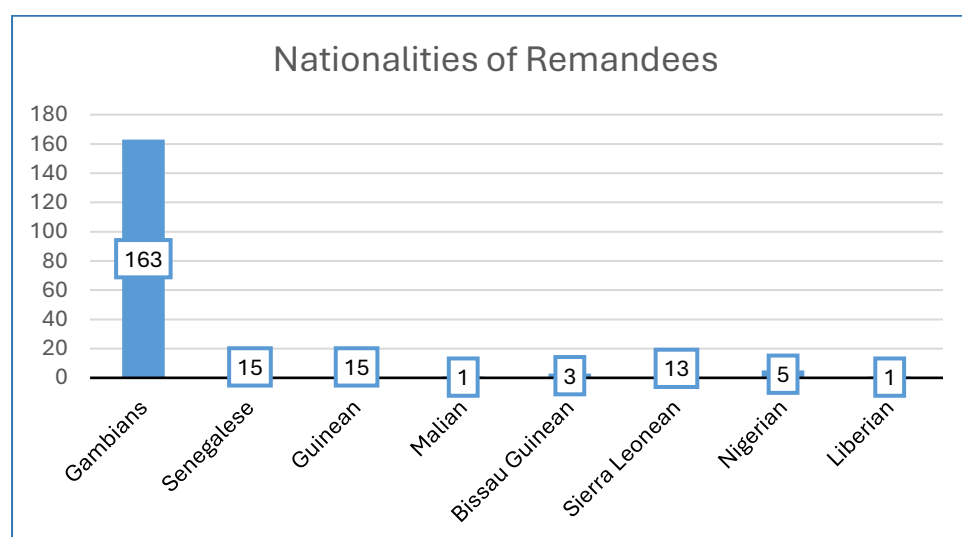
At the time of the visit, Jeshwang Prison had fifty-one (51) convicts held in the Main Yard and two hundred and sixteen (216) remandees who are kept in four separate big cells.

Figure 9: Number of Convicts, Remandees



Majority of the ramandees in Jeshwang Prison are Gambian constituting One Hundred and Sixty-three, followed by Senegalese and Guineans constituting fifteen each.

Figure 10: Total Number of Remandees



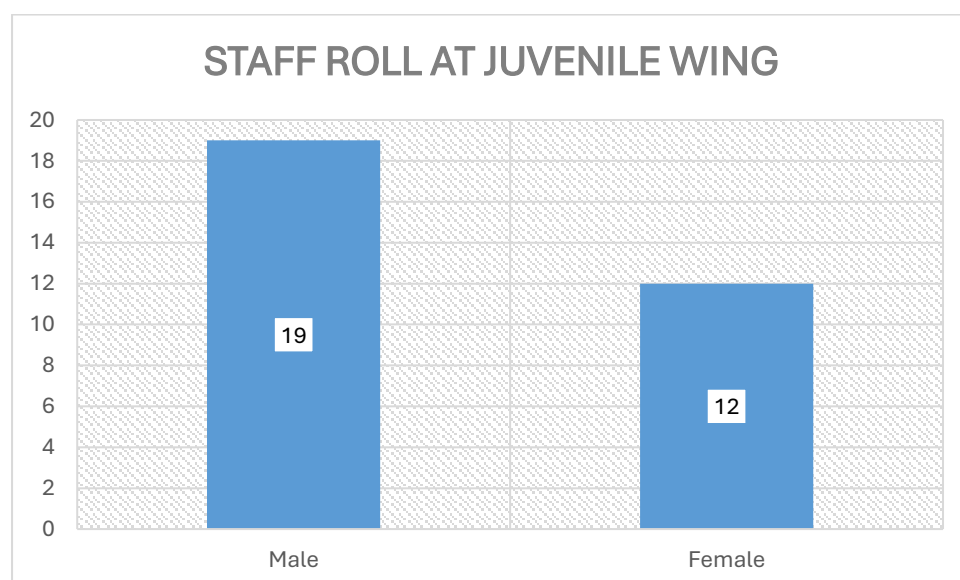
JUVENILE WING

The monitoring visit to the Juvenile Wing of Jeshwang Prison revealed a range of serious human-rights and child-welfare concerns. At the time of the assessment, the facility housed 32 children, four of whom had offences proven against them, while twenty-eight were on remand. Two additional female children were said to be temporarily held at the Shelter for Children in Bakoteh. The male children were accommodated in three large rooms, which

function as combined sleeping and living quarters. Despite the relatively spacious layout, the conditions within these rooms remained inadequate. Ventilation was poor, and bedding was insufficient, with many children sleeping on worn or thin mattresses placed directly on the floor. Although the monitors observed some recent improvements, including the installation of a television set in each room and the provision of mosquito nets in the Wing, these changes did little to offset the overall challenges faced by the children in custody.



Figure 11: Staff Roll at Jeshwang Juvenile Wing

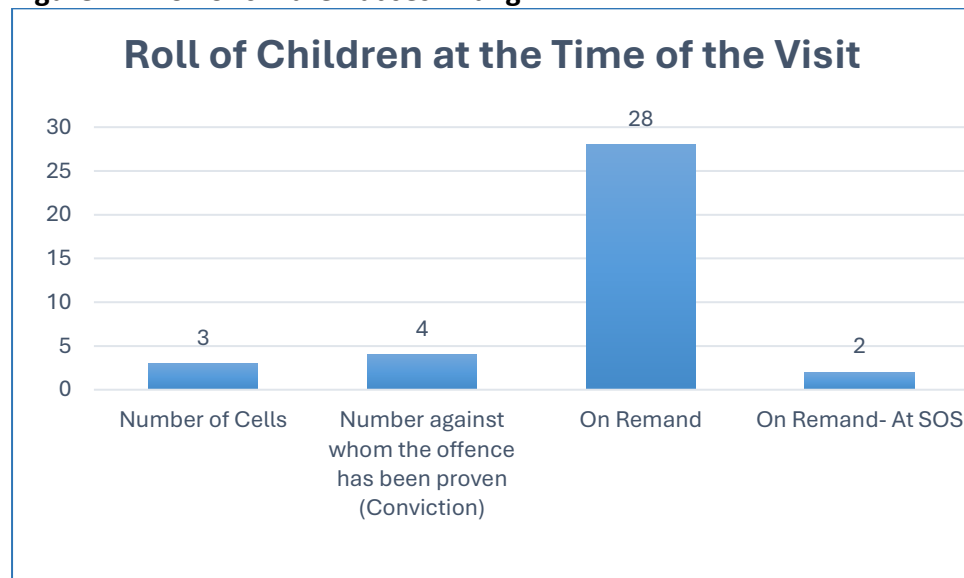


Sanitary facilities within the Wing were found to be limited and inadequate. It had only two toilets located outside the cells, one of which was under repair at the time of the visit, limiting accessibility. The children reported experiencing irregular access to clean water, and although water was available during the visit. The children in one of the cells claimed that they were only allowed to use the toilet facilities for few hours during the day and mostly used chamber pots most of the evenings and through the night.

Roll of children at Jeshwang

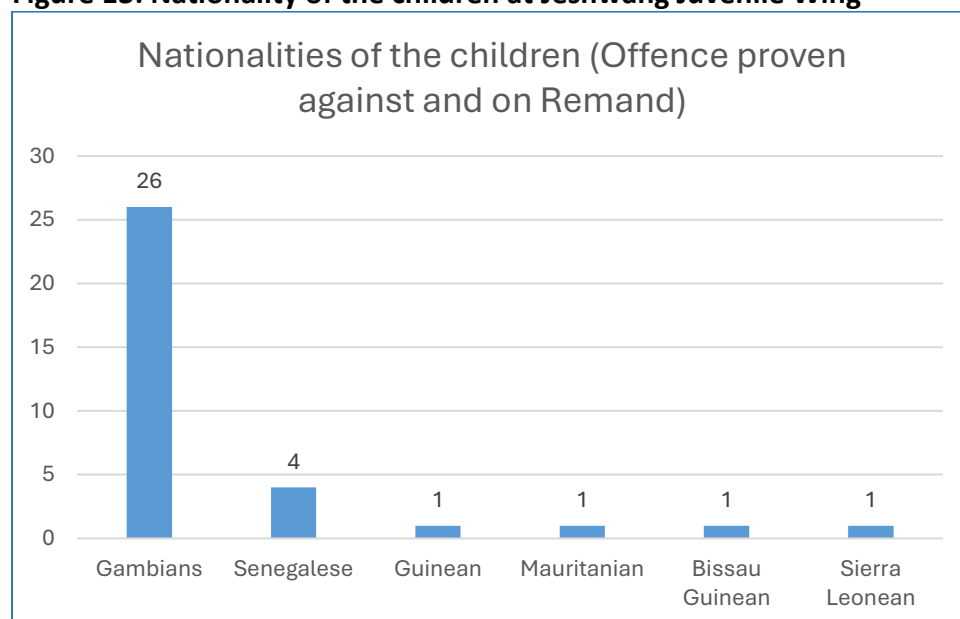
The roll of children in the Juvenile Wing at the time of the visit to Jeshwang Prison was 32 children, comprising four (4) against whom alleged offences have been proven and twenty-eight (28) on remand. They are housed in three big rooms. The Prison officers informed the monitors that two female children were currently held in Bakoteh. This imbalance between convicted and remand children reflects broader systemic issues within the juvenile justice system and contributes to overcrowding in the Wing.

Figure 12: Roll of children at Jeshwang



Nationality of the children at Jeshwang Juvenile Wing

Figure 13: Nationality of the children at Jeshwang Juvenile Wing



A significant concern was the high number of children on remand, who accounted for nearly 90% of the population of the Wing. Many of these children reported frequent adjournments and prolonged delays in their cases, often linked to the slow pace of trials and limited access to legal representation. Another concern raised by the children and officers is the inconsistent visits and updates from social workers, which also significantly contribute to these delays.

Access to health care remained constrained. The Juvenile Wing does not have a dedicated clinic, leaving children dependent on the main prison clinic or nearby health centres. These facilities, however, frequently experience shortages of essential medication. Delays in medical referrals to external hospitals were common, largely due to logistical constraints, particularly the unavailability of ambulances and fuel. These conditions create significant risks for children with underlying or acute health needs. Some of the children reported that there was some sort of rash outbreak within their cells, which according to some of them was contracted from the use of chamber pots. Although monitors could not ascertain the cause of the rashes, they confirmed that there was a significant number of children in this particular cell had rashes, especially around their “genitalia”.

The children also reported ongoing concerns regarding the quality and nutritional value of their meals. Although they acknowledged a recent improvement in the quantity of food, they stressed that its quality remained poor and lacked sufficient nutritional diversity. Many rely on family visits to supplement their meals, leaving children without regular family support especially vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies.

The absence of structured educational or rehabilitative programmes was one of the most serious gaps identified during the visit. Although the Juvenile Wing offers lessons in English and Quranic studies, there is no structured curriculum or library services. There is some sort of carpentry and sewing workshop, although quite dilapidated and visibly out of use. The absence of these services severely limits the children’s opportunities for personal development and reintegration and increases their risk of long-term social and emotional harm.

