
PARTICIPANTS' PAPERS

SECURITY AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT AT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

Security and safety management at correctional facilities aims to ensure the well-being of inmates and staff, as well as to maintain the function and daily operation of the facility itself. Unfortunately, due to power imbalances in correctional facilities, too much emphasis is often placed on security, which results in violations of human rights in many ways. Power imbalances also cause certain aspects of safety to be overlooked.

In 1955, the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders adopted the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted expanded rules, known as the “Nelson Mandela Rules.”¹ These rules provide guidelines on the operation of correctional facilities to ensure the dignity and value of the inmates as human beings.

This paper will look at the security and safety management at correctional facilities as guided by the Nelson Mandela Rules. The data were collected through observations during site visits, interviews with various people whose jobs relate to prison management, lectures, and internet research of relevant publications and materials. Security management at correctional facilities will be considered from three aspects of prison security: physical security, procedural security and dynamic security. Good practice or areas that need further attention, in accordance with the Nelson Mandela Rules (the Rules), will be highlighted.

The paper will not discuss all issues found in most prisons but only those which are relevant to challenges posed to the ASEAN Secretariat in security and safety. The principles presented can be implemented to improve the security and safety at the facilities of the ASEAN Secretariat and eventually will provide some input to further improve the security and safety management at other public facilities.

II. SECURITY AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

In places of detention, it is important to maintain security and order. Nevertheless, implementation shall not negate the person’s dignity or impose torture and other ill-treatment. As a basic principle, Rule 1 of the Nelson Mandela Rules states: “All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings... The safety and security of prisoners, staff, service providers and visitors shall be ensured at all times.”²

A. Physical Security

Physical security aims to prevent escapes and other contact with the outside world mainly through physical structures and other building systems, such as walls and fences, building design, alarms and detection systems.

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¹ Gilmour, Andrew. “The Nelson Mandela Rules: Protecting the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty.” *UN*, <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/nelson-mandela-rules-protecting-rights-persons-deprived-liberty#:~>

² The revised United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), adopted by the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on 22 May 2015, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council on 9 September 2015, UN-Doc. E/ RES/2015/20 and adopted by UN General Assembly Third Committee on 5 November 2015, UN-Doc. A/C.3/70/L.3.

Guided the by Nelson Mandela Rules, there are two relevant rules related to physical security at correctional facilities:

(Rule 5) (1.) The prison regime should seek to minimize any differences between prison life and life at liberty that tend to lessen the responsibility of the prisoners or the respect due to their inherent dignity as human being. (2) Prison administrations shall make all reasonable accommodation and adjustments to ensure that prisoners with physical, mental or other disabilities have full and effective access to prison life on an equitable basis.

(Rule 89) It is desirable to provide varying degrees of security according to the needs of different groups.³

In line with Rule 89, physical security at correctional facilities varies based on the security level of the facility. For example, in Sri Lanka, the correctional facility has three security levels: maximum security, medium security and open prison. In Japan, during visits, one can see the contrast between the security at Hiroshima prison and at a juvenile training school, with the later having a more humane feeling. While Hiroshima prison is guarded by 4-5-meter solid wall, juvenile training schools have a combination of a 2-meter-high wall and a 1.5-meter-transparent chain link fence. According to the explanation from the director of a juvenile training school, this approach is intended to create a more normal school feeling for the inhabitants.

Although the application may vary depending on security the level, in general, physical security consists of the following elements:

1. Perimeter wall or fence, some equipped with turrets and incorporating double or triple layers of perimeter wall with a no-man's area in between. Although not common, other types of perimeter protection can be used, such as in Maldives where the sea becomes the natural barrier.
2. Perimeter Intrusion Detection System (PIDS) in the form of infrared or strands of wire along the top of the perimeter wall. Japan prisons adopt this in many correctional facilities.
3. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) as the surveillance and monitoring device. More sophisticated CCTV in Maldives uses analytical software that helps to detect intrusion.
4. Walk-through metal detectors in the form of gates or handheld devices, to screen inmates and visitors and prevent contraband from entering the prison area.
5. X-ray machines to scan incoming goods and prevent contraband.
6. Window treatments in the form of window grills, wire mesh or lately, to eliminate the use of metal grills, architects have opted to use tough glass.
7. Locks, latches, padlocks and grills to secure openings.
8. Alarm system and Public Announcement (PA) system as a mean to communicate and alert others of fire incidents or other critical security situations that require immediate attention and assistance such as fight, riot, attack on security staff or escape attempt by inmates.
9. Building design and material selection are carefully picked for effective protection and cost-efficient maintenance.
10. Area zoning that divides public and more secure areas.

It is notable that during visits to some correctional facilities in Japan, the use of barbed wire or razor wire

³ Ibid.

as the form of perimeter intrusion deterrent is not found. There has been controversy in utilizing barbed wire to secure areas due to its high potential to inflict injury on innocent passers-by, for which the property owner might be held liable. In Hiroshima prison, metal spikes are used on vertical piping and structural columns to prevent climbing and escape.

