

FAST FACTS

From Prisons to Corrections: Promoting Institutional Reform of the Sierra Leonean Correctional Services



Project Cluster
**Effective
and Inclusive
Democratic
Governance**

Duration
**October 2016 -
December 2018**

Budget
US \$1,500,000.

Access the official
[From Prisons
to Corrections
Project Document](#)

What we do

This project supports the Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS) in implementing its Strategic Plan to improve life in correctional facilities, in accordance with Sierra Leonean law and its international human rights obligations.

How we do it

UNDP interventions improve the capacity of correctional facilities to comply with international human rights standards; and strengthen the capacity of correctional service staff to ensure the welfare of inmates, and the safety and security of society.

Why we do it

All human beings have inalienable rights and these rights must not be compromised - even during the legal deprivation of liberty. Humane prison conditions are a prerequisite of fair criminal justice systems. All pretrial detainees have the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty, and the deprivation of liberty should be the only punishment of sentenced inmates.

Poor detention conditions can be detrimental to inmates' rehabilitation and reintegration to society. They are also a violation of the United Nations (UN) Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.¹

Challenges

The SLCS does not yet have the capacity to ensure the safety and security of inmates, staff and society. Prison infrastructure is outdated; quarters are overcrowded, lack ventilation and clean sanitary facilities; and medical facilities are substandard, resulting in poor health conditions. In addition, inmates lack sufficient nutritious food and water.

Sustainable Development Goals

UNDP policy is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a universal call to action, addressing the root causes of poverty while affecting positive changes for both people and planet.

This project specifically contributes to the achievement of SDG 16 with a focus on Target 3, to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all. In conjunction with the overall UNDP Rule of Law project and the Promoting Transparency in Sierra Leone's Judiciary project, this project actively seeks to reduce the pretrial and remand population in Sierra Leone.

Donors



Achievements

Development and implementation of the Human Rights Action Nationwide Plan

Three human rights audits were conducted and 19 Correctional Facility Managers and Regional Commanders trained to implement the the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. This led to the development of a Human Rights Action Nationwide Plan that is presently being implemented by Facility Managers. Among other things, plan provides for the separation of remand prisoners from those who are convicted. It has also enabled inmates to enjoy visits from family members and to engage in leisure activities.

Review of the Correctional Act 2014 and Prison Rules

In spite of having been revised in 2014, Sierra Leone's Correctional Act does not fully encompass key principles on international and national law and best practice required to transform the SLCS from a prison service to a correctional service. Similarly, Prison Rules - established in 1961 - do not fully realize the human rights of either inmates or security staff.

In 2017, drawing from input from the SLCS, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Correctional Council approved reviews of both the Correctional Act 2014 and Prison Rules. The revised documents have since been submitted to the Ministry of Justice and are currently being prepared for presentation to Parliament.

Adoption of the Accommodation and Industries Master Plans

The newly-adopted Accommodation Master Plan and Industries Master Plan will support government and SLCS in identifying and implementing immediate, short-term and long-term priorities for service reform.

Reflecting the number of inmates as well as the actual amount of space, the Accommodation Master Plan provides the SLCS with a full overview of institutional capacity, to inform plans for renovating and rehabilitating facilities.

The Industries Master Plan improves the sustainability of the SLCS, enabling inmates to receive training and develop skills, to grow their own food, and to build - and sell - furniture. These initiatives have helped generate funds for the SLCS; and inmates - who used to eat just once - are now receiving three meals every day.

For more information about UNDP and its projects, go to: www.sl.undp.org.

Inquire, via email at: communication.sl@undp.org

Or telephone: +232 99 28 99 55.

We are also on social media:



¹ The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna (2015), https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/GA-RESOLUTION/E_ebook.pdf - last accessed 13 November 2017⁴