The Wing had a staff complement of 31 officers—19 males and 12 females—distributed across shifts. Officers reported facing numerous operational challenges, including chronic water shortages, frequent power outages, and the lack of a functional generator. Inadequate staffing levels further strained their capacity to supervise and support the high number of children in custody, creating heightened security risks and compromising the quality of care. The officers also reported a rise in physical altercations amongst the children, which, according to them, have in some instances resulted in severe bodily harm. Despite these constraints, officers interviewed during the visit did not report any allegations of physical abuse of children. However, the juveniles themselves described their daily living conditions as harsh, distressing, and degrading, particularly due to the sanitation problems, lack of meaningful activities, and prolonged legal uncertainty caused by case delays. The juveniles also decried that they were kept within their cells for a couple of weeks without being let out to the yard for leisure activities, which, according to them, was a form of punishment for the recurrence of physical alterations amongst some of them.

Overall, the conditions observed within the Juvenile Wing fall far short of international child-protection standards. The combination of overcrowding, poor sanitation, insufficient health care, lack of educational programmes, and prolonged delay in the disposition of cases in Court place children at significant risk and underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reform.

FINDINGS AT MILE II CENTRAL PRISON, JESHWANG PRISON, AND JANJANBUREH PRISON

General Conditions: Across all wings of Mile II Central Prison, overcrowding remains the most serious challenge. Cells at the Remand Wing, which were originally designed to hold five inmates, now accommodate between 18 and 20 detainees. Ventilation and lighting are poor, and the available bedding is inadequate and in deteriorating condition. The Main Yard and Security Wing exhibit similar congestion and infrastructural dilapidation, placing significant strain on the facility's resources and negatively affecting inmate wellbeing. In Janjanbureh Prison, both the Remand Wing and the Main Yard are severely overcrowded, with inmates sleeping on extremely worn-out mattresses. The structures are colonial-era blocks with limited airflow, leading to stifling and uncomfortable living conditions. At Jeshwang Prison, ventilation is similarly inadequate across the Main Yard, Remand, and Juvenile Wings. Bedding is insufficient, though a few improvements were noted, including the availability of mosquito nets and televisions in some cells.



Sanitary Facilities:

Sanitary conditions in Mile II Prison were deplorable across all wings. Toilets and bathrooms were broken, water access was inconsistent, and many detainees—especially those in the Security Wing—relied on chamber pots. Broken taps and leaking pipes emitted foul odours and created stagnant water that served as breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

In Janjanbureh Prison, sanitation was extremely poor. The Remand Wing had only one toilet and one bathroom, both of which were in unacceptable condition. Sewage leaks contributed to unpleasant smells and stagnant water near inmate accommodation. At Jeshwang Prison, sanitation fell below minimum standards. Although the Main Yard included built-in toilets, the sewage systems were inadequate.

Sewage Facilities:

All three prisons faced severe sewage problems. In Mile II, broken sewage pipes caused unpleasant odours and created pools of stagnant water around cells. In Janjanbureh, sewage frequently leaked into both cells and outdoor areas. In Jeshwang, dysfunctional sewage systems contributed to ongoing hygiene and environmental concerns.

Food Served: According to inmates, despite slight improvements in quantity, the quality of food remained inadequate across all facilities. At Mile II, meals lacked nutritional value and were served in insufficient quantities. Food preparation conditions were unhygienic and unhealthy, and no special diets existed for inmates with underlying medical conditions such as hypertension or diabetes. In Janjanbureh, meals consisted mostly of leafy vegetables, with fish and meat rarely served. Breakfast was typically poor-quality porridge. In Jeshwang, inmates reported that the nutritional value of food remained insufficient.



Health and Health Care: Healthcare services across the three prisons remained deeply inadequate. In Mile II, the clinic operated without essential drugs or adequate medical equipment and lacked a resident doctor. Inmates depended on families to purchase essential drugs and on referrals to EFSTH and other hospitals, while ambulance shortages caused delays. Mental health cases were often referred to Tanka Tanka Psychiatric Unit, but due to overcrowding and staff shortages, many admissions were declined. TB patients and inmates with mental illnesses were housed together within the prisons, including in cells with other inmates, posing severe health risks to both inmates and prison staff.

Janjanbureh Prison had no clinic and relied entirely on the Janjanbureh Health Centre, which also faced frequent drug shortages. Referrals to Bansang Hospital were often delayed due to limited ambulance availability. At Jeshwang, shortages of essential medication were observed, and in some cases expired drugs were the only available option. Referral delays were common, partly due to fuel shortages and lack of transport. One inmate reportedly died under circumstances that inmates claimed were linked to delayed medical care. Although the account of the inmate dying within the prison was disputed by prison officials, they stated that the inmate was a frequently referred patient to the Kanifing General Hospital and died on the way to the hospital.

Treatment of Prisoners: No cases of torture were reported at any of the three prisons. However, inmates consistently described their living conditions as degrading, with the most severe complaints coming from detainees housed in the Mile II Security Wing, as well as inmates in Janjanbureh and Jeshwang Prisons.

Family Visits: At Mile II and Jeshwang, family visits are permitted on weekdays. Gambian nationals generally maintain regular contact with family and friends, but foreign nationals face significant barriers due to lack of embassy or consular assistance. The Security Wing in Mile II remains subject to strict visitation restrictions. In Janjanbureh Prison, family visits occur, though inmates are prohibited from making or receiving phone calls.

Support from Embassies/Consulates for Non-Nationals:

Across all three prisons, foreign nationals reported minimal or no support from their embassies or consulates. Many inmates believed their diplomatic missions were unaware of their detention. When consular visits occur, they are infrequent and poorly coordinated.



Convicts with Disabilities:

None of the facilities have a structured system to support inmates with disabilities. At Mile II, detainees with mental illness remain largely untreated due to the absence of a psychiatric doctor or nurse. None of the prisons provide disability-sensitive accommodation or assistive services for inmates with physical or mental impairments.

Appeals and Pretrial Detention: Delays in judicial processes were reported across all three prisons. At Mile II, several detainees have been on remand for up to five months, while more than five appealed cases have been pending for over a year. Delays stem from adjournments, limited legal representation, and slow court processes. At Jeshwang, monitors observed 216 male remand detainees—four times the number of convicted inmates—and 30 children on remand. Frequent adjournments continue to drive the backlog of cases.

Uniforms: In Mile II Security Wing, inmates receive only one set of clothing, regardless of the length of their incarceration or seasonal weather conditions.

Conjugal Visits: Conjugal visits are not permitted in Mile II, Jeshwang, or Janjanbureh Prisons.

Interview with Prison Officers: The Officers at both Mile II, Jeshwang and Janjanbureh Prisons expressed concerns about the lack of support to improve their welfare. They also appealed for more capacity building programmes, welfare and logistical improvement in areas such as better working conditions, access to necessary resources, transportation, and basic operational tools. In an interview with the Officers, they complained about the lack of stable water supply which also affects the inmates. As the Prison does not have a functional generator, the Officers decried the periodic power outages which disrupt essential services, security operations, and administrative work. They also indicated that inadequate staffing limits their supervision capacity and increases security risks considering the high number of remandees.



OTHER AREAS VISITED AND ISSUES OF CONCERN ACROSS PRISONS

Conditions of the Kitchen

Across the three prisons, kitchen facilities were generally inadequate, though the severity varied. In Jeshwang and Janjanbureh Prisons, the kitchens consisted of a single enclosed space where all food preparation was carried out by inmates. These kitchens were poorly ventilated, with walls and roofing visibly covered in soot, presenting potential health and safety risks. While the kitchen is comparatively larger with some new structures in Mile 2 Prison, it similarly has poor ventilation and aging infrastructure, limiting hygienic food preparation.



Availability of Vocational Training

Vocational training opportunities were not consistently available across the three prisons. Mile 2 Prison has a designated training center offering skills such as electrical installation, masonry, tiling, and tailoring for Jeshwang as well. However, the center lacks adequate tools, materials, and qualified instructors, which restricts its effectiveness and prevents expansion into additional skills such as carpentry and construction.



In contrast, Janjanbureh Prisons has no functional vocational training centers, leaving inmates in these facilities without access to structured skills development programmes.

Availability of Recreational Facilities, Programmes, and Library

None of the three prisons had structured recreational facilities or formal programmes. Inmates across all locations reported that their only regular form of recreation was the board game Ludo, which they play informally.

Additionally, all three prisons lacked a library and provided no access to remedial education, adult literacy programmes, or continuing education, limiting opportunities for intellectual stimulation and rehabilitation.

Right to Worship

All three prisons had mosques available for Muslim inmates. However, none of the facilities provided a designated place of worship for Christian inmates or individuals of other religious faiths. As a result, non-Muslim inmates reported having to pray in their cells or communal spaces, raising concerns related to equitable enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING PRISONS

1 Construction of New Prisons

The current three Prisons are old and in dilapidated conditions, with Mile II Central Prison opened in 1920. The conditions in all the Prisons were found to be dire - severe overcrowding, poor ventilation, inadequate lighting, broken sanitary systems, and inadequate bedding.

There is an urgent need to construct new prisons across the country, including satellite prisons, that meet international standards, especially the Mandela Rules. Separate and secure facilities should also be constructed for women, children, inmates with contagious health issues and other vulnerable inmates to safeguard their wellbeing, dignity, and privacy in accordance with human rights standards.

As an interim measure, the Government should establish a dedicated development budget for the urgent improvement of lighting, ventilation, and sanitary facilities.² Measures to Reduce Overcrowding.

Overcrowding remains a persistent challenge in all the Prisons. To address this, the Judiciary should consider the imposition of non-custodial and community-based sentencing alternatives as stipulated in Section 32 of the Criminal Offences Act 2025 and Section 220 of the Children's Act 2005. Such measures would ease the burden on the Prisons. Furthermore, strengthening parole and early release programmes can significantly reduce congestion and allow eligible inmates to reintegrate into society under appropriate supervision. Other service providers such as prosecutors, legal representatives, and social workers in the case of juveniles need to establish concrete coordination mechanisms to reduce prolonged pre-trial detention within remand.

2. Improving Inmate Health and General Welfare

Clinics exist in both Mile II Central Prison and Jeshwang Prison. However, none of the Clinics has a medical doctor and they all sometimes run out of essential medical supplies. Inmates with critical health conditions are referred to the EFSTH or Kanifing General Hospital. Thus, it is important to take measures to improve the health and welfare of inmates to maintain humane detention conditions in the Prisons. This includes increasing access to healthcare services, with particular attention to mental health support, and ensuring the provision of adequate medical supplies which are regularly replenished, and the availability of functional ambulances for timely medical evacuations and referrals. Prisons must also ensure that all inmates have reliable access to clean water, nutritious meals, adequate bedding and uniforms and opportunities for regular outdoor recreation. These measures contribute to both physical wellbeing and psychological resilience.

3. Establishing and Strengthening Complaints Mechanisms

The inmates complained about a lot of issues affecting their welfare and wellbeing which could have been promptly addressed if there were guidelines or procedures for reporting. Some of the issues, like the procedures for appeal or delay in the disposition of their cases, require timely dissemination of information or clarification. To enhance transparency and accountability, the Prison Authorities should establish accessible and confidential complaint mechanisms in all the Prisons that allow inmates to report concerns without fear of retaliation. Such mechanisms play a vital role in safeguarding inmate rights and ensuring that corrective actions are taken promptly where needed.