To meet the requirements of Nelson Mandela rule 5, careful prison design is important. Although the following description is intended to portray conditions of typical American prisons, arguably, the same conditions are found in many other countries as well:

Facilities are usually built like fortresses—monoliths in rural locations ringed with razor wire and high walls. Interiors are detailed to withstand tremendous abuse, made with hard materials... which mercilessly reflect the endless noise inside prisons, raising stress levels of both inmates and those who work with them. There's generally either too much or too little light—most of it fluorescent, and switched on 24/7—which scrambles everyone's circadian rhythms. But due to security and cost concerns, access to natural light is a luxury. Windows are expensive, and their size and location often determine a facility's weakest security points. The typical interior color palette, meanwhile, is a study in sensory deprivation—just a few shades of monotonous, soul-crushing beige."⁴

In the early stage of establishment of a correctional facility, the architect and planner must be aware of the physical security requirements, and the architectural design shall already accommodate security and safety management. There are many examples where the facilities are constructed without enough security and safety consideration. Later, renovation and new construction is required to fix the security weakness, which requires additional cost. At the opposite end, the facility is designed with too much emphasis on security aspects, creating a facility that does not facilitate supportive and humane treatment of the inmates. Examples of such improper design approaches are: facilities that minimize contact between staff and detainees to reduce staffing, no regard to the specific needs of a diverse detainee population, and design that assumes significant use of solitary confinement cells, which by design entail substandard living conditions⁵ and are not in line with the spirit in the Nelson Mandela rules. Through study visits, we can see that Japan provides a good example of balance between creating a facility that supports humane treatment while still maintaining good security.

To achieve effective prison design, participation of correctional staff is required in the design stage to provide concrete information about day-to-day operation and what is required to support it. One good example is an initiative by the Government of Brazil to create prison design guidelines based on the active communication between correctional staff and architects/engineers. Another reference issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "Towards Humane Prisons", provides guidance on prison planning and design. These guidelines also include provision for catering to special needs of inmates with disabilities. Interviews with several correctional staff reveal that most prisons are not designed and constructed with inclusivity in mind. On a case-by-case basis, if there is an inmate with disabilities, correctional staff must provide special arrangements that often require more effort from the staff and additional cost.

Related to the design and construction of buildings, engineers must pay attention to the applicable building codes. Ideally, server rooms, electrical panels, CCTV control units and other equipment related to building systems shall be put inside fire-rated enclosures with proper signage, away from heavy traffic or with limited access only for technicians. Not only is this crucial to maintaining the security of the equipment but also to ensure the safety of the people inside the building, as mandated by Nelson Mandela Rule 1.

B. Procedural Security

Procedural security is about a set of routines or procedures that must be followed. In the prison context, this can be expanded to not only security but also safety procedures.

There are many Nelson Mandela Rules that are relevant in the procedural security context, such as rules

⁴ Slade, Rachael. "Is There Such A Thing as 'Good' Prison Design?" *Architectural Digest*, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/is-there-such-a-thing-as-good-prison-design>

⁵ Towards Humane Prison: A Principled and Participatory Approach to Prison Planning and Design, *ICRC*.

regarding non-discrimination; file management procedures; separation of categories; restrictions, discipline and sanctions; information to and complaints by prisoners; contact with the outside world; retention of prisoners' property; and inspections.

Effective procedural security requires not only a clear set of regulations but must be implemented by staff that are adequate in number, recruited on merit, well trained, and adequately paid.⁶ Shortages of staff are often compensated for by more strict security, while insufficient training leads to unnecessary security measures. Due to challenges in recruiting staff of suitable character, in many places, the position is filled with a person who believes that inmates, as people deprived of liberty, tend to be dangerous and violent; therefore, strict security measures are required to control them.

Based on several discussions with some people whose jobs are related to prison management, all of them already have a set of rules in place related to security. For example, the procedures to accept family visits, search procedures for inmates and procedures for service providers inside the prison have been carefully developed to accommodate the principles of the Nelson Mandela Rules and have been executed without issues. Japan in particular has a complete set of standard procedures on various activities and situations behind prison walls that are supported by effective training programmes to support implementation.

But in some cases, under special circumstances, there are still incidents where the correctional security staff inflict violence on inmates, which is a sign of problems in rule implementation. During his lecture, Mr. Hollander emphasized the importance of leadership. In this issue of poor implementation, leadership plays a great role in formulating proper and effective procedures, to provide role modelling, to provide mentorship, and to supervise and monitor the day-to-day implementation.

Safety procedures are often overlooked. There are two points to note regarding safety procedures: (a) safety monitoring and inspection to meet applicable industry standards, and (b) insufficient attention and preparedness of staff and inmates during emergencies.

Workshop facilities within prisons often play two roles as educational and production facilities. As production facilities, prison management must be aware about applicable safety standards and requirements within the respected industry to minimize the risk of occupational health problems and work injuries. This means that certain protocols must be established to ensure safe working environments, such as: application of personal protective equipment (PPE), routine workplace cleaning, regular maintenance of equipment, and periodic inspection by certified inspectors, SOPs for job related accident, and first-aid. The safety SOP must conform to the industry standard tailored to the specific conditions of the correctional facility.

During the lectures and study visit, questions arose over the preparedness of prisons during emergencies. There have been several cases of fire in Indonesian prisons caused by riots or electrical short circuits. Almost all news media, on 8 September 2021, reported that there was a great fire accident in Tangerang Class I Prison that killed at least 41 inmates.⁷ There are also challenges in conducting evacuations in a safe and secure way, how to handle inmates with movement difficulties, whether there are alternative facilities for temporary evacuation, how to properly move the inmates during evacuation, how to address poor building maintenance that potentially creates hazardous situations. People in prison are among the most vulnerable from the negative effects of natural hazards, including extreme weather and climate change. Despite international and national momentum in many countries towards increasing and improving disaster risk reduction (DRR), the application of DRR in prison systems is often not a primary concern.⁸ Prison management must do the risk analysis, develop procedures and execute drills for inmates and staff to familiarize them with the proper procedures. Prison management may introduce preventive maintenance action, which emphasizes periodic inspection to prevent safety incidents caused by faulty equipment that creates hazards. From the design stage, architects and engineers must plan for emergencies and provide necessary equipment in the event of power failure.

⁶ Balancing Security and Dignity in Prisons: A Framework for Preventive Monitoring, *PRI and APT*.

⁷ Supriyono. and Ihsan, Ahmad Yulianto., Criminal Liability in Prison Fire Cases: A Case Study of Class I Tangerang Prison Fire, *Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies*. 7(1).

⁸ Natural Hazards and Prisons, *Penal Reform International*.

C. Dynamic Security

Dynamic security is an approach to security which combines positive staff-prisoner relationships with fair treatment and purposeful activities that contribute to their future reintegration into society.⁹ Under this concept, prison staff actively and frequently observe and interact with prisoners to gain a better understanding and awareness of prisoners and assessment of the risks that they present.¹⁰

This concept is guided by the Nelson Mandela Rules:

(Rule 1) All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings.

(Rule 2) The present rules shall be applied impartially. There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status.

(Rule 38) Prison administrations are encouraged to use, to the extent possible, conflict prevention, mediation or any other alternative dispute resolution mechanism to prevent disciplinary offences or to resolve conflicts.

One issue that kept coming up in discussions, lectures, and reference materials is the undervaluing of inmates in the eyes of correctional staff. This issue increases the risk of abuse of power, use of force and violence toward the inmates. One possible solution offered is the L.A.C.E.S framework (Lawful, Accountable, Considered, Equal, and Setting the Standard).¹¹ Lawful means that correctional facility staff must act in compliance with law, which has clear conditions as to when the use of force can be justified and, hence, is considered lawful. In the event of unlawful use of force, the staff members involved must be held accountable for their action. Although one might argue that use of force is spontaneous, there often are opportunities to de-escalate situations before the use of force by training the staff to offer calm and rational replies when faced with emotive situations. A set of dedicated training is required, including training regarding unconscious bias and how to reduce the influence of negative stereotypes.¹² As for setting the standard, this means that staff are updated with training and are aware of guidance, and that supervisors ensure that the staff feel supported, and leaders are modelling the behaviour that we strive for.¹³

III. LESSONS LEARNED AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS FOR THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT

A. Revisit the Security Improvement Approach

The current security and safety improvements based on UNDSS recommendations are focusing more on the reliance on physical security and strict security procedure. While some recommendations on physical security improvement are on the way, there are more recommendations which require significant budget to implement. On the ground, there has been some conflict due to opposing interests between maintaining security of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and the need to make the ASEC more open and accessible to the public. Based on the study, it is important to revisit the remaining recommendations to come up with some adjustments to maintain security and at the same time create a more “open and welcoming” secretariat for staff, service providers, and visitors. This requires seeking support from higher management. ASEC can learn from Japan, which puts more focus on safety procedures and capacity-building instead of current heavy reliance on physical security.

⁹ Balancing Security and Dignity in Prisons: A Framework for Preventive Monitoring, *PRI and APT*.

¹⁰ Prison Incident Management Handbook, *UN* 2013.

¹¹ Bosworth, Grant J. and Ashcroft, Sarah. L.A.C.E.S: Introducing a New Framework to Enhance Professional Standards Around Use of Force. *Prison Service Journal*. 252. January 2021.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

B. Shift the Focus to Capacity-Building of Human Resources

Other than focusing on physical security, another cost efficient and more effective approach is to develop the existing human resources. Currently, the security guards have negative views of visitors and especially service providers. Often, some guards provide unequal treatment to staff. In this new approach, there are two follow up actions to be done, which are:

1. Provide training to security guards to allow more friendly procedures and treatment while still maintaining security measures.
2. Provide intensive coaching for some individuals to shift their perspective to a more positive view of others.

These plans of action will require strong leadership to show examples, provide guidance and supervise the adoption of new policy.

C. Review of the Current Emergency Preparedness and Risk

As a preventive measure to anticipate unpredictable disaster, ASEC management must do internal risk assessment and develop detailed written procedures for emergencies. The procedure must be communicated to all relevant staff and other parties involved. This can be achieved by maximizing the role of the Risk Management Team that has already been established within ASEC.

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