4. Establishing Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programmes

Mile II and Jeshwang Prisons provide vocational or livelihood skills training to their inmates, in areas such as tailoring and handcraft as well as remedial classes. These vocational skills are important for the reintegration of inmates upon release. However, there are no systematic, planned, or state-supported rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for the inmates after their release or upon completion of their sentences. Thus, to reduce recidivism and promote long-term public safety, it is essential for the State to put in place effective rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for Prisons. Beyond the provision of primary healthcare services and vocational training, the Prison authorities should develop and implement mental health and psychosocial support, educational and life skills programmes, and counselling services in the Prisons and post-release reintegration programmes. Strengthening partnerships with social services is equally important, as such linkages provide vital support systems that enable successful reintegration and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

PART II: MONITORING OF POLICE STATIONS



Introduction—The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in fulfilment of its mandate under Sections 12 and 20 of the NHRC Act 2017, conducted monitoring visits to twenty-eight (28) Police Stations and Posts across all regions of The Gambia. These visits form an integral component of the Commission’s nationwide assessment of detention facilities, aimed at evaluating the conditions under which individuals are arrested, held, and processed while in Police custody. The focus on Police Stations is particularly important given their role as the first point of contact between law enforcement and persons deprived of liberty. As such, they serve as a critical site for assessing compliance with constitutional guarantees, procedural safeguards, and international human rights standards applicable to the treatment of detainees.

The monitoring exercise sought to assess the physical conditions of Police detention cells, the treatment of detainees, the availability of essential services, and adherence to national and international standards relating to arrest, detention, and due process. In addition to inspecting cells and sanitary facilities, the teams reviewed station documentation such as Station Diaries and relevant registers, interviewed Station Officers and detainees, and examined operational procedures guiding arrest, bail, family communication, and access to legal representation. Special attention was paid to the protection of vulnerable groups—including women, children, and foreign nationals—given the widespread absence of designated holding spaces for these categories of detainees.

The assessment focused on the following key areas:

- Conditions of detention cells, including ventilation, lighting, bedding, cleanliness, and overall suitability.
- Availability of sanitary facilities to detainees, including toilets, bathing areas, and access to clean water.
- Availability of designated cells for women and children and the general treatment of vulnerable detainees.
- Compliance with constitutional safeguards, including communication of charges, access to bail, and the 72-hour detention limit.
- Access to legal representation and availability of Child Welfare and Gender Officers.
- Food provision and overall welfare of detainees.
- Record-keeping systems, including the maintenance of Station Diaries, Prisoners' Property Registers, and other required documentation.
- Operational and logistical capacity of stations, including staffing levels, availability of vehicles, office space, interview rooms, equipment, and the welfare of officers.

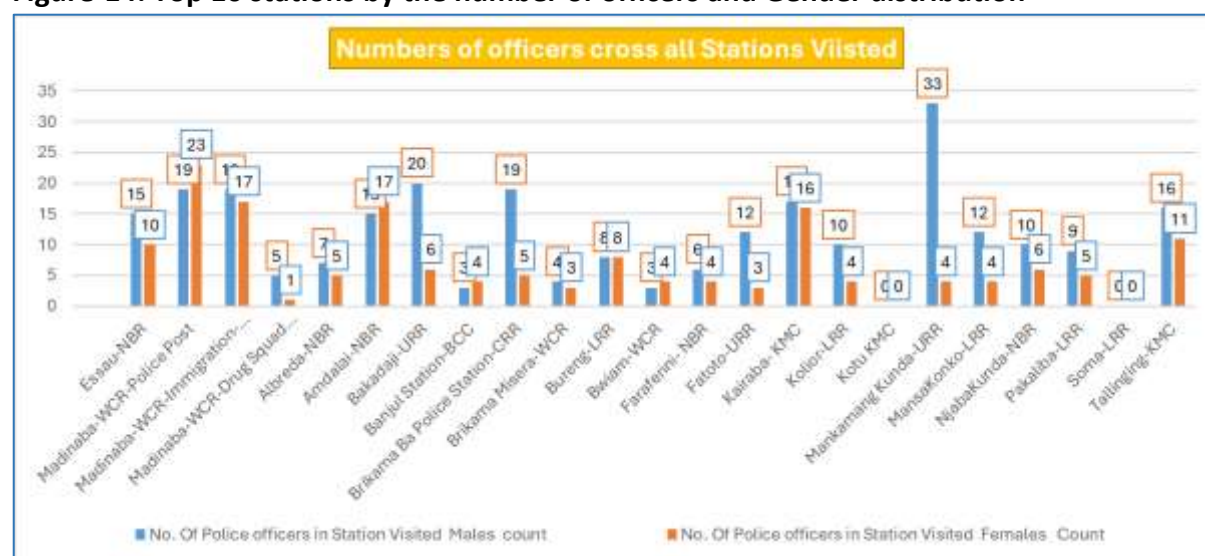
Local Government Area	Number of Police Stations Visited
Banjul Municipality	1
Kanifing Municipality	5
West Coast Region	7
North Bank Region	5
Lower River Region	5
Central River Region	2
Upper River Region	3



Number, Gender and Nationalities of Detainees in Police Custody

Of the 28 Police Stations visited, only 15 had detainees in custody at the time of the visit (See Appendix 1). In total, only 40 individuals were found in custody across all monitored Police Stations, comprising 32 adult males, 5 male children, 2 adult female detainees (found in Essau Police Station) and 1 female child detainee in Madinaba Police Post. Majority of detainees were Gambian nationals, accounting for about 70% of detainees. Senegalese citizens formed the second largest group, and only 1 Sierra Leonean national was recorded, representing cross-border dynamics.

Figure-14: Top 10 stations by the number of officers and Gender distribution



MONITORING VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS IN BANJUL AND KANIFING MUNICIPALITY



Conditions of the Cells: Across all stations, the condition of detention cells ranged from poor to inadequate, with only one station (Tallinding Farokono) relatively meeting acceptable standards.

At Banjul Police Station, cells were found to be damp, dusty, unhygienic, poorly ventilated, poorly lit, and emitting a strong smell of urine. Detainees slept on bare mats, indicating a lack of bedding. The cells appeared not to be regularly cleaned.

At Kotu Police Station, the two cells were also below acceptable standards. Ventilation was limited, humidity levels were high, and lighting was insufficient. The floors were dirty, and sanitation-related smells were pervasive. At Kairaba Police Station, the cells were poorly ventilated and dimly lit, with visibly worn walls and floors. Toilets smelled strongly, and detainees were held on bare floors or thin mats. Tallinding Farokono Police Station was the only facility where the cells were assessed as relatively clean and spacious. However, other structural gaps still existed, including the lack of gender and child appropriate cells.

Sanitary Facilities: Sanitation was consistently inadequate across the stations. At Banjul, sanitation facilities were visibly dirty and emitted strong odours. At Kotu, toilets were dirty, sometimes nonfunctional, and lacked water for flushing. At Kairaba, sanitation facilities were substandard, lacking proper flushing and emitting strong smells. At Tallinding Farokono, the station had only one shared toilet used by both officers and detainees; its condition deteriorated significantly during the past rainy season.

Separate Cells for Women and Children: Gaps in the separation of women and children from adult male detainees were found in all stations monitored. At Banjul Police Station, a separate cell for women was in existence, however, Children are held in a small daytime enclosure near the Counter, which is neither secure nor properly designated. Due to lack of a dedicated children's cell, minors are occasionally kept overnight in the women's cell.

Kotu, Kairaba, and Tallinding Farokono Stations all lack dedicated women's and children's cells. Women and minors are often held either in the general cells or other improvised spaces, leading to significant child protection and gender sensitivity concerns. Notably, at Kairaba, a minor was held in an adult cell and found to be held beyond the 72-hour legal limit as he was reported to be initially detained in Tallinding before being transferred to Kairaba Police Station.

Food for Detainees: A consistent pattern across all stations is that Police Stations do not provide full daily meals, and detainees depend heavily on family members or visitors for food. At Banjul, detainees received only one meal per day due to insufficient budget allocations. At Kotu, lunch was provided, but detainees relied on families for breakfast and dinner. At Kairaba and Tallinding, food provision was limited or occasional, with detainees relying primarily on family support. Detainees without family or community support are therefore at high risk of inconsistent or inadequate nutrition.

Child Welfare and Gender Officers: Availability of designated Child Welfare and Gender Officers varied between stations. Banjul and Kotu Police Stations did not have designated officers present. As a result, cases involving children or SGBV survivors were handled by general duty officers or CID personnel, often without specialized training. Amongst the Stations visited, only Kairaba and Tallinding Farokono Stations have designated Child Welfare and Gender Officers. However, both face operational limitations. At Tallinding, the Officer shares an office with CID staff, resulting in frequent interruptions during sensitive interviews and compromising confidentiality.

Interview Facilities and Privacy: None of the stations had dedicated interview rooms for vulnerable persons such as children, women, or SGBV survivors. Interviews took place in open offices or shared workspaces, undermining privacy, confidentiality, and trauma sensitivity.

Record Keeping: Record-keeping practices were weak across all stations monitored. Banjul, Kotu, Kairaba, and Tallinding had Station Diaries and property registers, but entries were often incomplete, outdated, or irregular. Such gaps compromise accountability, hinder case tracking, and reduce transparency regarding detainee rights and treatment.

Access to Family Contact: While all stations formally permit family visits, practical access was severely limited by the lack of functional station landlines. Detainees rely on officers' personal mobile phones to contact family members — a discretionary and inconsistent practice. This communication barrier delays visits, hampers detainees' ability to access food, clothing, medication, and complicates bail arrangements.

Access to Legal Representation and Bail: All stations allow lawyers to visit detainees and generally permit the granting of bail. However, detainees who cannot afford private lawyers face significant challenges due to limited access to free legal aid and weak referral pathways. Strict surety requirements, combined with poor communication systems, lead to delays in processing bail. In Banjul and Kotu, detainees also reported delays in being informed of charges and detentions exceeding the constitutional 72-hour limit.

MONITORING VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS IN WEST COAST REGION

The monitoring team conducted visits to the following detention facilities in the West Coast Region: Brufut Anti-Crime Unit, Tanji Border Patrol Unit, Tujereng Police Station, Tanji Police Post, New Yundum Police Station, Brikama Misera, Madinaba, Bwiam and Banjulinding Police Station. The visits revealed significant disparities in conditions, infrastructure, and resources across the stations, highlighting systemic challenges affecting both detainees and officers.

Conditions of the Cells: The condition of detention cells across the West Coast Region police facilities varied significantly, with most stations falling below minimum human rights standards.

At Brufut Anti-Crime Unit, there was only one small cell (approximately 3m x 3m). It was poorly ventilated, lacked lighting, and had only two mats, with no mattresses available. No detainees were present at the time of the visit, but the lack of proper ventilation, bedding, and space makes it unsuitable for detention. At Tanji Immigration Border Patrol Unit, detention cells were more spacious and adequately ventilated; however, lighting was notably poor, resulting in dim and insufficiently lit holding areas.



At Tujereng Police Station, which operates within a rented compound, sleeping conditions were inadequate. Detainees were provided with only mats on the floor. No detainees were present at the time, but the infrastructure was not compliant with basic detention standards. At Banjulinding Police Station, two male cells were operational with seven detainees at the time of the visit. Ventilation was very poor, and the cells lacked adequate space. No cells were available for women or children.

Tanji Police Post had no functional detention facilities. The structure consisted of a very tight room with no sanitary facilities, making it unfit for detaining suspects. As a result, detainees are transferred to nearby stations.

Overall, the majority of facilities lacked acceptable detention environments, particularly regarding ventilation, lighting, adequate bedding, and space.

Sanitary Facilities: The quality of sanitary facilities across stations was inconsistent. At Brufut Anti-Crime Unit, poor cell conditions were accompanied by cramped office spaces and limited sanitation options for detainees. The sanitary facilities were the best among all stations visited. There were three male and three female toilets, all clean and well maintained. These facilities were shared by detainees and officers. Sanitary conditions in Tujereng Police Station were inadequate due to the poor state of the rented building. New Yundum Police Station had only one sanitary facility for all detainees, creating significant hygiene and privacy concerns.

Tanji Police Post had no sanitary facilities for staff or detainees, making it unsuitable for detention. Sanitation across the region remains largely inadequate, with only Tanji Immigration Unit meeting acceptable hygiene standards.

Separate Cells for Women and Children: A critical finding across the region was the absence of separate, secure holding spaces for women and children. None of the stations—Brufut, Tujereng, New Yundum, or Tanji—had dedicated cells for women or children. At Brufut, officers acknowledged that detainees are not separated by gender or age due to infrastructural limitations. At New Yundum, women and minors had no designated holding spaces. At Tujereng and Tanji Police Post, no dedicated cells were found.

Detention of minors across all stations involves temporarily placing children near the station counter, in administrative offices, or in open workspaces under officer supervision. In some cases, minors may be held in the women's section, where available—even though this was not appropriate. These ad hoc arrangements fall below child protection standards and expose minors to privacy violations and possible contact with adult detainees.

Food for Detainees: Food provision remained a widespread challenge across the region. Most station officers reported that lunch was expected to be provided by the Station, but this was inconsistent. Officers reported that they frequently use their personal funds to purchase food for detainees. Detainees primarily depend on relatives for meals. Detainees without family support face food insecurity and inconsistent access to basic nutrition. The current system places undue financial pressure on officers and failed to guarantee detainees' basic welfare.

Office Space and Working Conditions: Office conditions across the stations were generally poor. Brufut Anti-Crime Unit had extremely narrow CID offices (3m x 3m) with no computers. Tujereng Police Post had severely deteriorated infrastructure, with many damaged chairs and worn-out workspaces requiring urgent repair. New Yundum Station lacked sufficient space, with CID officers sharing a room with the Child Welfare and Gender Unit, compromising privacy. Tanji Border Patrol Unit had acceptable sanitation but inadequate lighting. Staff quarters at Banjulinding (New Yundum) were also in poor condition and required renovation. Child Welfare and Gender Officers: Only a few stations had access to Child Welfare and Gender Officers, and even those were shared across multiple stations. Brufut Anti-Crime Unit had no Child Welfare or Gender Officer, thus all related cases are referred to Brusubi, while Tujereng and New Yundum lacked dedicated officers. At regional level, designated officers exist, but station-level implementation was found to be weak and inconsistent. This gap significantly affects the handling of SGBV and child-protection cases.

Record Keeping: Record-keeping practices varied but generally reflected administrative weaknesses. Station Diaries were generally maintained. However, other essential records—Prisoners’ Property Diary and Stolen Property Diary were inconsistently updated. Missing entries, incomplete documentation, and irregular timestamps were common. These gaps undermine accountability and effective oversight of detainee management.

Logistics and Resource Constraints: Resource shortages were widespread across all stations. Common challenges include lack of operational vehicles (Brufut had only one vehicle to cover all operations within Lower West Coast), insufficient manpower, irregular uniform supply, absence of computers and printers (notably at Tujereng), and poor infrastructure in several stations. These constraints significantly limit operational effectiveness and officers’ ability to uphold detainee rights.

Observance of Rights of Detainees: Despite structural and logistical challenges, interviews with detainees indicated that basic constitutional guarantees were generally observed. Detainees reported being informed of the reasons for their arrests, and no reports of unlawful detention were recorded. Detainees were able to contact family members through phone calls or physical visits. Bail was granted in eligible cases. However, the absence of proper facilities and communication tools (e.g., station landlines) posed significant practical barriers.

MONITORING VISIT TO POLICE STATIONS IN UPPER RIVER REGION AND CENTRAL RIVER REGION



As part of the monitoring exercise in the Upper River Region (URR) and Central River Region (CRR), the team visited the following Police Stations: Fatato Police Station, Basse Police Station, Fatato Police Intervention Unit (PIU) Base, Mankamang Kunda Police Station, Bakadagi Police Station, and Brikama Ba Police Station.

Conditions of the Cells: Conditions of the detention cells varied significantly across the region, with most stations requiring improvement.

At Fatato Police Station, the two cells were found to be in unsatisfactory condition. Ventilation was inadequate, and detainees lacked access to internal toilets, requiring them to share a common facility with officers. At Basse Police Station, cell conditions were poor and overcrowded. Ventilation was insufficient, and detainees did not have clean toilet facilities inside the cells.

In contrast, Bakadji Police Station, being relatively new, had clean, well-ventilated cells equipped with functional internal toilets.

At Mankamang Kunda Police Station, the recently constructed cell and detention area were in good condition, with proper ventilation and internal toilet facilities. The cells at Brikama Ba Police Station were in poor condition. The station has two small cells without clean internal toilets and lacks a formal detention area. Ventilation was inadequate, and urgent intervention is required. The Fatato Police Intervention Unit Base allowed access to its detention facility, but the brief nature of the visit limited detailed assessment.

Overall, most stations except Bakadji and Mankamang Kunda do not meet minimum standards for ventilation, sanitation, or detainee accommodation.

Sanitary Facilities: Sanitary conditions varied, with only a few stations providing adequate facilities. At Fatato, detainees and officers share a single common toilet, creating hygiene and privacy concerns. Basse and Brikama Ba Stations lacked clean sanitary facilities inside the cells, leaving detainees dependent on external toilets, which were not always well maintained. Bakadji and Mankamang Kunda provided internal toilets in good condition, meeting acceptable standards.

The Fatato Intervention Unit allowed monitors access, but sanitary conditions could not be fully assessed. Most stations require significant improvement in the provision of clean, accessible, and appropriate sanitary facilities.

Separate Cells for Women and Children: Across the region, the lack of separate cells for women and children was a widespread and consistent concern. Fatato, Basse, Mankamang Kunda, and Brikama Ba all lack dedicated facilities for women and children. Bakadji Police Station was the only facility with separate cells for women and children. At the Fatato Police Intervention Base, arrangements were unclear, but no dedicated facility was identified.

The absence of separate detention spaces exposes vulnerable groups to risks, violates child protection standards, and compromises privacy, dignity, and safety.

Food for Detainees: Food provision for detainees was generally inconsistent across the region. At Basse, detainees receive only one meal per day. At other stations such as Fatato, Mankamang Kunda, and Brikama Ba, food provision was either not available or relied heavily on relatives and officers. Officers in some stations reported supplementing food from their personal resources, indicating inadequate institutional support. The lack of a structured, station-funded food supply poses a risk to detainee welfare, especially for those without family support.

Child Welfare and Gender Officers: Availability of Child Welfare and Gender Officers varied across stations. Fatato, Mankamang Kunda, and Brikama Ba do not have designated officers, while Basse and Bakadji have designated Child Welfare Officers. The Fatato Police Intervention Unit Base relies on referral systems but lacks dedicated personnel.

The absence of trained, dedicated officers limits stations' ability to appropriately respond to child protection and SGBV cases.

Office Space and Working Conditions: Office space and working conditions were mixed across the region. At Fatato, staff quarters were in poor condition and required urgent repairs. The CID office was narrow (approximately 3m x 3m) and unequipped. Basse and Brikama-Ba faced space and maintenance challenges. Bakadji and Mankamang Kunda, being newer facilities, had better working conditions, although Bakadji experienced frequent water supply disruptions due to borehole issues. Overall, many stations require renovations and improved resources to support effective policing.

Record Keeping: Recordkeeping was good at Fatato, Basse, Bakadji, and Mankamang Kunda. Station Diaries, Lost and Found Registers, and Exhibit Registers were properly maintained at Fatato, Basse, Bakadji, and Mankamang Kunda. At Brikama Ba, records were maintained but required closer monitoring. Recordkeeping quality at the Fatato Intervention Base was not fully assessed due to access limitations.

Logistics and Resource Constraints: Multiple stations highlight significant logistical and resource limitations. Fatato lacked vehicles and sufficient personnel. Brikama Ba and Basse also faced manpower and mobility challenges, water supply issues were reported in Bakadji. Inadequate infrastructure, limited equipment, and insufficient staff quarters were common concerns. These constraints hinder patrols, crime response, and administrative efficiency.

MONITORING VISIT TO POLICE STATIONS IN NORTH BANK AND LOWER RIVER REGIONS



Conditions of the Cells: Conditions of detention cells across the NBR and LRR varied but were generally below acceptable standards.

In the North Bank Region, Essau Police Station held five male detainees across five cells. Despite the number of cells, conditions were unsatisfactory, with poor lighting (despite installed bulbs), inadequate sanitation, and insufficient bedding, as detainees slept on prayer mats. Amdalai Police Station held two male Senegalese detainees across two cells with similar deficiencies—nonfunctional lighting, inadequate sanitation, and no mattresses. Farafenni Police Station had three detainees confined in one cell, also marked by inadequate lighting, poor hygiene facilities, and insufficient bedding.

Albreda and Njaba Kunda had no detainees at the time of the visit. While both stations maintained detention spaces, the facilities were affected by the same structural challenges found elsewhere, including limited sanitation and poor lighting.

In the Lower River Region, only Kolior Police Station had a detainee at the time of the visit—a single male Gambian in a cramped cell with poor lighting and bedding. Bureng, Mansakonko, Pakaliba, and Soma Police Stations had no detainees, but their cells reflected outdated infrastructure and insufficient readiness for custodial use.

Across both regions, many cells were observed as cramped, poorly lit, and lacking adequate bedding and ventilation. Levels of cleanliness varied, but overall conditions were not aligned with humane standards for detention.

Sanitary Facilities:

Sanitation was a significant concern across almost all stations visited. In many facilities, detainees reported access to inadequate functional toilets inside the cells. Running water was often unavailable or inconsistent, and cleaning supplies were limited. Only a few station-maintained toilets were usable. In others, toilets were shared between detainees and officers, had poor lighting, or lacked basic hygiene materials such as soap. In several stations, sanitation spaces were not suitable for use.

Lighting and Ventilation:

Lighting and ventilation were found to be inadequate in nearly half of the stations visited. Although some cells had installed bulbs, these were frequently nonfunctional due to electrical faults or outages. Many detention areas were dim or poorly illuminated, making supervision difficult and increasing safety risks. Ventilation was also inadequate in numerous stations, especially considering the humid weather condition—which raises risks related to heat, poor air circulation, and detainee discomfort. Only a small number of facilities provided adequate lighting and airflow.

Bedding and Sleeping Conditions:

Bedding provisions were consistently insufficient across both regions. Most detainees slept on prayer mats or directly on the floor. Mattresses, blankets, and basic bedding were largely absent. Stations with no detainees still lacked proper bedding, indicating systemic logistical gaps rather than temporary shortages. The lack of appropriate bedding poses serious concerns regarding comfort, dignity, and overall detainee welfare.

Accommodation for Women and Children:

The monitoring revealed limited or no accommodation for women in custody. Approximately half of the stations visited had no dedicated women's cells, and several provided no information about how women would be detained if arrested. Although no female detainees were present during the visit, this lack of appropriate facilities remains a major gap.

Detention arrangements for children were similarly inadequate. None of the stations had designated cell for children. In cases where minors are detained, officers rely on improvised

arrangements such as placing them near the counter, in administrative offices, or in unused areas until a parent or Child Welfare Officer becomes available. These practices do not meet child protection standards and expose minors to avoidable risks.

Documentation and Communication of Rights:

Documentation of detainee rights and custodial processes was inconsistent across stations. Some detainees reported being informed of their rights, while others indicated they had not received such information. In several stations, documentation was incomplete or missing. Cases under investigation lacked standardised records, and administrative limitations—such as staffing shortages and slow court processes—further affected detainee rights and case progression. Administrative registers were partially maintained, but documentation gaps highlight the need for strengthened oversight and training.

Staffing, Infrastructure, and Operational Gaps:

Both regions displayed recurring operational challenges. There exist limited staffing, especially at border stations and rural outposts, outdated or deteriorating infrastructure, insufficient welfare and hygiene support, inadequate cell readiness for detaining individuals and lack of cleaning supplies, running water, and proper lighting.

Some stations reported lack of functional vehicles, hindering patrols, arrests, and emergency response capabilities. These resource constraints significantly affect the overall quality of policing and custodial management.

Detainee Welfare and Contact with Family:

Where detainees were present, they were generally allowed contact with family members and were informed of the reasons for their arrests. Some stations provided a single daily meal, while in others, detainees relied on families for food. Welfare support systems were inconsistent. Despite resource limitations, there were no reports of unlawful detention or denial of bail in either region during the monitoring period.

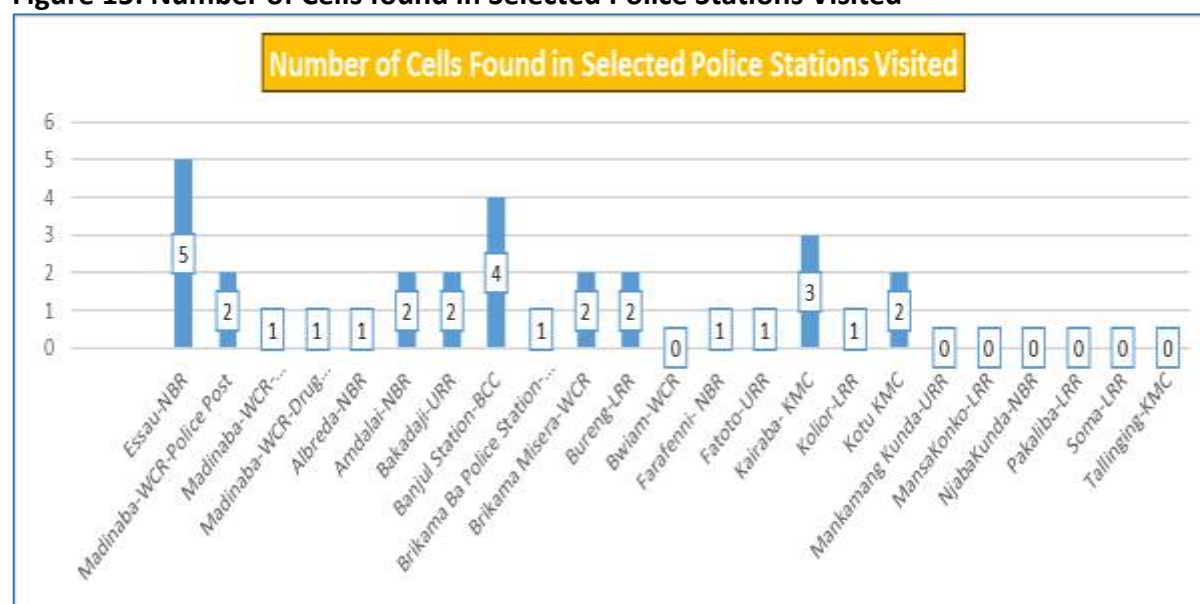
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ACROSS ALL POLICE STATIONS VISITED

Monitoring of Police Stations revealed varying levels of compliance with human rights standards, institutional procedures, and overall operational readiness. In several Stations, core elements required for effective functioning—such as trained personnel, adequate equipment, and reliable communication tools—were inconsistent, substandard or absent. The findings below provide an overview of the availability of designated Child Welfare and Gender Officers, the quality of detainee management processes, and the extent to which detainees were able to exercise their rights to family contact and communication. Monitoring of Police Stations across the two Municipalities and the Regions highlighted substantial disparities in both infrastructure quality and operational practices.

1. Conditions of Detention Cells

Figure 16 below indicates the number of cells across all Police Stations visited. Out of the 28 Police Stations visited, the findings show that only 11 Stations have designated cells for women and children. While some Stations have adequate number of cells for the available detainees, the absence of cells in Police posts raises concern over human rights safeguards and constitutional rights of persons suspected of having committed a crime.

Figure 15: Number of Cells found in Selected Police Stations Visited



General Conditions of the Sanitary Facilities

Sanitary facilities are commonly shared with both detainees and Officers or are non-functional. The assessment of ventilation, lighting, and bedding conditions across detention facilities revealed widespread and consistent shortcomings. Ventilation results are mixed, with poor or unspecified ventilation being the most common responses, indicating that many cells either lacked adequate ventilation. Only a small proportion of stations reported good ventilation, suggesting uneven standards across sites.

Lighting conditions appear notably poor. Half of the responses describe lighting as absent or poor, with only two stations reportedly having adequate lighting.

Bedding availability is the most concerning of the three areas. Many stations either provided no bedding or relied on mats placed directly on the floor, while proper mattresses were documented in only one facility. The large number of unspecified responses again highlight monitoring and reporting gaps.

Overall, the charts show that many detention facilities operate with inadequate or poorly documented living conditions, with substantial deficiencies in ventilation, lighting, and bedding that fall short of minimum standards, which may compromise detainee welfare.

Figure 16: Response on the General Condition of Detention Centers at Police Stations

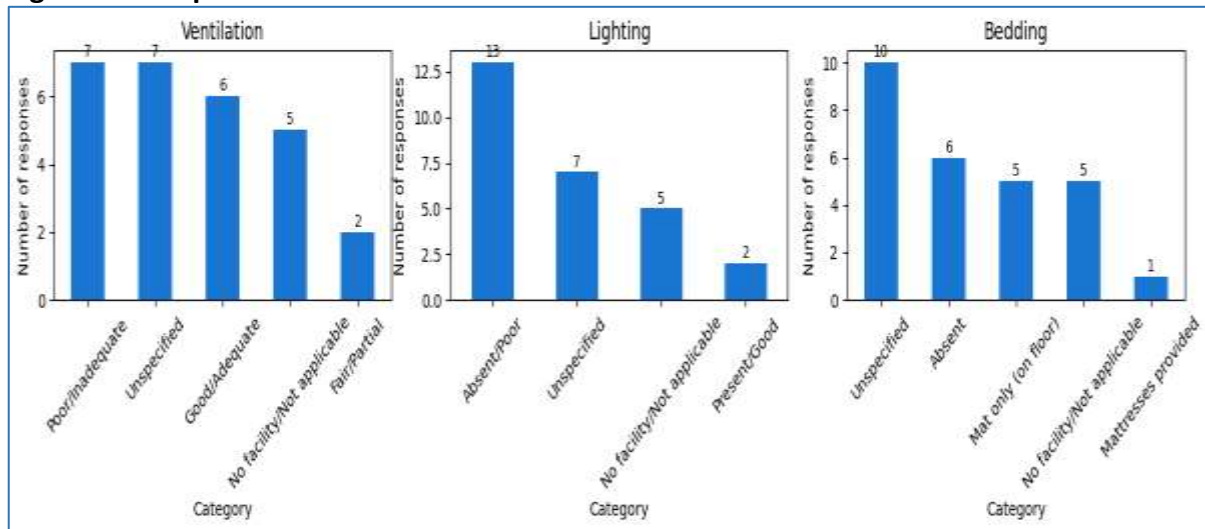
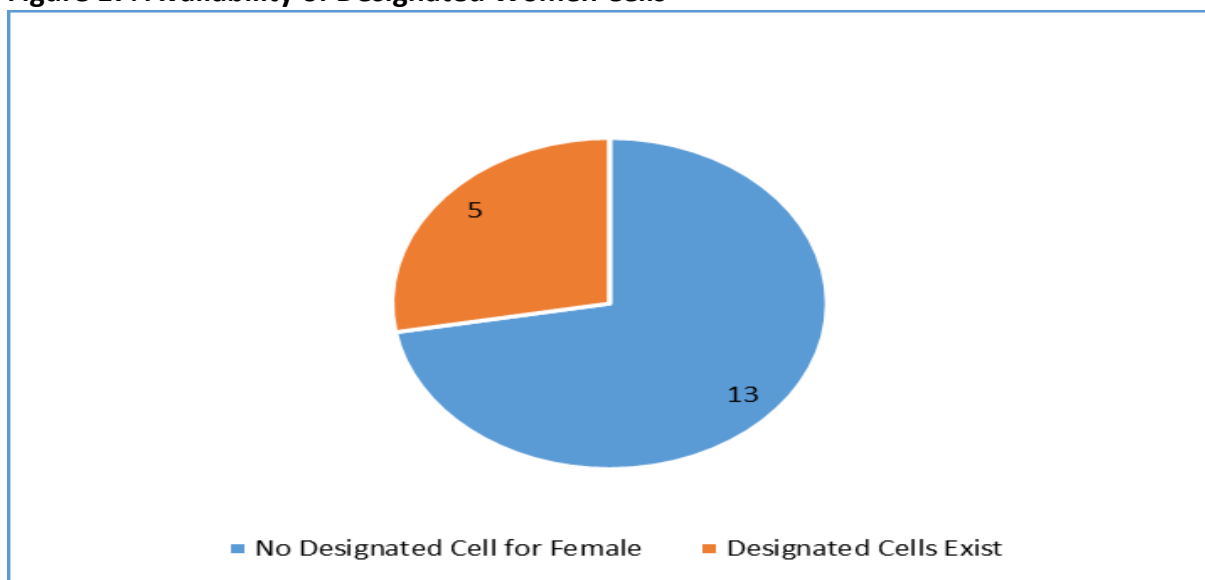


Figure 17: Availability of Designated Women Cells



The data presented in the graph indicates significant gaps in the availability of designated women's cells across the Police Stations surveyed (N = 26). Half of all respondents (13 stations, 50%) reported having no designated cell for women, highlighting a widespread lack of gender appropriate detention facilities. This finding points to structural limitations that may compromise the safety, privacy, and dignity of women in custody.

Only 5 stations (19.2%) confirmed that a designated women's cell exists, showing that fewer than one in five facilities meet the basic requirement for gender segregated detention spaces. Additionally, 1 response (3.8%) indicated that the station had no female detention facility at all, reinforcing concerns about inadequate accommodation options for women detainees.

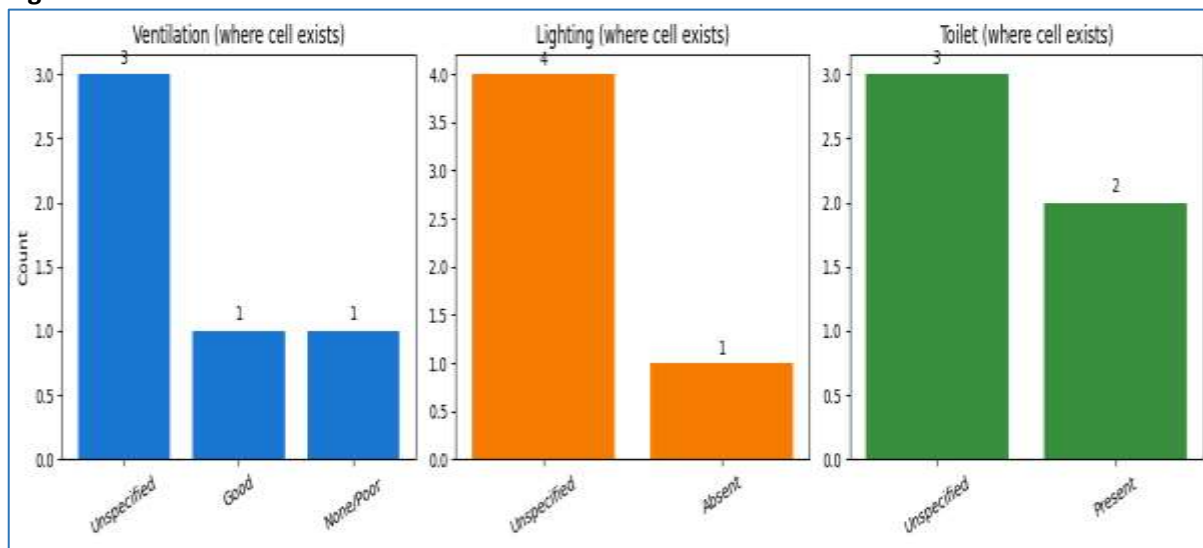
Overall, the distribution of responses demonstrates that majority of stations lack appropriate infrastructure to safely detain women. The low number of designated women's cells underscores the need for systematic improvements in facility design, resource allocation, and

standardized documentation to ensure that women deprived of liberty are held in conditions that respect their rights and dignity.

Conditions of the Cells

Many cells have inadequate ventilation, poor lighting, and no bedding except mats which the detainees sleep on. Responses to the conditions of detention spaces were extremely limited. Where information was available, cells were described as either adequate or not conducive, with one case unspecified.

Figure 18: Conditions of the Cells



DESIGNATED CELL FOR CHILDREN



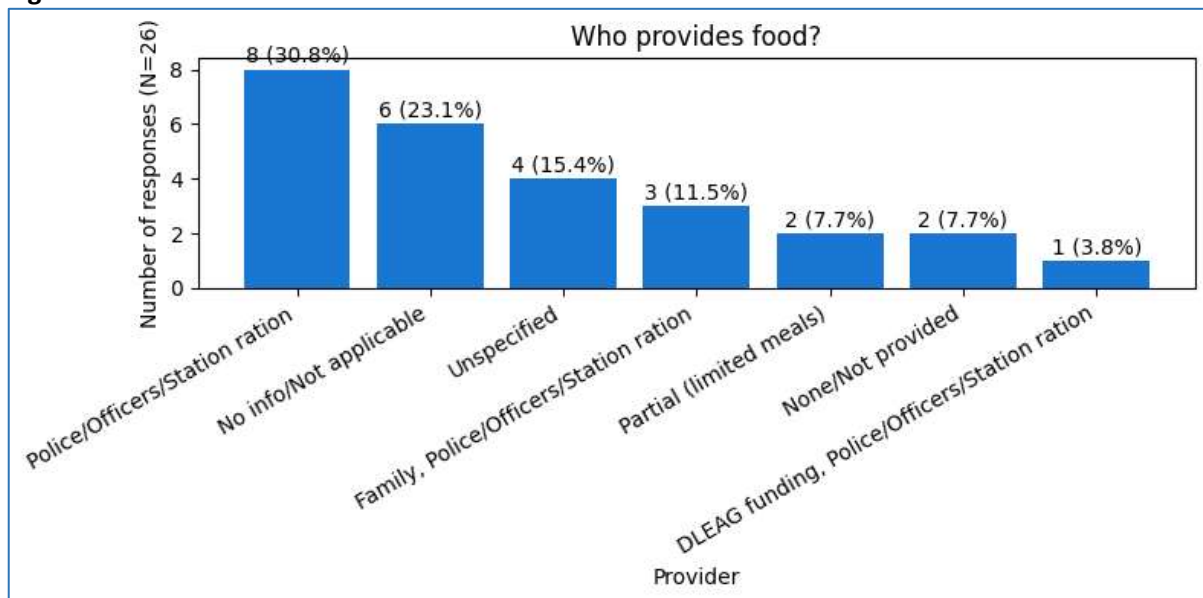
The findings reveal a more systemic concern in the lack of designated cells for children. A majority of Stations (15 out of 26, or 57.7%) reported having no designated cell or detention facility for children. Only three Stations confirmed the existence of such a facility, while others either did not provide information or stated that minors are not detained as a matter of policy. In cases where no child-specific cell was available, the locations where children were held varied widely and were often inappropriate. In most cases, the holding location was not specified (6 cases), while in five cases, children were kept behind the station counter, an area not intended for detention. Other children were placed in the women's cells, the CID office, or left in the care of Child Welfare Officers. These patterns demonstrate a clear lack of dedicated facilities for minors and highlight the significant risk of children being held in environments that are unsuitable or potentially unsafe.

Figure 19: Designated Cells for Children

Availability of designated children's cells	Count %
No designated cell for children	57.7% (15/26)
Designated cell for children exists	11.5% (3/26)
Minors not detained (policy)	3.8% (1/26)
No information / Not applicable	27% (7/26)

Overall, the findings point to significant inconsistencies and gaps in the treatment, documentation, and accommodation of children in police custody. While some children receive adequate meals and are held in reasonable conditions, many others face unclear or insufficient food provision, lack of proper bedding, and placement in non-designated holding areas. The widespread absence of child-specific facilities underscores the need for standardized procedures and infrastructure to ensure the protection, safety, and well-being of children in conflict with the law.

Figure 20: Food Provision



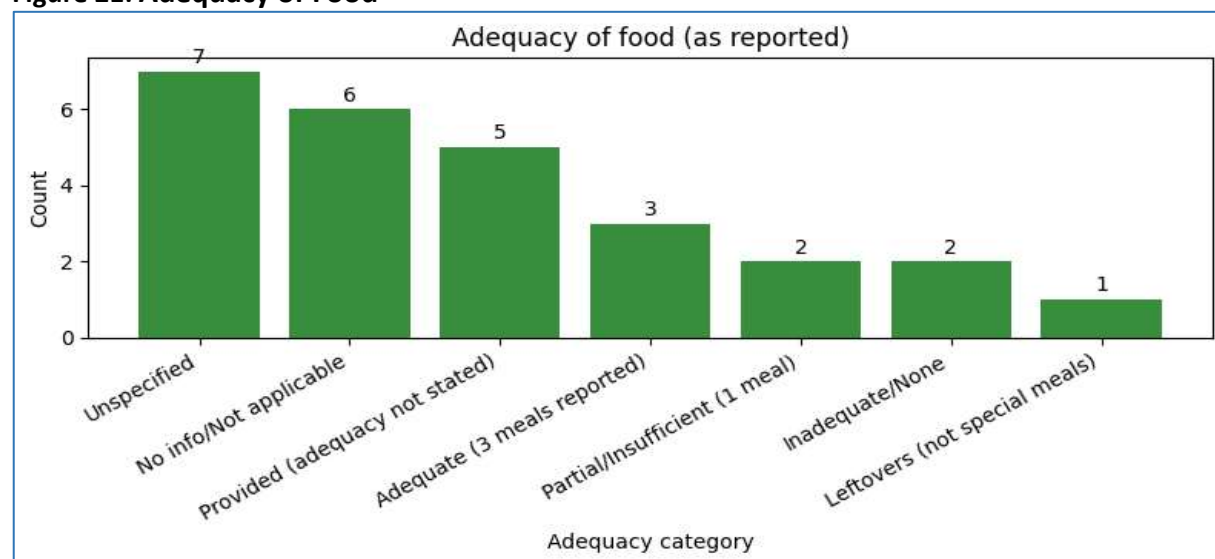
The findings of the graphs below provide an overview of the conditions experienced by detainees in police custody, focusing on the adequacy of food, the sources of food provision and the availability of designated child-friendly holding spaces.

Monitoring across the Stations indicates that food provision for detainees is largely informal, inconsistent, and poorly documented. There is no uniform system in place to ensure regular meals, and arrangements vary significantly from one Station to another. In most cases, food is not provided as part of a structured institutional obligation; instead, the responsibility falls predominantly on Police Officers—who often use their own limited resources—and on family members, who bring food during visits.

Only a small number of Stations reported providing meals that meet basic adequacy standards, such as offering three meals a day. These stations represent exceptions rather than the norm. In many facilities, meals are provided irregularly or only partially, for instance, lunch may be offered while breakfast and dinner depend entirely on family support.

The absence of reliable documentation further obscures the situation. Several Stations could not specify who provides food or whether meals are consistently available. This lack of record-keeping raises concerns about the welfare of detainees, especially those without active family support. In such cases, detainees may receive insufficient food or, in some instances, no food at all, placing them at risk of neglect and nutritional deprivation.

Figure 21: Adequacy of Food



The monitoring exercise undertaken to the selected Police Stations revealed significant disparities in infrastructure, personnel, detainee management, and adherence to human rights standards. While some Stations have shown that they are compliant in maintaining records and communicating charges to detainees, many others operated under severe logistical and operational constraints that undermine both staff effectiveness and detainee welfare.

Child Welfare and Gender Officers

The presence of designated Child Welfare and Gender Officers was inconsistent and often inadequate across Police Stations in the country. Several police stations -including Brufut Anti-Crime Unit, Kotu Police Station, Tujereng Police Station, and many rural Stations had no such officer present, leaving child protection and gender-sensitive cases to general-duty officers without specialized training in such cases.

In better resourced Stations like Brusubi, Gender and Child Welfare Officers support nearby Stations including Old Yundum, Kotu, and Tujereng as part of a regional deployment model. While this expands access to specialized services, it also leads to delays in response and case handling because officers cover multiple locations. A similar arrangement exists at Kairaba Police Station, where one officer supports Bakoteh, and New Jeshwang. Overall, the model results in stretched capacity and inconsistent availability of specialized officers across Stations

In Police Stations with Child Welfare and Gender Officers, their workspaces were frequently shared with CID, undermining privacy for interviews and inhibiting proper case management. Overall, the monitoring found that more than half of the Police Stations do not have a designated Child Welfare and Gender Officer, creating significant protection gaps for minors and Women.

Office Facilities

In terms of documentation systems, the monitoring revealed that Station Diaries were present in most facilities and their reliability varied. Some Stations, particularly Fatoto, Bakadagi, and Basse, maintain Diaries and supplementary Registers diligently, with up-to-date and properly catalogued entries. In contrast, other Stations had incomplete records, missing entries, or irregular updates. Supplementary registers such as Lost and Found Registers, Exhibit Registers, and Prisoners' Property Registers are inconsistently maintained. These shortcomings were frequently linked to lack of stationery, computers, printers, and secure filing cabinets. The near-total absence of digital case management systems further contributes to administrative inefficiencies and undermine accountability.

The office conditions were generally found to be inadequate or unsatisfactory. Many Police Stations, especially those in the West Coast, Lower River, and Upper River Regions, functioned in poorly ventilated environments. Broken office furniture outdated or unusable equipment, and absence of basic working tools such as computers were common. At Tanji Police Post, officers said they purchase their own electricity credit due to lack of institutional support. Several offices lacked private spaces for sensitive interviews, leading to instances where Child Welfare and Gender Protection activities had to be conducted in shared rooms with unrelated staff. These conditions reflect broader constraints in resourcing and infrastructure across the Police system.

Officers' Accommodation, Other Services and Wellbeing

Staff Quarters, where present, also varied significantly in quality. Police Stations such as Fatoto, Basse, and Tujereng have dilapidated, overcrowded, and lack running water. In some facilities, officers lacked access to private sanitation facilities and shared basic pit latrines with detainees. A few newly built Police Stations, notably Bakadagi and Mankamang Kunda, have improved housing conditions, though these too faced challenges such as unreliable water supply.

Across the Stations, a range of operational and infrastructural challenges significantly hindered the effective delivery of services. On the operational side, day-to-day processes were often disrupted by factors such as limited personnel, inadequate equipment like vehicles, and inefficiencies in routine procedures. These issues affected the ability of officers to manage cases promptly, maintain accurate records, and provide consistent oversight.

Interviews with detainees provided a nuanced perspective on respect for constitutional rights. Many detainees confirmed that they were informed of the reasons for their arrest and were permitted to contact family members, often through officers' personal phones since station landlines were non-existent or frequently nonfunctional. Bail was generally accessible, although strict surety requirements, especially in rural areas, made it difficult for some detainees to secure their release. Importantly, there were instances where detainees were held beyond the constitutionally mandated 72hour limit, primarily due to delays in investigations or court availability. Access to legal representation varied widely with urban detainees more likely to secure the services of lawyers, while rural stations rarely received visits from legal aid providers such as NALA. Notably, there were no reports of physical torture

or overt abuse during the unannounced visits, though poor material conditions—overcrowded cells, lack of lighting, and unhygienic sanitation—amounted to degrading treatment in several facilities.

Figure 22: Bail

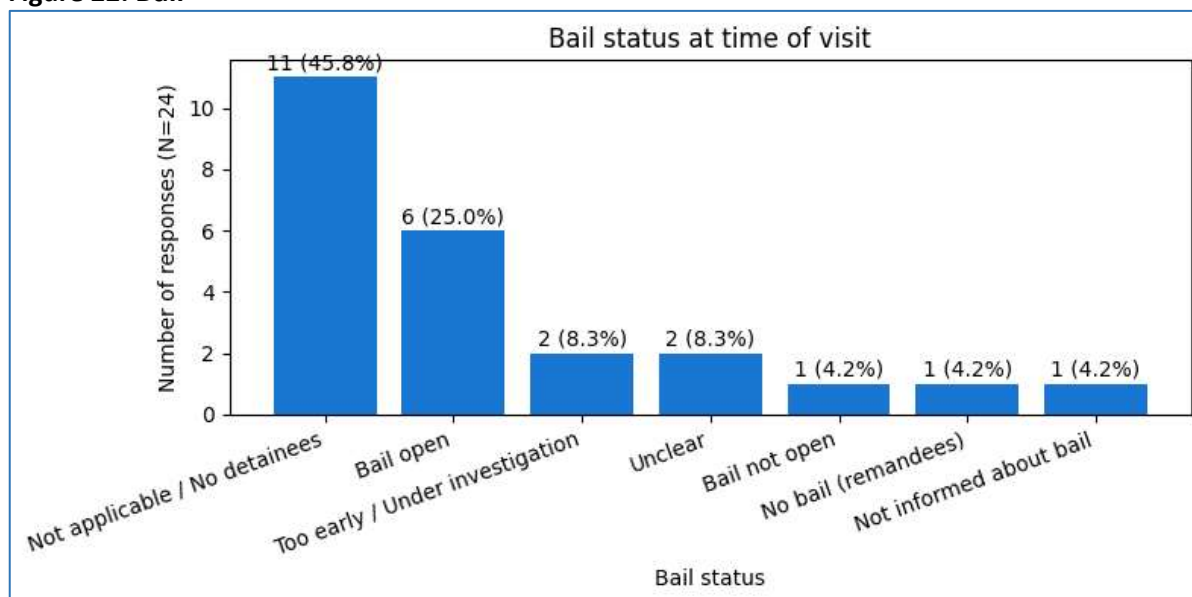
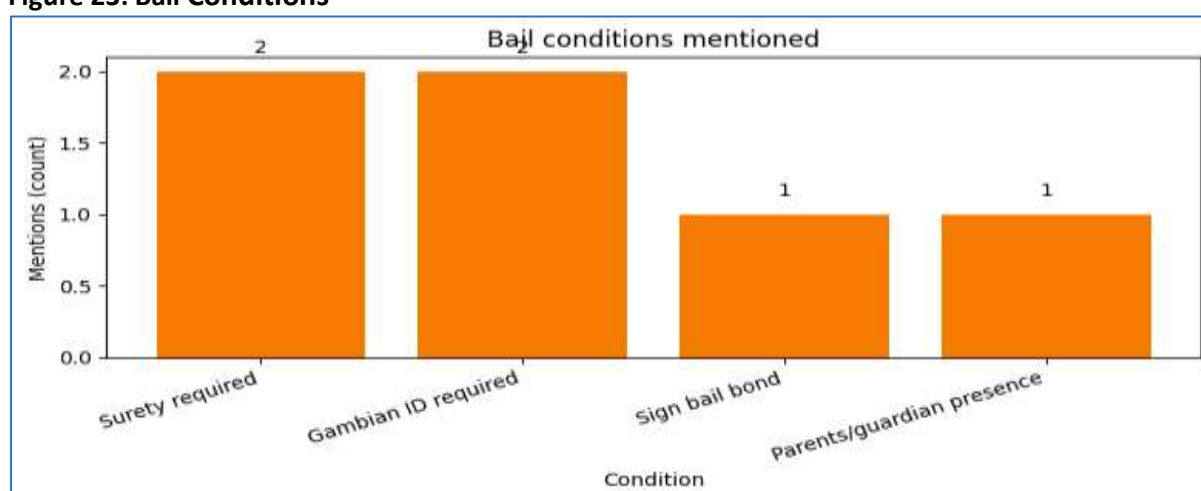


Figure 23: Bail Conditions



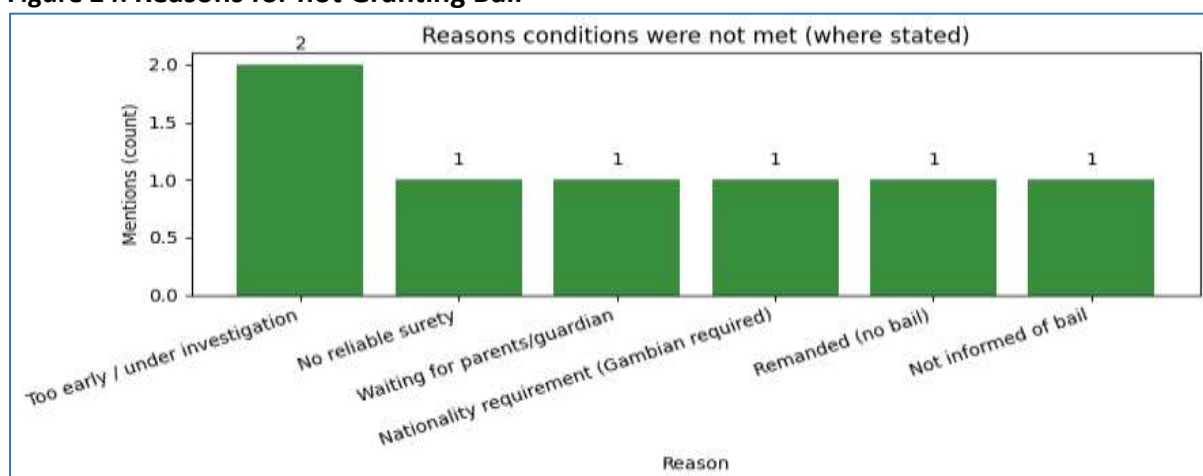
The data on bail conditions and the reasons they were not met reveals several patterns in how bail decisions are communicated to detainees and implemented by police officers. The most frequently mentioned bail conditions were the requirement for a surety and the need for a Gambian identity card (ID). Less commonly cited conditions included signing a bail bond and requiring the presence of a parent or guardian. These conditions highlight a mixture of administrative documentation requirements and procedural safeguards.

When examining why these conditions were not fulfilled, the most common reason was that cases were still at an early stage or under investigation. Other reasons included the absence of a reliable surety, delays in reaching parents or guardians, nationality-based requirements

for sureties, remand decisions that excluded the option of bail, and instances where individuals were not informed about their bail status.

These findings indicate that while certain bail conditions are consistently required, the barriers to meeting them are varied and often procedural in nature. Early-stage investigations, lack of communication, and reliance on external parties such as sureties or guardians all contribute to delays or inability to meet conditions. This suggests a need for clearer communication, streamlined processes, and support mechanisms for individuals who may struggle to meet administrative or relational requirements for bail.

Figure 24: Reasons for not Granting Bail



Charge and Admission:

In most Police Stations, detainees reported being informed of the reasons for their arrest, fulfilling a core constitutional obligation.

A key factor contributing to delays in communicating charges was the lack of adequate procedural training among some officers. In several Stations, officers had not received sufficient information on the proper steps and timelines for informing detainees of the charges against them, particularly under conditions required under section 24 of the 1997 Constitution. As a result, procedures that should have been routine were inconsistent, leading to avoidable delays.

At Banjul Police Station, detainees specifically reported delays in being informed of their charges, underscoring these procedural inconsistencies and highlighting the need for strengthened training in detainee rights, documentation processes, and timely communication protocols.

The admission procedures in several Stations were weakened because the documentation systems were poorly managed. This means that essential records—such as entries in the Station Diary and detainee registers were not consistently or accurately kept. In places like Brufut Anti-Crime Unit, Kotu, and Tujereng, officers either failed to record information properly or maintained the records irregularly, which compromises accountability and makes it difficult to track detainees or verify the timeline of events.

In contrast, stations such as Fatoto, Bakadagi, and Basse demonstrated good recordkeeping, with complete and well-maintained documentation. However, many of the Stations facing challenges struggled because they lacked basic materials and equipment. Shortages of stationery, printers, and computers made it difficult for officers to document charges, update registers, or manage case files efficiently. As a result, errors or gaps in the admission process became more common, affecting accurate charge recording and proper tracking of detainees.

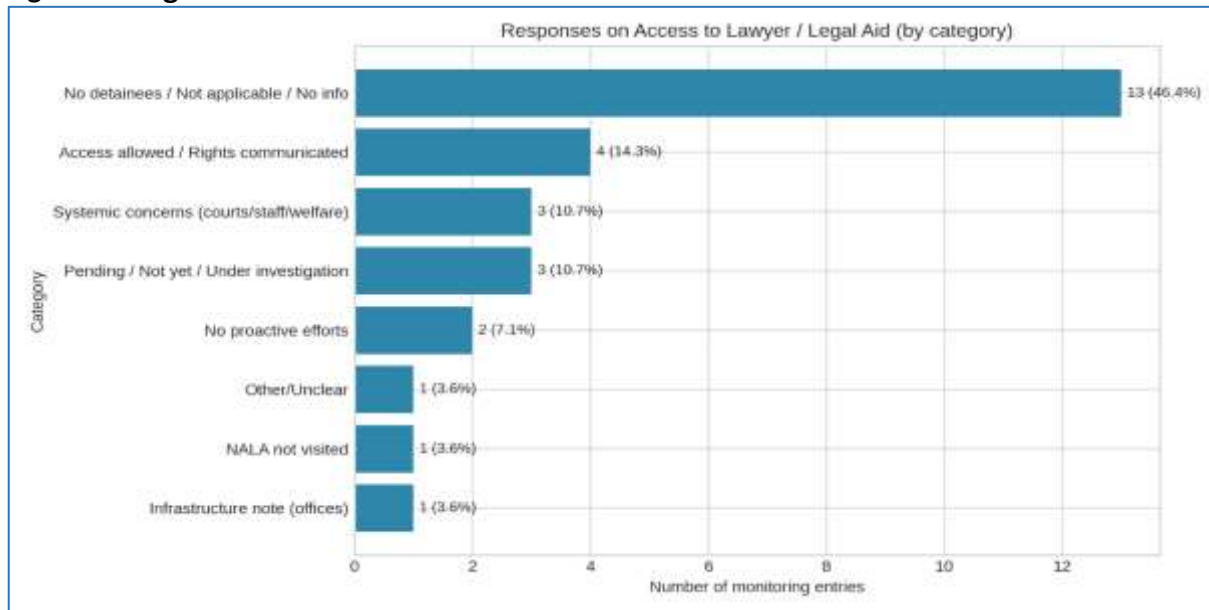
FAMILY VISIT AND CONTACT WITH FAMILIES

Interview results showed that, although most Police Stations allowed detainees to contact their families, the quality of this facilitation varied considerably. In many locations such as Banjul and Brikama-Ba, officers struggled to support communication effectively because the Stations lacked functional landline telephones. As a result, officers often resorted to using their personal mobile phones to help detainees reach relatives. This created inconsistencies in how communication was provided, with some detainees receiving timely assistance while others faced delays or limited access depending on the resources available at each Station.

Detainees in rural Stations, particularly in URR and CRR, confirmed that they were able to receive visits, although sometimes families delay such visits due to the long distance, or unavailability of transportation.

Despite these challenges, the monitoring team found no evidence of systematic denial of family contact, and detainees were generally aware of their right to communicate with relatives.

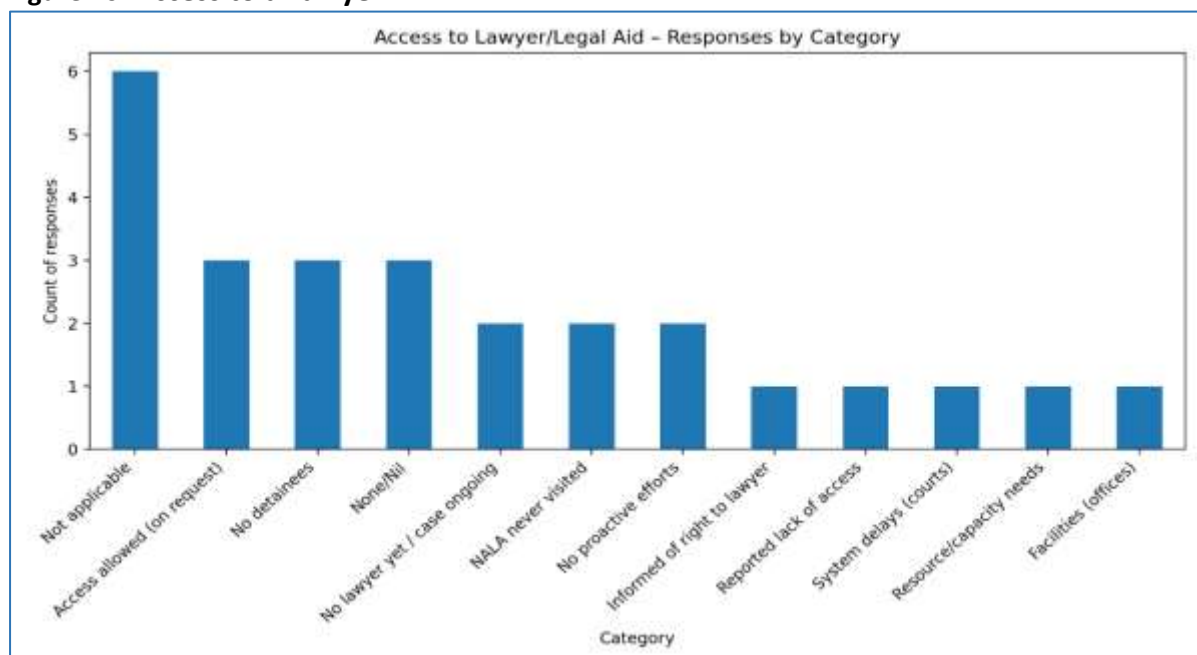
Figure 25: Legal Aid



The monitoring data shows that access to lawyers and legal aid remains inconsistent across facilities. Among cases where information was available, only a small number reported that detainees were informed of their rights or allowed access to legal aid.

In some facilities, monitors noted that NALA had not visited or that no proactive efforts were made to ensure legal representation. A few responses also highlighted issues such as lack of facilities or unclear information.

Figure 26: Access to a Lawyer



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING POLICE DETENTION FACILITIES

A. Detention Facilities

To improve the standard of Police detention facilities, the Government should establish and enforce minimum requirements for all Police Stations. These standards must address ventilation, lighting, sanitation, bedding, capacity and dimension. Every station should also provide separate cells for women, children, and other vulnerable detainees. Regular quarterly inspections, coordinated by regional oversight committees, would help ensure compliance.

B. Detainee Rights

Respecting detainee rights is fundamental to lawful policing. All detainees must have access to legal representation within the first 24 hours of detention. Implementing automated family notification systems would strengthen communication and transparency when individuals are taken into custody. Bail procedures should be reformed to minimize the barriers imposed by surety requirements, which often prevent detainees from securing timely release. It is also essential to strictly enforce the 72-hour detention limit through electronic monitoring systems and mandatory court reporting.

C. Human Resources

Strengthening the human resource capacity of Police Stations is essential for rights-based services delivery. Efforts should be made to achieve at least 30 percent female officer representation in every Police Station to support gender sensitive policing. Officers should receive regular training in human rights, gender sensitivity, and child protection. Improved welfare provisions, including better housing, adequate equipment, and psychosocial support—would enhance officer wellbeing. Establishing clear career development pathways, including opportunities for promotion and continuous learning, would further professionalize the police service.

D. Systems and Processes

Modernizing police operations requires the rollout of electronic case management systems across all stations. Such systems would improve recordkeeping, enhance accountability, and facilitate timely decision-making. Introducing data analytics tools would strengthen the ability of police management to track detainee trends, allocate resources effectively, and improve overall performance.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON POLICE STATION VISIT ANALYSIS

1. Officer Demographics and Distribution

The analysis revealed notable demographic and staffing disparities across Police Stations. Male officers significantly outnumber female officers, resulting in limited capacity for gender sensitive services. Furthermore, staffing levels varied widely, with some stations operating with critically low numbers while others were adequately staffed. Rural Stations were generally affected by staffing shortages, reflecting regional imbalances in resource allocation.

2. Detention Facilities and Conditions

Several detention facilities were found to be inadequate. Many lacked proper detention cells altogether, while existing cells often had poor ventilation, inadequate lighting, and substandard sanitation. In several locations, toilets and bathing areas were shared between detainees and staff, raising serious concerns about privacy, safety, and dignity. The absence of designated cells for women and children further highlights major infrastructure gaps and the inability of many facilities to ensure appropriate and safe separation of vulnerable

3. Training on Detainee Management

There is a clear need to strengthen the capacity of Station Officers and Relief Commanders in effective detainee management. Across all Stations visited, a recurring concern was the consistent weakness in how detainees' rights were handled. Several key rights were not being properly upheld:

- Right to bail: Many detainees were unable to secure bail because the requirements for sureties were applied too rigidly, even in cases where alternative arrangements could have been considered.
- Right to legal representation: Access to lawyers was often delayed or unavailable, leaving detainees without timely legal advice.
- Right to contact family: Procedures for allowing detainees to communicate with family members were inconsistent, meaning some detainees could call relatives while others could not.
- Right not to be detained beyond 72 hours: In several cases, detainees were held beyond the constitutionally mandated 72-hour limit, which is a direct violation of national law and human rights protections.

Overall, these gaps demonstrate significant shortcomings in detainee management practices and highlight the urgent need for training to ensure that constitutional and human rights standards are consistently applied.

4. Record Keeping and Documentation

Recordkeeping practices across Stations were highly inconsistent. Many stations faced shortages of basic office supplies and essential equipment, making it difficult to maintain accurate and comprehensive documentation. The limited use of electronic systems contributed to data management challenges and reduced the efficiency of operational processes.

5. Regional Disparities

Significant regional disparities were evident in the quality of detention conditions. Urban Police Stations were generally better equipped and better staffed than Police Stations in rural areas. This uneven distribution of personnel, facilities, and equipment underscores the need for more equitable resource allocation to ensure that Police Stations in all Regions meet minimum standards of policing and detainee care.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC)

APRIL 2026